

Autism Speaks, the nation's largest autism advocacy organization, today announced the launch of its 100 Day Kit, a personalized resource to assist families in getting through the critical time following an autism diagnosis. In addition to receiving the contents of the kit, which includes information about services and service providers in a family's community, those who register will also be connected with a regional Autism Speaks Autism Response Team member who can provide further insight and guidance.

A personalized version of the 100 Day Kit is available by visiting www.autismspeaks.org/community/family_services/100_day_kit.php, where parents of a newly diagnosed child will be asked to fill out a short survey. In response, an Autism Response Team coordinator will contact the family to get additional information so that the 100 Day Kit can be tailored to include resources specific to their child's age and location. The family will receive a binder with pertinent information, as well as contact information for an Autism Response Team coordinator in their region who has been trained specifically to answer questions they may have.

The turn-around time for a new kit will be approximately one week from the date of the initial request. Members of the Autism Response Team will follow up with families four months after they receive the 100 Day Kit to see how they are doing, answer any questions they may have, and solicit their feedback. Families may also download the text of the kit without registering – and without personalization – and use Autism Speaks' Family Services Resource Guide to access local resource information.

The 100 Day Kit includes basic information about autism and dealing with the news of a diagnosis. The personalized kit lists local service providers, support groups, recreational activities, sources of legal information, conferences, local autism and disability organizations and information about the local chapter of Autism Speaks. It provides insight into getting services for a newly diagnosed child and explains various available treatment options. A week-by-week action plan helps walk a family through the steps it needs to take to ensure that it is on the right track. The kit also includes a glossary of terms associated with autism, as well as a safety plan and a list of recommended books and informational web sites.

“When a child is diagnosed with autism, his or her parents are often left feeling overwhelmed and confused about what to do next and where to turn for help,” said Peter Bell, Autism Speaks Executive Vice President for Programs and Services. “This kit will be a valuable tool for these families and will help make the first few weeks and months after diagnosis a little less daunting.”

“Parents need to know that they are not alone,” said Lisa Goring, Autism Speaks Director of Family Services. “The 100 Day Kit and the Autism Response Team will help families get informed, get organized and get connected to important resources and support services in their community.”

The 100 Day Kit was created by the Autism Speaks Family Services staff in conjunction with a professional advisory committee comprised of twelve autism professionals, a parent advisory committee that included parents from across the country, and members of the Autism Speaks Family Services Committee.

Shannon L. Knall

Autism Speaks

Greater Hartford Advocacy Chair

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www.walknowforautism.org/greaterhartford

1 in 150: Autism is an epidemic