



EA—Expressive Arts

LS—Life Skills

SS—Social Skills

STUDIO WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

We are always adding new offerings! Some workshop titles may not yet be on the description list.

Active Listening (EA, LS, SS)

Body language, appropriate reactions, and responses are the name of the game! Active listening forms deeper connections between the speaker and listener by strengthening attentiveness to the conversation.

Advocacy in the Workplace (EA, LS, SS)

Disclosing a diagnosis is a personal choice and one that should not be taken lightly. When choosing to disclose a diagnosis in the workplace, there are certain workplace accommodations that must be known and understood, as well as your ADA rights. If the choice to keep a diagnosis private is made, there are still key techniques one can use to advocate for their needs while on the job. Equipping employees with the knowledge and language to have these conversations is the key to *Advocacy in the Workplace*.

Artist Workshop (EA, SS)

Watercolor, acrylic, or tempera paints! Clay, origami, or canvas! We've got it all! *Artist Workshop* takes a classic approach to making art together through guided practice and conversation. Pieces that are made have the option to be displayed at Barrier-Free's annual Art Gallery, or be displayed at [Make Studio](#), our partnership in Baltimore. Additional pieces can be sold at local community events and festivals, or be taken home to be enjoyed. The choice is yours!

Being a Good Friend (EA, SS)

Feeling supported, being trustworthy, and accepting of others are pillars of a good friendship. These qualities fall in tandem with showing up during happy and hard times, having similar interests, and appreciating interests outside of our own. *Being a Good Friend* focuses on reciprocal relationships where both sides of the friendship learn and show equal investment and interest.

Besties & Buds (EA, SS)

Besties & Buds focuses on friendship skills with a specialized twist! We look at something specific that friends do together (i.e., gaming, outings, art, and more) to help build that bestie and bud friendship status. It starts with common interests, and builds from there!



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Budgeting & Finance (LS)

Budgeting & Finance starts with knowing our expenses. What are we spending our money on each month? We break down our spending goals into needs, wants, and savings. From there, we learn how to track our progress. Other topics covered are what it means to have credit, credit cards, investing, and understanding government subsidies.

Cinematic Discussions (SS, EA)

Join us in dissecting the cinematic elements surrounding your favorite movie! We'll go behind the scenes to learn how much time, money, and skill went into producing and creating our favorite films!

Combating Ableism (SS, LS, EA)

Language preferences, neutral language, avoiding euphemisms, and focusing on abilities, not limitations is common practice when *Combating Ableism*. Not only are these methods utilized, but also expanded on at The Studio. We rehearse different scenarios we have encountered in our lives and practice arming and shielding ourselves with the language, dialogue, and responses necessary when faced with ableism.

Comedic Timing & Wit (SS, EA)

Being naturally funny is all about comedic timing, delivery, and wit! We learn the social elements of reading our audience, pausing when necessary, and practicing cadence, tempo, and rhythm. Let the hilarity begin!

Communicating with Friends (LS, SS)

It takes two to tango! Communicating with friends is not a one-way street. We learn how (and why) we engage in conversations with friends. The purpose is to make our connections stronger and deeper. It is not just about communicating in-person, but safely using tools such as texting and social media to make our bonds stronger.



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Community Connections (SS, LS, EA)

Let's stroll Downtown Sykesville! We visit local shops, venture off to the park, grab some ice cream, go to a restaurant, or simply take in some sights during our travels. This makes our presence known throughout the community and promotes inclusion in the community! Everything in town is within walking distance, but also venturing outside of the town is fun too! Visits have included The Carroll Arts Center, Antique Shops, McDaniel College, grocery stores, and more! This is a great opportunity to implement what we're learning in The Studio in the real world!

Conflict Resolution (LS, SS, EA)

Conflict Resolution starts with accepting that conflict is natural to the human experience. Conflict happens in every ongoing relationship. We learn how to control our emotions while simultaneously remaining alert, and calm. We respect differences, and pay attention to what is being said. We learn the proper skills to separate the conflict from the person and work through solutions to our disagreements.

