



## Finding Direction in a Time of Need: A Review of the Autism Intensive Services Programs Offered by Easterseals Michigan

*Contributed by Erik Gallery, BCBA, LBA, Navigator Manager*

The MiNavigator Program at the Autism Alliance of Michigan works to provide guidance for those seeking resources and options with the varying needs that may be presented through the lifespan of Autism. In doing that work, we assess the types of needs that are presented across the state and identify potential solutions to present to those we serve.

A need that has been continuously present in our evaluation has been the needs associated with those in crisis. In our time of review, we have come to better understand that the specific needs that define a crisis have grown, and with that, so must the resources we identify. While historic services such as emergency responders and suicide prevention lines have remained present, many families and individuals have been in need of comprehensive, behavioral support, that provides care and direction beyond an incident.

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Easterseals Michigan has aimed to meet some of these needs in the implementation of their Autism Intensive Services Programs.

### **Program Overview:**

Easterseals Michigan's (ESM) Autism Crisis Services (ACS) program was developed with Blue Care Network (BCN) for children with ASD who are at-risk of and/or may be cycling in and out of ERs, Hospitals and specialty residential placements. This program offered intensive services for these children and families often in conjunction with traditional ABA/behavioral health services. The individuals and families serviced required more specialized intensive services and family interventions/support to remain in the least restrictive community setting.

Starting on 10/1/22, the ACS program based on its success has been redesigned and expanded into the Children's Intensive Services (CIS) and Adult Intensive Services (AIS) programs. The new CIS and AIS programs will serve most Blue Care Network (BCN) and Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) members in need of intensive services including (when indicated) fully integrated mental health services.

### **Programming includes:**

1. A comprehensive systems model using a multidisciplinary team with a BCBA and mental health clinician.
2. Wrap-around approach with levels of care that holistically addresses the child and family needs.
3. Family involvement and interventions to address their unique challenges.
4. Coordinates care with any existing medical or behavioral health providers.
5. Family and community resources are also activated to sustain the child/family's well-being.

As a long standing, children's behavioral health & Autism services provider, ESM offers

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comprehensive treatment, fully addressing the complex needs of children with Autism and at the same time challenges their families face.

### **Children/families who would benefit from the service:**

1. Have a diagnosis of ASD who experience, or are at risk for frequent crisis care, emergency room visits, or hospitalizations.
2. Co-occurring other serious emotional disorders or medical diagnoses.
3. Exhibit high intensity or complex behavioral and/or medical needs who would benefit from intensive parent training and support in the home and community.
4. Families experiencing high levels of caregiver stress/challenges in managing and meeting the needs of their child with Autism.

### **Services may include\*:**

1. Intensive parent training provided by a BCBA to address targeted high-risk behaviors.
2. Clinical services as needed for co-occurring mental health diagnoses
3. Intensive Case management for coordination of care with all stakeholders with routine progress reports.
4. Respite and other parent support services.
5. Referral to highly qualified professionals and coordination of care for any needed intensive behavioral health services including family therapy.
6. Supports coordination services with community organizations to address any contributing social issues.

\* Individual plan coverage may vary. Copays may apply.

### **How to Obtain or Inquire About Services:**

Call Larissa Heise LMSW, BCBA, LBA – Program Manager at **248.860.4722** for both BCN/BCBSM or ESM's central call center at **1.800.757.3257**



## Back to School: Neurodiversity

*Contributed by AAoM's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee*

The Autism Alliance of Michigan would like to welcome students and teachers back into the classroom for the start of another successful school year! We know that the past couple of years have challenged us all to adapt to the ever-changing health landscape that the pandemic has created. Now, more than ever, it's important for those in the classroom to embrace their peers and adopt an attitude of inclusion.

Many students, parents, and teachers may be curious about what neurodiversity is and how they can teach and understand those that may have unique needs.

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network defines neurodiversity through the following statement,

“Neurodiversity means that no two brains are exactly the same. Every person has things they are good at and things they need help with, and there is no such thing as a “normal” brain. The neurodiversity movement says that people with brain-based disabilities (like autism, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, or mental health disabilities) should be accepted and included in society just like neurotypical people (people without brain-based disabilities).”

When learning about neurodiversity and teaching this in the classroom, it does not just mean that

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those with brain-based differences think differently, it affects many different areas such as sensory processing, executive functions, communication, and coordination. It is not limited only to those that are part of the autism community. Other students (and teachers!) may process information differently due to ADHD, learning disabilities, and even some mental health conditions.

It is important that every student is recognized as being unique. They all have their own ways of processing and learning information. Therefore, certain strategies that work for one student may not work for another. When you learn that an individual is neurodivergent, try to see the world from their perspective and teach them in the way that they learn best. We know it can be difficult to come up with strategies to meet the needs of every child or adult, so we have provided some resources and ideas below.

### **Some Ideas for Educators:**

Provide accommodations for students that have different needs. Incorporate suggestions from speech therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, special education teachers, and even the students themselves into the classroom. Many accommodations made for specific neurodivergent students can benefit the entire classroom—such as including breaks in the day, creating a sensory-friendly space, or including copies of a lecture for students to review at a later time.

One approach that helps to achieve this environment in the classroom is Universal Design for Learning: Cornell University's Center for Teaching Innovation states, "Universal design for learning (UDL) is a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. This means developing a flexible learning environment in which information is presented in multiple ways, students engage in learning in a variety of ways, and students are provided options when demonstrating their learning.

Provide instruction using different modalities. Some students will be more receptive to listening to a

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lecture, while others may prefer to read materials in a book. If you have the opportunity to incorporate multiple methods in your classroom, you'll better support neurodiverse AND neurotypical students. All kids can benefit from multisensory lessons. If kids learn something using more than one sense, the information is more likely to stick. The result is better retention of the skill.

