



# REFLECTIONS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2022 ISSUE

## CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH IN THE AUTISM COMMUNITY

Conversations about racism can be difficult for all families, including families within the autism community. Juneteenth, which is the celebration of the emancipation of slavery and the freedom of Black people, is a holiday that can lead to complex conversations about race, equality, and inclusion. If you are struggling to know how to start a conversation about race and racism with an autistic child, we've got you covered! Here are 5 tips to help you take the next steps.

1. **Don't wait:** Begin the conversation early. The earlier the conversation, the more your child will be equipped to understand racism and feel a level of comfort while discussing the topic with you.
2. **Keep it simple:** Discussions around race are nuanced and may require multiple conversations. Keep the information as simple and direct as possible while honoring the heart of the issue.
3. **Choose the right time and place:** Having complex conversations during transitions or when your child is in a new environment may not lead to a successful conversation. Choose a time and place where your child feels comfortable and relaxed.
4. **Surround yourself with resources:** The local library or a simple internet search can be great ways to find many wonderful resources and books to share with your child. Explore a list of some great books [here](#).
5. **Lead by action:** If having a conversation is difficult or not possible with your child, incorporate and model inclusivity and equality in your daily actions.



## MISSOURI FAMILY TO FAMILY

Missouri Family to Family is a family driven organization that can support you by listening, training, and connecting you with quality resources specific to your situation.

Missouri Family to Family provides referrals, Information Specialists, peer mentors, leadership training, and educational opportunities to act as a holistic resource center for families.

Their Information Specialists aid in systems navigation, resource connection, and emotional support and help families build action plans. Peer mentors offer lived experiences on how to use community services and help guide individuals toward greater self-advocacy, empowerment, and personal responsibility for their own success.

They also support families to develop their advocacy and leadership skills and increase their understanding of how to bring about positive change in their family member.

One of their specialties is Good Life Groups which engage participants in learning and problem solving with peers and facilitators on specific educational and support topics.

You may also find value in their Learning Experiences/Sessions, which are educational activities created to enhance the knowledge and skills of stakeholders while providing information on how to better understand a topic or perform specific tasks.

Visit their site to get connected to these great resources:

<https://mofamilytofamily.org/>

Connect with them on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/mofamily2family/>

## EXTERNAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Congratulation to the University of Iowa!

The University of Iowa is one step closer to starting their own ECHO Autism program. Congratulations to Kelly Schieltz, PhD, BCBA-D and the University of Iowa for completing their partnership documents with the ECHO institute! We look forward to learning more about your ECHO Autism Program and supporting you through our ECHO Autism Communities partner liaison program.

\*Kelly Schieltz, PhD, BCBA-D is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital.

## ECHO AUTISM IN THE NEWS

ECHO Autism Communities is collaborating with Cognoa to study real-world application of Canvas Dx! Canvas Dx is a form of AI technology that helps clinicians identify signs of autism in children between the ages of 18 and 72 months.

"We are excited to incorporate Cognoa's Canvas Dx within our existing diagnostic model in hopes of expanding primary care physicians' tools to reliably identify and diagnose children with autism."

-Dr. Sohl, M.D.

This collaboration is featured in [PR Newswire](#), [Healthleaders Media](#), and [Biospace](#).

## LEARN ABOUT ECHO AUTISM: NORTH MACEDONIA



ECHO Autism Communities was created to help bring autism care and services to **everyone**, no matter their location. We're so excited to share that ECHO Autism: North Macedonia is doing exactly that by increasing local access to high quality health care and education for children with ASD in North Macedonia.

This program is intended for special and mainstream educators in preschools and kindergarten, primary and middle school as well as therapists in hospitals, clinical and educational settings including developmental pediatricians, child psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, child/adolescent psychiatrists, dietitians, and more.

This program launched in December 2021 and meets every 3rd Friday of the month at 3:00 pm Central European Time. Attendees join from all around the globe including Austria, China, Greece, Germany, Pakistan, Serbia, Sweden, North Macedonia, and USA.

Check them out on the following platforms:

Website:

<https://echoautism.70cvetovi.com.mk/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/70-Cvetovi-Project-ECHO-Autism-104776175169364>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdUjBfONVm8x53sI9iLGZfg>

## **SPOTLIGHT ON: ECHO AUTISM FAMILY ADVOCATES**

This month, we want to highlight ECHO Autism Communities: Family Advocates program. This program aims to develop a network of equipped and informed advocates in our communities.

### **What is ECHO Autism: Family Advocates?**

ECHO Autism: Family Advocates is a virtual learning program intended to educate, equip, and enrich the lives of those within the Autism community. The general mission of the clinic is to develop a Network of well-equipped advocates, who are familiar with complex systems and passionate to connect people with autism and their families to high-quality, evidence-based resources, supports, and services. Furthermore, the clinic aims to increase local access to well-equipped community-based advocates who understand systems and can connect people with autism and their families to high-quality, evidence-based resources.

Each virtual session occurs for 90 minutes every first and third Friday of the month and is open to anyone across the globe.

There are two categories of program participation: Family Advocate Network Members and Family Advocate Observers. Family Advocate Network Members include autistic people or family members of people with autism who live in the state of Missouri and have a passion for helping people with autism and their families gain access to what they need to ensure they are living their best lives! Family Advocate Observers include anyone who wants to learn more about autism and how to support autistic people and their families!

Each session starts with a brief presentation by an autism expert, followed by a rich group discussion where advocates are invited to present about the challenges that people with autism and their families face navigating systems, finding good resources, or advocating for themselves or loved ones. Sessions end with the full group proposing solutions and sharing helpful resources. Topics discussed provide information about the medical system, educational system, state eligibility, and funding, transition to adulthood and adult living, bolstering advocacy skills, and engaging your community.

**For more information, contact the ECHO Autism Clinic Coordinator,  
Maria Seville at [mariaseville@health.missouri.edu](mailto:mariaseville@health.missouri.edu)  
or register today [here](#).**

