Newest Autism Prevalence Data Showing 15% Increase in Two Years

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new data showing the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) continues to rise. ASDs are a group of developmental disabilities that are often diagnosed in early childhood and can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges over a lifetime. The new rate of 1 in 59 children with autism reflects nearly a 16% increase from two years ago when the CDC released data stating that the prevalence hadn’t risen since 2014, when the rate of 1 in 68 children with autism was announced.

“A decade ago the CDC reported 1 in 125 children had autism and related disorders. Today’s data shows more than double the prevalence of autism in our nation since 2008 and emphasizes the need for better services and supports for people with autism and their families. People with autism live in all our communities – they are members of our families, they are our friends, they are active in our places of worship, they work with us, they teach us, and they are valuable members of society.

“We’ve made progress to raise awareness and improve services, but today’s report reminds us we need to be doing more. We need to be working to ensure that people with autism can receive the individualized supports they need in school, at work, and as they pursue lives in the community of their choosing. We’ve faced many threats recently that could be extremely detrimental to individuals with autism. From an Administration budget request that would have been devastating to people with disabilities; to a state by state effort to cut people off Medicaid, the single largest funding source of services and support for people with autism and their families; to a tax law that jeopardizes critical programs we are still in the fight of our lives and remain ready to advocate for the civil rights of people with autism and other disabilities.

“The new prevalence rates underscore the need to reauthorize the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act which expires next year. This law is the primary vehicle for federal funding for surveillance, autism research, screening and diagnostic services, and professional training. The significant variation in prevalence rates between different states points to the need to better understand the contributing factors and to plan for the service needs across the country.

“An important take away from this report is the need for early diagnosis and intervention. The Arc is a resource to young families across the country when it comes to early intervention. With nearly 650 chapters across the country, The Arc is the largest service provider to people with autism and other forms of intellectual and developmental disability in the nation. The Arc will continue to lead the way and work with people with autism to support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes,” said Peter V. Berns, CEO of The Arc.

Here at The Arc of East Central Iowa we currently serve 210 individuals on the autism spectrum. Recently one of those consumers, a 12 year old non-verbal male, used his talker and told his mom that he wanted more friends. So this year, for the first time, he is going to participate in our Summer Day Program. By the end of summer he’ll have more friends than he’ll know what to do with! At a recent meeting with this gentleman he greeted his Service & Support Coordinator and sat right next to her on the couch. He used his talker and independently pressed the “hair band” button, asking if he could play with her hair. (He likes long hair.) During the visit he also got up to get himself some chips to eat and graciously put one in the coordinator’s mouth to share. These little things show great growth for this young gentleman as he has been known to be very shy, uncomfortable around others, and not willing share unless prompted. The coordinator said, “that experience was so cool to see... it was so laid back and natural... he’s never been that comfortable around me before.” According to mom, “he must really like you!”

We’ve also had a number of individuals with autism participate in our Project SEARCH program. Currently, 8 of those individuals are employed in the community! Here are some of the things that the program does to assist individuals while they do their workplace internships:

- Visual/picture schedules
- Work with the department supervisor to explain the needs of the individuals and work with the staff to revise and/or adapt job tasks
- Additional training with department staff on working with individuals on the spectrum
- Revamp the style of the checklist - for example larger font, more detail, add check boxes

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One of the best parts of my day at The Arc is late afternoon. That’s when the buses start pulling up at our main building. The staff all sit outside as a team, waiting, and one by one they go to each bus, greeting and helping consumers into the building for our Daycare Enrichment Program and Choice. I get to see the smiles on the faces of the consumers and the staff as they see each other. The staff clearly have formed wonderful relationships - showing compassion, caring, kindness and humor. These staff are known as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). DSPs are the life blood of nonprofit organizations like ours who provide long term services and supports.

