

April is Autism Awareness Month

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a group of developmental disabilities that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that an average of 1 in 110 children in the U.S. have an ASD. Autism is one of the diagnoses in the group of ASDs.

ASDs are “spectrum disorders.” That means ASDs affect each person in different ways, and can range from very mild to severe. People with ASDs share some similar symptoms, such as problems with social interaction. But there are differences in when the symptoms start, how severe they are, and the exact nature of the symptoms.

According to the CDC, ASDs are developmental disabilities that cause substantial impairments in social interaction and communication and the presence of unusual behaviors and interests. Many people with ASDs also have unusual ways to learning, paying attention, and reacting to different sensations. The thinking and learning abilities of people with ASDs can vary—from gifted to severely challenged. As ASD begins before the age of 3 and lasts throughout a person’s life.

There is currently no cure for ASDs. However, research shows that early intervention treatment services can greatly improve a child’s development. Early intervention services help children from birth to 3 years old (36 months) learn important skills. Services can include therapy to help the child talk, walk, and interact with others. Therefore, it is important to talk to your child’s doctor as soon as possible if you think your child has an ASD or other developmental problem. For more information about autism, you can visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>

In the past several years, the awareness of autism has dramatically increased in Kentucky. This increased public awareness of autism can be attributed to the grass roots collaborative efforts of support groups across the state bringing together families and professionals. ****INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SUPPORT GROUP HERE****

The Kentucky Autism Training Center (KATC), a part of the University of Louisville’s College of Education and Human Development, has served the citizens of the Commonwealth for over a decade by providing support and training to families and professionals. KATC’s mission is to strengthen our state’s systems of support for persons affected by autism by bridging research to practice and by providing training and resources to families and professionals. KATC is committed to improving the quality of life for those affected by ASD. For more information about KATC, visit <http://louisville.edu/education/kyautismtraining>