



Autism Society  
of North Carolina

# SPECTRUM

VOLUME 39, No. 2 | ISSN 1044-1921 | SUMMER 2022



Integrated Care

Behavior in the Classroom

Selective Eating

# Table of Contents

## Feature articles:

- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 4 | "Are Chicken Nuggets a Vegetable?" and Other Mealtime Musings: Selective Eating in Autism |
|---|---|
- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 6 | Integrated Care: Why it Matters and How to Achieve it |
|---|---|
- 
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 8 | Medicaid Transformation: Tailored Plans are Arriving |
|---|--|
- 
- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 10 | A Teacher's Perspective on Addressing Challenging Behaviors in the Classroom |
|----|--|
- 
- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 14 | New Program Provides Career Support to State Employees |
|----|--|
- 

## Also in this issue:

- 
- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| 3 | Message from the CEO |
|---|----------------------|
- 
- |    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| 12 | Direct Supports |
|----|-----------------|
- 
- |    |        |
|----|--------|
| 15 | IGNITE |
|----|--------|
- 
- |    |             |
|----|-------------|
| 16 | Camp Royall |
|----|-------------|
- 
- |    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| 18 | Social Recreation |
|----|-------------------|
- 
- |    |         |
|----|---------|
| 19 | NC ABLE |
|----|---------|
- 
- |    |          |
|----|----------|
| 20 | Chapters |
|----|----------|
- 
- |    |                  |
|----|------------------|
| 22 | Hispanic Affairs |
|----|------------------|
- 
- |    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| 24 | Fundraisers and Events |
|----|------------------------|
- 
- |    |           |
|----|-----------|
| 28 | Donations |
|----|-----------|
- 
- |    |            |
|----|------------|
| 30 | Call on Us |
|----|------------|
- 

## Mission Statement

The Autism Society of North Carolina improves the lives of individuals with autism, supports their families, and educates communities.

## The Spectrum

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## Work with Us

The Autism Society of North Carolina is always looking for qualified candidates who are passionate about helping individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. ASNC has offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Greenville, Raleigh, Newport, and Wilmington.

A variety of part- and full-time positions are available. Please visit [www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers) to learn more about current ASNC career opportunities. We appreciate referrals; please help us recruit the best talent by sharing the above link.

## Privacy Policy

The Autism Society of North Carolina respects the privacy of its members and those who receive our publications. We do not sell or otherwise share our mailing list, email notification list, or any other personal information with other businesses or organizations.



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# A message from the CEO

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At the Autism Society of North Carolina, we know the situation of every individual and family is unique. We serve an incredibly diverse community, and we are working hard to provide the services, supports, and resources that are appropriate for everyone. To achieve that goal, we spend a lot of time listening to individuals and families to understand the needs and preferences of those we serve. As a result of our dialogues, you will see shifts in language and terminology in our materials.

For many years, organizations recommended using person-first language (person with autism) rather than identity-first language (autistic person). Many in our community prefer identity-first language because autism is such an important and inherent part of identity. We will use both terms, and when we know a preference exists, we will use the term preferred by the person being served.

We are also examining how we discuss levels of the spectrum. We know it is intimidating for families navigating a new diagnosis to understand all the ways autism is described, and we know that many have issues with language related to functioning levels. We are making a shift toward framing the spectrum by support needed. Support needs vary for everyone, whether they are on the spectrum or not. One person may need little support with academics but need a higher level of support for social skills. Another person may need more support with communication but less support for daily living activities. As all individuals work toward their unique goals, the levels of support needed will change, so this approach allows us to stay flexible with describing services and programs.

The Autism Society of North Carolina has also adopted two statements that affirm our strong belief that the diversity of our community makes us stronger:

### Diversity Statement

The Autism Society of North Carolina values diversity and respects the unique contributions of people with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. We believe that sharing and discussing ideas should occur in a climate of openness, respect, and trust. It is important that we not only acknowledge and celebrate diversity, but make ongoing, responsible efforts towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### Neurodiversity Statement

The Autism Society of North Carolina supports neurodiversity – the understanding that differences in the human brain and behavior are both common and to be accepted. Autistic people experience, understand, and interact with the world in unique ways, and we respect and value their neurological differences. As an inclusive organization, neurodiversity helps us appreciate individuality, be scientifically informed and culturally sensitive, celebrate distinctive talents, and acknowledge multiple perspectives held in the autism community.

I want to thank all of the individuals, families, staff, and professionals who shared the feedback and insights that led to the creation of these statements and our more inclusive language.

We will continue to listen and adjust to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community. There is no stronger community than the autism community, and we are honored to work together with all of you.

My best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Sheriff".

Tracey Sheriff, Chief Executive Officer



# “Are Chicken Nuggets a Vegetable?” & Other Mealtimes Musings: Selective Eating in Autism

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*By Whitney Sukonick, MA, LPA, BCBA, LifeLong Interventions Director*

One of the first jobs of parenting is to keep your child healthy and nourished by ensuring they eat a variety of nutritious foods, alongside the extra treats and occasional Happy Meal that accompanies childhood. Before having children, many of us felt like this would be the easy part. Three meals a day, snacks sprinkled in between; water, fruits, vegetables, healthy carbs, protein. Simple, right?

Like many things that come along with this parenting journey, we quickly learned how wrong we were to assume anything would be that straightforward! Picky or selective eating is something that many families navigate with their children. Battles at dinner time, dessert negotiations, and late-night internet searches of “can my child live off pizza alone?” – this is the reality for many caregivers who feel like they are at their wits’ end.

Picky eating is common for many children, regardless of their developmental trajectory. But for children with autism, food selectivity can become extreme and can last well beyond early childhood. The prevalence of feeding problems in children diagnosed with autism is estimated to be more than five times higher than that of neurotypical children and can range in severity from inadequate nutritional intake, to being under or overweight, to the need to supplement nutrition medically using a gastrostomy feeding tube. For both parents and children, this can be a stressful and scary experience.

The reasons behind extreme food selectivity in individuals with autism aren’t always fully understood. For some, sensory aversions to specific characteristics of certain foods may contribute. For others, a need for sameness and predictability in their diet may be a controlling variable. Differences in communication, emotional regulation, and executive functioning can make expressing emotions and opinions around mealtimes incredibly difficult for everyone involved. And most importantly, it’s imperative to remember that underlying medical conditions such as reflux,

allergies, oral motor challenges, or intolerances may also be contributing factors and should be ruled out before any behavioral approach is taken.

Luckily, there are some basic strategies that can help both you and your child as you try to increase their comfort with new food groups:

## **Explain the importance of healthy eating.**

For some children with autism, it may be helpful to simply explain to them ahead of time why it’s so important to eat a varied diet of healthy foods. Remember to keep the messaging positive! There are no bad foods, only foods that are better in moderation while others we can enjoy all the time. Using something concrete and visual like a social narrative can be helpful in explaining these concepts. Make sure your child knows when they can expect to have their favorite foods and when you’ll encourage them to try new ones. It can be helpful to let your child know exactly which foods you’d like to try together and how they might expect them to smell, look, and taste.

## **Keep the pressure off.**

For autistic children and adults, extreme food selectivity can be a result of anxiety and fear. Taking a no- or low-pressure approach can lower everyone’s stress level, resulting in an improved relationship with food and mealtimes for your child. Avoid withholding preferred foods and instead offer novel foods to try alongside of their usual meal. Encourage

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*Offering a choice between which types of food will be included in their meal, how many bites they’ll take of a new food, or even which place they’ll sit at for dinner time can be empowering ways to put them in control of their meal in a safe and healthy manner.*

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your child to inspect the food, take a bite of it, or even just leave it on their plates as they get used to the idea of trying something new. Be responsive to their cues and if you notice them becoming agitated or upset, validate their feelings and let them know how proud you are of them for trying. Don't get discouraged if it doesn't go well the first few times; this is a new experience for everyone. Over time, as trying new foods becomes part of the new routine, your child's comfort level may increase.

### Let them take control (where possible).

Embedding choice into mealtimes is a powerful tool for increasing your child's sense of control and autonomy. Children hear "no" much more often than they hear "yes" throughout their day and as a result, many things can feel out of their control. This is especially true for a child with autism, who may have many unmet sensory, regulation, or communication needs that contribute to the desire to exercise increased control over their day. Offering a choice between which types of food will be included in their meal, how many bites they'll take of a new food, or even which place they'll sit at for dinner time can be empowering ways to put them in control of their meal in a safe and healthy manner.

### Make it fun!

For children with very restricted diets, mealtime and eating in general can be associated with feelings of stress, anxiety, and fear. So, remember to make eating and exploration of new foods fun! Cook a new meal together, plant your own garden and cook the healthy foods you grow, explore a nearby fruit or vegetable patch to pick your own, or even just take them along for grocery shopping when possible. Remember to offer your child plenty of choices along the way and provide lots of opportunities for positive feedback and encouragement!

