

The Need

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the most costly developmental disabilities with an estimated lifetime societal cost ranging from \$1.4 to \$2.4 million per child. Scientific evidence from studies of developmental neuroplasticity document the positive impact of early intervention for children under 3 years of age. The priority for early intervention is evident in the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation to screen all children for ASD at 18 and 24 months. And yet, the average age for diagnosis ASD in the US is 4-5 years, far beyond the window of opportunity for early intervention. Even worse, lower income, African American, and rural families receive a diagnosis up to a year and a half later. This means that most children with ASD miss the window of opportunity for early intervention before age 3, which translates to significantly greater costs for the family and society. Recent advances in early screening and diagnosis make it feasible for experienced clinicians trained on validated tools to diagnose ASD by 18-24 months of age. The problem of early detection extends beyond autism to all developmental disabilities. In spite of mandates for early intervention (EI), only 20% of children who will later require special education at school age are receiving EI services under age 3 in the US. There is an urgent need to build the capacity of communities to improve early detection so families have the opportunity for effective early intervention during the toddler years. Primary care providers are in a critical position to reach the 80% of children who are now missed by the EI system and play a pivotal role in reducing age of screening, evaluation, diagnosis, and entry into intervention.

Potential Impact

Early diagnosis and intervention has lifetime consequences for children with ASD and their families. The overarching aim of Autism Navigator is to offer the infrastructure that helps to build capacity to transform community-based systems of healthcare delivery and education for toddlers with ASD and their families. Autism Navigator is a unique collection of web-based courses and tools developed to bridge the gap between science and community practice. We have integrated the most current research into a highly interactive web platform with extensive video footage to illustrate effective evidence-based practice. The video clips come from the unparalleled library of video footage collected from research projects at the Autism Institute at Florida State University. If a picture is worth a thousand words, imagine what a video is worth. It is our contention that video illustration is a way to rapidly impact knowledge and skills and offer community-viable strategies to engage families and improve professional practice. By interfacing the professional development of primary care physicians, early intervention providers, and other service providers with information and support for families, our collection of online courses and tools can create a synergy that will result in greater impact on healthcare practices. By engaging the community and using technology-supported learning, the potential for sustaining system-wide changes

in early detection and early intervention practices are unlimited. The Autism Navigator platform has the potential to advance science by providing a practical, achievable mechanism for identifying ASD at very young ages through community-based screening. This will enable genetic, biomedical, and intervention research to study younger children than is now possible, given the usual age of diagnosis.



Unique Features of Autism Navigator Courses

- Specially designed video players— to view single, paired, and multiple video clips to compare and contrast behaviors across children or contexts. You are guided by narration to introduce the video clip, point out what to watch for, recap key points, and call attention to noted behaviors.
- Two ways to navigate easily to specific slides — a slide index with a list of the slide titles or key content, and a slide viewer with thumbnails of the slides in the unit.
- Ideas— a section inspired by TED Talks to see brief mini-documentaries or short talks that offer information and inspiration about autism. You can narrow your selection by choosing from a list of themes.
- Tools— a section for easy access to print materials for all units with more information for providers, research briefs, materials to share with families, and links to websites and e-documents related to ASD.

For individual and group pricing information, email sales@autismnavigator.com or call 1-844-427-3457 | 1-844-4ASDHLP