



Autism in L.A.: Today's Realities, Tomorrow's Challenges
A Conversation and Collaboration with Community Leaders

Keeping Expectations High for Students with Autism
Developing a Plan to Create Model Education Programs

Monday, November 28, 2011

(please note this is the Monday after Thanksgiving weekend)

8:30 am - 3:00 pm

The California Endowment

1000 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles 90012

Please join leaders in the Los Angeles area autism community as we use the framework of an "IEP" to have a collaborative discussion on the present effectiveness and set goals for the future of educational programs for students with autism. Through small teams, we will develop model educational programs and discuss ways to overcome barriers to creating these programs. This forum will help shape recommendations for the future of education for individuals with autism and guide efforts to advocate for these proposals with policymakers.

Who should attend?

Leaders of parent organizations, school districts, public and nonpublic schools, service providers, regional centers, and anyone who has an interest in improving the quality and diversity of education programs for students with autism.

Please note: We strongly encourage meeting participants to attend the entire day. Your involvement and input is vitally important. This is a collaborative forum, ***not*** a how-to workshop or a discussion about individuals or specific student issues.

Cost: \$50 per person including lunch
Seating is limited. RSVP early.

To register, go to www.autismla.org

Registration Deadline – November 18, 2011
For more information, call 562-804-5556.

SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

- 8:30–9 am **Registration and Welcome:
Developing a Plan to Create Model Educational Programs**
- 9-10 am **Present Levels of Performance:
The Current State of Education for Students with Autism**
Panelists:
Jane DuBovy - Parent and Special Education Attorney
Robert Farren – Former Director, Southwest SELPA, Member, Autism Blue Ribbon Commission
Emily Iland - Parent and Professor, Special Education, Cal State Northridge
Areva Martin - Parent and President, Special Needs Network
Debbie Moss - Autism Specialist, Los Angeles Unified School District
- What are the best practices and current research on educating students with autism?
 - How can school districts be more innovative and how do they deal with the increase in numbers of students with autism?
 - Self-contained classrooms or inclusion, public schools or nonpublic schools: how do we determine what is appropriate and how do we ensure a range of good options?
 - Are we using the recommendations from California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism?
- 10-11 am **Accommodations, Modifications, and Supports:
Overcoming Challenges for the Future**
Panelists:
Matthew Asner - Parent and Advocate
Pat Grayson-DeJong - Parent and Autism Education Consultant
Ariel Schoolsky, MFT – Supervisor, Verdugo Hills Autism Project
Valerie Vanaman - Attorney at Law
- What is the impact of budget cuts on special education including increased class size, reduced aides and fewer supports?
 - How do we provide appropriate training and support for teachers, staff and administrators?
 - How do we recruit and retain good educators and encourage school districts to support autism programs?
 - How do we assume competence and ensure all students with autism are getting what they need no matter where they are on the spectrum?
 - How do we create a more cooperative and collaborative relationship between parents and school districts?
- 11 am–12 pm **Team Meeting Part 1 - Setting Goals and Objectives
Creating Model Autism Programs in the Schools**
- Participants will be divided into diverse teams that include educators, therapists, regional center staff, advocates, and parents. Teams will design multiple model educational programs that will benefit children from across the autism spectrum. You will remain a part of your team for the remainder of the day.
- Each team will focus one of the following areas:
- Preschool
 - Elementary School
 - Middle School
 - High School
 - Transition Programs

Teams will be told that they have **no barriers** to creating model programs: they will have sufficient funding, supplies, and classroom space; experienced teachers and aides; and, support from administrators. They can design both inclusion and self-contained models on both public and nonpublic campuses. The teams must show how they will measure the success of their programs.

12:15–1:15 pm

**Team Meeting Part 2 - Developing a Support Plan
Working Together to Address the Barriers to Creating Great Educational Programs**

Teams are charged with developing creative solutions to overcome the barriers that prevent us from building model programs in Los Angeles County. Teams must develop ideas that are feasible and could potentially be implemented in our region. Each team will address the following challenges as it applies to the grade level of their team:

- Developing cooperation and collaboration between districts, regional centers and parents
- Improving recruitment and training of teachers, aides and administrators
- Creating meaningful inclusion for students across the spectrum
- Building consistent behavioral programs in the classroom and on campus
- Addressing the needs of the most impacted students
- Preparing all students for the transition to adulthood
- Parent training for the IEP process with an emphasis on low income and Spanish-speaking parents

1:30–2:30 pm

Team Reports

A representative of each team will report to the entire group about the different model programs they have designed and their ideas to overcome barriers to developing these models.

2:30-3:00 pm

Closing Remarks: **Monitoring Progress and Outcomes of Educational Programs in the Future**

Please mark your calendars for the remaining meetings of this Autism in L.A. Series:

**The Autism Epidemic Grows Up:
Adults with Autism Creating Meaningful Lives**
Wednesday, January 25, 2012
The California Endowment

**Harnessing Our Power:
Mobilizing the Autism Community in Los Angeles County**
Friday, March 16, 2012
The California Endowment

**Autism in L.A.: Assessing a Year's Community Collaboration
Creating a Plan to Advocate for and Implement the Recommendations**
Follow Up Annual Meeting
Friday, May 18, 2012
Location to be determined