### Safety first.

It's important to work closely with your child's physician as you try to address food selectivity. For some children with more extreme feeding needs, it will be essential to seek the

support of a team of professionals who can oversee your child's care and monitor their safety closely. For children with significant selectivity and food refusal, contributing factors must be evaluated and addressed before it is safe to proceed with treatment. For example, children may have oral motor needs such as muscle weakness or lack of proper chewing skills. For others, esophageal or gastrointestinal issues may need to be alleviated before feeding needs can become the priority. These complex needs are best addressed by an integrated care, multi-disciplinary team of professionals who are well trained and experienced in this specialty.

Not all autism service providers are qualified to address feeding issues, so it's important that you ask questions about their background, training, and experience and when in doubt, wait for the right professional or team of professionals to become available to meet these needs for you and your child. For information about providers in your area, please contact our Autism Resource Specialists by calling 800-442-2762. ■

*Whitney Sukonick directs LifeLong Interventions (LLI), the Autism Society of North Carolina's comprehensive Applied Behavior Analysis treatment program for children and adults. She has been a member of the Clinical team since 2014. She is a behavior analyst and licensed psychological associate, with a master's degree in Psychology with a concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis from UNC Wilmington. She completed a clinical internship and did post-graduate work at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, MD.*

## Autism Society of NC Earns BHCQE Accreditation



Last year, the Autism Society of North Carolina's Clinical Department and our Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programming was awarded a full three-year BHCQE Accreditation. This accreditation recognizes behavioral health organizations that excel in clinical quality, staff qualifications, and consumer satisfaction, and it also ensures that ABA services are delivered ethically, sustainably, and in a client-focused manner. We are proud that this accreditation recognizes our commitment to high-quality services.



Our Clinical team can provide a variety of supports for you or your loved one. To learn more about our Clinical offerings, please scan the QR code or visit [autismsociety-nc.org/clinical](https://autismsociety-nc.org/clinical)

# Integrated Care: Why it Matters & How to Achieve it

*By Jenna Flynn, MSW, LCSW, NADD-DDS, Integrated Care Professional*



“Integrated care” is a term that has begun showing up more in healthcare settings as something desired and positive. You may have also heard of it referred to as “whole-person care” or “coordinated care,” but those terms don’t tell us what it is, why we may want or benefit from it, or how to get it. This article will give you a brief introduction to integrated care and some ideas of how you can begin to advocate for a more integrated approach. We will use the terms “integrated care,” “whole-person care,” and “coordinated care” interchangeably in this article.

## What Is Integrated Care?

The term “integrated care,” at its core, is attempting to achieve connection among anyone working to help you, regardless of their specialty or role. Coordinated care means your doctors, your pharmacist, your psychiatrist, and your therapists, among others, will talk to each other about what you need, how they can help, and what your goals are. Whole-person care means these professionals also consider who you are, what is important to you, and what your culture is, and they infuse respect and dignity into every interaction with you. Integrated care means your system is informed and supported by people with lived experience with the things you are seeking support for, be it mental health diagnoses, stressful life experiences, parenting a child with a disability, transitioning to adulthood, gender diversity, or autism spectrum disorder. Whole-person care means your supports are treating who you are as a complete person, which means also supporting your needs for housing, financial assistance, social support, community safety, and your ability to

understand sometimes complex medical information. Who you are, what you need, and your experience is the focus in an coordinated care system.

If your current healthcare experience feels different or feels disconnected, you are not alone. In a disconnected system, we are the messenger to all of our providers, and we don’t always know what is important for each doctor or specialist to know. Does my Primary Care Provider (PCP) need to know about my dental pain or my recent depressed thoughts? Does my psychiatrist need to know about my new pre-diabetic status or that my in-home provider has been sick? Does the staff who come to my home need to know that I’m changing medications soon and I’m feeling anxious about that? And if I feel unsafe at home or feel lonely, who needs to know and who can help? It’s challenging and tiring to try and figure out the current system and it often leads to important information not getting to the providers who can help the most.

## Why Does Integrated Care Matter?

Research has shown that integrated care leads to better outcomes in several ways. As a client, patient, or person seeking support, coordinated care can reduce our confusion and the number of times we need to share our story and to ask for support. It can also reduce how long we wait for support. When a team approach is used, and when all team members are aware of and accountable to one another, you're less likely to spend time waiting and feeling forgotten. Research also shows that in integrated care systems, patients feel more involved in their own care, more educated about their options, and more confident to voice their questions or concerns. Lastly, whole-person care can create strong positive outcomes for the entire system: Team-based integrated care settings have shown lower costs than those using a more traditional disconnected method, and from a public health perspective, whole-person care provides better clinical outcomes for complex and chronic needs.

## How Can We Achieve Integrated Care?

One of the first things you can do as a client, patient, or person receiving other services is to ask for your providers to talk with each other about your care. You can specify what information you'd like for them to share, how often you would like them to share it, and for what purpose. In most cases, you will need to sign a Release of Information document verifying you approve their communication. In some cases, you may request all your providers talk together on a conference call where you can be present and express the importance of them working together as a team. During your regularly scheduled appointments, you can ask your nurse, doctor, or specialist when they last spoke to the others on your team. You can request, at any time, that they follow up with one another so that you won't be the only person attempting to relay important information about your needs or care.

You can also encourage your providers to broaden their understanding of your culture, your identity, your diagnoses,

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*Research also shows that in integrated care systems, patients feel more involved in their own care, more educated about their options, and more confident to voice their questions or concerns.*

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and your needs. While our medical and behavioral health providers receive a lot of specialized training, they are not considered experts in everything. We can't always assume they know our experience, our culture, or our needs if we don't state them and give them an opportunity to learn about them.

Sometimes, especially when you have a lot of different providers, this coordination can be too much for you to do alone. If you have Medicaid, you can call the Managed Care Organization (MCO) for your county to see if they can assign someone to help. One role that may help is called a Community Guide or Community Navigator, but you should ask the MCO if you are eligible for one. If you have private insurance, you can ask your insurance company if someone can be assigned to help – these people are usually called Care Coordinators.

There also may be clinics, agencies, and providers in your area who have adopted an integrated care approach, and you might choose to transfer your care to them. These clinics or agencies typically have Care Navigators or Care Coordinators on staff whose job it is to ensure everyone on your team is communicating and to make sure your various needs are met. Clinics that are integrated tend to have people working there from various backgrounds like medicine, psychology/psychiatry, counseling or social work, and nursing.

Lastly, here at the Autism Society of North Carolina, we are working toward a more integrated approach to the clients and families we work with. We now have a Registered Nurse and Licensed Social Worker on staff to begin to ensure we can support you and your families more wholly. ■

## ASNC Resources

Toolkits: [autismsociety-nc.org/toolkits](https://autismsociety-nc.org/toolkits)

Blog: [autismsociety-nc.org/blog](https://autismsociety-nc.org/blog)

Upcoming workshops:  
[autismsociety-nc.org/workshops](https://autismsociety-nc.org/workshops)

Webinar library:  
[autismsociety-nc.org/webinars](https://autismsociety-nc.org/webinars)

Talk with a specialist: [autismsociety-nc.org/ARS](https://autismsociety-nc.org/ARS)



*Jenna Flynn joined the Autism Society of North Carolina in 2022 as an Integrated Care Professional and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). She previously worked for ASNC as a Direct Support Professional and at the Creative Living day program in Raleigh. She has a Bachelor's in Psychology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and received her MSW from UNC Chapel Hill in 2011. Jenna has previous experience in the NC Managed Care Organization (MCO) system and at the UNC TEACCH Autism Program.*



# Medicaid Transformation: Tailored Plans are Arriving

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*Please note that information in this article was current as of July 2022 and is subject to change. Please visit [autismsociety-nc.org/medicaidtransformation](https://autismsociety-nc.org/medicaidtransformation) for updated information on Transformation and Tailored Plans.*

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is in the process of implementing Medicaid transformation in North Carolina. In this process, most Medicaid recipients will have their health services changed from a fee-for-service model to managed care where physical health, behavioral health, and Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) services will be part of one health plan. Our state's plan is unique in that it includes non-medical elements of health, such as housing, transportation, food security, and other factors that support healthy living.

Under a transformed Medicaid system, there are two types of Medicaid managed care plans, Standard and Tailored. Standard plans started in 2021, while Behavioral Health I/DD Tailored Plans are scheduled to start December 1, 2022. Tailored Plans are for those who are on Innovations waivers or receiving other I/DD services like respite, developmental therapy and others funded through b3 or IPRS, as well as those with serious mental health and substance use disorders. Most people with autism will use Tailored Plans.

## **What is “managed care”? What are “Tailored Plans”? How will things change?**

In a managed care model, a health maintenance organization (HMO) such as an insurance company, a provider-led health organization, or another health management organization like the Local Management Entity (LME)-Managed Care Organization (MCO), is paid a per-member, per-month fixed rate to deliver services to people (members) needing health care and related supports. Because these organizations have a limited amount to spend on care, there is a built-in cost incentive to keep people “well” and out of more expensive care. If you have been getting services from your LME-MCO over the last few years, you already are familiar with one type of managed care that oversees home and community-based services and/or long-term care services.

