

Resources for Families Affected by Autism

Informational Resources

- Autism Speaks: [Autism support, resources & advocacy | Autism Speaks](#)
- ABA Centers of Virginia: [Virginia ABA Therapy | Autism Therapy | ABA Centers VA](#)
- CDC: [Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\) | Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\) | CDC](#)
- Autism Foundation: [Autism Foundation Nonprofit](#)
- Autism Society - Central Virginia: [Autism Society Central Virginia | Support, Services, Help, Advocacy](#)

VCU Specific Resources

- Child Development Clinic
- <https://www.chrichmond.org/services/developmental-pediatrics/>
 - Intake Packet to be filled by Families: <https://www.chrichmond.org/media/chrichmond/content-assets/media/chrichmond-media/file/2023-10-23-cdc-intake-packet.pdf>
 - "While You Wait" - Child Development Clinic Informational Sessions Offered every 1st Friday at 12 pm and every 3rd Friday at 3 pm
 - Registration Link: <https://redcap.vcu.edu/surveys/?s=KNYJXXWNN3XDTMKN>

Extracurricular Activities

- Jacob's Chance
 - Local organization that offers activities for individuals 5-40 years old with intellectual, physical, and/or complex disabilities. Program options can be found on their website and include sports, adventures, educational enrichment, and community socials.
 - [Home | Jacob's Chance](#)
- River City Inclusive Gym
 - Offers inclusive gym classes with 1:1 instruction and adaptive equipment for children with developmental differences. In addition to their 10 week sessions they offer birthday parties.
 - [RCIG](#) (804) 239-0695
- Urban Air Adventure Park
 - Sensory Friendly Jump every 1st Monday of the month from 4 pm-8 pm specifically designed for children with Autism and special needs to enjoy the trampoline park without loud music and flashing lights.
 - [Sensory Friendly Play | Fun for Everyone](#)
- Richmond Urban Dance
 - Offers a free hip hop dance class for special needs dancers. Richmond Urban Dance is designated as an "Autism Friendly Community." RUD also offers a Therapeutic Dance Program which is

an 8-week summer program meant to promote emotional and mental well-being in youth.

- <https://richmondurbandance.com/community-outreach>

Camps

- Summer Camps with Jacobs Chance
 - Rotate yearly and include various options such as field-trip based camps, culinary arts, sports, and visual arts. Ages vary. Financial Assistance is Always Available through the organization.
 - [Summer Camps | Jacob's Chance](#)
- Surfing for Autism
 - Program in the Outer Banks, North Carolina. Individuals with Autism are provided an inclusive beach experience and the opportunity to learn to surf. Typically in mid-July with registration in April.
 - [SurfingForAutism](#)
- SOAR365 Summer Camps at Camp Baker
 - Programs for children and adults with disabilities with overnight and day camp options.
 - [Summer Camp | SOAR365](#)
- Camp LIGHT
 - Summer Day Camp program for individuals with special needs and at-risk youth in Waynesboro, VA.
 - [Creative Works Farm - Proud Home of CampLIGHT](#)
- For more camp options, visit the Camp Resource Directory on the Autism Society of Central Virginia website: [Camps - Autism Society of Central Virginia](#)

Local Organizations Supporting Neurodivergence

- Autism Friendly Communities
 - Look for this designation on local organization and company websites! This means that the company's team has participated in comprehensive training on Autism with the Autism Society of Central Virginia.
 - <https://ascv.org/autism-friendly-communities/>
- Perk! Coffee & Lunchbox
 - Very inclusive and friendly environment for local coffee/lunch
 - 2620 Buford Road, N. Chesterfield, VA 23235
- Science Museum of Virginia
 - Museums can be overstimulating, but the Science Museum of Virginia has a Sensory Guide and Sensory Backpacks which include noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys, sunglasses, and activity sheets for children on the autism spectrum or with sensory concerns. They also have "Minds of All Kinds" events throughout the year which are free, sensory friendly evenings at the museum.
 - [Autism Spectrum and Sensory Concerns | Science Museum of Virginia | Richmond, Virginia](#)

- [Minds of All Kinds - Science Museum of Virginia | For curious-minds of all ages!](#)
- Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens
 - Offers a sensory guide and sensory backpack for visits for individuals with autism. Backpacks include noise-cancelling headphones, sunglasses, sensory fidget toy, and a communication card. Backpacks can be checked out in the Library or at Guest Services in the Robinson Visitor's Center.
 - <https://www.lewisginter.org/visit/accessibility/autism-spectrum-and-sensory-concerns/>
- Children's Museum of Richmond
 - Offers sensory charts for families with information on the tactile, visual, auditory and movement opportunities at each exhibit. Also denotes quiet zones. They also offer social narratives and visual schedules to help prepare children for their visits. Sensory backpacks including a 12 sided fidget-cube, weighted vest, mesh marble fidget toy, noise-canceling headphones, a communication card and sunglasses are available.
 - Sensory Friendly Nights are free for families and occur every 3rd Friday from 5pm-7pm. Location alternates so be sure to check the schedule!
 - <https://www.childrensmuseumofrichmond.org/accessibility-inclusivity/>

