

Autism Beacon ™



The Autism Beacon is Lighthouse Autism Center's virtual monthly newsletter. Take a look and learn about new center updates, staff spotlights and valuable resources for the autism community!

Lighthouse Center Happenings

LAC Announces New Center to Open in Lincoln, Nebraska

Lighthouse Autism Center is opening a new center in Nebraska! Our new center is preparing to open in Lincoln, NE, in the early summer of 2024 and will feature beautifully remodeled spaces to promote natural and play-based learning. Lincoln Autism Center will provide services to over 30 families and create over 45 new jobs in the area. We cannot wait for you to see it!



Follow our Facebook page for progress updates and more information!

[View Updates on Facebook](#)



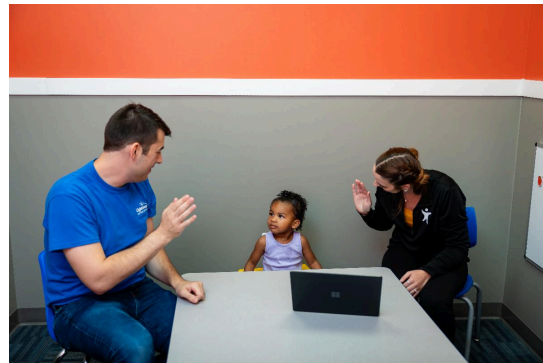
Social Skills Groups for Iowa Learners

Many children with autism experience challenges with social skills including communication, social interaction behaviors, emotional regulation, engagement, and simply meeting other peers with similar skills or interests. In order to better meet the social needs of our learners, Lighthouse is now offering social skills groups at select center locations including our Davenport, Clinton, North Liberty, and Marion centers (Iowa center locations).

[Learn More](#)

Appointments Available for Autism Evaluations

Lighthouse Autism Center is now offering autism evaluations for children 2-6 years old. Appointments are available at every Lighthouse location. Children with autism often show signs in infancy but may not be diagnosed until much later. Early signs of autism in babies or toddlers often go unrecognized, simply because parents or caregivers may not know what to look for. One of the most important things you can do for your child after birth is to learn the early signs of autism.



[Learn More About Autism Evaluations](#)

Sensory Items for Autism

Sensory items for Autism can have profound benefits for Autistic children, including enhancing motor skills and providing comfort and calamity. Here



are some of the best sensory toys to purchase.

[Read More](#)

Staff Spotlight: Ruthie



Ruthie is a Registered Behavior Technician Trainer at our East Moline center and has been with Lighthouse Autism Center since July of 2023. She is a mom to a seven-year-old boy and her favorite hobbies are writing poetry and painting. Ruthie also enjoys trying new things and meeting new people. She is a huge movie buff and her idea of a perfect evening is sitting on the couch watching a good movie and eating popcorn.

What made you decide to apply to Lighthouse?

I made a choice years ago to work in different fields- never doing the same thing twice. I was determined to find my purpose. I worked jobs as complicated as the government and as simple as a warehouse. There was one job I could never get away from- children. Everywhere I went I found myself teaching or molding a child from different walks of life. I applied at Lighthouse not knowing what was in store. I saw the website and was sold almost immediately. I knew I could be a teacher but never knew about being a Registered Behavior Technician. I live to try things I've never tried, so I applied, and now my life is filled with so much more purpose.

What is your favorite part of working at Lighthouse Autism Center?

My favorite part of working for Lighthouse is its solid foundation, which is very important for autism and the people working with individuals on the spectrum. Change is good, but too much change creates inconsistency. I love the energy as well. Everyone here is happy to be here and this is something I rarely saw throughout my many career choices.

How would you describe your experience working for Lighthouse?

My experience here at Lighthouse has reached new levels mentally for me. I usually go into the workforce and grasp everything at the beginning and when I have reached the ceiling of elevation, I quit and move on to another career. Here at Lighthouse, there is no limit. There are more opportunities and space to grow, if you are willing to work for it. I'm constantly challenged, creatively, mentally, and physically. I love the fact that I can be my authentic self and use my creativity to help each learner reach their goal.

Do you have a favorite memory from your time here?

My favorite memory from my time at Lighthouse happened within my first month of joining the team. When I was in training, I was so worried that I was not grasping all the terms and understanding how to run the programs. Every step of the way someone on the team was yelling "Go Ruthie" or "You got this" and it gave me the push and encouragement I needed to succeed. Now I can do the same for other trainees.

What advice you would like to share for those interested in a career at Lighthouse Autism Center?

