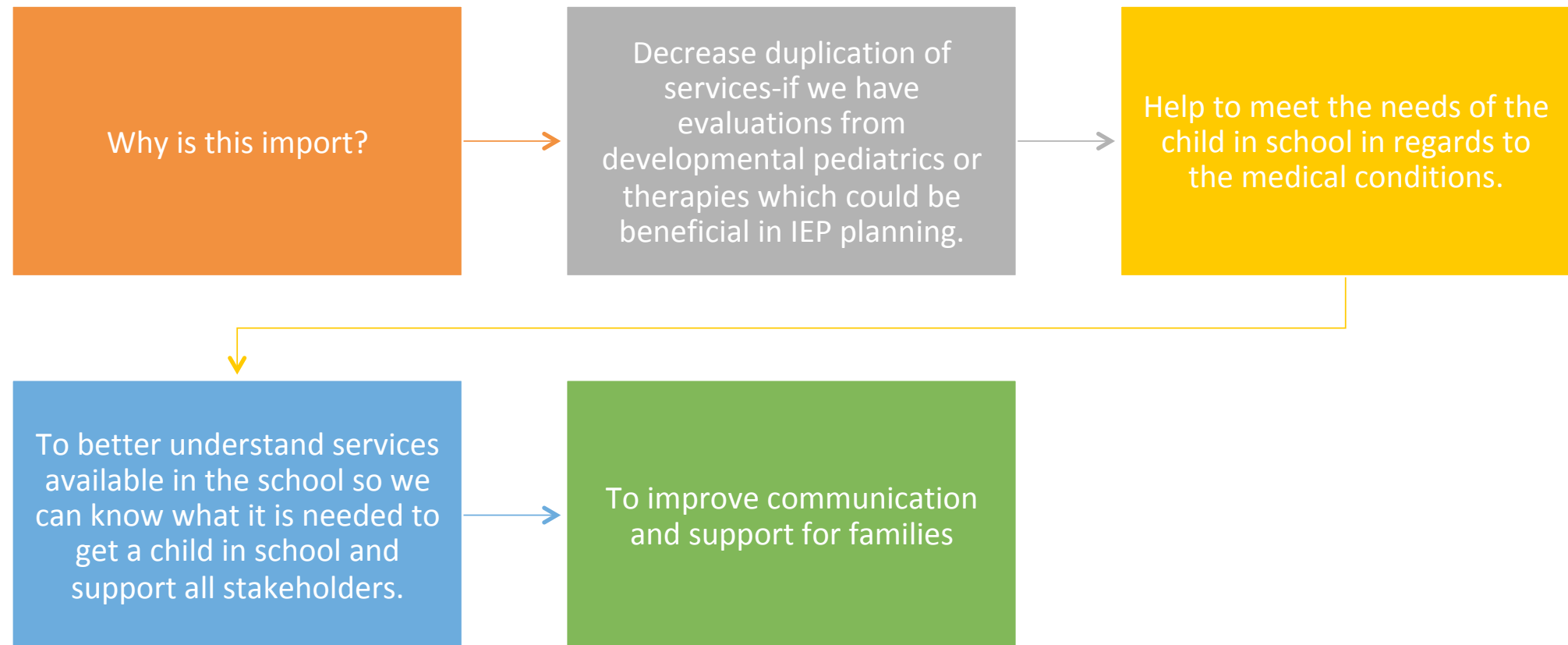


VALLEY HEALTH PARTNERS FQHC-LA

Mission

Partnering with the people of our community to achieve health and wellness through the delivery of extraordinary care that is compassionate, accessible and affordable in a family-centered and culturally sensitive environment.

School and Primary Care Connect



A scenic view of a Swiss village, likely Lucerne, nestled along a calm lake. A prominent church with a tall, dark spire stands on the left bank, its reflection visible in the water. The village features traditional European architecture with white walls and dark roofs, some with wooden balconies. The background shows steep, forested mountains under a soft, hazy sky. The foreground is filled with out-of-focus green foliage, creating a sense of depth. The text "IT TAKES A VILLAGE!!!" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!!!