In order for The Arc to meet the needs of those who use our services, we are constantly recruiting staff to become DSPs. Currently we have 311 DSP staff who are working around the clock, 365 days a year, to meet the needs of the individuals and families that we serve. It takes a special person to be a DSP. First and foremost, you need to have heart and compassion for those that you serve. I recently heard a family member refer to their long-time Arc DSP as “part of the family.” Clearly they had developed a special relationship with the family that was rewarding and beneficial. New staff come to us from all walks of life such as college students, teachers during summer break, nurses, retirees, family members and neighbors of those living with a disability. The top three places where we recruit new staff are from current Arc families, current employees, and Facebook. The fact that current families and employees are telling others to come work for The Arc is a very good sign. It tells us that they value their work here enough to recommend us. Nationally there is a shortage of DSPs. According to ANCOR, the national turnover rate is 45%. The turnover rate for the 1st Quarter of 2018 at The Arc was 14.2%. Although we are pleased with this number, we recognize the negative consequences of staff turnover on the families we serve. Having to find a new DSP that meets your needs, hoping that they are a good match, and developing a new relationship are all things that may take time and cause stress. Because we know consistency and relationships are so important to the families we serve, The Arc is working on several initiatives to increase recruitment and retention of our DSP staff. We recently held several focus groups made up of fairly new DSP staff to talk with them about their experiences with The Arc and how we can improve our onboarding and support of them. We plan to continue these groups on a quarterly basis. We have teamed with IMON who has volunteered to help us develop a recruitment video. And staff are increasing their contact with new DSPs to offer support and trainings. So, if you or someone you know is looking for rewarding work, where you can directly make a positive difference in the lives of many, please contact our Human Resources Department at 319-365-0487 ext. 1054 or HumanResources@arceci.org. We would love for you to join our team of caring and dedicated professionals.

Anne Armknecht, MBA HC
Executive Director

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All interns complete a brief bio about themselves that they share with the department they are in, outlining their strengths and the things that are challenging for them. Staff sit in with them on their interviews to assist them with the process. Typically it is rephrasing the question to help them understand and/or maybe give some type of prompt to assist them in answering. They even assist them with writing things down so that way they don’t have to try to remember it all. Another accommodation that has been done is a video portfolio. If an individual struggles with answering questions in an interview setting, the video can show the individual at work doing various tasks, and also some of them in more leisure time, to showcase their abilities.

Each individual’s disability is different and we are continually finding ways to better teach, support, and accommodate them for success now and into the future.
**International E-mail Exchange: A New Way To See**

By: James Holcombe

In October 2016, The Arc of East Central Iowa (ARCECI) and Together with the Disabled (GmB) of Rodgau, Germany, launched a new program, an international e-mail exchange between its members. Communicreations facilitates the exchange by translating from English to German or German to English, depending on which direction the e-mail is headed.

A real success story has emerged. In December 2016, Marcus of GmB sent a short description of himself to Price of ARCECI, and they hit it off. The next month, Price sent a similar description back to Marcus. Every month since, without fail, Marcus sends an e-mail to Price or vice versa, with support from caring parents.

Whether it be Price finding out that Marcus also likes music and dogs, or whether it be Marcus finding out that Price is half his age but loves things international, both are finding out there is so much to learn out there. And out there means learning about the friend that they don’t see but know through common discovery. Since an e-mail arrives one month, and the response goes out the next month, it is a discovery process that happens over time and with great anticipation. Enabled by e-mail, it acts more like traditional mail in mailboxes.

It is fun to watch this exchange develop into friendship. Price has autism, but now he has another channel of communication. Marcus has a visual impairment, but now he has a new way to see the world. I really love seeing the excitement of each person, Price or Marcus, as they “open their mailbox” each month to see what more they learn about the other. Although they are “disabled,” we have so much to learn from them: how to trust more, how to learn more, how to see more. Marcus says his favorite color is orange. I wonder if that’s the color of this new friendship.

Please contact Whitney Alber, In-home Program Manager, ARCECI, at 319-365-0487, ext. 1022, if you would like to learn more about this international e-mail exchange program.


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**Wings For All**

On Saturday, May 5th, we partnered with The Arc of SE Iowa, The Eastern Iowa Airport and Allegiant Air for Wings For All. This was the first time this program has been in the state of Iowa and we were excited to be a part of it. 58 individuals with disabilities, along with their support staff or family members took part in this educational morning. Participants went through beginning to end of what it would be like to go on a plane for a real trip. Each person got a boarding pass, went through security, waited at the gate, boarded the plane, got to meet the pilot, de-boarded the plane and had a celebration at the end. Of the 58 individuals that took part in the program 31.7% have a future trip scheduled and wanted to do a test run with their loved ones prior to leaving. We would like to extend a thank you to The Arc of SE Iowa, Eastern Iowa Airport and Allegiant Air for allowing us to partner with you on this great event. Also, a special thanks to all the volunteers that helped make the day possible. Stay tuned for future Wings For All events!
Ice Cream Social & Family Fun Night

All friends and families of The Arc are invited to join us for free ice cream, treats, entertainment, & fun for all!
Sponsored by the Staff & Congregation of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church.