**Beginning in December, North Carolina is scheduled to integrate LME-MCO managed behavioral and I/DD services with Medicaid physical health into one “Tailored Plan” designed for people with significant health and support needs.** At present, if you get services via your LME-MCO, your physical health care is a separate part of a

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*Beginning in December, North Carolina is scheduled to integrate LME-MCO managed behavioral and I/DD services with Medicaid physical health into one “Tailored Plan” designed for people with significant health and support needs.*

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Medicaid “fee-for-service” program in which providers are paid set fees for specific services directly via the Medicaid program. **After December 1**, your LME-MCO will manage **all** of your Medicaid health and I/DD care including doctor's visits, medication, emergency care, specialty services like physical and occupational therapy, and non-emergency medical transportation, as well long-term I/DD services like Innovations Waiver services, respite, and other supports. Intensive behavioral supports (like Research Based Behavioral Health Treatment [RBBHT], Applied Behavior Analysis [ABA], and other evidence-based autism behavior services) will be available in both the Standard and Tailored Plans.

All six North Carolina LME-MCOs are providing Tailored Plan health care coverage to people who qualify. Your LME-MCO is going to be the Tailored Plan for your Medicaid county of record. You will be auto enrolled in your Tailored Plan (unless you are found to no longer be eligible for Tailored Plan coverage, in which case you will be given other options). Medicare/Medicaid dual eligible people and Family Planning only eligible people will stay in a combination of Medicaid

Direct for physical healthcare services and an LME-MCO/Tailored Plan (for I/DD services).

There is no consumer choice of Tailored Plans: you can opt out of Tailored Plans and go to a Standard Plan; HOWEVER, **you will lose access** to I/DD services such as Innovations or TBI waivers, Tailored Care Management, the new (i) services, and any state or locally funded services (IPRS, single stream funded).

### How will Tailored Plans affect I/DD and autism services?

**After December 1, 2022, Innovations waiver services (formerly CAP MR/IDD waivers) will only be available in Tailored Plans.** People needing intensive I/DD services, such as employment or housing supports, and/or services paid for with funds outside of Medicaid (e. IPRS or state-funded services) must be enrolled in a Tailored Plan to continue receiving them.

**Proposed new services for autism and I/DD will be available through the Tailored Plans.** As part of the Tailored Plan rollout, (b)3 services are scheduled to go away and new (i) services will be available. This is an important change. B3 services were limited and sometimes ran out of funding during the year. Services available under the new (i) program are an entitlement for those who qualify, meaning that there is no waitlist and funding will remain consistent all year.

**After December 1 all Tailored Plan members will have care management** and a choice of care management providers. Care management is different than the care coordination currently offered to some members by the LME-MCO. Care management can help with connecting to community resources, applying for supports, coordinating services and providers, help with issues outside of but related to your health. Members will have a choice in some cases to receive Care Management through the Tailored Plan (for instance, keeping current Care Coordinator from the LME-MCO. Other options will be to choose from state certified

Care Management agencies. For those who do not make a choice, they will be auto enrolled by their plans.

**Tailored plan members will have a choice of primary-care providers (PCP)** in the Tailored Plan. If you or your loved one with autism currently has a PCP that you would like to keep, please check to see if they are enrolled with your Tailored Plan or your Tailored Plan's contracted healthcare network. If they are not enrolled, encourage them to do so.

### New (i) Services in the Medicaid Plan

As mentioned above, North Carolina will offer additional services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as others, under (i) services through the Medicaid program. When Tailored Plans begin operation December 1, 2022, some of the services that LME-MCOs offered under b(3) such as respite, supported employment and community living and support, will be offered under a new Medicaid benefit for adults and children called (i) services. Most b(3) services will have a similar service offered under the (i) services or under the state's 1115 waiver.

Unlike waiver services, these (i) services are an entitlement for people on Medicaid who are eligible, meaning there is no cap on enrollment and people can't be turned away for lack of slots or lack of local funds. There will be no "waiting list" for (i) services like there are for Innovations. The (i) services are targeted at meeting specific needs and may have limits on the number of hours or other limiting criteria. They are not as comprehensive as a full Innovations waiver slot. The (i) services could be used by people who are eligible for Medicaid and are on the Registry of Unmet Needs waiting for a waiver slot as well as by people who do not meet the criteria for an Innovations waiver, but who still need supports and services, if they financially qualify for Medicaid as their insurer.

### What if I am not getting the answers I need? Introducing the Medicaid Ombudsman

As part of Medicaid Transformation, DHHS has launched an Ombudsman program to help provide free and confidential support for those experiencing trouble or to help understand their rights and responsibilities under NC Medicaid. The Ombudsman can help people with questions about their Medicaid benefits, including issues such as enrolling or disenrolling from a plan; having trouble getting access to healthcare under Medicaid; needing information to assist with an appeal, grievance, mediation, or fair hearing; or connecting to resources like social services, housing resources, food assistance, legal aid, and other programs. The call center offers free interpretation in over 150 languages. You can contact the NC Medicaid Ombudsman at 1-877-201-3750 or visit their website for more information at [www.ncmedicaidombudsman.org](http://www.ncmedicaidombudsman.org) ■



# A Teacher's Perspective on Addressing Challenging Behaviors in the Classroom

*by Mary Janca, Autism Self-Advocate & Teacher*



In my experience as a teacher, students who display challenging behaviors in school act from a place of frustration. They may have low self-esteem and be unable to handle any form of redirection or correction. They may struggle with the learning process and blame themselves for failures. They cannot communicate their wants and needs while their peers manage fine. These and other issues are often the cause of undesired behaviors that prevent learning.

Some students will shut down in class, draw instead of work, or leave the classroom. Other behaviors are more disruptive, including verbal or physical noise, aggression, or moving around. These students are teachable and want to learn. They need adults and peers to like them and want to be around them. They desire success in school. Hence, it is imperative that these children get specific attention to help them manage their behaviors and actions. As a teacher, here are some of the tools I have used to reach students exhibiting challenging behaviors.

## Language

Praise, praise, praise. All children need praise. Children who struggle especially need praise. If the school has a system of praises per redirection, have more for autistic/neurodivergent children. Some children show undesired behaviors for the reward of attention. Being unpleasant and difficult guarantees negative reactions, which is a controllable result. This gives a reward to a child who feels no control. Replace that control with expected praise for good behavior,

and no negative reaction for bad behavior. The child will seek out controllable results and will start showing good behavior in exchange for the praise.

Have high expectations, but ensure the student knows you have their back. High expectations are the best kind of respect you can give any child. This tells them that someone knows they are capable and deserve respect. Be positive and determined.

Talk to the child in a language that you would with other children. It helps raise their maturity. Many children have variations in maturity because autism is a developmental delay. It can be easy for an adult to slide into baby speak with a child who has limited language. However, it shows respect to talk to them as you would another child of their age. Only alter language when you discuss topics that are difficult, such as social skills/thinking, and bring in visuals. Simplify language or limit language when the child is feeling stress or is under duress.



## Rewards

Rewards can be given for on-task or desired behavior. The period can be adjusted based on how long the student is productive. Give occasional lengths and/or tasks which can be easily accomplished by the student, so they can know and appreciate success. Their motivation should also increase.

Make the rewards tangible and simple. A stamp or sticker will do, and they can be collected in a book or on a chart to trade in for something bigger. The reward system can be class-based, or schoolwide. Charts and tokens work at all grade levels.

Give rewards, but do not take them away for setbacks. Give fewer rewards when the child is on task. Extend the on-task time as the child can self-manage before giving a reward. The child will learn to feel pride in accomplishing acceptable/desired classroom behavior, because they will see how the adults respond well to them. The result is to help the students grow and raise self-esteem.

## Social-Emotional Regulation Tools

This is a growing field in schools, especially for schools in underserved communities. Students have suffered greatly in their abilities to communicate due to the year(s) of quarantine and remote learning, leading to separation from peers. The students in underserved communities have faced even more struggles with the challenges in the home, such as parents losing work and food insecurity. There are new positions in school districts for educators to teach social skills and social emotional regulation. Students have been returning to the school environment with mixed bags of undesired behaviors, including poor hygiene, inappropriate language, disrespect, and mostly, lack of perspective taking.

Perspective taking is one very essential skill to develop. It starts with having mindfulness of one's own thoughts and actions. Once this is established, the student can then start thinking of others' thoughts and actions. This is a start towards taking perspective. Students with autism have struggled with this, due to being preoccupied with their own anxieties and focused interests. Students who have been remote learners the past two years have been socially stunted and need these skills as well.

Behavior analysts, speech/language pathologists, and teachers use many tools to teach social emotional regulation and perspective taking. One popular tool is the Zones of Regulation. Leah Kuypers, an occupational therapist and autism specialist, developed the program as a response to the challenges that students with autism were facing in school settings. In addition, the Zones were effective with students dealing with trauma. Any issue that affected communication needed a simple means of expressing feeling. The program takes the complexity of emotions and simplifies it to color

coding. The simplicity of a color or code helps especially when the child is stressed or distracted.

