



REFLECTIONS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2022 ISSUE

BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT: DRIVING WITH AUTISM

This month we are highlighting Driving with Autism, an online program designed to help autistic individuals obtain driver's licenses.

A driver's license represents freedom and independence and may seem out of reach for some autistic people. Andrew Arboe founded Driving with Autism to help autistic people navigate the steps to safely drive on their own.

Here's how Andrew says it all began: "It started by my own experience learning to drive without any resources to access. Most states have mixed resources in regards to autism and driving...The experience made an impact to me and once I obtained my license, I went to creating driving presentations to get a dialogue going."

Since 2019, Andrew has presented at conferences such as the World Autism Conference and Autism Society of Greater Phoenix to show the possibilities of driving. During that time, he took initiative and created Driving with Autism in 2021 to address resources nationwide!

Learn more [here](#)!

Catch Andrew as a Listen to the Spectrum panelist at the upcoming 2023 ECHO Autism Communities Symposium.



UNC TEACCH CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Lead facilitator of ECHO Autism: Mental Health Brenna Maddox and 2023 ECHO Autism Communities Symposium speaker Brian Boyd were featured in an article from the University of North Carolina.

UNC TEACCH is a program dedicated to creating a world where all autistic people and their families have access to excellent evidence-based services in their home communities.

The article celebrating their 50th anniversary includes statements from Brian Boyd and Brenna Maddox, both of whom are involved with ECHO Autism Communities.

Check out the article [here](#).

SAVE THE DATE!

2023 ECHO AUTISM COMMUNITIES SYMPOSIUM

APRIL 20, 2023

ECHO AUTISM COMMUNITIES FEATURED IN NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND MEDICINE WORKSHOP

ECHO Autism Communities was recently featured in a National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine workshop titled Supporting Children with Disabilities. In this workshop, practices were identified that could improve the system of care for children with disabilities as well as improve access to services for underserved and marginalized populations.

Check it out [here](#).

Citation: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2022. Supporting Children with Disabilities: Lessons from the Pandemic: Proceedings of a Workshop. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
<https://doi.org/10.17226/26702>.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ECHO AUTISM COMMUNITIES



We are wishing you a happy holidays from ECHO Autism Communities!



SPOTLIGHT ON ECHO AUTISM: ADVOCATES

ECHO Autism Communities is happy to announce the 2023 ECHO Autism: Advocates Series starting February 3, 2023! This ECHO Autism program is for all who are interested in learning about best-practice resources and how to navigate the complex systems that serve people on the spectrum and their families. Although this program is focused on information for family- and self-advocates in Missouri, United States, we invite anyone to join – even if you are on the other side of the globe!

Have we caught your attention? See more details below!

What? The ECHO Autism: Advocates Program aims to equip family- and self-advocates with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate complex support systems, actively connect people on the spectrum and their families to high-quality, best-practice resources, services, and supports, as well as influence policy.

When? Virtual ECHO Autism: Advocate sessions occur on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM central time. Sessions begin on February 03, 2023, and run through December 15, 2023.

Who? Attendees from across the globe are welcome to join us! There are two categories of program participation. Advocate Network Members: 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! Advocate Observer: Anyone who wants to learn more about autism and how to support autistic people and their families!

Seven autism experts lead the ECHO Autism: Advocates program. The lead content experts are parents of autistic children and/or professionals who have years of experience working in the autism field.

How? You can expect each session to start with a brief presentation by an autism expert, followed by a rich full group discussion where advocates are invited to present about the difficulties that people on the autism spectrum and their families face navigating systems, finding best-practice resources, or utilizing leadership skills for advocacy. Sessions will end with the full group proposing solutions and sharing helpful resources.

Topics that will be discussed in 2023 will 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.

Please click the link below to sign up! We cannot wait to see you on Friday, February 3, 2023.
[SIGN UP HERE](#)

Please contact Michael Hansen at michaelhansen@health.missouri.edu with any questions.

LEARN ABOUT OUR GLOBAL PARTNER: WAISMAN CENTER



This month we are turning the spotlight on the Waisman Center located at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They have just finished the pilot of ECHO Autism: Addressing Anxiety in Clinical Practice.

The purpose of this ECHO pilot is to increase the ability of behavioral health providers to treat anxiety for children ages 5-18 years old with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The target audience is a cohort of mental health providers or psychotherapists including, but not limited to licensed counselors, licensed clinical social workers, family therapists, and/or psychologists, located throughout the state of Wisconsin (WI).

The ECHO pilot consisted of five 90-minute sessions running from mid-October through mid-December 2022. Curriculum topics include:

- What does anxiety and autism look like in school-age children and youth?
- Adaptations of evidence-based anxiety interventions (such as cognitive behavioral therapy) for autism
- Adaptations of autism therapies (such as visual supports) to address anxiety
- The benefits and limitations of medications/medication myths
- Guidance on finding services and providing resources for patients

The interdisciplinary hub team consists of a social worker, Psychologist, BCBA, Parent, and ECHO Autism Coordinator.

Experts at the Waisman Center UCEDD have provided some short-term community education on this topic in the past [here](#). However, Waisman clinicians and the UCEDD's "Constituent Advisory Committee" made up of self-advocates and family members of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including ASD, across the state of WI, requested further training and support for community behavioral health providers on the topic of autism and anxiety. These groups have consistently raised the need for therapists in the community who know how to provide behavioral health interventions to individuals with ASD as a pressing priority area for the entire state. Both clinicians, families, and autistic self-advocates report that mental health providers often do not feel prepared or refuse to provide services to individuals with ASD.

Congratulations to this team for launching a successful pilot. We can't wait to hear more about their results.

Questions? Reach out to Mary Rehani at mrehani@wisc.edu. You can also learn more [HERE](#)