Connecting to Coworkers (LS, SS)

Not all coworkers are friends, and it is important to know the difference. We go over the dos/don'ts of talking to coworkers on the job! We'll discuss what topics are most conducive for the workplace and what topics we should leave at home.

Conversations 101 (LS, SS, EA)

What do I ask, how do I ask it, and when? These can be challenging questions to answer when navigating a conversation. We aim to shift the focus of the conversation from only answering questions, to asking them. We provide a "social toolbelt" of tactics and strategies for engaging in the duplexity of conversation and building social capital.

Cooking Skills (LS, SS)

Cooking is all about planning...and science! Together, we learn the importance of temperature, timing, kitchen prep, following a recipe, and when to improvise. Each week tackles something attainable and new! Participants research recipes, look up supply prices, plan the shopping list, and budget. From here, we shop for the ingredients at the grocery store and bring it back to The Studio to cook! *Past recipes have included: Grilled Cheese Bar, omelets, tacos, fried rice and vegetables, Mexican street corn, pancakes, sushi, homemade pasta, sugar cookies, fudge, potato leek soup, and much more!*



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Creating a Character (EA, SS)

Character archetypes, characteristics, backstories, quirks, faults, and flaws are the name of the game when *Creating a Character*. Participants design their own characters and play them in a rehearsed improvisation activity, or scripted skit. Creating characters outside of ourselves helps not only expand our creativity and spontaneity, but aids in fostering empathy, introspection, and group connectivity.

Creating a Vision Board (LS, SS)

A vision board is a visual representation of our goals. Using different forms of multimedia, participants create vision boards that are reflective of their future goals and aspirations. These boards serve as motivation for the future as more skills are worked on at The Studio. The boards are then presented to our fellow Studio members!

Creating a Routine (LS)

A routine provides the structure to enhance mental, physical, and emotional health. The absence of a schedule, or routine, can lead to feelings of uncertainty, stress, and unmanageability. *Creating a Routine* helps with schedule making and leaving time for not only obligations, but things that bring us joy. Knowing where we're supposed to be and when each day helps strengthen our independence.

Creative Differences (EA, SS)

Expressive arts are commonly embedded in The Studio practice. Often, many other schedule offerings have expressive arts embedded as a teaching tool to help participants further and more deeply understand the material. However, with utilizing expressive arts so frequently, *Creative Differences* can occur. These differences are shared, respected, and worked through—with the skills learned being practiced and rehearsed.

Creative Problem Solving (EA, LS, SS)

There is more than one way to do something. Sometimes, rigidity and neurodiversity can go hand-in-hand. *Creative Problem Solving* seeks to think outside of our own boxes and view multiple possibilities at the same time. Our members are excellent creative thinkers. The Studio seeks to expand this even more and offer real-life solutions to real world problems.



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Current Events (LS, SS)

The Studio is not an isolated island separate from the rest of the world. We are IN the world, therefore world and current events do have an effect on us. These are discussed and dissected in a respectful and well-educated manner so those that struggle with nuanced language can easily understand.

Debate Skills (SS, EA)

We all have different opinions and stances. These opinions and stances can be miniscule or large. Having the proper *Debate Skills* like staying on topic, knowing your audience, knowing your facts, proper body language, appropriate facial expressions, having confidence, and calmness can make all the difference when it comes to the art of persuasion.

Developing Empathy (LS, SS)

Lack of empathy, or rather, displaying empathy has been a common critique of the neurodiverse population—and often even a diagnostic criteria. *Developing Empathy* helps those that are neurodiverse not only understand where this stereotype comes from, but how to combat it when the situation arises.

Digital Citizenship (LS, SS)

Digital Citizenship is the ability to engage positively, competently, and critically online. We learn the skills of effective communication and creation by practicing the forms of social participation that are respectful of human rights and dignity through the responsible use of technology.

Digital Design (SS, LS, EA)

Digital Design covers the basics of website building and social media content curation. Many of our Studio members are young professionals seeking to promote themselves across various digital platforms. *Digital Design* is perfect for young neurodiverse entrepreneurs.

