

AUTISM ASSESSMENT TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

By the Autism Assessment Capacity Project

ABOUT US

The Autism Assessment Capacity Project (AAP) began in 2021 to investigate and address the issues contributing to the limited autism diagnostic capacity in Oregon. It is a collaboration between leaders at Health Share of Oregon, OHSU Institute on Development and Disability, Providence Children's Development Institute, Legacy Randall's Development & Rehabilitation Program, CareOregon, and Children's Health Alliance and was seed-funded by Health Share of Oregon starting in 2023.

The AAP's multiple initiatives aim to address autism diagnostic capacity and access at multiple levels through increasing workforce capacity, collaboration between health systems, and fiscal sustainability of diagnostic providers. AAP's PCP Training Program is one such initiative and aims to equip providers with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide autism diagnostic and referral services, thus significantly improving access for children across Oregon.

TRAINING DETAILS

- PCPs (MD, DO, PA, NPs) participating in the training program are trained on the use of assessment tools, including the DSM-5 Parent Interview and STAT™ (an observational tool to assist with autism diagnosis).
- Upon completion of the 36+ hour AAP training, PCPs are STAT™-certified and able to begin administration of quality autism diagnostic assessments for children 18-47 months (within specific inclusion criteria).
- The curriculum and format of AAP's Autism Diagnostic Assessment Training Program for PCPs is based on validated programs in other states.
- Studies from other states have found that trained PCPs can reliably assess children (within specific inclusion criteria) with an accuracy consistent with the interrater reliability of those doing "gold-standard" autism diagnostic assessments (e.g. ADOS-2).

BACKGROUND

- Children in Oregon are waiting up to 2+ years for autism assessment due to a service provision scarcity, which is exacerbated by distance from urban specialty care centers. Due to workforce trends, wait times are projected to worsen.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics listed "Autism Diagnosis by Pediatricians" in their Top Ten Resolutions for 2023.
- AAP's first cohort of PCPs was trained in 2024 and, by completion of the training, all providers were STAT™-certified and >70% were implementing diagnostic assessment in their practices.

AAP-TRAINED PCP TESTIMONY:

"Learning from experts in the field how to assess and diagnose Autism as well as initiate interventions which are fundamental in ensuring positive future outcomes has truly added to my repertoire of clinical skills. Learning for family/parent support groups and community resources also have given me tools to help guide families to learn and cope with the new diagnosis. I am grateful to be part of this pilot program and I am energized to continue to grow with it."

Please contact AACPtraining@ohsu.edu if you are interested in learning more.

References

1. Broder-Fingert, S., M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, & Swoboda, S. L., M.D., FAAP (2024). Autism diagnosis in primary care promotes equity, benefits families. American Academy of Pediatrics News. <https://doi.org/https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/28469/Autism-diagnosis-in-primary-care-promotes-equity?autologincheck=redirected>

2. American Academy of Pediatrics (n.d.). Autism Diagnosis in Primary Care. https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/autism/autism-diagnosis-in-primary-care/?_ga=2.137622579.2051707199.1726090187-512800032.1723059167