



April is Autism Acceptance Month! At Space Coast Early Steps, we're committed to supporting every child's unique journey, and this month offers us an incredible opportunity to amplify acceptance, awareness, and appreciation for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Why Autism Acceptance Matters

Autism Acceptance Month is more than just raising awareness; it's about embracing diversity, advocating for inclusion, and celebrating the strengths and talents of individuals with autism. By shifting the focus from mere awareness to acceptance, we strive to create a world where everyone feels valued, understood, and included.

Facts About Autism

- About 1 in 36 children in the US are identified with autism
- Autism is nearly 4 times more common among boys than among girls.
- Autism is characterized by differences in social interaction, communication, and responding to sensory experiences.

Ways to Get Involved

Throughout April, there are countless ways to participate and show your support for Autism Acceptance Month:

- Get SOAKed for Autism 2025 <https://www.soakautism.com/>
 - A free fun day for the whole family on Saturday, April 5th, from 11-2pm at Fred Poppe Regional Park, Palm Bay
- UCF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) has a variety of classes and activities. <https://ucf-card.org/calendar/>
- Autism Workshops – April 14th and 15th: Sensory Issues in Autism (see flyers in newsletter)
- <https://www.belikebuddy.com/florida> Autism Friendly Activities in Florida

Let's Celebrate Together!

This Autism Acceptance Month, let's come together as a community to celebrate diversity, promote acceptance, and build a more inclusive world for all. We invite you to join us in spreading love, understanding, and support throughout the month of April and beyond.

m



April
5th
11-2
FREE
Water
DAY





The City of **Palm Bay** Florida
Fred Poppe Regional Park
Palm Bay, Florida



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



a special day for special families

water slides,
bounce houses,
carnival snacks,
water activities,
character pictures,
Palm Bay Fire
Palm Bay Police

No registration required - this is a free family festival filled with activities, entertainment and lots of water inflatables, foam party, bounce houses, games, water shooters/pools, fire truck spray, police and fire vehicles, community partners, quiet zones/sensory room, DJ, animal interactions, music therapy, art therapy, crafts, characters, face painting, free cotton candy, popcorn, drinks, ice cream/snacks and fun for all our special needs community and friends.



Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers

What is the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers and what do they do?

The Florida Department of Health (DOH), Children's Medical Services, Early Steps Program, maintains the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT). DOH is the established agency lead for Part C, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). FICCIT is a federal Part C, IDEA requirement (34 C.F.R. §303.600-605) and meets quarterly with the role to advise and assist DOH to:

- Identify sources of fiscal and other support for early intervention service programs under Part C of IDEA.
- Assign financial responsibility to the appropriate agency.
- Promote methods for intra-agency and interagency collaboration regarding child find, monitoring, financial responsibility, provision of services and transition.
- Prepare applications under Part C of IDEA, including amendments.
- Transition from Early Steps to preschool and appropriate services.
- Review the Early Steps Annual Report which includes the status on early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Federally Required Parental Seats:

- At least 20 percent of the members must be parents, including minority parents, of infants or toddlers with disabilities or children with disabilities aged 12 years or younger, with knowledge of, or experience with, programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- At least one parent of an infant or toddler with a disability or a child with a disability aged 6 years or younger.

Learn more at
Floridaicc.com

To apply for a seat on the FICCIT, please visit the Governor's Appointment's webpage at: flgov.com/appointments



DOH 4-14-21

SENSORY ISSUES IN ASD



Center for Autism
and Related Disabilities
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Date: Monday, April 14th, 2025 at 6:00 - 8:00 PM

**Address: Suntree Business Center
3270 Suntree Blvd, Melbourne, FL, 32940**



Individuals with autism may exhibit a wide variety of sensory dysregulations within their day to day lives. This training will touch upon some of the more common types of sensory dysregulations that this population of individuals tend to demonstrate. We will discuss how “hypo” sensitivities compare & contrast to “hyper” sensitivities amongst many individuals with ASD, as well as share some of the more common research based interventions that can be developed & implemented to assist these individuals to learn to live more fulfilling lives.



