

Advocacy & Testimonials



SBSA Building Community Awareness Through Advocacy Services

The more we build community awareness of autism the more support the individuals with autism and their families have available. This will allow an outcome where the individual and community lead a more enriching life. Our organization has always supported the efforts to achieve this goal. Step By Step Academy (SBSA) prides itself in always being involved in community events, legislation, and working closely with government agencies to improve funding and services offered to the autism community. We work side by side with families to develop them as effective advocates for their families needs. We also help them understand when changes in legislation are being considered and how that affects their loved ones services and funding. We support families by providing advocacy services for a variety of meetings and trainings a family may need. Our attendance in meetings can help a family member feel safer and more confident that they will communicate all the wants and needs that are of concern. No matter the type of meeting educational, medical, government services and even meetings with their loved ones direct care staff and providers. We can provide the support the family needs to assure that based on the current rules and regulations of the state they are accessing funding and services that help them meet the needs of their family. There is no better feeling than providing advocacy services to an individual and/or family in need. It is the most amazing feeling to know that you have helped an individual and/or family in need. It is very rewarding work.

SBSA Parent Testimonials

"When I look at the way Logan used to be – the way he would scream and cry and bang his head, the way he would hit and bite, I'm amazed. I felt very strongly that he would never be independent. Most people who meet Logan now struggle to believe things were ever as bad as they were. My son is living proof that what Step By Step Academy does, works. If it weren't for their program, I do not know where we'd be. Logan is a success story." – Melissa M.

"My son has Down syndrome and autism, and since starting at Step By Step Academy, he has completely blossomed. Murphy went from playing by himself and kicking and pulling

hair to get away from his sister when she wanted to play, to begging to go play with the other kids in the neighborhood. He cries when he can't play with them now. I have never wondered whether Step By Step Academy was the right placement for him - one morning as we were getting ready to leave, Murphy told me that he loved me, and I sobbed. Step By Step Academy gave that to me." – Tina V.

"My family and I actually moved to Ohio from Texas to send Lindsey to Step By Step Academy. We were able to tour the facility while visiting Ohio on vacation, and when we returned home to Texas, nothing in our local area compared. We wanted Lindsey's education to meet her where she was, not where a school district thought she should be, and in all our searching, Step By Step Academy was the only place we felt confident in – it's exactly what our daughter needed most, and we are thrilled to have gotten her here." – Jenny R.



SBSA Helps Professionals Receive Training on Assessment Tool for Autism

Step By Step Academy was honored to be asked for the second year in a row to help the Autism Diagnosis Education Project (ADEP) and the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, in a free training session on the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) for public health and service employees. This training was held on April 22nd & 23rd 2010. About ADEP-As part of the budget bill passed in June, 2007 to secure an appropriation for a pilot early screening program for autism and developmental disabilities in Ohio. The appropriation was renewed in the budget bill passed in



June 2009. The Autism Diagnosis Education Project (ADEP) is actively working to educate physicians around Ohio about screening and diagnosis of autism. In addition, ADEP is working with others that identify children with autism - Help Me Grow, school districts, County Boards of Developmental Disabilities - to collaborate on these types of efforts.

To read more about this please visit
www.concernedaboutdevelopment.org

National Health Care Reform – How does it help families at SBSA?

Well believe it not, there is no mention of autism, but I can sum that up in four little words “including behavioral health treatment.” Doesn’t seem like much huh? Top national advocates believe with the insertion of these four words into the essential core benefit section of the new health care reform bill will provide intensive behavioral treatments, ABA, to persons with autism. Right now we expect these services to be ready for us to access in 2014. I know you have heard that the new reform bill also stops preexisting condition discrimination and it will also offer dependent coverage up to 25 years of age from our clinical team there to inform and support families! Way to go clinical team! Marla Root helped Doug Krinsky host the event this year and this was a great way to spread the news about all the good services and outcomes we see here at SBSA.

Two More States End Autism Insurance Discrimination
Vermont and Missouri have been added to the growing list of states that have passed legislation in 2010 ending insurance discrimination against children with an autism diagnosis. Vermont’s bill, S. 262 was passed unanimously in the House last week, followed by unanimous concurrence by the Senate last Friday. Missouri’s bill, HB 1311 was passed on Wednesday after years of deliberation on the issue and last minute rallying by the community. Both bills are expected to be signed into law by the governors soon. There are now a total of fifteen states that have passed similar legislation to require health insurance to cover autism treatment and another eighteen states are pursuing legislation currently or in the upcoming legislative session. Per Autism Society To read more about legislative issues effecting individuals with autism please visit www.autismsociety.org click on advocacy and then legislation.

Ohio’s Autism Insurance Coverage Bill — House Bill 8

The Autism Insurance Coverage bill - House Bill 8 - was passed by the Ohio House on December 14, 2009! HB 8 prohibits health insurers from excluding coverage for specified services for individuals diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Covered services under the bill include: Habilitative or rehabilitative care (which would include therapies like Applied Behavior Analysis), pharmacy care if the policy, contract, or agreement provides coverage for other prescription drug services, psychiatric care, psychological care, therapeutic care, and counseling services. The bill was amended to include a \$36,000/per cap on benefits, requiring providers to be licensed or work under a licensed provider, delays the effective date of the legislation until January 2011 and allows for six-month reviews of treatment plans by health insurance companies. The bill now moves to the Ohio Senate for consideration. The more difficult task will be securing support for this legislation in the Senate. As always, the Autism Society will alert you as to any new developments. Per Autism Society To read more about legislative issues effecting individuals with autism please visit www.autismsociety.org click on advocacy and then legislation.



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