Different colors are associated with moods and emotions which are desirable or not desirable to the learning environment. Students learn that emotions which help with learning fall into a "green zone." Other colors are associated with distractable emotions, such as tiredness or excitement. The "red zone" is for the emotions that cause a child to lose control (such as rage or high anxiety). When students are reminded to get back into the "green zone," the color association can snap them to attention because of the visual mnemonic.

The Zones can be taught in a variety of ways. I have made miniature color-coded and laminated cards that go on desks. Students review their zone and mark it at the end of the day. Any students who had a meltdown must mark the red zone; however, they are allowed some leeway until they are able to take responsibility in their actions, and they find pride in doing better. I have seen students start to crumble when put on the spot to report themselves, and I back off. Then they begin to come out of their shells and take initiative towards their own behaviors. That is a very cool thing to see.

## Looking Outward

Eventually, students will not be reward driven. They will find satisfaction in making progress for the sake of personal growth. They may share their growth with an adult or even with peers if their class has evolved into a supportive environment. I have seen this. As students grow, their next level is reaching outwards and helping other students grow. A fun way to get students to recognize others is to give them opportunities to praise their peers as they were praised. In my classroom, I have offered the opportunity for students to write notes to classmates, practice giving compliments during social times, or "grade" others' works with adult supervision. It helps the students to pay attention to each other, and relationships will start to build. With adult supervision as needed, students begin to master their own social and emotional regulation and gain those vital connections with peers. ■



*Mary Janca is a teacher and coach for students of all learning differences. She has been teaching for twenty years, has a Master's Degree in Teaching, Behavioral/Emotional Disorders, and is certified in multiple subjects from first grade to high school. She coaches youth and adults with life skills and academics. She is currently working on a client base to serve students in Greensboro and Raleigh. Mary has Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD. She has faced many struggles in life due to these differences, but is proud of her desire to get back up, learn, and keep going. She loves to help others succeed with whatever challenge they are facing.*

# A Community of Clubs in Greenville

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Autism Society of North Carolina adopted protocols to ensure that services could be delivered in a safe manner. In Greenville, the staff also worked to find ways to encourage social interaction and build community while keeping clients and staff safe. With many community offerings still closed to the public last year, Greenville staff started several clubs, offering weekly programming to clients and staff.

“The clubs started because of COVID, but they’ve turned into something really beneficial for those we serve and our staff,” says Mackinsay Glover, Autism Services Coordinator in the Greenville office.

On Mondays, clients and staff gather for Art Club, led by Raymond Henderson, Autism Services Coordinator, in his local art studio. “We do a different activity each meeting, and it’s a great chance to build some skills, like using scissors or following multi-step directions,” he says. “But I don’t want people to feel like they’re coming just to learn. I want it to be as fun as possible. My goal for this club is that people are excited to come.” Artwork created at this club is often exhibited in the Greenville office for clients and caregivers to see when they visit.

After Art Club, it’s time to dance! Each week, a client or a direct support professional is tasked with leading a dance for the rest of the group. So far, line dancing, the YMCA, and the Cupid Shuffle have been favorites.

“There is no standing against the wall during Dance Club,” says Henderson. “It motivates the client to see the staff participation. It gives everyone permission to have fun.”

On Wednesdays, Glover leads the Health and Wellness Club. The group started by completing walking challenges in local parks; during the hot months of summer, participants have used the Social Recreation space in Winterville to do fitness stations and play games. Health and Wellness participants also enjoyed preparing for and participating in the Eastern Run/Walk for Autism together in April.

As participation in clubs grew, staff and clients realized they could start their own clubs. One direct support professional runs a Hero Club, where participants work on conversation skills by discussing superheroes. Others are getting together for a regular Bowling Club. In the future, the staff hopes to

start a mindfulness and meditation group, a boot camp for participants interested in that form of work out, and a cultural club to learn about different people and their traditions. They’re also hoping to find space for a cooking club.

“The clubs have been amazing for team-building in our area,” says Regional Services Director Holly Akin. “The supervisors and staff have been extremely collaborative in developing these clubs, and now we’re working with other programs in the area, including Social Recreation and Transition.”

In addition to providing clients with social connection and natural supports, the clubs have been beneficial to direct support professionals. Not only do the clubs provide ways to network with other local direct support professionals and participate in fun activities with supervisors, they provide opportunities to learn new skills. “The staff see strategies they can use with their own client,” Glover says. “They see how another staff member uses redirection or modeling or priming. It’s a safe space to learn and observe.”

While the clubs have built community for clients and staff, they are also a gateway to the larger Greenville community. “The clubs have allowed us to be much more visible in the community,” says Akin. “Now the community is reaching out to participate with us. Local artists have come to Art Club. People have seen us walking and asked to walk with us. The clubs are expanding people’s views of autism.” ■





# A Day in the Life of a DSP

The Autism Society of North Carolina employs hundreds of direct support professionals (DSPs). Every day, DSPs work one-on-one with individuals with autism, supporting them in reaching their goals. Since everyone's goals are different, there is no "typical day" for a DSP – but that's the way many DSPs like it.

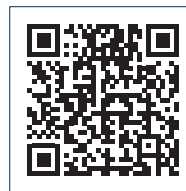
"A typical week for me is definitely busy, but it's a lot of different things. It's volunteering, it's going to the work setting, it's being in the home setting. It's building different types of skills in different settings," says Kaitlin Warren, who has worked as a DSP for three years in the Greenville area. "One of my favorite parts about the job is that every day isn't the same."

Warren began working for the Autism Society of North Carolina when she was a sophomore in college because she was offered the flexibility to create a schedule that accommodated her classes and coursework. She did not have any experience with autism when she started, but credits training, shadowing opportunities, and ongoing supervisor support to helping her feel comfortable working with her clients.

For three years, she worked with a young adult whose goals were related to increasing independence. Warren has helped her client learn how to meal plan, grocery shop, and prepare healthy meals. They walk or jog in local parks. They work to increase job readiness by volunteering in the community. In recent months, Warren began working with a second young adult on health and wellness goals and social goals, supporting him with social interaction during community activities and providing structured exercise activities.

"It's exciting to see a client achieve their goal," Warren says. "Just seeing them take that first step independently...it does make you feel like you're making a difference."

Warren's next step is obtaining a master's degree in occupational therapy. "This job has played a key role in being able to reach that goal," she says. "I've grown a lot in my communication, patience, empathy, understanding, and knowing how to help individuals in a way that's positive."



To see a day in the life with Kaitlin Warren, please scan the QR code. ■

## Recognize Your ASNC Direct Support Professional

Join us in celebrating all support staff during Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, September 11-17.

Do you have an ASNC direct support professional who regularly goes above and beyond? Have they had a significant impact on you, your loved one, your family, and the community?

Recognize their excellence by nominating them for the John and Claudia Roman Direct Service Award. This award honors an Autism Society of North Carolina direct support

professional who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to individuals with autism and their families.

**Please complete the nomination form at [autismsociety-nc.org/RomanAward](https://autismsociety-nc.org/RomanAward) by September 2.**

The John and Claudia Roman Direct Service Award was endowed by Lori and Gregg Ireland to honor Christine Roman, the direct support professional who worked with their son, Vinnie. It was named for her parents, John and Claudia Roman.



# New Program Provides Career Support to State Employees

In April, Governor Roy Cooper announced a pilot program to provide career coaching to state employees with autism who need support in applying for promotions or job changes within the government.

The Career Advancement Resources for Employees on the Spectrum (CARES) initiative will provide eligible employees with up to five hours of career coaching from the Autism Society of North Carolina and the UNC TEACCH Autism Program.

“North Carolina’s workforce is made stronger by its diversity, and our talented employees on the autism spectrum offer valuable skills and perspectives,” Governor Cooper said. “This innovative program will help us support and retain these employees and better serve our state.”

CARES career counselors through ASNC/TEACCH will work with state employees in individualized sessions to hone management and interpersonal skills, establish new and obtainable career goals, discover solutions to current employment obstacles, develop an employment action plan, provide support to make any changes needed, create a more equitable culture, advocate for the resources needed to succeed, and empower the individual to work with current management and future teams and facilitate change and understanding.

## LiNC-IT

CARES grew from Linking North Carolina with Innovative Talent (LiNC-IT), a unique collaborative partnership between government, non-profits (including ASNC), and employers, created to address the significant unemployment rate for young adults with autism who have some level of post-secondary training/college.

LiNC-IT uses an “internship-to-hire” model. LiNC-IT interns are paid a competitive wage during a 12-week internship. During the internship, the intern is supported by agencies including ASNC. 97% of interns who have used the LiNC-IT program have turned that opportunity into full time employment with the companies. In the rare case that internship does not turn into permanent employment, the candidate still has gained experience in the field to add to the resume.

In addition to placing interns directly into full-time positions at a variety of companies, LiNC-IT has been effective in



creating changes in the recruiting process so that individuals with autism can succeed.