MAGNITUDE

- **Newest numbers for this year are now saying 1 in 36 children are affected by Autism (CDC, 2023).**
- **For the first time minority children have surpassed their white counterparts in diagnosis (CDC, 2023).**
- **AVERAGE MEDICAL COST IS 11.5 BILLION TO 60.9 BILLION PER YEAR**
- **AVERAGE COST FOR MEDICAL CARE FOR A CHILD ENROLLED IN MEDICAID IS 10,709 DOLLARS ANNUALLY**
- **AVERAGE COST FOR BEHAVIOR THERAPY PER CHILD IS BETWEEN 40,000 TO 60,000 DOLLARS A YEAR**



Facts

Affects 70 million people world-wide

50 percent of those with autism will wander or bolt from safety

Every year 50,000 teens age out of school-based services

The annual national cost of autism is expected to be \$461 billion to 1 trillion dollars annually

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children with autism

Barriers to Diagnosis and Treatment

Not enough specially trained developmental pediatricians to do evaluations of children, and limited access to the providers who are available.

Not enough providers for ABA, play therapy, in home supports, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other identified support services

Waiting list are from a few months to as long as two years for services during prime developmental stage for children.

Early Identification

- MCHAT-Modified Checklist for Toddlers- Administered in primary care at good for ages 16-30 months
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire-not specific to autism but does help determine developmental delays
- Referrals placed to Early Intervention Services
- Goal is diagnosis in Pre-School years
- Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers and Young Children-interactive screening tool with 12 activities assess play, imitation, and communication



Treatment Team

- Speech therapy-previous belief was that using communication devices or sign language would stall progress with expressive language
- Occupational therapy-addresses items such as dressing, toileting, feeding, grooming, fine motor and social skills.
- Physical therapy-improve muscle tone, balance and coordination
- Social skills
- Sensory Integration therapy-physical therapist and occupational therapists

The Non-verbal Child



Needs to have a hearing test completed



No need to raise your voice when talking to a non-verbal child



Does not mean they are not learning



Should be introduced to early communication tools early on in the process



As frustrating as it is for us, we need to think how frustrating it is for the child

The Pandemic Aftermath

- Prior to March 2020, there was a sharp increase in the number of children born in 2016 compared to children born in 2012.
- After March 2020, there was a sharp decline in children being diagnosed with ASD and accessing services.
- Many children did not get early intervention services or treatment through the pandemic



Common Health Problems

- 1/5-1/3 of people with autism have epilepsy-symptoms include staring spells, stiffening of muscles, involuntary jerking of limbs
- GI disorders including chronic constipation, chronic diarrhea, reflux disease,
- Disrupted sleep-Over half of children with autism suffer from disrupted sleep. One of main cause of behavior problems associated with autism can be from disrupted sleep.

Feeding Difficulties

- 70 percent of children with autism have feeding and or eating problems with 36 percent being considered severe
- Chronic overeating-leading to obesity is common. Lack internal cues to tell them they are full, sensory issues lead to the consumption of high calorie, low nutrient foods
- Pica dangerous habit of eating non-food items
- Selective eating leading to being underweight and have nutrient deficiencies



Mental Health

- 54-70 Percent of people with autism have one or more mental health conditions
 - ADHD-31-61 percent of people with autism
 - Anxiety-11-42 percent of people with autism (especially social anxiety) this can increase in adolescents
 - Depression- 7 percent of children and 26 percent of adults
 - Schizophrenia-4-35 percent of adults with autism
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- A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.



BEHAVIORS

- Challenging behaviors represent some of the most concerning and stressful feature of autism
- Can often cause harm or damage, family and caregiver stress, isolation, and caregiver burnout.
- Individuals with autism experience changes at various stages of life that might result in new behaviors
- Behaviors can be triggered by internal factors such as stomach pain, or external factors such as people, places, noises, or activity levels.

