

CARD COMMUNICATOR



Center for Autism and Related Disorders
at Kennedy Krieger Institute

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Connect with CARD – April 2022

ROAR for Kids

Next month, Kennedy Krieger Institute will host its first in-person event in two years—ROAR for Kids!

We hope you will join us for this fun family event on **Saturday, April 30**, at **Oregon Ridge Park in Cockeysville, Maryland**. ROAR for Kids will once again feature a **5K run and a low-mileage fun walk**, which participants may join **in person or virtually**. Additionally, the event will host a **family festival**—back by popular demand—which will include princesses, superheroes, big trucks, carnival games, the very popular **Mascot Challenge** and more!



Event check-in opens at 6:30 a.m., with both races and the family festival kicking off at 8 a.m. The Mascot Challenge will take place around 9:45 a.m., and the event will end at around 11 a.m. When registering for the event, friends and families of the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) may join the CARD Dream Team or create their own team and choose to support CARD.

[Click here to join the CARD Dream Team!](#)

The funds raised from your registration and additional fundraising efforts will be used to purchase intervention materials and equipment to support children's learning.

Please contact Tara Lewis at LewisTa@KennedyKrieger.org if you have any questions, or if you would like to connect regarding additional fundraising opportunities to support CARD. **We hope to see you there!**

Autism Acceptance Month Miniseries

This April, Kennedy Krieger Institute's Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) hosts its Autism Acceptance Month Miniseries, a virtual speaker series that recognizes the significance of Autism Acceptance Month. Experts in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) will provide valuable insights during four prerecorded sessions on Thursdays, from noon to 1 p.m. EDT. Registration is free. Parents, caregivers, professionals and community members may register now at KennedyKriegerCARD.Eventbrite.com—we hope you'll join us!

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Autism Acceptance Month Miniseries Schedule

Panel 1: Autism: An Evolving Perspective

- Thursday, April 7, noon–1 p.m. EDT
- Hear from two autistic self-advocates

Panel 2: Briefing on Innovative Autism Research at CARD

- Thursday, April 14, noon–1 p.m. EDT
- Hear from four of CARD's internationally renowned researchers

Panel 3: Evidence-based Insights Into Medical, Genetic and Psychiatric Conditions and Care in Autism

- Thursday, April 21, noon–1 p.m. EDT
- Hear from CARD medical and psychiatry experts

Panel 4: Autistic Adults and Employment

- Thursday, April 28, noon–1 p.m. EDT
- Hear from Kennedy Krieger experts on transitioning to adulthood and employment



CARD Research Updates

TEAMS Infant Siblings Study

Researchers at Kennedy Krieger Institute are studying how infants learn language early in life through **The Early Assessment of Language Markers in Infant Siblings Study**. We hope to improve ways to identify children who may benefit most from early intervention. Infants under 6 months old with an older sibling may be eligible to participate in brain and behavioral developmental assessments. View the [study flyer](#) to learn more.

First STEPS: Social Communication for Toddlers Engaging Through Play

Receive early intervention by participating in our research study **First STEPS: Social Communication Intervention for Toddlers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**. Children between 18 and 33 months old may be eligible to participate. View the [study flyer](#) to learn more.

Thank You!

Dine Out for Autism Update

In November of 2021, the Friends of CARD Executive Committee partnered with all eight of Liberatore's restaurants and organized a highly successful Dine Out for Autism fundraiser. Each Liberatore's location, along with Liquid Libs and both Lib's Grill locations, participated, and in total, Friends of CARD raised more than \$2,400 for CARD. It was a great event, and we thank everyone who supported Dine Out for Autism that day! Special recognition and thanks go to our Liberatore's partners, and to our Friends of CARD Executive Committee for their time and efforts on this friend-raising and fundraising event.

The Friends of CARD Executive Committee is planning additional friend-raising and fundraising events for 2022. Look for information about great opportunities to get involved soon. In the meantime, there are ways you can support CARD right now! Please consider [joining CARD's ROAR for Kids Dream Team](#). Funds raised will be used to purchase intervention materials and equipment to support children's learning.

SPARK for Autism's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative

Led by Dr. Ericka Wodka and Dr. Rebecca Landa, the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute has been a SPARK research site for the past six years. SPARK, funded by the Simons Foundation, is the largest genetic study of ASD to date. The goal of SPARK is to build the largest long-term research cohort to better understand the causes of ASD and to help improve lives. There are over 275,000 participants in SPARK, of which over 100,000 are autistic. There is a wealth of data available through SPARK to researchers, and resources for families. In fact, Dr. Wodka published [two papers using SPARK data](#) in the last year, and faculty members of CARD have provided [live webinars that are archived](#) on the SPARK website.

This past December, SPARK announced a supplement award aimed at increasing the engagement and participation of Black and

African American families and individuals. Led by Dr. Garland Jones and Dr. Wodka, our CARD SPARK team submitted an application, "Ignite inclusion: Raising awareness and increasing the participation among Black and African American families participating in SPARK," which was one of five applications awarded the supplemental funding. During the summer of 2020, we hired Eva Queen as our first equity, diversity and inclusion outreach coordinator to help us better reach underserved communities, and now with the additional SPARK funding, we have more support to do just that!

To learn more about SPARK, please visit the [SPARK FAQ](#) page, and feel free to contact our SPARK research coordinators, Kyla Minton (Minton@KennedyKrieger.org) and Megan McTaggart (McTaggart@KennedyKrieger.org), for assistance.