REFLECTIONS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | MAY 2023 ISSUE

RESOURCES FOR A SAFE SUMMER

Summer is almost here, and we couldn't be more excited! Summer can bring extra fun, but it also can bring some extra anxiety and possible risks.

We've got plenty of resources to keep everyone safe and make sure everyone has fun! Here are a few of our favorites:

- Safety & Wandering Prevention Checklist

- Drowning Prevention

- Facing Your Fears Videos

We offer many free, evidence-based resources on our website, and these are just a few. Check out more here.

NEW PARTNERS AND PROGRAM LAUNCHES

Welcome new ECHO Autism Partners:

- The Smile A While Foundation – Joanne Oates, PhD is an occupational therapist interested in starting an ECHO in Jamaica with her partners. Welcome!

- Saskatchewan Health Authority dba Provincial Autism Strategy – Welcome Lori Mulholland, Kimberly Woycik and Ghita Wiebe to the ECHO Autism Community!
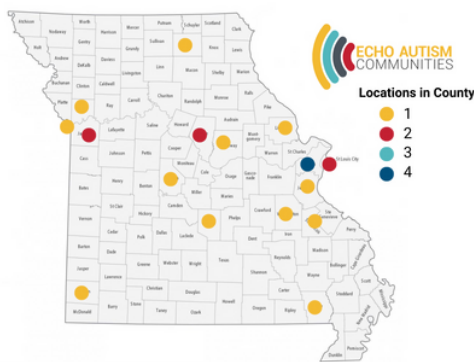
New ECHO Autism Program Launches:

- Autismo Puebla in Mexico launched their ECHO Autism program on April 27, 2023. Their focus is supporting Primary Care professionals in caring for people on the autism spectrum. Congratulations!

ECHO AUTISM STAT TRAINING APRIL 2023

Our mission is to democratize expertise and disseminate best practices, to mentor and guide communities of clinicians, educators, and advocates, creating local expertise and increasing access for autistic people and their families.

Last month, 22 Primary Care Physicians and Practitioners (PCPs) from across Missouri attended our 2-day ECHO Autism STAT training in Columbia, Missouri. The Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers is a structured behavioral observation validated to identify children between 14 and 48 months of age with characteristics of autism. The STAT tool provides PCPs with a standardized clinical observation of the social-communicative and play characteristics seen in children on the autism spectrum. This training serves as the foundation for building the clinical expertise necessary for PCPs to diagnose autism in young children with clear characteristics of autism. When utilized in conjunction with a comprehensive diagnostic interview, a developmental screener such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, and DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, ECHO Autism STAT trained clinicians have demonstrated to be able to provide accurate, early diagnoses of ASD.

We are thrilled that 22 additional PCPs are partnering with us to increase access to best practice autism care and diagnostic expertise for families and children across the State of Missouri. The map to the left shows the practice locations of our new STAT training program participants.

Learn more about this program by checking out this article here.

CINCINNATI CHILDREN'S LAUNCHES NEW ECHO AUTISM PROGRAM FOR ALLIED HEALTH

As the rates of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) increase, there is a critical need to offer educational opportunities and a collaborative learning environment for professionals who provide therapy to children on the autism spectrum. Interest from allied health clinicians led Cincinnati Children's Hospital's ECHO Autism team to investigate modifying the ECHO Autism curriculum for primary care providers to meet the needs of allied health professionals in fields including speech-language pathology (SLP), occupational (OT) and physical therapy (PT). To create the Allied Health ECHO Autism program, they expanded the HUB team to include an SLP and OT from their Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (DDBP).

Cincinnati Children's has successfully completed two cohorts of ECHO Autism for allied health professionals, one with clinicians from their institution and one that expanded to include community providers. The Allied Health ECHOs have been well-received and well-attended. Cincinnati Children's continues to adjust the curriculum based on pre- and post-survey data and the qualitative experiences shared by clinicians about their challenges working with children on the autism spectrum.

Congratulations to Julia Anixt, Jen Smith, and Arin Contra Gile for continued success in this ECHO Autism program!

ECHO AUTISM COMMUNITIES AT INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR AUTISM RESEARCH (INSAR) MEETING

ECHO Autism was represented from all over the globe at the latest INSAR (International Society For Autism Research) meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden, on May 3–6, 2023. Congratulations to the following presenters and authors:

Meri Naumceska; North Macedonia
Implementation of the Echo Autism Model in North Macedonia: Understanding Professional Development Needs and Barriers for Educators in the Classroom and Beyond

Agnes Rynkiewicz; Poland
Implementation of the Echo Autism Model in Poland

Trixie Pujol; Kenya, Africa
ECHO Autism in East Africa: Understanding Barriers to Care, Professional Development Needs to Improve Access to Autism Best-Practices

Valeria Nanclares-Nogues, Kristin Sohl
The Brief Observation of Symptoms of Autism (BOSA): Validation Study of the Spanish-Language Bosa - Sensitivity, Specificity, and Suggested Cutoff Scores within a Latin American Sample

Alicia Curran
ECHO Autism: Family Advocates – Increasing Access to Autistic and Caregiver Advocates to Navigate Complex Systems and Access Best-Practice Resources

Valeria Nanclares-Nogues, Kristin Sohl, Alicia Brewer Curran, Melissa Mahurin, Katrina Boles; Crys Oberweiser
Addressing Gaps in Care through the Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Autism: Psychology Program in Missouri and Beyond

Kristin Sohl, Micah Mazurek
Iterative Development of an ECHO Autism Program to Improve Healthcare for Autistic Adults

Valeria Nanclares-Nogues, Kristin Sohl
Advancing Access to Best Practice Care in Latin America: Implementation of the Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Autism Model to Equip Clinicians with Evidence-Based Knowledge and Training

TRAINING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Last month, our Director of Program Development and Global Expansion, Dr. Valeria Nanclares-Nogués traveled to the Dominican Republic to provide training to psychologists, physicians, and practitioners on autism assessment and best-practice guidelines for the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Centro de Atención Integral para la Discapacidad (CAID-Comprehensive Care Center for Disability) hosted the training in their main building in Santo Domingo.

The CAID is a center that falls under the Ministry of Public Health and Social Service with the aim of providing comprehensive, high-quality services in the evaluation, diagnosis, and intervention of children 0-12 years of age with ASD, Down's Syndrome, and Cerebral Palsy.

The CAID's mission is to promote the development of all abilities of children with developmental differences, through a comprehensive care system. The CAID's values of commitment and dedication to serve those in need, inclusion and equity for all people, as well as compassion and respect for the people they serve, are in direct alignment with the mission and values of the ECHO Autism Communities program.

This training was the first in-person training held overseas since the start of the pandemic, with 40 professionals from around the country who were learning about the diagnosis of ASD, becoming clinically certified in the use of the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, 2nd Edition (ADOS-2), considered one of the gold-standard instruments within a diagnostic assessment battery.

Families in the Dominican Republic, as with many low-resource countries, face great disparities in access to appropriate diagnostic evaluations and follow-up care. By combining this training and the ongoing efforts of the Center to promote best practices through their ECHO Autismo-RD program (established in 2022), we hope to begin to reduce barriers and increase access to knowledge and training for professionals who in turn, will help children and families within their communities. This training also served as an opportunity to showcase the work of the ECHO Autismo-RD, that will be relaunching their program in the next couple of months, focusing on early detection and referral of young children with characteristics of ASD.