Directing & Design (SS, EA)

Many of our Studio members are also involved in our Inclusive Theater Companies (ITCs) where they are used to being the actors on the stage. *Directing & Design* gives us a taste for the behind-the-scenes action. We get a first-hand look at the production side of performance and then we try it out for ourselves!



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Dive into...Disney, Greek Mythology, Shakespeare, and more! (SS, EA)

Whether we're Diving into *Greek Mythology*, *Diving into Disney*, or *Diving into Shakespeare* and more, The Studio does it all! The *Dive into* series is a crash course in the history, significance, and modern day influence of our favorite topics.

Drama Games (EA, SS)

Drama Games teaches valuable theater skills as well as team building, promoting self-confidence, spontaneity, creativity, and stretching the imagination.

Event Planning & Prep (SS, LS, EA)

The Studio offers many events outside of our regularly scheduled Studio time. These events can range from art galleries, holiday parties, birthdays, or seasonal get-togethers. During Studio time, our participants help plan the event and make the lists of supplies necessary for hosting. After we shop for supplies from the lists we made, we prep the space for the event. This means getting the food ready, decorating the space, and making any necessary signage. We also "rehearse" the event as well so participants know exactly what to expect.

Gaming Tournament (LS, SS)

What's life without some friendly competition? *Gaming Tournament* combines the games we know and love with socialization and connection. Whether we're Nintendo or retro gaming, playing a board or card game, or field games, peer engagement is at the forefront of each tournament.

Getting to Know You (SS, EA)

When it's your first day at The Studio, *Getting to Know You* will be on the docket. That's because group integration is important to us! We will warm up with check-ins and drama games, then focus on group commonalities so we can make new connections with you quickly. Trust us, there's a method to the madness!

Group Interactions (SS, EA)

Let's face it, groups are intimidating sometimes. There are many social rules and pressures at play. *Group Interactions* aims to focus on your role in a group dynamic. Tools will be introduced to you so you can learn how to navigate the space, sense a social need, and fill it.



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Growth Mindset (LS, SS, EA)

Someone with a *Growth Mindset* views intelligence, abilities, and talents as learnable and capable of improvement through effort. On the other hand, someone with a fixed mindset views those same traits as inherently stable and unchangeable over time. We aim for a *Growth Mindset* at The Studio. We can learn, we can be successful, and we do have the abilities that can be honed and adapted over time.

How to Hygiene (LS)

While the concept may seem simple enough, the execution sometimes leaves something to be desired. *How to Hygiene* focuses on the do's and don'ts of personal cleanliness. For example, cologne isn't a substitute for showering and sanitizer is not a substitute for hand washing. Also, there is a time limit for how long you should be washing your hands. And everyone should make hygiene part of their daily routine.

Improv for Real Life (LS, SS, EA)

Slapstick silly improv is undoubtedly fun! But, more can be done with improv when we practice various scenarios we may encounter in the real world. These scenarios can be practicing for a job interview, a restaurant outing, a party, making transactions in a local shop, or asking a friend to hang out. The list goes on! These social situations can be scary for those that are neurodiverse so we practice them to help limit any anxieties.

Improving Communication (LS, SS, EA)

Improving Communication works on lowering the frequency of one-word responses and increasing the frequency of two-way communication and memory retention. Not only is it important to remain engaged in a conversation, but to also be able to recall important information about those we conversed with when engaging in a conversation again and again.

Interview Skills (LS, SS, EA)

Research, preparation, punctuality, professionalism, communication, listening, asking questions, and confidence are the interview pillars. The Studio breaks each of these pillars down into easy-to-digest takeaways. Once each pillar is practiced and refined, participants do mock job interviews!



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Knowing Your Audience (LS, SS, EA)

Being mindful of those around us and their various situations is key to *Knowing Your Audience*. Some topics may be appropriate for discussion with certain groups, and others may be inappropriate. *Knowing Your Audience* helps us uncode these nuances so we are respectful to others at all times.

Learning Languages (LS, SS, EA)

Whether it's learning Spanish, German, or American Sign Language, The Studio has several bilingual supporters participate in Studio offerings to help expand our basic knowledge of multiple languages and cultures.

