



**Autism
Society**

Health Equity: Inclusion & Accessibility



Agenda

- Introduction to the Autism Society
- Vaccine Education Initiative
 - Goals
 - Outcomes
- An Accessible Future



Autism Society: Who We Are

The Autism Society is the oldest leading grassroots Autism organization in the United States with over 70 affiliates across the country.

Mission

To create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

Vision

Creating a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it.



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Autism Facts & Statistics

- 1 in 36 children and 5.4 million adults
- 1/3 are identified with an intellectual disability
- Increased risk of physical and mental health complications & premature death
- Over 70% have at least one co-occurring mental health conditions
 - 40% impacted by anxiety

Vaccine Education Initiative

Leveraging the power
of connection to:



Provide Education




Inspire Confidence



Create Accessibility



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“ Past Experiences

- He doesn't like the medical office setting.
- Does not like unfamiliar people to touch him.
- Hates shots. Hasn't gotten any in years.
- Has extreme anxiety and fear of vaccines.
- He will cry and scream and say he is being tortured.

We have never been given any other options so all we have ever done when he received vaccinations is hold him down while he cries and resists.



Pilot-tested Tips and Tools

- Appointment preparation
- Environmental planning
- Evidence-based practices
- Key resources
 - Communication supports
 - Sensory supports
 - Injection tools
 - Caregiver-informed strategies

Social Narratives & Visual Schedules

 **Getting My Vaccine**



I want to protect myself and people around me from getting sick.




A vaccine is a medicine that protects people from getting sick.




Sometimes you need just one vaccine a year, sometimes you need more depending on the vaccine.


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 What to expect with your **COVID-19 Vaccine**


Before | During | After




- Find a **nearby COVID-19 vaccine** by checking local providers like pharmacies, clinics, or your doctor's office, or by visiting **Vaccines.gov** and entering your zip code.
- Get free vaccines from BRIDGE ACCESS program participating healthcare centers.




- For vaccine appointments or transportation help, contact **DIAL: The Disability Information and Assistance Line** at 888.677.1199, email DIAL@usaginganddisability.org, or visit dial.acl.gov to connect with a specialist online.



- When you arrive to receive your COVID-19 vaccine, you **might need to show your ID and insurance card**.
- No need for citizenship or residency proof.





- To protect yourself and others, it is recommended that you **wear a mask** that covers your mouth and nose.
- Wear a t-shirt**, the shot will be in your upper arm.




- Bring anything that may help **ease anxiety** like a fidget toy, comfort item, preferred video, communication tool, etc.

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 **Getting My Vaccine**

- 


Check in at the vaccine clinic, pharmacy, or doctor's office

☒
- 


Follow a helper to a room

☐
- 

Sit down and roll up sleeve

☐
- 

Nurse cleans arm with a wipe


☐
- 

Nurse will give the shot

☐

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Visual Communication Supports

 **Healthcare Communication Board**


Pain Scale:

- 10: Worst Pain Possible (Red face)
- 9: (Orange face)
- 8: (Yellow-orange face)
- 7: (Yellow face)
- 6: (Light yellow face)
- 5: (Light green face)
- 4: (Green face)
- 3: (Light blue face)
- 2: (Blue face)
- 1: No Pain (Light blue face)

YES **NO**

HURT	HELP	STOP	WANT	WHEN	NURSE
NEED A BREAK	TOO LOUD	TOO BRIGHT	DON'T WANT	WHERE?	VACCINE
BRAVE	NEED TIME	DRINK	SNACK	WHAT?	BAND-AID
DON'T KNOW	BATHROOM	FAMILY	FIDGET	WHO?	WAIT

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 **Healthcare Communication Board**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
Y	Z	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9				

YES **MAYBE** **NO**

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Accessible Vaccine Kits



“ Caregiver Feedback

- He was completely comfortable and calm through what is typically a stressful situation.
- Being so well respected by the staff and volunteers...helped her move past her fears.
- There was no anxiety about getting the second shot because of how smooth the first one went.
- This clinic was a game changer for my family.

Getting this done in a low stress, guilt free environment! It alleviated my own stress as a parent too, about being judged for my child's behavior.

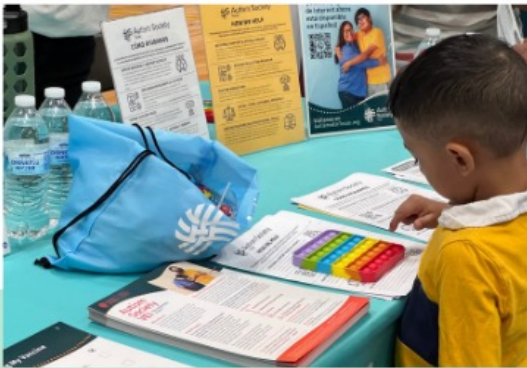
The different tools used to distract my son and make him as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

Also that nobody held him down.





Creating Grassroots Connections



Community Impact



3.4 million
reached through
education &
outreach



52,310
Support
Services



50,000 +
vaccines



315
Community
Events & Activities



515
Clinics across
23 states

Healthcare Training



4,000+
Healthcare
professionals
trained



280+
Community
education
programs



200+
New local, regional,
and national
partnerships

#StrongerTogether



Powerful Partnerships

- APhA - American Pharmacy Association
- Giant Pharmacies
- Immunize.org & Coalitions (National)
- Skippack Pharmacy (PA)
- Nurses Who Vaccinate
- Association of Immunization Managers
- Local Health Departments
- Teaching Hospitals
 - Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
 - UCLA

Healthcare Training



A Lasting Impact

“The Autism Society's presentation at our Regional Adult Immunization Coalition Meetings was nothing short of dynamite. Their insights provided a roadmap for inclusivity, offering tangible and invaluable strategies that healthcare practitioners can readily implement in their vaccine clinics, ensuring a seamless and positive vaccination experience for neurodiverse individuals.”

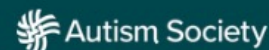
– NYSACHO





What **one** person
may need

All
can benefit from.



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Promoting Acceptance

Empowering Access, Inclusion, & Equity

- Pharmacies
- Preventative Medicine
- Hospitals
- Emergency Rooms
- Urgent Care
- Dental
- Mental Health
- Eldercare & **Beyond**



A man in a Superman costume is posing with a young child in a Batman mask. The man is kneeling and pointing towards the camera, while the child stands next to him. The background is a simple indoor setting with a door and a mirror.

Pharmacists are Super Partners

Trusted messengers in communities!

- Autism Society + Skippack Pharmacy:
 - Offering Accessible Vaccination training to pharmacists and immunizers
 - Hosting community vaccine clinics
 - Sharing Accessible Vaccine Kits, communication boards, visual schedules, and VEI information

Looking Ahead



“


Anything is possible when we commit to collaboration, coordination and communication with each other to make health experiences positive for all.”

– Mitch Rothholz, RPh, MBA



Questions?



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Get Connected

Get connected to the resources and support you need.

Visit our website at AutismSociety.org.

Contact our National Helpline to speak with a trained Information & Referral Specialist:
[800.3AUTISM](tel:8003AUTISM) • info@autismsociety.org

[Connect with a local affiliate](#) or email the
VEI Team: vei@autismsociety.org

Discover how you can [get involved](#) or [give](#) today.

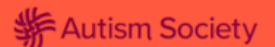
The connection is you.™





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Thank you.

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