While I do not have a college degree and I have never worked with children diagnosed with autism before Lighthouse, within 6 months I have advanced to an RBT Trainer through hard work and training from my fellow team members. Something that has not been easy as a single parent. If you are afraid because you believe you are not enough or you can't help a child with autism, then you are the right person for the job because you have humility. All of this to say: "The sky is not the limit; it is only a point of reference." ---- Pastor Frank R. Livingston.

Autism Job Opportunities

Tell Us Your Story

Resource of the Month: Insource

In 1975, a group of parents in South Bend came together primarily because they wanted to understand what "going to school" would mean for their children with disabilities. Prior to that time, most of those families had children who, because of their disabilities, were not permitted to attend public schools. The group of parents worked with their local schools to understand the requirements of a new law that said that children with disabilities, as all other children, are entitled to a free appropriate public education. They took that knowledge and information and shared it with other families in the South Bend community.

The mission of IN*SOURCE is to provide parents, families, individuals and service providers in the state of Indiana the information and training necessary to help assure effective educational programs and appropriate services for individuals with disabilities.

[Visit Website](#)

Upcoming Community Events & Resources

Promoting Independence: Living and Transportation

February 13, 2024

5:00pm - 6:30pm - Online

Northstar Career Center presents:

Promoting Independence: Living and Transportation



[Reserve Your Spot](#)

Learn about:

- Steps to take now in order to support independent living in the future
- Programs available in the community that support independent living
- Funding sources that exist which promote independent living
- Transportation planning
- Steps to promote individual safety

Keynote Speakers:

Sarah Sheppard Thompson -

Commonwealth Autism

Kelsey Calder - Travel Trainer with GRTC

Father's Virtual Autism Support Group

February 17, 2024

5:30pm - 7:00pm EST - Online

In this platform Autism Fathers can attend a virtual Zoom session with other fathers who are on the Autism Journey.

This can be done in the comfort of your own home, office or remotely on the road via your phone.

Our facilitator is world renown Dr. Robert Naseef, who has a distinct voice as a psychologist and father of an adult son with autism. He has spoken around the country and trained professionals



[Learn More](#)

internationally in treating autism and supporting families.

Talks With The Arc Trust

February 21, 2024

12:00pm - 1:00pm - Online

Do you or a loved one receive government benefits like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid? Not sure on how to save for the future and keep these benefits?

In Talks with The Arc Trust, we'll cover the options that people have when saving for the future, the ins and outs of those options, and how they work with various government benefits.



[Register Online](#)

Keeping Runners Safe - Safety & Autism

February 27, 2024

6:00pm - 7:00pm EST

This virtual, one-hour presentation is designed for parents and caregivers of children who engage in behaviors that may put their safety at risk.

Participants will learn to identify and prepare for risky situations and make a plan to increase their child's safety. This presentation focuses on children and youth with autism in high risk situations but all parents and professionals are welcome to participate. Materials include a checklist to help assess potential risks and start to build a safety plan specific to your child.



[Learn More](#)

Sensory Open Gym

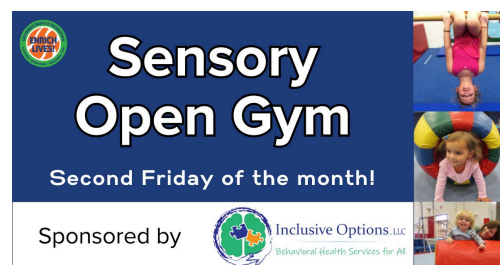
March 8, 2024 & April 12, 2024

6:00pm - 7:00pm

Columbus Gymnastics Center

405 Hope Ave, Columbus, IN 47201

During this time, our gym is specifically dedicated to providing a fun and safe space for children ages 2 to 14 who experience Autistic Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, or who have specific sensory needs. Our entire facility is set aside so that attendees can run, jump, swing, and climb on our equipment in a calm



[Learn More](#)

and comfortable setting. Siblings without disabilities or sensory requirements are more than welcome to also attend! This is a free event and is sponsored by Inclusive Options LLC.

Museum My Way

March 12, 2024
4:00pm - 7:00pm
3000 North Meridian Street,
Indianapolis, IN

An adaptive museum experience

Capacity limited. Registration required. This special event is an opportunity for visitors with disabilities and/or sensory sensitivities to experience the museum in a new way. Families and groups of all abilities are welcome to play and learn together!

Sensory modifications to the museum environment include:

- Limited capacity
- Quiet area with sensory items
- Some music is turned down or off
- Edited lighting effects in some areas—Take Me There®:
Greece will be set in "daytime" mode



[Learn More](#)

**Providing Autism Therapy Services to Families in Indiana, Illinois,
Michigan, Iowa and Nebraska.**

[Find A Center!](#)

