
News Releases

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New Competencies to Help Teachers of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

[View the Indiana University Media Release](#) (August 25, 2009)

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), in conjunction with the Autism Society of America (ASA), has announced the publication of professional competencies for teaching students with autism spectrum disorders.

These competencies, the result of a three-year grant funded by the Autism Society of America, will be incorporated into the CEC's resource on highly qualified teachers titled What Every Special Educator Needs to Know and endorsed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

"As the incidence of autism has increased, universities and colleges created their own version of competencies to guide program development," said Cathy Pratt, director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism at Indiana University and chair of the Autism Society Board, who worked on the competencies.

"With the release of these competencies and through the leadership of the Autism Society and the CEC, there is now a national standard that can be used for both course and program creation and for professional development in schools," Pratt said. "This will increase the probability that new teachers will enter the classroom with the skills and knowledge needed to educate students across the autism spectrum."

Family members and individuals on the spectrum played a key role in the competencies development process. Research and technical assistance was provided by the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and partners from the Network of Autism Training and Technical Programs (NATTAP), which includes the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community's Indiana Resource Center for Autism. NATTAP will be integral in the implementation and training of the use of the competencies in school districts. Additionally, the competencies will be incorporated into textbooks used by universities and integrated into a platform of 80 Autism Internet Modules currently under development.

For more information, contact Pratt at prattc@indiana.edu or 812-855-6508. For more information about the Indiana Institute, visit www.iidc.indiana.edu.

About NCATE: The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education ([NCATE](#)) currently accredits 632 colleges of education with nearly 100 more seeking NCATE accreditation. NCATE is a coalition of 33 member organizations of teachers, teacher educators, content specialists, and local and state policy makers. All are committed to quality teaching, and together, the coalition represents more than 3 million

individuals. The [U.S. Department of Education](#) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized NCATE as a professional accrediting body for teacher preparation.

About CEC: The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionalities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice. To learn more about CEC, visit www.cec.sped.org or call 888-232-7733.

About the Autism Society: Founded in 1965, the Autism Society is the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, which exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. Through a nationwide network of local chapters ASA works to increase public awareness about issues important to people on the autism spectrum -- advocating so individuals have access to appropriate services throughout their lifetime, and providing accurate information regarding treatment, education, research and public policy. For more information or to get involved, visit www.autism-society.org.

About Autism: Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disability that typically appears during the first two years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause for autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families today.