SCAN ME

<https://SensoryIssuesASD1.eventbrite.com>

SENSORY ISSUES IN ASD



Center for Autism
and Related Disabilities
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Date: Tuesday, April 15th, 2025 at 9:00 - 10:30 AM

**Address: Suntree Business Center
3270 Suntree Blvd, Melbourne, FL, 32940**



Individuals with autism may exhibit a wide variety of sensory dysregulations within their day to day lives. This training will touch upon some of the more common types of sensory dysregulations that this population of individuals tend to demonstrate. We will discuss how “hypo” sensitivities compare & contrast to “hyper” sensitivities amongst many individuals with ASD, as well as share some of the more common research based interventions that can be developed & implemented to assist these individuals to learn to live more fulfilling lives.



SCAN ME

<https://SensoryIssuesASD2.eventbrite.com>



SENSORY EARTH DAY

APRIL 12, 2025 5-7:30PM

Sensory Earth Day is a special event for children with exceptionalities and their families to enjoy a sensory-friendly atmosphere while participating in Earth Day themed games, sensory exploration, crafts and more.

\$2 for members, \$6 for nonmembers.
Registration required.

Scan the QR code to register!





North Brevard's GREATEST Baby Shower

All Expectant Moms, New Moms & Dads that register will receive a swag bag filled with baby items and resources!



Saturday, May 3, 2025

9:00am - 2:00pm

The Grove Church

1450 Harrison St. Titusville, Fl. 32780

Educational Classes

- ♥ Safe Sleep
- ♥ Carseat Safety
- ♥ Handling a Toddler
- ♥ Holy Bladder!
- ♥ Chiropractic Care for Babies
- ♥ Breastfeeding Support
- ♥ and SO MUCH MORE!

Giveaways & Prizes

- ♥ Cribs
- ♥ Travel System
- ♥ Gift Certificates
- ♥ Vendor Gift Items
- ♥ Baby Items, Educational Toys

Fun for the Kiddo's

- ♥ Bounce House
- ♥ Food Trucks
- ♥ Face Painting
- ♥ Food Trucks
- ♥ OPEN SPACE

Sponsored By:

Pregnancy
Care Center
at BETA



Please call 321.264.0446 to become a Vendor or with any questions.

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2025 | VIERA, FL



Eat My CRUST 5K

VIERA'S FAVORITE PIZZA 5K!

REGISTER ONLINE AT EATMYCRUST5K.COM



SUNDAY, MAY 4 5K

VIERA HIGH SCHOOL | 7:00AM

- Super Cool Course. It's Fast!
- Pizza Finisher Medals for Everyone.
- Individual & Team Awards.
- Win a Golf Cart!
- Tons of Pizza, Fun, Prizes + Surprises.

ALL AGES. ALL PACES. RUN IT. WALK IT.



IT'S THE 5K WHERE YOU CAN EAT ALL THE PIZZA & WIN A GOLF CART!

100% of race proceeds will benefit Viera High School Athletics & Space Coast Early Steps



Register today: EatMyCrust5K.com





Early Steps Wee Warriors Playgroup

Every 4th Friday
Time: 11:30am - 12:30pm
Where: Wee Warriors Gym
3845 W Eau Gallie Blvd,
Melbourne, FL, 32934
MUST RSVP
WeeWarriors2024@gmail.com



EARLY STEPS PLAY GROUPS

**Inclusive playgroup for all children with or without disabilities,
Ages 0 to 3
Join us for therapy related play activities
SEPTEMBER THROUGH DECEMBER 2024**

**Palm Bay Play Group - Every 3rd Friday of each month
9:30am - 10:30am
Palm Bay Library, 1520 Port Malabar Blvd. NE, Palm Bay, FL 32905**

Cocoa Play Group – Every 1st Wednesday of each month **STARTS FEBRUARY
10am – 11am
Catherine Schweinsberg Rood Central Library, 308 Forrest Ave, Cocoa, FL, 32922**

