

# WELCOME *KIT*



**AUTISM ALLIANCE**  
OF MICHIGAN

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**AUTISM ALLIANCE**  
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# **WELCOME LETTER**



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## WELCOME TO AUTISM ALLIANCE OF MICHIGAN (AAoM)

Thank you for taking the time to learn about AAoM's statewide initiatives in serving the autistic community.

Throughout this kit, you'll find information and linkage on our foundational services and events, such as:

- Our MiNavigator Program - AAoM's flagship service, providing resource identification across the state.
- An overview of our Safety services - including access to our GPS Scholarship as it relates to elopement based needs.
- Direction to access our community based trainings - with education focused around understanding autism
- Our comprehensive Resource Directory and Community Calendar - both containing resources and inclusive events for our autistic community and partners.
- *And so much more!*

Whether you are an autistic person, a caregiver, a peer, or just a community member that wants to learn more, we at AAoM welcome your connection!

We hope this guide is beneficial in building your understanding of how we can address the needs you're experiencing. If you wish to learn more about our work beyond these pages, we invite you to visit us at: [Autism Alliance of Michigan](https://www.autismallianceofmichigan.org)

Any additional questions can be directed to: [info@aaomi.org](mailto:info@aaomi.org)

# ABOUT US



**AUTISM ALLIANCE**  
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## WHO ARE WE

Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM) was founded in 2009 out of a need to address significant service barriers for individuals and families living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

We believe that every family should have access to services to assist with clinical and education goals, to create a safety plan to keep their child from wandering, enjoy resources and entertainment venues in their community, and to access housing, transportation, and employment for independent living. In short, we believe no family member should be limited because they have autism.

Through our wide initiatives, AAoM has served over 40,000 people throughout the state and continues to lead efforts to raise expectations and expand opportunities for people touched by autism across the lifespan.

AAoM strives to be a place of hope. Where autistic adults and children can feel understood, valued, and accepted, and where caregivers can feel hard, supported, and embraced. Through our three Pillars of Work – Navigation, Education, and Employment – we provide autistic individuals and families with the tools and resources they need to lead lives that meet their greatest potential.

## ABOUT MiNAVIGATOR

MiNavigator was created to provide free professional consultation to individuals and families across Michigan affected by autism-based needs. Since inception, we have served over 14,000 families directly, and thousands more through our community education and training initiatives.

MiNavigator is made up of an interdisciplinary team of professionals, ranging in backgrounds including clinical services, education, vocational rehabilitation, and lived autism experience. Navigators provide resource identification for a variety of needs as they relate to autism.

Some of these needs include:

- Gaining a diagnosis of autism
- Identifying a local service provider (e.g., ABA, OT, SLP, etc.)
- Locating recreational and community-based opportunities
- Aiding providers in finding support for autistic clients
- *And so much more!*

Navigators aim to serve any person, ranging from parents and caregivers, autistic persons, and service providers. To get started, [click here](#) to complete our contact form.

# **MiNAVIGATOR RESOURCE DIRECTORY**



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## WHAT IS IT?

AAoM is here to help families and caregivers find the right care for their loved ones' needs. Our comprehensive Resource Directory connects our community with hundreds of service providers across the state. The Resource Directory is ever-growing and seeks to cover all areas of Michigan. Users will have access to identify autistic evaluators, clinical service providers, resources related to socialization, independent living, and much more.

## HOW TO GET CONNECTED

To access the Resource Directory, [click here](#).



# **SAFETY PROGRAM**



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AAoM's Safety Program strives to protect and serve families in Michigan that are caring for a person with autism. Our Safety Program works to connect families with additional resources related to the varying needs of one's safety. We do this through individualized consultation guidance, working to understand the unique needs of the person, and identifying options for long-term resolution.

Additionally, the Safety Program includes education of both caregivers and first responders through targeted training events. Our hope is that this education will aid our communities in adapting to the needs that arise in safety situations.

We also offer a GPS Scholarship to families and individuals that are experiencing elopement. Along with our GPS vendor, AAoM is able to provide a wearable GPS device and one year of paid service to eligible applicants. Eligibility for the scholarship is based on the needs experienced by the individual, and presented financial need.

For more information about the Safety Program, [click here](#).

# HEALTH & WELLNESS



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Regular healthcare appointments, including routine vaccinations and annual check-ups, are vital for the overall wellbeing of autistic individuals. By prioritizing health & wellness, those living with autism can feel empowered to lead healthy, fulfilling lives and access the resources and support they need to reach their highest potential.

AAoM prioritizes the general health & wellbeing of its community through various initiatives, such as:

- Maintaining immunization-based resources and integrating further health-focused content into AAoM's Health & Wellness landing page.
- Rotating storytelling between providers, parents/caregivers, and autistic individuals to offer diverse perspectives.
- Connecting with provider partners across the state in offering consultation towards improved access to their physical facilities and services. This has included staff training and collaboration in facility enhancement such as sensory spaces and kits.

To learn more about this initiative's work and aligned resources, [click here](#).

# EVENTS & TRAININGS



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## AAoM'S SIGNATURE EVENTS

AAoM hosts annual events throughout the year with the goal of bringing further acceptance, education, and support for the autistic community. These include our regional **Navigating Autism Today (NAT)** conferences, our **Autism Hero Walk**, and the **Michigan Shines for Autism Gala**.

- **NAT Conferences:** These regionally based conferences seek to disseminate education and share wider resources important to the autistic community. This is an event to bring together families, autistic individuals, and service providers towards a shared goal of identifying further support where needed.
- **Autism Hero Walk:** The Autism Hero Walk has become the largest gathering of the autistic community in Michigan! Families and autistic persons come together during this day of embrace to participate in a community walk and activities in the Detroit Zoo and attend one of the largest autism based vendor fairs.
- **Michigan Shines for Autism Gala:** This is AAoM's largest fundraising event, which supports our organization overall, including programmatic initiatives. It's an event of dining, entertainment, and networking to support our autistic community.

To learn more about these events and how to get involved, [click here](#).

## AAoM'S SIGNATURE TRAININGS

AAoM provides education opportunities across the state with a number of diverse trainings. Thousands of residents, including caregivers and service providers, have participated in these sessions. Our most popular training has been our Autism 101.

Autism 101 is designed to be broadly relevant and impactful for a wide audience, from professionals to community residents. Additionally, this training teaches the common characteristics and needs that may be associated with autism. It provides background on the development of autism and dispels associated myths. It also aims to make the audience aware of resource options as needed.

We host monthly webinars for these sessions. They can be viewed [here](#).

Do you belong to a community organization or workplace that's interested in learning more about autism? We are also able to provide live, organization-wide training depending on availability. Find our Collaboration Request Form [here](#).

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Our Community Calendar is your go-to resource for a wide variety of events hosted by our external partners. From informative workshops and educational seminars to recreational activities and support groups, the Community Calendar showcases a diverse range of opportunities tailored to the unique needs and interests of those living with autism. [Click here](#) to stay up to date with events happening within our network. Do you have an event you'd like to share with the community? Contact us at [info@aaomi.org](mailto:info@aaomi.org).

## MINAVIGATOR NEWSLETTERS

Want to stay up to date with autism support and resources? Our MiNavigator Newsletters are a great way to stay informed about all things AAoM. To view past editions of our newsletters, and to subscribe to our mailing list, [click here](#).

# THANK YOU

## STAY CONNECTED WITH US

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Contact us by phone at (877) 463-AAOM  
or email us at [info@aaomi.org](mailto:info@aaomi.org)

[Visit our website](#)



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