



Fraser Supports Autism Awareness



Fraser® has partnered with Governor Tim Pawlenty to proclaim April as Autism Awareness Month in the State of Minnesota. The state proclamation coincides with a national effort to gain visibility for our country's fastest growing developmental disability. Autism spectrum disorders now affect 1 in 150 children. Autism is more common than juvenile diabetes, childhood cancer and AIDS combined. Sadly, every 20 minutes another child is diagnosed with autism.

But there is hope! And that's what Autism Awareness Month is all about. Throughout the month, Fraser will be sharing information and inviting the community to participate in important events. It is our hope that increased awareness will lead to early diagnosis and treatment for more children.



What is autism?

Autism is a neurologically-based developmental disability that affects the way a child's brain develops and the ability to communicate, reason and interact with others.

What are the signs of autism?

Parents, teachers and medical professionals may look for these behaviors:

- not responding to name;
- doesn't point or wave goodbye;
- used to say a few words, but now doesn't;
- intense tantrums;
- odd movement (twirling, flapping, rocking);
- poor eye contact;
- unusual attachment to objects or schedules;
- lining up items in a certain order.

Having one or more of these signs indicates the need for a developmental screening.

When should a child be evaluated for autism?

Most pediatricians perform a developmental screening at well-child visits during the preschool years. These screenings allow the doctor to monitor the child's development and look for red flags. If the doctor has reason for concern, he/she will refer the family to a specialist (such as Fraser) for an evaluation.

Every Individual with Autism is Different

Autism is a spectrum disorder, where symptoms and characteristics present themselves in a variety of combinations, from mild to severe and in any combination. It is very important to select a provider that will tailor services to the needs of the individual and family.

What Causes Autism?

Although a specific cause of autism is not known, current research links autism to biological or neurological differences in the brain. A pattern of autism or related disabilities in families suggests there is a genetic basis to the disorder, most likely involving several genes in combination.

Is There a Cure for Autism?

In the medical sense, there is no cure for the differences in the brain which result in autism. However, with appropriate intervention, many of the associated behaviors can be positively changed. In some cases, the individual may appear to no longer have autism. However, the majority of children and adults continue to exhibit some manifestations of autism throughout their lives. Evidence shows that early intervention results in dramatically positive outcomes for young children with autism.

Fraser – Minnesota's Leader in Autism Services

Fraser is the longest-running, largest provider of autism services in Minnesota. Fraser provides extensive diagnosis, treatment and support services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders and their families. Fraser uses a multidisciplinary approach and partners with each family to determine which services are the best fit. If you or someone you know needs services related to an autism spectrum disorder or other cognitive disability, please call 612-331-9413 or visit www.fraser.org.

Resources for Parents and Professionals

Visit www.fraser.org to download a free copy of the Fraser Autism Resource Directory, a valuable tool for parents learning to navigate the complex educational and medical service systems.

Visit www.fraser.org/forms to find helpful tips related to autism spectrum disorders. Topics include: developing coping skills, choosing a dental provider, making a weighted blanket, and many more.

Participate in the first annual Fraser Walk for Autism sponsored by GMAC-ResCap on Saturday, April 12, 2008, at Mall of America. For information, visit www.fraser.org/calendar.



Attend the day-long autism seminar presented by Fraser experts on Thursday, June 26. Watch www.fraser.org for seminar information.