## A LiNC-IT Success Story

Governor Cooper held an event to celebrate the announcement of CARES. At the event, Becca Alley, who serves on our self-advocate advisory board, shared her experience with LiNC-IT. Here is her speech:

*I am a Program Management Officer at Credit Suisse. Most autism employment news articles begin with the statistic that over 80% of autistic individuals are unemployed or under-employed. This is true, but it's also not the point.*

*80% of us are not unemployed or under-employed because of lack of qualifications, but rather through intrinsic biases in interview processes. When the going gets tough in corporations, the first programs to stall are charitable ones. Autism employment is not a charity initiative, it's smart business. At Credit Suisse, I've worked with my management team to explore solutions that are impactful to our business.*

*My move to Credit Suisse was a change in career for me, and I am pleased to have found success in this new endeavor.*

*But, simultaneously, we shouldn't have to justify our employment and societal worth by bringing so-called "super powers" to the table because of a diagnosis. Our employment worth should hinge on our professional qualifications. Our societal worth should hinge on simply being living beings.* ■

# Building Independence & Achieving Goals

There's always something happening at IGNITE! With locations in Davidson, Raleigh, and Greensboro, IGNITE is a place where members come together to share ideas, learn practical skills, build friendships, and feel comfortable being themselves.

Here are some highlights from the past few months:

## Career Growth

At every location, members are experiencing incredible growth in their careers! Thanks to groups like Career Exploration and partnerships with Employment Support, members are obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment. In the past months, members have started jobs in a variety of fields, from data entry to retail to governmental services. One member used skills learned in IGNITE cooking classes to find a job at a local bakery, while another member used self-advocacy skills learned in a personal development class to request a promotion from part-time status to full-time employment. Members in Raleigh had the chance to explore career interests with weekly volunteer opportunities with area non-profits, including Miracle League, Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Cary Art Center, and Corral Riding Academy.

## Social Activities

Meaningful relationships continue to develop at IGNITE, with several opportunities in recent months to connect with members across the state. Camp Royall hosted a weekend retreat for all three locations, and IGNITE partnered with TEACCH for a pizza and game night that members from all locations attended. Members research and plan community outings; in Greensboro, for example, recent outings have included a Greensboro Grasshoppers baseball game, a visit to the Greensboro Revolutionary Military Park, and an Earth Day celebration. In Davidson, staff from MSC Industrial Supply Co. have planned and joined in on events such as kickball and trivia at a local bowling alley. Parents of members have had the chance to network as well in new parents' groups. And many members are keeping the fun going outside of IGNITE, planning additional meals, parties, and outings to deepen the friendships that started at IGNITE.

## Personal Independence

Members continue to meet personal goals, from obtaining driver's licenses to moving into apartments. IGNITE offers a variety of groups and classes to make these goals attainable, including cooking classes that result in members sharing new recipes with friends and family. One member's personal goal included walking 10,000 steps a day, which was often completed with the use of IGNITE's treadmill, while another member set a goal of completing laundry independently for the first time, which was achieved! At the Davidson location, a volunteer tax preparer visited to teach members about tax forms, completing paperwork, and maintaining financial records. Another member is working on self-confidence and is using skills learned at IGNITE to join more community activities.



## Learn more about IGNITE

Learn more about joining IGNITE on our website: [autismsociety-nc.org/IGNITE](http://autismsociety-nc.org/IGNITE). Members must be at least 18 years old, have graduated from high school with their diploma, and be their own guardian. In Greensboro, we also offer SPARK, for young adults aged 18-30 with beginning independence skills. Those candidates must not have issues with aggression and must be independent with all personal hygiene. ■



# A Place for Teens to Connect

Camp Royall is a special place for campers of all ages, from 4 to 104! In recent years our programming for teenagers has grown, and we're excited that Camp Royall can be a place for young people to connect and prepare for adulthood.

In 2016, we started Teen Tuesday, a monthly group for teens to share dinner and work on life skills together. Three years later, we started Teen Retreats, a weekend-long camp experience held eight times per year. At the retreats, participants enjoy typical camp activities, but they're also asked for their opinions on activity options so that the plan for the weekend reflects the interests and choices of the group. Both of these programs are geared toward teens who have low support needs in self-care and communication, and new participants are screened by camp staff to ensure they are a good fit for the groups.

For Sadie Watterson, who has attended several Teen Retreats over the years, the programs are a great way to find friends with common interests. "I love meeting people from all over the state," she says. "I've made really good friends that I talk to on a daily basis. I've gotten to travel to see some of my friends, and we've attended anime conventions together."

Matthew Howard, who has attended both Teen Tuesday and Teen Retreats, concurs: "I get to be with my friends and we

have fun together. I sometimes show them the games I am playing, and we talk about things like our favorite gaming systems."

"Camp Royall is the one time he really gets to socialize with peers on the spectrum," says Karen Howard, Matthew's parent. "I think that helps his patience and empathy, and we have really enjoyed watching that develop. Being part of the community has helped Matthew mature and develop his independence skills."

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*I like the fact that I can relax and get away, but I also get pushed a little bit out of my comfort zone with new activities.*

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Marleny Quinones, parent of participant Aaron Crenshaw, praises the programs for improving social skills. "As a person with high-functioning autism, his social needs were often missed," she says. "I think the Camp Royall leaders have done a magnificent job at providing programs

that meet those needs that often fall in the cracks. At Camp Royall, he feels like he is part of a community of peers who relate to his struggles as someone with autism."

Aaron's favorite activities at Camp include playing soccer with





friends and arts & crafts. Matthew enjoys hayrides, going in the pool, and visits from horses. Sadie also enjoys the pool, the sensory room, arts & crafts, and horses.

"I like the fact that I can relax and get away, but I also get pushed a little bit out of my comfort zone with new activities," says Sadie, citing her experience with the zap line as an example of trying something new.

All of the participants encourage other teens to check out Camp Royall's teen offerings.

"They should come," says Matthew. "They will have fun, meet new people, and get to do lots of activities that you cannot do at home, like sleep in a cabin and make s'mores."

"Every teen at Teen Tuesday is cool, smart, and handsome," says Aaron. "We are fun and we are cool. Join us!"

To learn more about Camp Royall's year-round offerings, please visit our website: [www.camproyall.org](http://www.camproyall.org).

### Registration for 2023 Programs

Online registration for the Camp Royall Summer Camp lottery will run from November 1 to January 15. This schedule allows us to notify you about placement and scholarship awards in early February. We hope this will help you make your summer plans!

Registration for all other 2023 programs will also open on November 1, but that registration closes on December 15, so that families can be notified in early January. After the registration period, you can apply for waitlists.

As always, we are honored to provide a caring, accepting place for campers on the autism spectrum. Please contact Camp Royall staff if you have any questions at 919-542-1033 or [camproyall@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:camproyall@autismsociety-nc.org). You can also learn more on our website, [www.camproyall.org](http://www.camproyall.org).



**Supplies:** Camp Royall always needs supplies to keep camp operating smoothly. If you are interested in giving supplies to Camp Royall, we have an Amazon wish list: [bit.ly/CampRoyallWishlist](https://bit.ly/CampRoyallWishlist)

**Spread the Word about Working at Camp:** We are looking for hard working, passionate people who are looking to provide service. Working at Camp Royall is a life-changing experience filled with fun, friendships, and an amazing feeling of accomplishment. We provide training and support to our staff so they are prepared to work with individuals with autism. If you or someone you know is interested in working at Camp Royall, please direct them to our website, [www.camproyall.org](http://www.camproyall.org), to learn more. Full job descriptions are available at [www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers).

**Help Send Kids to Camp:** We work year-round to raise money to give campers who are unable to afford camp the opportunity to learn new skills, have fun, and make friends. Each year, the demand for scholarships exceeds the funds we have available. We hope you will consider giving to provide life-improving experiences for campers with autism. Please contact Kristy White, Chief Development Officer, at [kwhite@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:kwhite@autismsociety-nc.org) or 919-865-5086 if you are interested in donating to camp, learning about named scholarships, or helping with fundraising. ■



## We've Moved!

*Please note the NEW addresses for our Greensboro & Fayetteville offices:*

**Greensboro:**  
5 Centerview Drive, #150  
(Lenoir Building)  
Greensboro, NC 27407  
336-333-0197

**Fayetteville:**  
1047 Murchison Road, Suite 132  
Fayetteville, NC 28301  
910-864-2769

# Making Friends & Enjoying Adventures

Social Recreation in Eastern NC serves individuals residing in the Trillium Health Resources service area through summer day camps, afterschool, and adult programs. Programs are located in Newport, Wilmington, and Winterville, and interest forms are accepted year-round. Program activities are designed to increase social relationships, communication, physical wellness, and independence, all while having fun! As one participant recently said, “I love having a place that helps me make friends!”



Enjoy some recent highlights from each location:

## Newport

The Second Annual Newport Olympics were a great success! Teams participated in games and events to win prizes, and everyone felt a great sense of accomplishment racing through the toilet paper finish line. The prizes were messier than any Olympic medal – winners had a chance to smash water balloons, dump water buckets, and throw shaving cream pies at Program Director Kelly Majewski.

During summer camp, participants explored their community with trips to local splash pads and free movies. They were also dazzled by a magician who visited the program, and they got up close and personal with sea creatures brought by a staff member from the local aquarium!