**Titusville Play Group - Every 2nd Friday of each month
9am - 10am
The Children's Center, 5650 S. Washington Ave., Titusville, FL 32780**

TEXT 321-292-1370 (or call) to RSVP



For Current Early Steps Families

EARLY STEPS PLAY SPACE PLAYGROUP



9AM - 10AM
EVERY 4th Monday
PLAY SPACE
6615 N Atlantic Ave, Cape Canaveral

LIMITED SLOTS

MUST RSVP:

<https://form.jotform.com/250414607953053>



Made with PosterMyWall.com



Did you know? At ALL Early Steps Playgroups, providers/therapists are on hand to play and learn with you and your child alongside our Family Resource Specialist (advocate) Feel free to ask questions about your child's development during our fun sessions!



3rd Mondays My Gym Viera

12:30 pm-1:30pm

For Current Early Steps Families

<https://www.mygym.com/signin/lge/lgesignin?ClassIdStr=Hy8Xpi3IGB1HqTENRq961g%3d%3d>

Please complete waiver and bring socks!

EARLY STEPS PUBLIC POLICY – WANT TO KNOW WHAT POLICIES ARE PROPOSED AND HOW THESE POLICIES AFFECT YOU?

The Early Steps Policy Public Participation Hearing scheduled for April 22nd at 2 p.m. ET has been rescheduled earlier in the day to Tuesday, **April 22nd, 10 a.m. ET.**

The opportunity for public comment on the proposed policies and the Part C application will be available for 30 days after public hearing, beginning April 21st, 2025, through May 21st, 2025. Comments will be accepted from the public, including parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities, providers of services, advocacy groups and organizations, as well as other stakeholders in the state.

Questions about the public hearing can be sent to Andrew.Smith@flhealth.gov, but all public comments must be directed to CMS.EarlyStepsPublicComment@flhealth.gov.

Community Sensory Play Date



The Children's Center
5650 S Washington Ave.
Titusville, FL 32780 321-
321-264-0855

Wednesday,
April 23, 2025
9 - 10:30am

The Children's Center, in partnership with the Pilot Club of Titusville and Space Coast Early Steps, is hosting a sensory play date for children ages five and under with developmental needs. There will be a make it and take it activity, sensory bins, developmental materials and more! Registration is required, space is limited.

To learn more and register for this event,
email childrenscenter@parrishmed.com



parrishhealthcare.com
Healing Families-Healing Communities®



Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model



The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit ChallengingBehavior.org.

More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, ChallengingBehavior.org.



ChallengingBehavior.org

How to Use Positive Language to Improve Your Child's Behavior

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron y Jill Giacomini

"Stop it," "No," "Don't do that!" As a parent, you might find yourself using these words and phrases more often when your child begins to make his own choices. Now, stop for a moment and consider how the conversation might feel if you couldn't use these words? What if, rather than telling your child what he can't do, you instead chose words to tell him what he can do? While this shift in language might seem small, it actually provides a powerful positive change to the tone of the conversation. When you focus on using positive language with your child, you will likely find that he has fewer tantrums, whines less and overall experiences fewer challenging behaviors.

How can such a small change make such a big difference? While it is obvious to adults, young children are not able to make the logical connection that when they are told not to do something, what they actually should do is the opposite. For example, the directions, "Don't climb on the counter" can be very confusing to a child. However, "Please keep your feet on the floor" tells the child exactly what the expectation is and how he can change what he is doing. Using positive language also empowers a child to make an appropriate choice on his own, which can boost his self-esteem. When you are specific in your directions by telling your child exactly what he can do and when, it is easier for him to comply and he is more likely to cooperate with the request.

