

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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STATE NETWORK PROMOTES AWARENESS, SERVICES FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN APRIL

The Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorder Network is reaching out to parents and caregivers to increase the awareness of autism and to help with the early identification of children who have autism.

During April, National Autism Awareness Month, the state network is holding its 8th annual conference and promoting the availability of local and national resources.

Today, one in 110 individuals and one in 70 boys are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, making ASD more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined. Autism occurs in all racial, ethnic and social groups and is four times more likely to strike boys than girls.

Autism Spectrum Disorders are complex neurological disorders that typically appear during the first three years of life, impairing a child's ability to communicate and to relate to others. Symptoms range from very mild to severe.

Parents oftentimes are the first to notice unusual behaviors in their child or to recognize that their child has not reached the appropriate developmental milestones. If you have concerns about your child's development, experts encourage you to act now by contacting your local school district to request an evaluation or to speak to your pediatrician about having your child screened for an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Research shows that early intervention can result in significant improvements for young children.

The Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorder Network provides up-to-date information and training as well as workshops statewide on a number of ASD topics.

Local and national resources as well as ASD information is available on the network's website at: <http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/>.

Additional information about the network, the April state conference and upcoming training sessions also is available at: <http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/> or by calling the network at 402.472.4194. The April state conference is no longer accepting registrations because it is at capacity.