

February 19, 2010

Hello!

I hope that you found the February KY PLANS materials to be of great help to you as you plan for Autism Awareness Month in April. The focus for the month of March is early identification for autism. Your challenge for next month is to **increase awareness of the importance of early identification of autism** within your community.

The CDC released new data that show an average of 1 in every 110 children in certain parts of the United States has an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The data also show that the average age at which children are diagnosed with an ASD is 4 1/2 years. This relatively late age of diagnosis is a reminder of how important it is to be aware of milestones that mark a child's development and to act early if a delay is suspected. Acting early can make a real difference! (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/>)

There is a wealth of information available at the Centers for Disease Control's website related to the importance of early identification of autism. If you have not had a chance to look at these materials, I would encourage you to do so. Another wonderful source for early identification information is the First Signs website. You can see their information by visiting <http://firstsigns.org/> The Autism Society of America also devotes a section on their website to early identification. You can see this section by visiting [http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about diag earlyidentification](http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_diag_earlyidentification)

I appreciate all that you do for the families in your community! As always, let me know if there are any ways that you think I could be of help to you. I am just a phone call or an email away. Happy March. Hopefully we can also say "Hello, Spring!"

Debbie