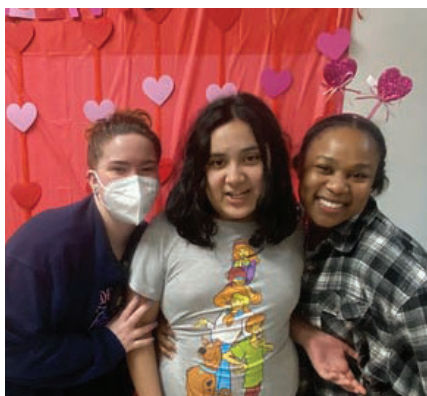


## Wilmington

Wilmington participants also had a chance to meet coastal creatures with a trip to the Fort Fisher Aquarium! “My favorite part about the aquarium was being able to touch the horseshoe crabs!” said one participant. Other field trips included the children’s museum, the science museum, and repeat visits to favorite pools and splash pads. When not exploring, the participants enjoyed dance classes, making homemade s’mores, and playing with sensory bottles at the center. Wilmington also hosted some very special visitors: in the spring, paws4people brought by some of the rescue dogs who are in training to be Assistance Dogs to play, and in the summer, a fire truck visited so that the campers could see it up close!

## Winterville

Winterville participants loved celebrating spring holidays! On Valentine’s Day, the center hosted a party for participants so they could play games, watch movies, and hand out valentines, while parents and caregivers were able to enjoy a date night. For St. Patrick’s Day, participants made shamrock cookies and enjoyed leprechaun ice cream floats. Easter brought an egg hunt at a local park!



During summer camp, participants had a busy schedule, with trips to the pool, splash pad, reptile museum, and the North Carolina Estuarium. They tried slushies at Pelican’s SnoBalls and met local therapy dog Deputy Drifter. At the center, they tried yoga, played gym games, and dressed up as favorite cartoon characters. “My favorite thing about summer camp is making friends, going to the pool, and playing games!” said one camper. ■

# Achieve a Better Life Experience with NC ABLE

*NC ABLE savings accounts have transformed the opportunities available for people with disabilities and their families.*

*by North Carolina Treasurer, Dale R. Folwell, CPA*



The NC ABLE Program allows individuals with the occurrence of a disability prior to the age of 26 and their families to contribute to tax-advantaged savings accounts without impacting eligibility for important public supports like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid.

## A path to financial freedom

For many eligible participants, there has long been a ‘spend down’ mentality. Saving money presents the risk of losing crucial public benefits for health care, food, housing and other supports. NC ABLE allows eligible individuals to save up to \$16,000 per year, with the first \$100,000 exempt from the poverty-level resource limits for SSI. Funds in an NC ABLE account will not impact eligibility for Medicaid, or eligibility to receive aid from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Simply put, NC ABLE accounts create a path to financial freedom.

## A better life experience

Not only does NC ABLE break financial barriers, but it also transforms the way eligible individuals and their families participate in their communities and plan for the future.

NC ABLE accounts grow tax free and can be used to fund essential services and qualified disability expenses (QDEs), helping to improve one’s quality of life. Things like speech-generating devices, special education programs, hearing and vision aids, laptops, smart home technology, vocational training, and even cell phones may be considered QDEs. These are just some of the many examples of QDEs that are crucial to maintaining independence and can help account holders achieve a better life experience.

## Disability employment awareness

I have met individuals across the state with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are a part of the work force and contribute to their local and state economies. NC ABLE provides a tool for workers as they experience the joy of achievement and upward mobility that every North

Carolinian deserves. Through the ABLE-to-work provision, an NC ABLE account holder can have their pay submitted into their account by direct deposit and they have a greater annual allowance for account contributions.

Though Disability Employment Awareness Month is celebrated each October, disability employment needs to be an ongoing conversation. Many organizations provide employment support, including the Autism Society of North Carolina and the Arc of North Carolina. And NC ABLE allows account holders to work towards transition, assume responsibilities, and discover a path to independence.

## The POWER of Five

Over the past five years, the average NC ABLE account balance has grown to over \$9,500 with the overall program accumulating assets of more than \$16.2 million. This has been done through grassroots efforts and partnerships with organizations like the Autism Society of North Carolina, the Arc of North Carolina, and the Special Olympics North Carolina. While this growth is commendable, we can do more. There are many families and eligible individuals who would benefit from the NC ABLE Program.

Awareness is critical to help reach these people, so I challenge you to tell just five people about NC ABLE. This is what NC ABLE’s 5th year anniversary of account availability and the POWER of FIVE is all about — telling five people about NC ABLE and then they will tell five other people — and we can start a chain to reach the eligible population in North Carolina and beyond.



Learn more about the benefits of NC ABLE and how to open an account at [NCABLE.org](https://NCABLE.org). ■



# Serious about Family Fun

Families across North Carolina wanted to get back to connecting with their communities this spring, and ASNC Chapters responded. After two years of mostly online meetings, the county-based support groups got serious about providing family fun.

We are excited about new Chapters forming and dormant Chapters reactivating in the following counties: Catawba, Burke, Mecklenburg, Union, Davidson, Rockingham, Moore, Pender, Brunswick, Duplin, Jones, Craven, Halifax, Nash, Hyde, Dare, Currituck, Pasquotank, and Camden.

ASNC Chapters are open to all – there are no membership applications, no fees, no attendance requirements. They offer a place where autistic children and adults and their families are accepted just as they are. Their mission is to provide family-to-family support, education, and autism awareness in their communities. We invite you to learn more about your local Chapter and get involved as a participant or volunteer!

Read on for some of the highlights from the past few months:

**The Craven County Chapter** has stayed busy with social events and meetings. In May, the Chapter rented out a local gaming venue for the evening so families could enjoy the arcade, bouncy houses, play areas, zip line, and basketball courts. Chapter families also volunteered with and participated in ASNC's Crystal Coast Run/Walk for Autism on a beautiful May morning in Beaufort!

**The Sampson County Chapter** invited families from that county and the adjacent Johnston County Chapter to family bowling every Monday this summer. They alternated between two bowling alleys in central towns.

**The Surry County Chapter** brought families out to The Farm in Dobson in early June, where the children particularly enjoyed the playground, inflatables, and farm animals. The Chapter also offered a sensory-friendly egg hunt this spring.

**The Davie/Forsyth, Rowan, Pitt, and Wayne County Chapters** have continued to provide much-needed support to families through caregiver chats, discussing topics such as travel, navigating services, and school concerns.

**The Harnett County Chapter** had an Egg-ceptional Family Fun Day at Barbecue Creek Park in Lillington with close to 30 in attendance. The children did a great job hunting down a field full of almost 400 eggs and then wound down with egg-decorating. In June, the Chapter also took families on a bowling outing.

**The Wake County Chapter** held its first social event in two years in April with a turnout of more than 100 people. Families



Photos: Sampson Chapter bowling outing (left); Richmond Chapter egg hunt (right).

signed up for a sensory- and allergy-friendly egg hunt at The Feathered Farm in Zebulon. After hunting eggs, families could spend time petting an assortment of animals, playing on the playground, and jumping on a trampoline. Chapter families have also been enjoying monthly playdates at various parks this summer and in-person support meetings.

Several other Chapters have taken to regularly meeting at local parks so that parents and caregivers can chat with each other while children benefit from social time with their peers. These include **Franklin, Person, and McDowell**. Person County Chapter families also enjoyed some craft time at their February meeting, making their own sensory bins out of fillers such as dried beans and rice. They then added a variety of items for searching such as mini LEGOs and plastic coins.

**The Granville/Vance Chapter** has been busy with making community connections, bringing in donations to their chapter, and hosting family activities, including an egg hunt and an outing at the local spray park.

**Orange/Chatham Chapter** families had a wonderful time at a social care farm in Mebane called Seawind Farm this spring. Activities included walking in the woods, birdwatching, and a scavenger hunt. A parent on the Chapter leadership team shared: “One participant used his ACC to say ‘turkey.’ Another became overwhelmed and sat under a tree in total contentment, smiling and rocking back and forth. All participants loved the trampoline, feeding the sweet horse, trails, and planting their own sunflower – from a station manned by the farm owner’s autistic son!” The Chapter also booked eight lanes of a local bowling alley and brought families out for a fun Saturday outing in February.

**The Haywood County Chapter** invited families to visit with real, live bunnies in April. Children and adults alike enjoyed petting and holding the rabbits, along with doing some crafts. The Chapter also offered a unique event in February: Adopt a Stuffedie. Attendees chose new friends from some donated stuffed animals and then decorated carriers, dressed their animals, and received adoption certificates.

**The Iredell County Chapter** welcomed Highland Canine Training to its March meeting so members could learn about and meet an autism service dog.

**The Richmond County Chapter** invited families to Krystal Dawn Retreat in April to enjoy an egg hunt, paddle boats, petting goats and mini-donkeys, decorating eggs, yard games, a photo area, and of course, yummy refreshments.

**The New Hanover County Chapter** held a family meet and greet picnic at a Wilmington park in April. The event featured refreshments, games, and lots of smiles. In June, the Chapter offered a lunch gathering to help caregivers connect with each other for support.

