

October 2009

Dear Colleague,

It is estimated that an average of 1 in 110 children in the United States is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by the age of eight (CDC, 2009). Although the median age of diagnosis is between 3.5 and 5.0 years, for most children with an ASD, developmental concerns had been noted before the age of 3 (CDC, 2009). ASD is a complex disorder that can sometimes involve other health, developmental, neurological, and genetic conditions. Additionally, support for early identification of ASD comes from a growing body of evidence suggesting improved outcomes for *most* and dramatic response to intervention for *some* children with characteristics of autism. Finally, there are some resources and services that are *only available* to children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. This information provides a strong rationale for early intervention professionals to know how and when to share concerns with parents when possible “red flags” for an autism spectrum disorder are recognized.

Moreover, talking with parents about your concerns demonstrates your knowledge of ASD, which will make it more likely that parents will turn to you for guidance and support in the future. Your open communication with parents at this critical time can be the first step toward building a relationship of mutual trust and respect.

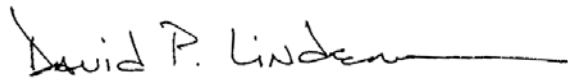
This packet is intended to provide you with information and resources to guide you in carrying out this critically important responsibility in an effective and sensitive manner. The information contained in this packet is intended to compliment the *Talking to Parents About Autism Action Kit* developed by Autism Speaks.

The Autism Speaks training materials primarily target childcare providers and early childhood teachers in community settings. This packet with its supporting materials is intended for practitioners in early intervention (Part C) and early childhood special education (Part B/619) programs. Parents need to know that early intervention and early childhood special education services are *always* individualized for a child and provided according to need and not prescribed by diagnosis. This is consistent with federal law and state statutes governing Part C and Part B/619 services.

Parents also need to know that they made the right decision when they decided to trust you to evaluate their child. They need to know if your team sees possible signs of an ASD. They need your help in making fully informed decisions about next steps for their child and family. We hope that your advance knowledge and planning, using information and resources provided in this packet, will increase the likelihood of a positive outcome to this important conversation with family members.

We hope that when you have taken the time to review this packet you will find that it contains helpful information. Please complete the evaluation and return it to us at the address provided on the form or complete the evaluation online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BVDFCZB>. Thank you for your interest and your efforts toward the development of quality services and programs for young children and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David P. Lindeman" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

David P. Lindeman, Ph.D.
Director, Kansas Inservice Training System

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders—Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, United States, 2006. MMWR Surveill Summ 2009;58(SS-10) Downloaded 6-24-10 from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/states/ADDMCommunityReport2009.pdf>

Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities

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Talking with Parents about Autism Spectrum Disorders Packet Evaluation

This packet is intended to support professionals in communicating critical information to families in a sensitive and helpful manner when indicators of a possible autism spectrum disorder are observed. We would like you to evaluate how helpful this packet has been for you and return this form to the address below.

Please check the parts of the packet that you found most helpful.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Power Point | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resources Worksheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources to Support Presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation Checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Screening Tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Milestone Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Websites | <input type="checkbox"/> NICHCY Autism Fact Sheet |

Please identify why each part you checked was helpful:

Please check the parts of the packet that you found were not helpful to you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Power Point | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resources Worksheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources to Support Presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation Checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Screening Tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Milestone Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Websites | <input type="checkbox"/> NICHCY Autism Fact Sheet |

Please identify what about this part(s) made it of little use:

Please tell us what was not available in the packet that would have been helpful to you.

Please describe how you plan to use the information in this packet.

Other comments or suggestions for future packets:

Thank you for completing this form and returning it to us!

Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS)
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Talking with Parents About Autism Spectrum Disorders

Introduction

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Lori Beth Chambers, M.S., CCC, SLP
David P. Lindeman, Ph.D.
October 2009

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Introduction

This technical assistance packet was developed to support and extend the *Talking to Parents Action Kit* developed by Autism Speaks. The kit includes a video that can be viewed or downloaded from the Autism Speaks website at http://www.autismspeaks.org/whatisit/talking_to_parents_action_kit.php.

If you are unable to access the video from the website, you may contact KITS to request a copy of the DVD at (800) 362-0390 extension 1618 or kskits@ku.edu.

The content of the packet includes:

- PowerPoint
- Resources to Support PowerPoint
- Screening Tools
- Implementation Checklist
- Resources & Websites
- Local Resources Worksheet
- Implementation Checklist
- Early Childhood Milestone Map
- NICHCY Autism Fact Sheet

These materials can be downloaded separately and may be duplicated freely without permission.

The PowerPoint presentation initially was developed to be used by professional development trainers working with early intervention/Part C and early childhood special education/Part B/619 service providers. We believe the PowerPoint can also guide individuals or teams in learning, role-playing, and implementing these practices on their own. Each of the materials referred to in the PowerPoint are included in the Resources section of the packet. Electronic copies of the PowerPoint and Resources are available by contacting kskits@ku.edu

A unique feature of this packet is the Implementation Checklist. It is our hope that this tool will assist you, your team, or your program in monitoring your progress as you work to improve your competence and confidence in talking with parents about autism spectrum disorders.