Lights, Camera, Action! (SS, EA)

Lights, Camera, Action! offers a similar experience to *Directing & Design*, except this is an exclusive look behind-the-scenes of film production. The goal is to focus more on cinematography, opposed to staged performances.

Listening & Responding (LS, SS, EA)

Listening & Responding focuses on memory recall where a story is shared and parts of the story are recited back. This is a conversational tool used to help strengthen communication among peers. Strengthening our recall threshold can make us better conversationalists.

Literature & Film (SS, EA)

Movies are never like the books! But, sometimes, in a rare occurrence, movies can turn out better than the books! Discussed and shown in *Literature & Film* are books that have turned into movies. We dissect each piece of the book and how well it was translated to the screen. We then discuss what the vision was in our own imaginations and how it compares to the cinematology.

Making Decisions (LS)

Adults face many cross roads as they are living their lives. Making informed decisions is paramount to success. Participants learn to see decisions through every angle and build a pros and cons list that aids in making the decisions that are best for them and their life trajectory.



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Masking & Being Yourself (LS, SS, EA)

Masking is a process by which an individual changes or "masks" their natural personality to conform to social pressures to avoid ridicule or harassment. During *Masking & Being Yourself*, we learn various social constructs set in place and how to navigate through them, or around them, while simultaneously not sacrificing parts of ourselves. We also learn what to do in a situation where ridicule and/or harassment are present.

Meeting New People (LS, SS, EA)

Meeting New People can be intimidating, but if we're equipped with a social toolbelt of topics of conversation appropriate for first meeting interactions, the intimidation tends to dwindle. During *Meeting New People*, we are introduced to this toolbelt and practice using each tool.

Mindfulness (LS, SS, EA)

Being conscious of what is happening around us is essential. *Mindfulness* is about our awareness of the present moment and calmly acknowledging and accepting feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

Money Management (LS, EA)

Are your bills on autopay? Do you pay them monthly yourself? Do you have a representative payee? Money management does it all! Covered is how to recognize different forms of payment and what forms may be most appropriate for various transactions. Also covered is how to know the value of a dollar, how far our money goes, and how much is needed for certain ventures.

Music Appreciation (SS, EA)

The chills you feel when you hear a particularly moving piece of music is the result of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that triggers sensations of pleasure and well-being in the brain. *Music Appreciation* takes a look at the limbic system and how it lights up when we hear music. This is true of all people, of all cultures! Music is the universal language!

Music & Movement (EA)

Music moves us! *Music & Movement* captures the essence behind why our bodies move to music. Our cerebellum is responsible for crucial motor control, when music plays it wants us to move, so we do! Let's dance!



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Music in Movies (EA, SS)

Music enhances emotions! That's why in dramatic scenes there is always a musical undertone that strengthens the front-facing action. *Music in Movies* dives into the importance of a musical score during intense scenes. The score is then separated from the scene and compared to the absence of music.

Navigating Society (LS, EA)

Whether it is figuring out transportation, scheduling doctor's appointments, going grocery shopping, or running errands, *Navigating Society* can be challenging for someone that is neurodiverse. There are some key tips to know when practicing independence.

Navigating Transactions (LS, EA)

How do I know how much to tip? When is it appropriate to tip 20% versus 18%, or 15%? Should I always carry cash, or is my debit/credit card acceptable? How much cash should I have? What if I don't have enough money when I get to the register? All these questions and more are answered and practiced when *Navigating Transactions*.

Nonverbal Communication (SS, LS, EA)

Have you ever heard that only 7% of communication is verbal? That means around 93% of communication is within body language, inflection, tone of voice, gestures, posture, and bodily proximity. *Nonverbal Communication* aims to recognize these social cues and nuances in language so neurodiverse individuals can better understand conversations.

Online Safety & Communication (LS, SS)

A general rule of thumb is to not communicate online with anyone you have not met in-person. However, knowing and doing can be challenging for some people. *Online Safety & Communication* shines light on the realities of online communication and the do's/don'ts of conversing in the virtual world. Also covered is what to look out for and recognize when phishing scams are encountered.

