

Mission

Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism

Vision

The Autism Society of America (ASA) is the leading voice and resource of the entire autism community in education, advocacy, services, research and support. The ASA is committed to meaningful participation and self-determination in all aspects of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. ASA accomplishes its ongoing mission through close collaboration with a successful network of chapters, members and supporters.

Guiding Principles

- ASA's efforts are focused on meaningful participation and self-determination in all aspects of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.
- ASA promotes individual, parental, and guardian choice to assure that people on the autism spectrum are treated with dignity and respect.
- ASA proactively informs, influences, guides and develops public policy at the federal, state and local level, including setting agendas for policy makers and legislators, for the benefit of the Autism community.
- ASA is the respected voice of the Autism community and the primary source for information by providing timely, frequent, relevant, and professional communications.
- ASA works to ensure that every chapter is a successful chapter, sustained by a collaborative relationship between the national office and chapters to realize mutual benefit and to protect the interests of both.
- ASA advocates for multi-disciplined approaches to Autism research focused on improving the quality of life for individuals across the autism spectrum and their families.
- ASA works to ensure financial self-sufficiency and growth for all ASA operating units and integrated operations across all levels of ASA.

Core Competencies

1. ADVOCACY

- Proactively informing, influencing, guiding and developing public policy at the federal, state and local level in collaboration with the greater disability community
- Advocating for multi-disciplined approaches to Autism research
- Advocating for inclusion, participation and self-determination in all aspects of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families
- Create an advocacy infrastructure and enable local capacity building to support people across their lifespan

2. EDUCATION

- Providing accessible and relevant information that supports stakeholder ability to make informed choices
- Stewardship of an authoritative body of autism information and knowledge
- Proactive community outreach and education

3. SUPPORT

- Encouraging and fostering a strong grassroots network that is an integral part of a larger community
- Creating local connections

4. SERVICES

- Building capacity within local communities for service delivery to individuals and their families

5. RESEARCH

- Translating research results into applied practice in everyday lives
- Identifying and fostering promising research practices

Options Policy

The Autism Society of America promotes the active and informed involvement of family members and the individuals with autism in the planning of individualized, appropriate services and support. The board of the Autism Society of America believes that each person with autism is a unique individual. Each family and individual with autism should have the right to learn about and then select the options that they feel are most appropriate for the individual with autism. To the maximum extent possible, we believe that decisions should be made by both the parents and the individual with autism.

Services should enhance and strengthen natural family and community supports for the individual with autism and the family whenever possible. The service option designed for an individual should result in improved quality of life. Abusive treatment of any kind is not an option.

We firmly believe that no single type of program or service will fill the needs of every individual with autism and that each person should have access to support services. Selection of a program, service, or method of treatment should be on the basis of a full assessment of each person's abilities, needs, and interests. We believe that services should be outcome based to insure that they meet the individualized needs of a person with autism.

With appropriate education, vocational training and community living options and support systems, individuals with autism can lead dignified, productive lives in their communities and strive to reach their fullest potential. The ASA believes that all individuals with autism have a right to access appropriate services and supports based on their needs and desires