Wednesday, June 13th
6:30 - 8:00 pm
St. Mark’s Lutheran Church
8300 C Ave. NE • Marion

Please RSVP to Derek by June 5th at dxayasouk@arceci.org or 319-365-0487 ext. 1056.

Annual Raffle
Support The Arc and YOU could be a winner!

Purchase your raffle tickets today for your chance to win one of our great packages!
- Kansas City Getaway
- Chicago Getaway
- Kid Fun Package
- Omaha Getaway
- Tour Iowa
- Milwaukee Getaway
...plus more!

Drawing to be held June 22nd. Need not be present to win.

$3.00 each | 4 - $10 | 10 - $20
25 - $40 | 40 - $60 | 100 - $100

Save the Date for these Upcoming Events!

- Arc Night at the Kernels • Saturday, July 28th
- Sunday Fun Day • Sunday, September 9th
- Annual Meeting • & Awards Night • Tuesday, September 25th

Project SEARCH Graduation!
Please join us as we say CONGRATULATIONS to this year’s 2018 Project SEARCH graduates!

June 8th, 2018
4:00 - 6:00 PM
Program starts at 4:45
St. Luke’s Center for Women’s & Children’s Health

The Arc’s Unified Softball
Come cheer on our players!
Games will be held Tuesday evenings from June 5th thru July 24th at Ellis Park in Cedar Rapids.

Games start at either 6:00, 7:00, or 8:00 pm.
Complete schedule will be posted to www.arceci.org once released.
Volunteers  
Hours - 706.75


Membership

Arc Advocate


Arc Friend

Nancy Baldwin, Judi & Jeff Barta, Lu Canning, Beverly Dorch, Steven & Mary Evanovson, Jim Gruettner, Brad Hauge, Verne & Joyce Hosek, Paul & Cheryl Kiburz, Gary & Bev Kotowske, Randy Krejci, Dorothy Pool, David & Mary Rater, Richard & Carole Swanson, Rick & Joyce Trotter

Arc Builder

Wayne & Kristine Breckon, Gary & Kelly Brinkmann, Rosemary Gabe, Jim Gruettner, Mark & Sue Hartung, Pete & Delaine Petersen, Phil & Laura White

Arc Angel

Mark & Denise Mitchell

Thank You

General Donations


Memorials

Nancy Albaugh

Robert & Sheryl Dohmen, Beverly & Arthur James, DM Kuehnle, Jane & Kenneth Malaby, Dorothy Russell

Betty Emanuel

Ralph Emanuel

Dan Rockwell


Sara Smith

Ryan Smith

You Make a Difference

Thank you for all of your continued generous contributions to The Arc. We will continue to recognize volunteers, donations and members in the quarterly editions of The Challenger newsletter. February - April 2018.
Consumer Spotlight

Emoni Martin

Hi, my name is Emoni and I live in Cedar Rapids. I will be graduating from high school in May & starting the transition center in the fall.

My Favorite Arc Activity: I love craft night! I like doing things with my hands like crafts or puzzles.

My Favorite Arc Memory: Anytime I get to go swimming with my friends! I love spending time with my friends here at The Arc, I also have enjoyed learning new gluten free recipes from the Healthy Chef groups.

My Favorite Activity: I like to play video games on my DS or listen to my books on tape.

My Favorite Hobby: Drawing cartoons (especially Pokemon) or animals. Listening to books is something else I really like to do.

My Favorite Foods: Sugar cookies are my favorite but I do like any kind of cookie.

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

Cedar Rapids children can begin to build their own library thanks to the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation and Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL).

DPIL mails over 1 million books each month to children around the world. The free program provides one book each month mailed directly to the child’s home from birth until they turn five years old. Each book is carefully selected based on age and reading level, starting with ‘The Little Engine That Could’ and ending with ‘Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!’ on their fifth birthday.

In 1995, Dolly Parton, through The Dollywood Foundation, launched Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library in her home county in East Tennessee. The program was so successful that a national replication effort began in 2000. In 2005, the international book committee was formed, and by 2013, Imagination Library was mailing books to Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia. Today, more than 1,196,000 children are enrolled.