Try This at Home

- **Replace "don't" with "do."** Tell your child what she can do! If you saw her cutting the leaves of a plant, rather than saying "Don't cut that!" you could say, "Scissors are for cutting paper or play dough. Which one do you want to cut?" It is more likely that your child will make an appropriate choice when you help her to understand exactly what appropriate options are available.
- **Offer a choice.** When you provide your child with a choice of things that he can do, wear or go, he is more likely to select one of the options you have offered because it makes him feel like he is in control. This strategy also works for you as a parent because you approve of either choice.
- **Tell your child "when."** When your child asks to do something, rather than saying no, acknowledge her wish and tell her when she might be able to do it. This answer feels more like a "yes" to a child. For example, if your child asks to go to the park, but you are on the computer finishing up a work project, you could say, "The park sounds like a great idea! I need to finish this letter for work right now. Would you like to go after your nap today or tomorrow morning after breakfast?"
- **Use "first-then" language.** Another way to tell a child when he can do something in a positive way is to use a "first-then" statement. For example, if he wants to watch TV but you would like for him to pick up his toys, you could say "First, pick up your toys and then

you may watch a TV show."

- **Give your child time to think.** Sometimes, you may feel frustrated when your child does not respond quickly to requests and feel tempted to use demands and raise your voice. When that happens, remember that your child is learning language and how to use it. She needs time to think about what you said and how she is going to respond. It can take her several seconds, or even minutes, longer than you to process the information. If you remain calm and patiently repeat the statement again, you will see fewer challenging behaviors and enjoy more quality time with your child.
- **Help your child to remember.** Children are easily distracted. Sometimes your child may need you to help him remember what you asked him to do in order to do it. "I remember" statements are very useful in these situations. For example, imagine you have asked your child to put on his shoes so that he can go outside, and he comes over to you without his shoes on and is trying to go outside. You can say, "I remember you need to put your shoes on before you can go outside." Stating the information as a simple fact, rather than a command, gives him the information he needs to make the right choice on his own without blaming him or making him feel like he has failed.



Practice at School

Teachers use positive language at school to help children become more confident and independent. When teachers tell children what they can do, children begin to manage themselves, classroom routines and interactions with peers by themselves. For example, a child who is throwing sand on the playground can be shown that, instead, she can use a shovel to put the sand in a bucket. The teacher might say, "If you want to play with the sand, you can fill this bucket. Would you like a blue bucket or this red one?" In this way, the teacher honors the child's interest, but directs it to a more appropriate play choice.

The Bottom Line

Positive relationships with parents, teachers and other caregivers provide the foundation for a successful and happy child, are the building blocks for your child's self-esteem and ability to empathize and predict future positive behavior choices. The manner in which you talk to your child has a significant impact on his behavior. Making positive changes to your communication style can be hard work, but with a little practice, you will see a big difference in your relationship with your child. Your child will feel more encouraged, positive and independent and, as a result, you will enjoy better overall cooperation.



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1st Sunday Morning of Each Month

9am to 11am

2250 W Coastal Ln, West Melbourne, FL 32904

Chuck E. Cheese's now offers a sensory-friendly experience on the *first Sunday of every month*. Our trained and caring staff is there to make sure families who have children with special needs have a fun filled visit.



BREAKFAST SUPPORT GROUP

Please join us for resources, friendship and support. We will share our journey together!

Food and/or drinks available for purchase.

All ages welcome!

Friday, April 4th

Cracker Barrel Old Country Store

1175 Palm Bay Rd NE,

Melbourne, FL 32905

10am – 11:30am

**Space Coast Early Steps
C.A.T.C.H. of Brevard**

Community Access to Child Health of Brevard, Inc.
Early Intervention Services for young children with
special developmental needs

For more information or referral contact:

1264 Rockledge Blvd., Suite 104

Rockledge, Florida 32955

Ph: (321) 634-3688 Fax: (321) 504-0955

Funding provided by IDEA and Florida Dept. of Health

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

<https://www.spacecoastes.org/>



LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

<https://www.facebook.com/Space-Coast-Early-Steps-101089132406421>



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Cell (text or call): (321) 292-1370

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https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/l/s/2GMM3ZYZA9H69?ref=wl_share

If you would like to help families and therapists on Amazon, every item is needed and always appreciated.
Thank you for your support!