

# SPEDITION NEWSLETTER

Office of Special Services and Student Equity  
Pontiac School District

Arnella Jamison, Ph.D., Director  
Jennifer Parker, Supervisor  
April 2022

Kelley Williams, Superintendent  
Dr. Desheil Echols, Assistant Superintendent

## APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH



Theme: The Unique Child

April 1-30, 2022



Celebrating PSD Staff, Students, and the Community

" APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH"



Weekly Eblast - Sharing "Are You Aware Autism Facts" weekly via email

- April 5, 2022 - Autism Awareness Pins Distribution
- April 14, 2022 - District Wide Communication: "Blue Out"
  - District Wide Attire: **Blue T- Shirts**
  - Decorate: doors, halls - **(color blue) (blue lights)**
- April 6, 2022 - Professional Development: Lunch and Learn  
(For ASD Staff presented by Kids In Motion Pediatric Therapy Services)
- April 22, 2022 - Lunch for Waterford Regional Fire Department
- April 29, 2022 - ASD Student Enrichment/Activity Day

Location: Pontiac High School

Time: 10:00am - 1:00pm

Activities: Paint with a Twist: supplies, paint, paintbrushes, canvases  
Legos, Music Therapy, Sensory Integration Bouncers



## Can you S.P.O.T. the Early Signs of Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) now affects 1 in 54 children in the United States, including those of **every race, gender, and age**. Studies show that nearly 80%–90% of parents saw signs of ASD in their child by 24 months, and that early intervention can have a positive impact on a child's long-term success. Anyone can help S.P.O.T. autism early by remembering these four signs:

- **S. Social Differences**

Avoiding eye contact; not showing interest in other children; unusual play patterns; no pretend play.

- **P. Persistent Sensory Differences**

Persistently getting upset over everyday sounds; over or underreacting to lights, smells, tastes, textures.

- **O. Obsessive/Repetitive Behaviors**

Flapping hands; rocking back & forth; having obsessive interests in a particular object or activity.

- **T. Talking/Communication Delays**

Little to no babbling by 12 months; not saying a single word by 16 months; may appear deaf; loss of previous verbal skills or language.

<https://nationalautismassociation.org/spot-asd-by-3/>

## What causes ASD?

Scientists believe that both genetics and environment likely play a role in ASD. There is great concern that rates of autism have been increasing in recent decades without full explanation as to why. Researchers have identified a number of genes associated with the disorder. Imaging studies of people with ASD have found differences in the development of several regions of the brain.

Studies suggest that ASD could be a result of disruptions in normal brain growth very early in development. These disruptions may be the result of defects in genes that control brain development and regulate how brain cells communicate with each other. Autism is more common in children born prematurely.

Environmental factors may also play a role in gene function and development, but no specific environmental causes have yet been identified. The theory that parental practices are responsible for ASD has long been disproved.

Multiple studies have shown that vaccination to prevent childhood infectious diseases does not increase the risk of autism in the population.

[https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-Fact-Sheet#3082\\_7](https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-Fact-Sheet#3082_7)

## Spotlight on Our ASD STAFF

- **Georgina Thompson**
- **Deborah Moss**
- **Famara Spurgeon**
- **Christina Teichman**
- **Linda Ratliff**
- **Toiann Burns**
- **Keisha Davis**
- **Trillium Smith**
- **Cateshia Terry**
- **Sharon Brooks**
- **Dominiqua Bearden**
- **Janice Morgan**

### What is Autism?

- Autism is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3
- Autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities
- Individuals with autism often suffer from numerous co-morbid medical conditions which may include: allergies, asthma, epilepsy, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, and more
- Autism is diagnosed four times more often in boys than girls. Its prevalence is not affected by race, region, or socio-economic status. Since autism was first diagnosed in the U.S. the incidence has climbed to an alarming one in 54 children in the U.S.
- Autism itself does not affect life expectancy, however research has shown that the mortality risk among individuals with autism is twice as high as the general population, in large part due to drowning and other accidents.
- Currently there is no cure for autism, though with [early intervention and treatment](#), the diverse symptoms related to autism can be greatly improved and in some cases completely overcome.

naa@nationalautism.org

<https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-fact-scheet/>



### Autism Speaks

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, [autism affects an estimated 1 in 44 children](#) in the United States today.

We know that there is not one autism but many subtypes, most influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. The ways in which people with autism learn, think and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. Some people with ASD may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently.

Several factors may influence the development of autism, and it is often accompanied by sensory sensitivities and medical issues such as gastrointestinal (GI) disorders, seizures or sleep disorders, as well as mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression and attention issues.

[Signs of autism](#) usually appear by age 2 or 3. Some associated development delays can appear even earlier, and often, it can be diagnosed as early as 18 months. Research shows that early intervention leads to positive outcomes later in life for people with autism.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>

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## REMINDERS



1. **Move up IEPS must be into the office by May 31, 2022.**
2. **Any reevaluations that are needed in September must be completed by May 31, 2022 and in the office by June 6.**
3. **All written reports must accompany the MET paperwork.**
4. **Data in the PLAAFP must be current.**
5. **If an evaluation is written on a REED and consented to by the parent, the district is required to conduct that assessment.**
6. **All IEP team members are required to be present for an IEP team meeting unless the parent consents to an excusal prior to the IEP team meeting. All IEP team members are required to participate in the REED process. All IEP team members are to sign the IEP.**
7. **Personal Care Forms are instructions for the Paraprofessional in the self-contained classroom. Forms can only be signed by: OT/PT, SSW, and/or Speech Pathologist. These are completed annually at the time of the IEP meeting. A copy of the Personal Care Form should be given to the classroom Para.**
8. **State assessments begin in grade three.**
9. **Remember to use the validate button while working in Special Education Electronic Forms module. It will help identify areas that need to be completed.**
10. **Supplemental aids and services to be provided to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals . If the service is via the Intermediate School District, a Direct Service Request (DSR) must accompany the IEP to the Special Education Office.**
11. **All REEDs must have an invitation printed with the signed REED.**
12. **All documents must be brought to the Special Education office within 5 days of the meeting.**

