



National Autism Center
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News

For Immediate Release
May 8, 2009

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Early Identification and Intervention Keys to Treating Autism

NAC Announces Free Autism Screenings this Summer

Autism occurs in approximately one in every 150 children. The number of diagnosed cases has increased dramatically in the past decade. Although there is no cure, early diagnosis and treatment have a significant impact on future progress.

“Studies consistently show that children who start treatment at the earliest possible age are less likely to require intensive and restrictive services later,” explains Susan M. Wilczynski, Ph.D., BCBA, Executive Director of the National Autism Center. “It’s important for parents, pediatricians, preschool teachers, and other caretakers to understand the symptoms of developmental disabilities and to move quickly on diagnosis and treatment.”

In response to the ongoing need for diagnostic services, The National Autism Center is announcing a free autism screening program for children between the ages of 18 months and 5 years suspected of having an autism spectrum disorder. The screenings will take place from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm on Friday, June 5; Thursday, July 9; Friday, August 7 and the first Friday of every month. The screenings will be conducted by a child psychologist specializing in autism diagnosis. Families are encouraged to contact the Center for more information.

Symptoms of autism include:

- no babbling, pointing, or meaningful gestures by 1 year of age
- no one-word communications by 16 months
- no two-word phrases by 2 years
- loss of language or social skills
- poor eye contact

- inability to play appropriately with toys
- unusual attachment to one particular toy or object
- no smiling
- apparent lack of response to sounds or voices and name being called

Although the cause of autism has not been identified, current research links autism to biological or neurological differences in the brain. Regardless of cause, autism is best treated by programs based on intensive behavioral interventions. As doctors make progress in diagnosing autism at an earlier age, more and more children are receiving treatment at a young age when they are most able to benefit and build the skills they need.

About The National Autism Center

The National Autism Center is dedicated to serving children and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) by providing reliable information, promoting best practices, and offering comprehensive resources for families, practitioners, and communities.

The National Autism Center is completing an unprecedented three-year project — the National Standards Project — to establish a set of standards for effective, research-validated educational and behavioral interventions for children with ASD. Once approved, the national standards will serve as a single, authoritative source of guidance to help families, practitioners, policymakers and funders make informed decisions and choose effective treatments.

An advocate for evidence-based treatment approaches, the Center identifies effective programming and shares practical information with families about how to respond to the challenges they face. The Center also conducts applied research as well as identifies training and service models for practitioners. Finally, the Center works to shape public policy concerning ASD and its treatment through the development and dissemination of national standards of practice.

For more information about the National Autism Center, please call 877-313-3833 or visit www.nationalautismcenter.org.