**The Wilson County Chapter** invited a special guest for their event at a park in April: a sensory-friendly Easter Bunny. Chapter families took pictures, made new friends, and enjoyed the park, hula hoops, and bubbles.

**The Crystal Coast Chapter** took a tour of the Morehead City Fire Department in March. The tour included a brief history of the department, and members had a chance to see all of the equipment, hold the fire hose, and meet a firefighter dressed in full gear up close. They had lots of fun even as they learned important safety information. ■

*If you would like to join a local Chapter, find one near you at [autismsociety-nc.org/chapters](https://autismsociety-nc.org/chapters) or contact Marty Kellogg, State Chapters Coordinator, at [mkellogg@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:mkellogg@autismsociety-nc.org).*



*Photos from top to bottom: Haywood Chapter bunny visit; Craven Chapter at Crystal Coast Run/Walk for Autism; Wake Chapter farm outing; Wilson Chapter Easter Bunny visit; Surry Chapter farm outing.*



# Recursos y Eventos para las Familias Hispanas

El Departamento de Asuntos Hispanos del Autism Society of NC (ASNC) ofrece servicios para familias por medio de llamadas, correos electrónicos, Seminarios Web, Reuniones de Grupos de Apoyo Hispano y eventos con Facebook, WhatsApp y otros medios. Contáctenos en español, llamando a Mariela Maldonado, Enlace de Asuntos Hispanos al 800-442-2762 extensión 1, ó a [mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org).

## Recursos en español en el sitio web de ASNC

Los invitamos a conocer nuestro Sitio Web en español, [www.autismsociety-nc.org/recursos](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/recursos) que ofrece información en las siguientes categorías:

- ¿Qué es el Autismo?
- Servicios Clínicos
- Herramientas de Trabajo
- Entrenamientos
- Artículos de la Revista Spectrum
- Programas de ASNC
- Grupos de Apoyo Hispano
- Videos y Narrativas Sociales
- Pandemia del Coronavirus - COVID-19

Además, cualquiera de las páginas del sitio web de ASNC se puede traducir al español haciendo "clic" en el icono del globo en la esquina superior derecha y seleccionando "Spanish/Español" en el menú.

## Reuniones de los Grupos de Apoyo Hispano

Las reuniones virtuales se realizan el 1er y 3er martes de cada mes a las 7 p. m. mientras que las presenciales se dedican a eventos y celebraciones culturales.

### Wake, Johnston, Pitt, Nash y el área del NE

Guadalupe Ortega 919-247-5760

Hilda Munguia 919-946-5080

Marta Espino 252-341-6795

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Beatriz Solano 919-525-7682

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Laura Torres 704-430-0281

Clara Amarante 347-217-5661

### Cumberland, Robeson, New Hannover y área del SE

Alma Morales 910-785-5473

Azucena Montiel 910-274-7632





## Seminarios web en español

Ofrecemos Seminarios Web cada mes a las 7 p. m. En los últimos meses se ofrecieron estas presentaciones; “Entrenamiento para Usar el Baño sin Lágrimas” con Servicios Clínicos; “Discapacidad y Sexualidad” y “Organización de Documentación Escolar y Medica” con ECAC; “iPad y Autismo” con Amy Perry, ARS de ASNC; “Cómo ayudar a mi hijo con Autismo” y “Servicios en la Comunidad” con el Departamento de Asuntos Hispánicos de ASNC.

## Próximos seminarios web

- **22 de septiembre:** “Transición a la adultez” con Millie Ramos, Educadora de Padres de ECAC.
- **13 de octubre:** “Acoso: Qué pueden hacer los padres” con Vickie Dieter, ARS de ASNC.
- **10 de noviembre:** “Como Ayudar a mi hijo con Autismo”
- **8 de diciembre:** “Estrategias para el Comportamiento Difícil”

Para información de otras presentaciones, visite:  
[www.autismsociety-nc.org/workshops](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/workshops).

## Run/Walk for Autism

Participe y cree un equipo con su familia y amigos para la Carrera/Caminata por el Autismo. Estos eventos, en todo el estado, apoyan la misión de ASNC y educan sobre el Autismo. La inscripción es únicamente en línea. Todos los fondos colectados sirven para apoyar los programas locales de ASNC. Visite el Sitio web para inscribirse y recaudar donaciones

**10 de septiembre - Asheville**  
WNC Run/Walk for Autism  
Bill Moore Community Park, Fletcher  
[wncrunwalkforautism.com](http://wncrunwalkforautism.com)

**24 de septiembre - Greensboro**  
Triad Run/Walk for Autism  
Jaycee Park, Greensboro  
[triadrunwalkforautism.com](http://triadrunwalkforautism.com)

**8 de octubre - Raleigh**  
Triangle Run/Walk for Autism  
Halifax Mall, Raleigh  
[trianglerunwalkforautism.com](http://trianglerunwalkforautism.com)



## Shop & Dine 4 Autism

Ha sido exitosa la participación de los padres en la campaña de recaudación de fondos, “Shop & Dine 4 Autism” el 26 de abril. Las familias disfrutaron de maravillosas comidas y servicios. Estamos muy agradecidos con los negocios y restaurantes que participaron: Lucky Chicken en Cary, Castillo Restaurant en Raleigh, Café Esmeralda en Durham, Fiorentina Café en Selma, La Fiesta Grande en Charlotte, Uscanga Auto en Raleigh, y Pampered Chef. ¡Los Esperamos el próximo año!

[www.autismsociety-nc.org/recursos](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/recursos)

Visite esta página web en español para encontrar videos, narrativas sociales, artículos de interés, y videos.



## Diez Consejos Practicos para Enseñar a Usar el Baño

Este entrenamiento puede ser difícil para muchos cuidadores y profesionales, pero nunca debe convertirse en algo estresante o molesto para su hijo. Para algunos niños con autismo, el proceso va a ser bastante rápido, pero para otros es un proceso que puede incluir muchas pausas e intentos.

Estos son algunos consejos:

- Busque señales que indiquen que el niño puede estar preparado para ir al baño.
- Asocie el baño con actividades y objetos divertidos.
- Identifique una recompensa.
- Comprométase a fijar un horario para el entrenamiento y tome nota de los datos.
- Cumpla con el horario para sentarse en el baño.
- ¡Celebre el éxito!

## Donaciones para el Departamento de Asuntos Hispánicos

El Departamento de Asuntos Hispánicos agradece su apoyo con sus donaciones que sirven para educar y promover oportunidades para las familias hispanas en todo el estado, como las becas para la Conferencia Anual y Servicios de traducción. Si usted desea ser patrocinador, comuníquese con Mariela Maldonado. ■



# Fundraisers & Events

## Spring Run/Walks for Autism a Great Success!

A big thank you to all the participants, volunteers, and sponsors who made the Spring Run/Walks for Autism a great success! More than 1,700 people stepped out to improve lives at the Run/Walk events in Beaufort, Greenville, and Wilmington, and together, they raised more than \$90,000 to support local programs of the Autism Society of North Carolina. To see photos, please visit our Flickr page: [flickr.com/photos/autismsocietync/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/autismsocietync/)

## Join us for the Fall Run/Walks – In-Person or Virtually!

Make plans to join us for a Fall Run/Walk for Autism! These events improve the lives of children and adults with autism while providing an amazing feeling of community. For each event, we're offering the opportunity to participate virtually, which is a great option for friends and family across the country who want to be part of your team and help fundraise. Proceeds will support local programs of the Autism Society of North Carolina. Registration is online only: [RunWalkforAutism.com](https://RunWalkforAutism.com)

**WNC Run/Walk for Autism**  
**September 10**  
**Bill Moore Community Park,**  
**Fletcher**  
[wncrunwalkforautism.com](https://wncrunwalkforautism.com)

**Triad Run/Walk for Autism**  
**September 24**  
**Jaycee Park, Greensboro**  
[triadrunwalkforautism.com](https://triadrunwalkforautism.com)

**Triangle Run/Walk for Autism**  
**October 8**  
**Halifax Mall, Raleigh**  
[trianglerunwalkforautism.com](https://trianglerunwalkforautism.com)



## Spring Event Sponsors

We thank the following sponsors of our spring events; these events would not be possible without them. Please support these businesses and thank them for helping to improve the lives of individuals with autism and their loved ones.

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## Camp Royall Classic Golf Tournament

On May 2, golfers came out for the Camp Royall Classic at Governors Club in Chapel Hill. The teams enjoyed a beautiful day on the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course and raised more than \$32,000 to send children and adults to Camp Royall.

Our thanks to local McDonald's franchise owners Paul, Pat, Rex, and Kelli Willoughby as well as Jeff Woodlief and Premiere Communications and Consulting for their continued support of Camp Royall.



## Catwalk to Camp

This year's Catwalk to Camp on April 8 in Raleigh was an incredible night of talent, stories, and generosity. Keynote speaker Daniel Wendler, PsyD, shared his story of struggling to find friends as a child, before he received his diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome. While he felt extremely lonely as a child, he came to realize that everyone – regardless of whether they are on the spectrum or not – desires connection and belonging, and what is often considered an autistic experience is actually a human experience. He challenged the audience to reach out to others and to help them feel a sense of belonging.