Reasons for behaviors

Obtaining a desired object or outcome

- Escaping a task or situation
- Getting attention, either positive (praise) or negative (yelling)
- Trying to self-calm, self-regulate or feel good (**sensory input**)
- Blocking or staying away from something painful or bothersome (**sensory avoidance**)
- Responding to pain or discomfortAttempting to gain control over an environment or situation (**self-advocacy**)



TANTRUMS

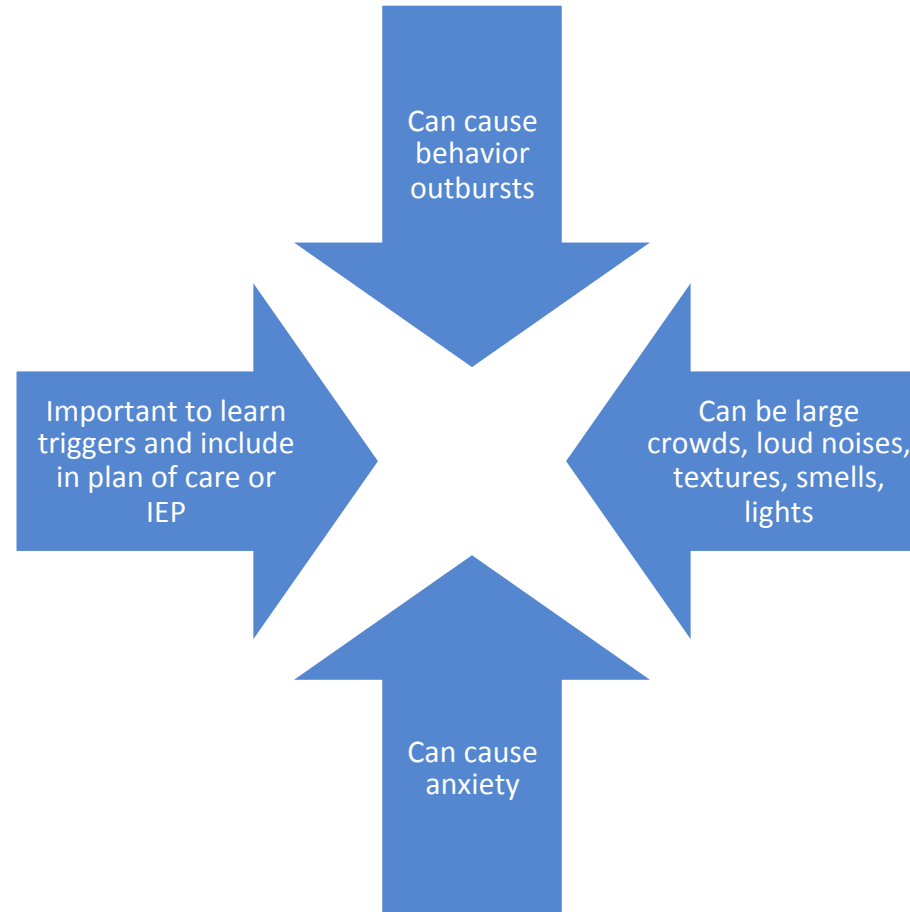
- Are emotional outbursts with a specific goal or function such as getting a certain item or to not have to do a certain tasks.
- It is a learned behavior response and deliberate
- The individual maintains control of their body and mind through out the event





"And I just get too much information."

Sensory Issues



MELTDOWNS

- Involuntary response to nervous system overload
- Physical manifestation of neurobiological chaos caused by a perceived threat
- Reaction is involuntary and can not be controlled
- Tension which is built up is released via stimming, repetitive movements, zoning out, screaming, crying, and stomping
- Once the meltdown begins it can take up to 20 minutes or longer to end once the stressor is removed.





Things Every Kid with Autism Wants You to Know

- I am first and foremost a child
 - My sensory perceptions are disordered
 - Remember to distinguish between I won't (I choose not to) and I can't (I am not able to)
 - I am a concrete thinker
 - Be patient with my limited vocabulary
 - Language is difficult for me I am visually oriented please take time to show me how to do things
 - Focus and build on what I can do
 - Help me in social situations
 - Try to identify what triggers my meltdowns
 - Treat me like the other kids
- 

DON'T LABEL ME

- Labels can be harming for children with autism
- No longer appropriate to use high-functioning or low-functioning
- Do not use terms severe or mild when describing children with ASD
- Labels can lead to the belief that the child does not need services or assistance

What can we do?

Partner together with the school districts and help to work with them to identify needs of this special population and how we can assist with the care of the child with autism.

Looking outside the box-connecting to other service providers such as sporting programs for special needs, YMCA, community service providers who have special programs.

Looking to music therapy programs and how can we help facilitate services to our children (Grants are available through several organizations) and art programs

we can help connect other stakeholders together to help improve the services needed for children with autism.