How It Works

To participate, children must be residents of Cedar Rapids and under five years of age.

To enroll, parents or guardians can fill out an official registration form and return it to the Cedar Rapids Public Library. Registration forms can be found at both library locations (Downtown and Ladd) and on the Library’s website CRLibrary.org/Imagination-Library.

A child’s first book should arrive between eight to ten weeks after registration. The only responsibilities of the parent or caregiver are to 1) read to their child and 2) call the Library with any address updates.

Wish List

From every day items to special requests. We are always in need of items to keep our office and programs running. Donations can be dropped off at The Arc’s main office anytime. Thank you for your support!

Kitchen Needs
- Paper Towels / Paper Plates
- Ziploc Bags (Gallon & Sandwich Size)
- Plastic Spoons & Forks / Plastic Wrap
- Scrubbers For Washing Dishes

Snack/Cooking Activity Items
- 100% Juice
- Snack Crackers (Whole Wheat)
- Cake Pans
- Blender

General Supplies
- Baby Wipes / Kleenex
- Dish Soap / Bleach
- Hand Sanitizer, Soap, Soap Refills
- Garbage Bags

Office Supplies
- Sharpies
- Masking Tape
- White Construction Paper

Program Needs
- Batteries (AA, C and D)
- Dolls/Barbies/Transformers/Dinosaurs
- Star Wars & Marvel Toys
- Coloring/Activity Books
  - (Super Hero/Contemporary)
- Board Games For Teens
  - (Scattergories, Pay Day, Life, Clue)
- CDs
  - (Kid Music, Nursery Rhymes)
- Karaoke CDs (w/ Vocals)
- Legos (Ages 8+ / Kinex)
- Whiffle Ball & Bat Set
- Dramatic Play Sets
  - (Kitchen, Grocery Store, Tools, etc.)
- Bingo Prizes (Assortment)
- Bubbles
- Sensory Items
  - (Water Tubes, Soft Plastic Gel Filled Shapes)
- Books On CD For Kids & Teens
- Weighted Blankets
- Newer DVDs (G or PG)
- Paint For Crafts
- Weaving & Jewelry Making Kits
- Bean Bag Chairs

Clothes
- Towels (Bath or Beach)
- Teenage Sized Shorts/Swimsuits
  - (Boys & Girls - Draw Strings or Elastic)
- Dress Up Clothes (Various Sizes)
Choose The Arc of East Central Iowa as your beneficiary when shopping on smile.amazon.com. At no cost to you, Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase price to The Arc of East Central Iowa.

DONATE A CAR \ CHANGE A LIFE

Tax Deduction
Free Towing

1-877-272-2270

www.thearc.org

Identify The Arc of East Central Iowa and we will receive 90% of proceeds. Program administered by Melwood Co. in cooperation w/The Arc of the US

Day Habilitation Services with many Options

Options of Linn County

1240 26th Ave. Court SW Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 • Ph: 319-892-5800

Want a job where you’ll make a difference?

Come work for us!

A Direct Support Professional (DSP) assists with activities of daily living, encourage attitudes and behaviors, assist individuals to lead a self-directed life, and contribute to the community. A DSP also acts as an advocate, in communicating their needs, self-expression, and goals.

Flexibility hours • Work with a variety of ages
Work in various settings • Participate in an assortment of activities

* Must be 18 years or older and have a valid driver’s license.

Applications are available at The Arc or online at www.arceci.org.
Please return to HumanResources@arceci.org or 680 2nd Street SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Member of The Arc of Iowa & The Arc of the United States

The Arc of East Central Iowa
680 2nd Street SE, Suite 200
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: 319-365-0487 • Fax: 319-365-9938
www.arceci.org

Mission Statement
The Arc of East Central Iowa empowers people with intellectual and related disabilities to engage in lifelong opportunities to live, learn, work and play with dignity, freedom and full inclusion in their communities.

Make a Difference
Donate at www.arceci.org

Register Now at www.arceci.org
Registration deadline is June 5th

28th Annual Arc Golf Tournament

Thursday, June 14th, 2018
Hunters Ridge Golf Course
Marion, Iowa

Tee-time 12:30 pm

JOIN US AS WE GOLF FOR A CAUSE!