For so many, Camp Royall is that place of belonging, and guests had the opportunity to enjoy a favorite camp tradition – the talent show! Before the live auction, Ron Howrigan pledged to auction his prized, one-of-a-kind car if more than \$200,000 was raised, and attendees met the challenge! More than \$300,000 was raised for scholarships to Camp Royall, ensuring an amazing summer of friendships and connections for campers.

## Wilmington Gala

On May 12, the Autism Society of North Carolina hosted its first gala in Wilmington. Hosted by Jon Evans of WECT News, the evening featured speaker Carr Bender, entertainment by musician Patrick Davis, and a live auction.

In his speech, Carr Bender shared how support from his family and early intervention helped him succeed in school. Bender, who holds a bachelor's degree in computer animation with a certification in film and video from Full Sail University, explained how autism has allowed him to see things that others can't, and that the strengths that can come from having autism provide many opportunities to change the world.

The event raised more than \$100,000 to support the Autism Society of North Carolina's Wilmington programs.



## Camp Royall Donors

Camp Royall is the largest and oldest camp exclusively for individuals with autism in the United States. Please contact Kristy White, Chief Development Officer, at 919-856-5086 or [kwhite@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:kwhite@autismsociety-nc.org) if you are interested in donating to camp.

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Estate of Mary V. Balliet  
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Teresa and John Sears  
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# Thank You!

The Autism Society of North Carolina would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all of our donors. While we appreciate every gift, we have limited the donation list to Honorarium/Memorial gifts in the interest of space and printing costs. Thank you for your tremendous support.

This list reflects donations received on or between January 1, 2022 and June 30, 2022. Please contact Beverly Gill if you have any questions or corrections at 800-442-2762, ext. 1105 or bgill@autismsociety-nc.org.

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## Donor Spotlight: Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament

We want to express our thanks to the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament for a generous 2021 grant to the Autism Society of North Carolina, which supports our Social Recreation program in Newport. This afterschool and summer programming includes time for dance classes, music, outdoor activities, arts and crafts, and more. With Big Rock's help, we've continued to serve over 30 children a month in Newport. For their generous support, Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament was recognized as a Gold level sponsor for our Crystal Coast Run/Walk for Autism in May, which raised additional funds totaling over \$15,000.

The Big Rock Tournament's huge impact in the community grew from humble beginnings. In the spring of 1957, the Fabulous Fisherman Club in Morehead City, NC, announced they would pay a cash prize – a little red wagon full of silver dollars – to the first person who could catch a blue marlin in the waters off the Crystal Coast. In the years since, the event has grown into a beloved and prestigious annual fishing contest, renamed the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament in 1972.

Truly a pillar of its community, Big Rock prioritizes charitable giving in its five-pronged mission statement in equal measure with the preservation of maritime culture and promotion of sports-fishing, marine education, and conservation among sports-fishermen. For the first time in tournament history, Big Rock Tournament's 2021 charitable contribution totaled an astounding one million dollars. The tournament's charitable giving benefits a small group of core charities, as well as additional charities chosen each year. ASNC is proud to have been selected by the Big Rock Charity Committee for addition to this impressive portfolio in 2021.



We are so thankful for our partnership with the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament! Their support of Newport Social Recreation has provided life-improving support for individuals with autism and their families. ■

## We're Hiring!

Do you know someone who is passionate about helping individuals on the autism spectrum and their families? Let them know that the Autism Society of North Carolina is always looking for qualified candidates to join us as we improve lives.

### Why work for ASNC? We offer:

- Extensive training and education
- Full- and part-time positions across the state
- Flexible hours and customized schedules
- Competitive pay
- Benefits starting at 20 hours
- Extensive client matching to ensure good fit
- Rewarding and relevant job experience

### We are always looking for candidates or referrals for the following positions:

- Autism Support Professionals
- Employment Support Professionals
- Autism Services Coordinators
- Social Recreation & Camp Counselors
- Behavior Technicians

[www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers)



# Call on Us!

The Autism Society of North Carolina improves the lives of individuals with autism, supports families affected by autism, and educates communities.

**Autism Resource Specialists** connect families to resources and provide training to help you become your child's best advocate. As parents of children with autism themselves, they understand your concerns. Find yours: [autismsociety-nc.org/ARS](https://autismsociety-nc.org/ARS)

**Workshops and conferences** with our Autism Resource Specialists or Clinical staff will help you learn more about topics that concern you, such as early intervention, evidence-based practices, IEPs, transitioning to adulthood, and residential options. [autismsociety-nc.org/workshops](https://autismsociety-nc.org/workshops)

**Online resources**, including toolkits, webinars, a blog, and a Staying Safe section, provide opportunities to learn on your own time from your home.

**Chapters and Support Groups** provide a place for families who face similar challenges to feel welcomed and understood as they offer each other encouragement. Find one near you: [autismsociety-nc.org/chapters](https://autismsociety-nc.org/chapters)

**Skill-building and support services** provide children and adults with autism the skills to increase self-sufficiency and participate in the community in a fulfilling way. ASNC's services across the state include skill-building in areas such as communication, socialization, community integration, and personal care; family consultation; respite; and adult day programs. Services are provided through the NC Innovations waiver, state funding, B3, and private pay. [autismsociety-nc.org/skillbuilding](https://autismsociety-nc.org/skillbuilding)

**Clinical Services** offer a variety of supports for individuals with autism and their families to increase independence and empower children and adults. **LifeLong Interventions (LLI)** provides comprehensive treatment for children and adults. LLI is rooted in the principles of ABA and involves effective instruction using evidence-based practices to promote meaningful skills and behaviors in the home, school, and community. **Rapid Response Clinical Consultation (RRCC)** is available in all 100 NC counties via telehealth for children and adults. RRCC is a short-term consultation service (2-4 weeks) that provides tips and strategies to address social communication, behavior intervention, and other skills. **Behavior consultations** provided by our psychologists and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) can help explain why behaviors are occurring, develop comprehensive behavior plans, and coach caregivers on effective strategies.

[autismsociety-nc.org/clinical](https://autismsociety-nc.org/clinical)

**Employment Supports** helps individuals with autism explore their skills and interests, then assists them in finding, keeping, and thriving in a job. Services are funded through the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

[autismsociety-nc.org/jobservices](https://autismsociety-nc.org/jobservices)

**Adult programs** serve individuals ages 16 to 28 with a focus on job readiness, development, placement, and training, as well as financial literacy, daily living and independence skills, and social skills. The year-round programming

includes small group instruction in centers and one-on-one support in the community.

[autismsociety-nc.org/adults](https://autismsociety-nc.org/adults)

**IGNITE** community centers in Davidson, Raleigh, and Greensboro offer activities, skills training, and educational workshops that foster social, financial, educational, and employment independence for young adults with high-functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome.

[autismsociety-nc.org/ignite](https://autismsociety-nc.org/ignite)

**Camp Royall** is the nation's oldest and largest camp for individuals with autism. Located near Pittsboro, Camp Royall serves all ages and offers year-round programming. [camproyall.org](https://camproyall.org)

**Social Recreation** programs provide opportunities for participants to bond over common interests, practice social skills, and try new activities. In Newport, Wilmington, and Winterville, social recreation programs include summer day camp, afterschool programs, and adult programs, with support from Trillium Health Resources. In other areas, summer camp and group activities may be available. Contact us to learn which services are available in your area.

[autismsociety-nc.org/socialrec](https://autismsociety-nc.org/socialrec)

**ASNC's public policy** efforts aim to advocate for the needs of individuals with autism and their families by maintaining a wide range of ties with the executive and legislative branches of state government. You can get involved and make your voice heard.

[autismsociety-nc.org/policy](https://autismsociety-nc.org/policy)

[www.autismsociety-nc.org](https://www.autismsociety-nc.org)

We have regional offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Greenville, Newport, Raleigh, and Wilmington. Contact our state office to be connected to resources.

State Office: 800-442-2762  
5121 Kingdom Way, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27607  
Sign up online to receive our email updates:  
[autismsociety-nc.org/contact-us](https://autismsociety-nc.org/contact-us)





Autism Society  
of North Carolina

5121 Kingdom Way, Suite 100  
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Join us this fall. Register today!

**Sept. 10**

WNC Run/Walk  
*Fletcher*

**Sept. 24**

Triad Run/Walk  
*Greensboro*

**Oct. 8**

Triangle Run/Walk  
*Raleigh*

[RunWalkforAutism.com](http://RunWalkforAutism.com)

Save the Date!



November 26 | Davidson  
10th annual car show to benefit IGNITE  
[americarnalive.com](http://americarnalive.com)

Autism Awareness Football Game

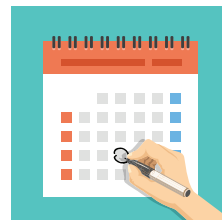
UNC vs.  
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October 1

Learn more at  
[www.teamautismnc.com](http://www.teamautismnc.com)

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