

A young girl with dark hair is shown in profile, blowing a dandelion seed. The background is a bright, green field under a clear blue sky. The dandelion seed is in focus, and several other seeds are shown in motion, floating in the air. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

# National Autism Center

*at May Institute*

MEDICINE, PSYCHOLOGY, EDUCATION, AND OTHER FIELDS OF STUDY ARE  
CONSISTENTLY COMING TO THE SAME CONCLUSION — EVIDENCE-BASED  
PRACTICE IS CRITICAL FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION AND CARE.

National  
AutismCenter<sup>SM</sup>  
*at*  
MayInstitute

The National Autism Center at May Institute is dedicated to supporting effective, evidence-based treatment approaches for autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and to providing direction to families, practitioners, organizations, policymakers, and funders.

An advocate for evidence-based intervention approaches, the National Autism Center (NAC) at May Institute identifies effective programming and shares practical information with families about how to respond to the challenges they face. The Center also conducts applied research and develops training and service models for practitioners. Finally, the Center works to shape public policy concerning ASD and its intervention through the development and dissemination of national standards of practice.

Guided by a Professional Advisory Board, the Center brings concerned constituents together to help individuals with ASD and their families pursue a better quality of life.

Together, May Institute and the National Autism Center are committed to identifying and applying universal standards for the treatment of autism and to providing care and hope to families throughout the country and beyond.

*“In a field rife with fads, pseudoscience, and popular, yet unproven, interventions, the findings of the National Standards Project are a welcome and much-needed counterbalance to much of the hyperbole for both professionals and families.”*

—PETER F. GERHARDT, ED.D., FOUNDING CHAIR, SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AT ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

# Resources for the Community

## National Standards Project, Phase 1 and 2

The National Standards Project answers one of the most pressing public health questions of our time—how do we effectively treat individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

In 2009, NAC completed an unprecedented multi-year project—the National Standards Project, Phase 1 (NSP1)—to establish a set of standards for effective, research-validated educational and behavioral interventions for children on the spectrum. These standards identify interventions that effectively target the core symptoms of ASD. The resulting National Standards Report became the most comprehensive analysis available about interventions for children and adolescents with ASD.

The report covers a broad range of applied interventions and identifies the level of scientific evidence available for each. For the first time, families were able to find specific information about the age groups, intervention targets, and diagnostic populations to which these interventions have been applied. The National Standards Report has become an authoritative source of guidance for parents, caregivers, educators, and service providers as they make informed intervention decisions.

Early in 2015, NAC released Phase 2 of the National Standards Project (NSP2). It provides up-to-date information on the effectiveness of a broad range of interventions for ASD. The review undertaken during Phase 2 updated the ASD intervention literature for children and youth under age 22. It also analyzed intervention outcome studies for individuals ages 22 years and older.

By compiling the results of NSP1 and NSP2, we have produced the largest compilation of studies ever reviewed. NSP2 is the only systemic review of ASD

interventions for individuals from birth through adulthood that takes into account all the available intervention outcome literature published through February 2012.

## *A Parent's Guide to Evidence-Based Practice and Autism*

Everywhere they turn, parents of children with ASD are bombarded with treatment choices—all of which claim to be effective. This manual published by NAC is designed to support parents as they make decisions about their child's treatment. It discusses the complexity of diagnostic evaluations for children on the spectrum, identifies and describes effective interventions, and outlines the importance of professional judgment and using data to guide intervention decisions.

## *Evidence-Based Practice and Autism in the Schools, 2nd Edition*

Educators today face the challenge of providing appropriate services to a diverse and increasingly numerous student population diagnosed with ASD. To achieve this goal, evidence-based practice is essential. This comprehensive manual was produced to assist school professionals as they strive to help these students reach their potential. It outlines topics such as the current state of research findings, professional judgment and data-based clinical decision making, values and preferences of families, and capacity building.

## Professional Advisory Board

NAC's Professional Advisory Board includes scientists and leading specialists in pediatrics, neuroscience, early intervention, education, and advocacy who are nationally recognized for their contributions to the field of autism. Among its members are individuals responsible for major innovations in the treatment of autism over the past 30 years. Pioneers in their fields, they have played crucial roles in the research, development, and dissemination of effective programming. As members of the Professional Advisory Board, they bring their substantial combined expertise to bear on the mission of the NAC.

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