Service Dogs

- Canine Companions
 - People with physical or developmental disabilities who can demonstrate that a service dog will enhance their independence or their quality of life are qualified to apply. There is no charge for a Canine Companions service dog.
 - [Home - Canine Companions](#)
- Service Dogs of Virginia
 - This organization trains dogs to support individuals with a wide range of needs including children with autism (ages 2-10) and adults with autism (age 18+) at no cost to clients.
 - [Service Dogs of Virginia | Empower Independence Today](#)
- Paws for a Purpose
 - Program aims to provide service dogs to individuals who may not have the means to afford them. Their dogs offer support and assistance to individuals on the autism spectrum and help provide comfort, emotional regulation, and enhance safety and independence in daily life.
 - [Paws for Purpose - Non-profit Service Dogs | Snowy Pines](#)

Resources for Safety

- National Autism Association's Big Red Safety Box

- The Big Red Safety Box is a box of tools and information to help individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder who may be prone to wandering, elopement, or fleeing behaviors. Families can request the toolkit free-of-charge from the National Autism Association Website or via the QR code below:

- <https://nationalautismassociation.org/big-red-safety-box/>



- AngelSense
 - AngelSense is an assistive technology including a wearable device for an individual with special needs and an app for the caregiver that allows for proactive monitoring and alerting. This helps with safety while allowing for fostering independence in individuals with Autism who may be prone to wandering or elopement.
 - <https://www.angelsense.com/>
- The Wallet Card Project
 - This initiative promotes safety between individuals with intellectual disabilities and law enforcement. This program offers personalized communication cards for individuals 14 years of age and over. Their website also has several informational/training videos about safety in various situations.
 - <https://www.justdigit.org/wallet-cards/>
- Project Lifesaver
 - Premier Search-and-Rescue program operated by public safety agencies to help protect people with a wide range of disorders, including Autism, who are prone to wandering. There are multiple participating agencies throughout Virginia including several police departments and fire departments.
 - <https://projectlifesaver.org/>

College Scholarships and Grants

- Grants
 - Autism Cares Today Grant
 - Grant provides quarterly funding assistance to families throughout the US to provide access for individuals and families affected by autism. Families can apply for grants below:
 - <https://www.act-today.org/apply-for-grant/>
 - MyGOAL Autism Grant Program

- Grant program to support families caring for individuals with autism, awarded once per year with 25 grants awarded yearly equally \$1000 each.
- <https://mygoalinc.org/mygoal-autism-grant-program/>
- Autism Speaks
 - Informational website as mentioned above. Has a list of several other grant opportunities for families affected by autism.
 - <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-grants-families>
- Scholarships
 - Organization for Autism Research
 - This program awards a \$3000 scholarship for students across the autism spectrum who are pursuing full-time, post-secondary, education in any of the following: four-year undergraduate college or university, two-year undergraduate college, trade school, technical school, vocational school, or cooperative life skills program.
 - <https://researchautism.org/self-advocates/postsecondary-scholarships/>
 - Microsoft Disability Scholarship
 - This program is sponsored by Scholarship America and offers \$5000 to a high school senior on the autism spectrum who plans to attend a two or four year college, university, or vocational-technical institution.
 - <https://scholarshipamerica.org/scholarship/microsoft-disability/>
 - Anne Ford Scholarship
 - This program is sponsored by the National Center for Learning Disabilities and is \$10,000 (\$2500/year over 4 years) for students with learning disabilities, including individuals on the autism spectrum with learning disability.
 - <https://nclld.org/scholarships-awards/anne-ford-scholarship/>

Miscellaneous

- Floreo Virtual Reality Therapy
 - A therapy tool that uses VR to help teach social, communication, behavioral, and life skills to neurodiverse individuals and others who could benefit from practicing these skills Developed by professionals trained in neurodiverse learning and designated as a breakthrough device by the FDA.
 - <https://floreovr.com/>
- PEERS RVA
 - Online and in-person social skills training for teens and young adults in Richmond, VA with autism. Classes are broken into ages 14-18 and ages 18-30.
 - <https://peersrva.com/current-in-person-classes/peers-social-skills/>