



**Contact us:**

**Main Office**

806 12th Street  
West Columbia, SC 29169  
800.438.4790 / 803.750.6988  
803.750.8121 Fax  
scas@scautism.org  
www.scautism.org



<http://scautism.org/>



Participant

The Parent-School Partnership Program has been assisting families with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders understand the special education process for almost 20 years. Our Parent Mentors have over 50 years of combined experience.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the South Carolina Autism Society is to equip those affected by autism spectrum disorders with knowledge and supports to maximize their quality of life.

Parent mentors are not attorneys and cannot provide legal advice. Families that need legal representation are encouraged to contact an attorney.



# **Parent-School Partnership Program**

# **A Team Approach**

# What is the Parent-School Partnership?

The Parent-School Partnership program is designed to assist families with students with autism spectrum disorders to reach their functional and academic potential in the educational system. Families will be connected with a Parent Mentor in their area who is a parent of an individual with ASD. The program strives to build collaboration between parents and schools - recognizing that both are essential partners in the education of students with ASD.

## **Parent-School Partnership Objectives**

- To facilitate partnerships between the parents of students with autism and school personnel
- To strengthen mutual respect and understanding between parents and school personnel
- To assist parents and schools in guiding each student with ASD towards knowledge and independence

## **Support for Schools**

- Encourages collaboration and teamwork between schools and families
- Acts as a resource for schools on issues relating to autism spectrum disorders
- Provides information to schools
- Schools and districts may refer families to the PSP program
- Helps schools to involve parents in the education process

## **Support for Families**

- Helps families establish positive working relationships with school personnel
- Provides families with information and resources about autism
- Helps families understand special educational rights and responsibilities
- Provides support in connecting with other agencies
- Encourages parents to be active participants in their child's education

# What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?

Autism is considered to be a spectrum disorder, meaning that the symptoms and characteristics of autism can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations, from mild to severe. This is why the term "autism spectrum disorder" (ASD) is sometimes used. Although autism is defined by a set of specific behaviors, children and adults can exhibit any combination of them with any degree of severity.

## **ASD includes Autism, PDD-NOS and Asperger's Syndrome.**

More than 4 million people in the U.S. have some form of autism, and over 72,000 in South Carolina. The newest prevalence rate now places autism as one of the three most common developmental disabilities, much more common than Down Syndrome. Yet the majority of the public, including some professionals in medical, educational and vocational fields are still unaware of how ASD affects behavior. Progress is being made in developing more effective teaching methods and other interventions for individuals with ASD.