Organization & Time Management (LS, EA)

Labels, organizers, and alarms are our friends! We live in a great era where modern technology has made our day-to-day lives easier to navigate. With *Organization & Time Management*, we will utilize these technologies and learn just how long certain tasks take to complete so we can schedule our lives and plans accordingly.



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Phone Calls & Greetings (LS, SS, EA)

In the era of texting and email, phone calls have become even more intimidating, but they are still necessary. *Phone Calls & Greetings* focuses on not only making calls, but receiving them as well. We learn appropriate times of day to call and when not to answer phone calls. We also cover speaking clearly, immediately introducing ourselves, only using our speakerphones when necessary, taking notes, having the right information ready and easily accessible to give on our end, using proper language, advocating for ourselves, and so much more!

Photography (EA)

Perspective, depth, lighting, angles, and symmetry capture the basics of *Photography*. These skills are broken down and learned separately and combined to get an all-encompassing exposure to the art of *Photography*.

Poetry Workshop (EA, SS)

Imagery, rhetoric, metaphor, and word association are key principles in *Poetry Workshop*. Participants create poetry about themselves, their favorite things, or abstract concepts. The poetry is then shared with one another in a group poetry reading. Some of our poetry is even featured in our art gallery.

Professional Writing (LS, SS, EA)

Sending a resume/cover letter to an employer, requesting off work, inquiring about a job, or reaching out and responding to a teacher/professor are all instances where *Professional Writing* is necessary. Our writing needs to differ in syntax when conversing with someone in the professional realm.

Professional Interactions & Communication (LS, SS, EA)

Similar to *Professional Writing*, our demeanor and way of presenting and communicating differs in the professional realm. *Professional Interactions & Communication* aims to highlight the differences between casual and professional interactions, and practicing them.



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Public Speaking (LS, SS, EA)

Whether it is presenting a presentation for school/work, speaking up at an advocacy conference, or writing the best man speech, *Public Speaking* is said to be one of the number one fears. To combat this fear, our Studio members practice controlling their breathing and body language when presenting, we work on hand gestures and body movement, and we rehearse so with each repetition we become more familiar and more comfortable.

Puppetry (EA, SS)

Socio-emotional development, confidence, fine and gross motor skills are all key benefits to the art of *Puppetry*. Participants choose a puppet and give it a name and personality. They then practice introducing the puppet to others. Afterwards, a short improvisational puppet show is performed to enhance creativity, spontaneity, and increase storytelling sequencing.

Responding & Reacting (LS, SS, EA)

If someone shares something deep and heartfelt, our response is not to then talk about ourselves. *Responding & Reacting* focuses on empathy and the ability to understand and recognize the feelings of others.

Restaurant Simulation (LS, SS, EA)

Going out in a large group can be overstimulating for some. That is why prior to going on a restaurant outing, a *Restaurant Simulation* is done. This simulation takes some of the ambiguity out of outing as the unknown can be stressful. The simulation includes looking at the menu beforehand, checking to see we not only have the money to pay for our food, but also beverages, tax, and gratuity, calculating mock gratuities so we are prepared when the time comes, and ordering succinctly as to not confuse or overburden our server. These simulations are not isolated to restaurants. Simulations are often done for a variety of different outings!

Resume Building (LS, SS)

A resume is a career snapshot that should be succinct and easy-to-read. During *Resume Building*, Studio members are given various resume templates and look at real job postings. We tailor our resumes using the jargon and lingo found in the job description. Resumes are updated on a regular basis.



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Rhythm & Beats (EA)

Energizing, stress relieving, and therapeutic. *Rhythm & Beats* focuses on an area of music that connects us together. Whether it be through playing in a drum circle, strengthening our fine and gross motor skills when holding instruments, increasing our reaction speed, or simply having fun, *Rhythm & Beats* is for everyone.