### **Some Ideas for Parents:**

Educate your child and others about neurodiversity It's important to teach your child about their own neurodiversity while educating others in your child's life, like friends and teachers. Here are some ways that you can communicate with your child about their own neurodiversity:

<https://themighty.com/topic/autism-spectrum-disorder/talking-children-neurodiversity>

And here are some easy and age-specific ways that you can teach your child about the neurodiversity that they will encounter in their day-to-day lives:

<https://onlinegrad.baylor.edu/resources/teaching-children-disabilities-inclusion/>

### **Some Ideas for Children/Students:**

For children and students that want to expand their knowledge of neurodiversity, there are a lot of books at all different levels that they can read. Scholastic offers a list of books that discuss neurodiversity at different grade levels.

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/teaching-tools/book-lists/neurodiversity-book-list.html>

We hope that you have a smooth transition back into the classroom and that this information helps to promote a climate of inclusiveness both inside AND outside of school!

### **References:**

<https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/designing-your-course/universal-design-learning>

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/what-we-believe/>



# You are invited to join us for the annual Navigating Autism Today: Grand Rapids Conference



**Friday, October 28th, 2022**

**L.V. Eberhard Center, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids**

The mission of the Navigating Autism Today: Grand Rapids Conference is to provide autistic people and their families with education, resources and support in the areas of early diagnosis, education and adulthood. Our goal is that attendees feel better equipped to navigate their unique journey with autism.

Attendees will spend their day in four breakout sessions hosted by professional speakers. There will be a diverse variety of topics and speakers to choose from so attendees can design their day to best reflect their unique interests. The event also provides a keynote speaker, complimentary breakfast & lunch, networking opportunities and an autism resource fair.

### **Schedule of the Day, Additional Details to Come:**

- 8:30am: Registration, Vendor Fair & Breakfast
- 9:00am-9:55am: Keynote Speaker
- 10:00am-11:00am: Breakout Session A
- 11:10am-12:10pm: Breakout Session B
- 12:10pm-1:10pm: Lunch & Vendor Fair
- 1:20pm-2:20pm: Breakout Session C
- 2:30pm-3:30pm: Breakout Session D

### **COVID-19 Vaccination Policy:**

Although guests are not required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination to attend this event, Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM) reserves the right to update this policy and instate vaccination, masking, and social distancing requirements if an unexpected surge in COVID-19 occurs leading up to the event.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Kris Harrison**



[www.aaomi.org/grconference](http://www.aaomi.org/grconference)

For more information contact Lauren Todaro at **248.590.2766**  
or [Lauren.Todaro@aaomi.org](mailto:Lauren.Todaro@aaomi.org)



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# Special Education Advocacy Summit

## December 1st-3rd, 2022 | Detroit, MI

Improving access to educational opportunities  
and raising expectations for students with disabilities

Presented By



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### Pre-summit Meet & Greet

*Meet and network with other Special Education Advocacy Summit attendees!*

Thursday, December 1st | 6:00pm - 8:00pm | Detroit Marriott Southfield

### Wrightslaw Special Education Law & Advocacy Training

Friday, December 2nd | 9:00am - 4:30pm | Marygrove Conservancy

### Putting Your Advocacy into Action! Interactive Sessions.

*Take what you've learned from the Wrightslaw training and apply it to specific advocacy issues.*

Saturday, December 3rd | 9:00am - 3:00pm | Marygrove Conservancy

Register at [mipaac.org/summit](https://mipaac.org/summit)



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# Upcoming Community Events



Date	Event
October 6-8	<a href="#">2022 Michigan Occupational Therapy Association Fall Conference</a>
October 8	<a href="#">NAMI Walks Your Way - Grand Rapids</a>
October 8	<a href="#">Yoga Saturdays with Jay</a>
October 8	<a href="#">Special Needs Resource Fair</a>
October 8	<a href="#">You Make a Difference Celebration Banquet</a>
October 11	<a href="#">Free Parents Support Workshops</a>
October 11	<a href="#">Peer to Peer Statewide Training</a>
October 13	<a href="#">REC-IT Class: Inclusive Art</a>
October 13	<a href="#">Autism 101 (Online) [AAoM Event]</a>
October 15	<a href="#">ARC Livingston Dance</a>

Looking for more to do?  
Scan the QR Code for  
more events!





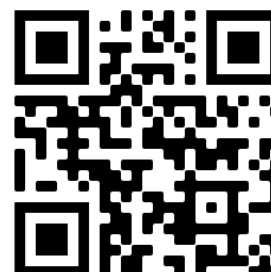
Upbound Staffing, a fully integrated program within the Autism Alliance of Michigan, leads and supports disability-employment initiatives throughout the State of Michigan.

Contact Upbound Staffing:  
Employee Pre-Assessment:  
<https://aaomi.org/employee-pre-assessment/>  
Website: <https://upboundatwork.com/>  
Email: [upbound@aaomi.org](mailto:upbound@aaomi.org)  
Phone: [1-\(248\) 508-8693](tel:1-248-508-8693)



Michigan Parent, Advocate & Attorney Coalition (MiPAAC) is a newly formed statewide group focused on student centered advocacy.

Contact MiPAAC:  
[MiPAAC membership Form](#)  
<https://mipaac.org/>



## MiNavigator

The MiNavigator team is a group of professionals ready to serve and connect those touched by autism with the most up to date services and resources available in our state.

Contact MiNavigator:  
Website:  
<https://aaomi.org/project/minavigator/>  
Email: [navigator@aaomi.org](mailto:navigator@aaomi.org)  
Phone: [877-463-2266](tel:877-463-2266)

Navigators are available Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 5pm

