

Indiana Resource Center for Autism

The Indiana Resource Center for Autism staff conduct outreach training and consultations, engage in research, and develop and disseminate information on behalf of individuals across the autism spectrum, including autism, Asperger's syndrome, and other pervasive developmental disorders. Our efforts are focused on providing communities, organizations, agencies, and families with the knowledge and skills to support children and adults in typical early intervention, school, community, work, and home settings.



Indiana

What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?

Autism spectrum disorders are also called pervasive developmental disorders, and include Asperger's syndrome, autism, and pervasive developmental disorders-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS). These are neurobiological disorders. While characteristics are typically not apparent at birth, symptoms appear in the first few years of life. Even though all share a core set of behavioral characteristics, each child and adult exhibits symptoms and characteristics very differently. Autism is referred to as a spectrum disorder to signify these differences among a group of people who share a common diagnosis.

An accurate diagnosis is made when an individual displays a certain number of behavioral characteristics related to communication, social skills, and restricted and repetitive interests and behaviors as outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association. For example:

Children and adults have difficulty communicating and understanding communication. Some have limited or no speech. Others have language, but lack the ability to engage in everyday conversation.

Engaging in social interactions, as well as play and leisure activities in an appropriate fashion, presents a challenge for most.

Individuals often demonstrate a narrow range of interests, prefer to repeatedly engage in specific activities, resist changes in routine, and

experience difficulties in regulating sensory input from the surrounding environment.

For some, challenging behaviors ranging from refusal to physical aggression may occur.

These differences make it difficult for the person to easily negotiate the demands and expectations of society. However, children and adults across the autism spectrum can and do live productive and meaningful lives when provided with appropriate programs and supports.

While once considered to be a rare disability with an incidence rate of 1 in 5,000, commonly agreed upon incidence rates now place the occurrence of autism spectrum disorders at 1 in 150.

Why Call the Indiana Resource Center for Autism?

IRCA staff can assist family members, professionals, individuals across the autism spectrum, and interested others in a variety of ways. Below is a description of our services.

Outreach Training and Consultation

Outreach training efforts focus on building the capacity of state and local agencies, and family members to support individuals across the autism spectrum. Every year, statewide conferences, regional workshops, intensive team training and other training events are sponsored across Indiana, and geared to a diverse audience of family members, professionals and those within the autism spectrum.

IRCA staff are available to address individual needs within broader systems change activities by observing the individual in natural school, work and home settings, and collaborating with the person's team and family members to suggest appropriate services and supports. The Indiana Resource Center for Autism does not promote one method or a single approach. Instead, IRCA staff strive to address the specific needs of the individual by providing information and training on a variety of strategies and methods.

Information Development and Dissemination

IRCA serves as a state clearinghouse for information about autism spectrum disorders by responding to individual requests for information, maintaining a library collection of relevant books and videos for public distribution, producing written and video materials, maintaining an active website and listserv, and monitoring current information on external resources, trends, policies, services, current treatments, workshops and so forth using a variety of formats.

A Booklets, videos/DVDs and other publications are developed and distributed by the Indiana Resource Center for Autism. These publications cover a range of topics that address issues across the lifespan.

A Commercially produced videos and print publications are available for loan to Indiana citizens from the Center for Disability Information and Referral (CeDIR) by calling (812) 855-9396 (Voice/TT).

Resource Center for

Autism

A Practical articles written by IRCA staff are available on a broad range of topics related to autism spectrum disorders. Specific topics address social skills development, behavioral issues, communication programming, services in Indiana, personal care and management, early intervention, educational programming, literacy and other useful topics. These articles are available for free on the IRCA website at www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca.

A A newsletter, the *IRCA Reporter*, is distributed to subscribers three times a year. The newsletter provides information on conferences and current issues in the field of autism spectrum disorders. The IRCA Reporter is free to Indiana residents. Non-Indiana residents may receive our newsletter for a fee.

IRCA staff also may be able to provide information about resources and services available within Indiana and elsewhere, and can recommend strategies for accessing services.

RESEARCH

As a university-based program, a primary responsibility of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism staff is to conduct research. Strategies and policies that enhance the quality of life for individuals within the autism spectrum are a primary focus of research. Every three years, the IRCA conducts a Needs Assessment survey to gather data from families and/or professionals about the status of programs and supports related to individuals across the autism spectrum.

HOW CAN YOU CONTACT THE IRCA?

For more information, contact the:

Indiana Resource Center for Autism
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
2853 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408-2696

Phone: (812) 855-6508
TT: (812) 855-9396
FAX: (812) 855-9630

E-mail: prattc@indiana.edu

Or visit our web site at
www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca.

IRCA is one of seven centers located at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community. Services may be provided in collaboration with other centers at the Institute that address early intervention, school improvement, transition, employment/careers, supported living, planning and policy studies, aging, information and referral, and family/individual support. For more information about these centers, contact the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community by calling 812-855-6508 or by visiting our web site at www.iidc.indiana.edu.

The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community is *Indiana's University Center for Excellence on Disabilities*.

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Supporting
Individuals
with Autism,
Asperger's
Syndrome,
and Pervasive
Developmental
Disorders