Self-Advocacy in Society (LS, SS, EA)

Self-Advocacy in Society strengthens a participant's ability to successfully communicate, convey, negotiate, and/or assert our own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions based on knowing and understanding our rights afforded to us by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Self-Awareness (LS, SS, EA)

Representation, knowledge of our own character, feelings, thoughts, motives, and desires are vital to *Self-Awareness*. We learn how to recognize these different aspects of ourselves and reflect on them, make changes if/when necessary, and learn from how we present ourselves in a space.

Self-Care (LS)

Knowing our threshold and boundaries go into *Self-Care*, but as does taking care of ourselves physically. This could mean looking after our food choices, exercise habits, and sleep routines. It also means knowing our limits when it comes to mental health. *Self-Care* provides the tools and tactics needed to make caring for yourself the priority.

Sketch & Slapstick Comedy (EA, SS)

What makes "The Three Stooges" or "Who's Line is it Anyway?" so funny? It's the combination of *Comedic Timing & Wit* paired with the art of theater. *Sketch & Slapstick Comedy* explores these two concepts in unison. Then we put theory into practice and create our own skits.

Social Habits (SS, LS, EA)

Remembering names, speaking during a break in conversation, not interrupting, and smiling at people walking passed you are all examples of *Social Habits*. At The Studio, we break down these habits into easy-to-understand material as well as uncovering the WHY behind each *Social Habit*.



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Social Media & You (SS, LS)

Social Media & You is about all that entails navigating the virtual world across various social media platforms. Participants learn how to properly engage online to where their social media persona matches their in-person interactions. Learned are the ways to communicate appropriately to friends, the frequency in which to communicate, how to sift through shared information, and how to avoid sharing personal information to limit the risk of hacking.

Social Norms & Etiquette (SS, LS, EA)

Was I supposed to bring a gift to that house warming party? When do I offer gas money to the person giving me a ride home? Do I always tip at a restaurant? These are among the many questions that are answered during *Social Norms & Etiquette*. The aim is to clear up any gray areas and, in life, there is a lot of gray!

Storytelling (EA, SS)

Whether we're writing, performing, or creating a storyboard, *Storytelling* is not just about creating a problem and solution, characters, and settings. It's about the exposition, or what happens before, setting the scene, the rising action, the climax, falling action, and the resolution. We create our own stories and act them out, and/or present them to one another!

Stress Management (LS, EA)

It could be music, breathing exercises, yoga, mindfulness, imagery, meditation and more. *Stress Management* is about managing stress levels for the purpose of improving everyday functioning. Techniques are shown, practiced, and implemented in the real world.

Tackling Big Projects (LS, EA)

Maybe you're moving, buying a car, renovating your house, or attempting to live on your own. *Tackling Big Projects* is for you! We break down the project into smaller, easier-to-manage tasks. We believe setting small achievable goals will help with the larger goals in the long run!

Trivia (SS, LS, EA)

Whether it's movies, sports, pop culture, or history, our Studio members will give you a run for your money! These *Trivia* buffs know where it's at! We often stretch our knowledge with a friendly game of Jeopardy, Blockbuster, or Cranium.



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Two-Way Dialogue (LS, SS, EA)

Breaking the one-way dialogue trend of question and answer can be a challenge. That stagnant interview feeling is not how strong relationships are formed. Responding with more than a “yes” or a “no” is important when engaging in *Two-Way Dialogue*. Reciprocal reacting and responding allows us to build deeper connections.

Working with Others (LS, SS, EA)

Group collaboration is one of the many goals at The Studio. While some prefer to work solo, or may have an occupation where they are alone, there is almost always a time where *Working with Others* is necessary. Here, we navigate those challenges and find out how transformative leadership can cater to each person’s strengths.

Workplace Etiquette (SS, LS, EA)

Our co-workers are not always our best friends. There are some things we do/don’t share with our colleagues. Some conversations are safe for work, other topics are to be avoided. How we know which is which is the purpose of *Workplace Etiquette*.

You’re the Expert (SS, EA)

Many neurodiverse people have an intense focus surrounding a certain topic or area of interest. We offer the opportunity to let us in on your interest! You could be interested in Disney, dragons, Star Wars, ancient history, Harry Potter...you name it. We want to know what makes you tick—after all, *You’re the Expert!*