State and Community Agencies for ASD Support

Many agencies have satellite offices statewide.

SC Department of Education
1429 Senate St
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (803) 734-5454

SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
Autism Division
Phone: (803) 898-9609

Family Connection of SC
Family Information Center
Toll Free: 1-(800) 578-8750

Autism Academy of SC
505 Blanding Street , Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (803) 929-0011

SC Autism Society
806 12th Street
West Columbia, SC 29169
Phone: (803) 750-6988
Toll Free:1-(800) 438-4790

Project HOPE
2131 Woodruff Rd. Suite 2100-358
Greenville, SC 29607
Phone (864) 676-0028

Early Autism Project
2580 Lin-Do Ct, Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 905-4427

For Professional Development Opportunities specific to School Support Staff needs, please have an administrator make a request through the following link on the SC State Department of Education Website:

https://scde.formstack.com/forms/leasop_request_for_assistance

"If you've seen one person with Autism, you've seen ONE person with Autism."



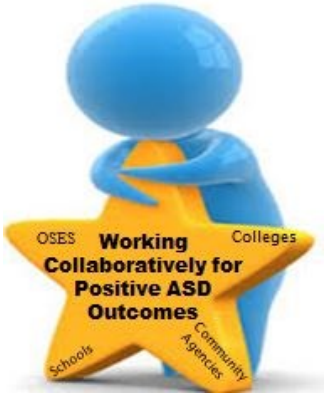
SC Department of Education
Office of Special Education Services

John R. Payne
Director of Special Education Services
jpayne@ed.sc.gov
Phone: (803)734-2738

Lisa O. Raiford
Education Associate– Autism Spectrum Disorders
lraiford@ed.sc.gov
Phone: (803) 566-7200

SC Department of Education
Office of Special Education Services

Learning About Autism Spectrum Disorders



Support Information for School Staff

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorders in South Carolina

The population of students who are eligible to receive special education services in SC schools for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has been on the rise for many years. This means that, inevitably, school staff in all environments will find themselves working with a students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. This can be confusing at first, particularly if you are uninformed or unprepared.



First, take the time to get to know the student who has an Autism Spectrum Disorder. They are people first just like any other student. Feel free to speak to your administrator and the student's teacher in the school environment in order to learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorders and the student's particular needs. Always remember, **confidentiality** in these discussions. Remember, the more you educate yourself, the better equipped you are to support our students in South Carolina Schools!

What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?

Autism Spectrum Disorders is a group of developmental disorders that include Autism and affect a persons ability to communicate and process the world around them. Because it is a spectrum, each person affected by ASD is different and may display different behaviors. Some characteristics you may see include:

⇒ Repetitive behaviors– rocking, flapping or arms, spinning

⇒ Have a need for consistency in routine and schedule and prior notice to any changes in this.

⇒ Difficulty communicating– repeating words, carrying on one-sided conversations, using pictures, or a computer to "speak"

⇒ Sensory challenges– may be sensitive to loud noises, bright lights, high noise levels, food textures -eating only one type of food daily, or may not like for different foods on a lunch tray to touch.

⇒ Social behavior challenges– may have difficulty reading body language including gestures and non-verbal communication like pointing, a head nod, or a facial expression. May have difficulty expressing his or her feelings.

These characteristics, when not recognized and accommodated for may result in a person with an ASD having a meltdown at their inability to communicate or feel understood.

What Can You Do?

Remember, a person with an ASD is a person. Take time to educate yourself about ASD. Get to know the students with whom you will work with, be it in the cafeteria, hallway, library, or on the bus.

Make sure the student understands the expectations of them in various environments, for instance:

⇒ **On the bus**– where will the student sit? Does this change daily?

⇒ **In the cafeteria**– can the student sit in a quiet area? What are the line procedures.? Will he or she need to memorize their lunch number?

⇒ **In the library**– what is the process for using any computers? How does one check out a book? What is expected during story time?

When possible use visuals such as a scale for voice levels in different environments, a written out or picture schedule., a written list of rules or expectations for each environment.

Ask the student's teacher how to best support the student. Ask to learn about any accommodations the student may have in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that must be followed . When there are concerns or challenges, document them so that everyone can work together to create a successful program for the student.