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# Interior Design for Autism

From **BIRTH**  
to  
**CHILDHOOD**

A. J. Paron-Wildes



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- Consider the sound transfer from room to room.
- Have a large enough room to accommodate a family of four or more. Often extended family wants to hear what the doctor has to say.
- Equipment and materials should be locked away or put away up high.
- Bariatric guest seats or benches instead of chairs so the parent can sit with the child.
- Sensory boards should be hung on the walls for children to occupy themselves.

## Specialty Areas

There are some procedures that a child with autism would need to go through in a clinic or a hospital. CT scanning, EKG's, or MRI's often need to be given to these children for diagnostic reasons. Beyond that, HBOT (Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy) is used for children with autism and many families have seen improvements in their child as a result.

In any of these scenarios, the stress and anxiety of the child before going into the gantry or machine is apparent. Artist and former Public Health Nurse Vara Kamin has used her therapeutic works and art to calm the children (and their parents) before they have to go through the stressful activity. Kamin's original works of art are replicated and then backlit, creating a vibrant, soothing image that holds the child's attention, and calms and assists them in restoring their equilibrium while engaging active imagination (see Figure 4.11). A clinical research study has been initiated at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in their Sedation Unit to document the impact and calming effect of Kamin's images on their patients, many whom are autistic.



Figure 4.11 Therapeutic art calms patients before an MRI at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Specialty Care Center—MRI Suite. Photo: Courtesy of Phoenix Medical Construction Company

Restorative art is a growing field in healthcare. This highly specialized type of art by Vara Kamin crosses the bridge from decorative art to restorative imagery that assists in creating a passageway for the innate healing capacity of the body to follow; especially for individuals in stressful environments when the mind most needs to find respite. A link to the artist's work is provided here: [www.varakamin.com](http://www.varakamin.com).

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# Interior Design for Autism

From **CHILDHOOD**  
to  
**ADOLESCENCE**

**A. J. Paron-Wildes**



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## Specialty Areas

For either an acute medical incident, or for specific chronic medical conditions, a child with autism might be required to have a diagnostic exam, such as an MRI, CT scan, X-Ray, etc. or on-going procedures and treatments in a hospital or clinic. Beyond that, HBOT (Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy) is used for children with autism, and many families have seen improvements in their child with this type of treatment.

### 70 TYPES OF SPACES



Figure 4.12 Therapeutic art calms patients before an MRI at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Specialty Care Center-MRI Suite.

Photo: Courtesy of Phoenix Medical Construction Company

In any of these scenarios, the stress and anxiety of the child (and parent) before going into the gantry or machine is often readily apparent. Artist and former public health nurse Vara Kamin, a recognized pioneer and leader in the field of Art and Healing, has used her restorative works of art in a wide variety of healthcare settings to calm the children of all ages (and adults), before they have to go through the stressful clinical procedures. Kamin's original paintings are replicated and then back lit: creating vibrant soothing images that captivate the attention of children, and calms and assists them in restoring their equilibrium while engaging active imagination (see Figure 4.12). A clinical research study has been initiated at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in their Sedation Unit to document the impact and calming effect Kamin's images have had on their patients, many whom are autistic.

The use of Restorative art is an emerging and evolving area in the field of Art and Healing. This highly specialized type of art by Vara Kamin forms a bridge from decorative art to restorative imagery that assists in creating a passageway for the innate healing capacity of the body to follow, especially for individuals in stressful environments, when the mind most needs to find respite. A link to the artist's work is provided here: [www.varakamin.com](http://www.varakamin.com)