

WYSAIL News!

“Nothing about me, without me”

THE GOALS OF SELF-ADVOCACY

Inclusion International, formerly the International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicaps (ILSMH), represents an international self-advocacy perspective. Self-advocates have frequently noted that people with disabilities are excluded from the decision-making process because they are considered incapable of making decisions. Because professionals and parents were concerned that they would fail, people with disabilities were not given the opportunity to learn decision making skills.

The following core beliefs, values, and principles of self-advocacy, as defined by Inclusion International, represent a significant departure from the past and the views of parents and professionals, and a continuing evolution in disability rights:

BELIEFS AND VALUES OF SELF-ADVOCACY

Being a person first

Not defined by our disability or thought of as an eternal child. We are individuals with our own identity.

Making our own decisions

Not having doctors or parents deciding where and how we live. We must be listened to as we express ourselves, and we must be allowed to make our own mistakes. We must help those who have higher support needs and cannot speak for themselves, so their decisions can be understood and respected.

Believing in my value as a person

Understanding that I am a valuable citizen, worker, and friend. From birth, every human has the same worth. We must be supported to like ourselves.

Having other people believe in you as a person

Not accepting old stereotypes of persons with disabilities as somehow less than human. All people have the right to be valued as an equal in their own community. We must not be discriminated against because of our disability. Other people must learn that we are people and treat us in the same way as everyone else.

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WYOMING STATE
ADVOCATES IN LEADERSHIP



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Special points of interest

- New Gerber Baby announced, and it brings new light to the Developmentally Disabled community.
- Sef Scott steals the stage! A normally non-verbal Autistic student speaks for approximately 6 minutes at his High

...Without me Continued

PRINCIPLES OF SELF-ADVOCACY

Empowerment

Support must empower individuals to make their own decisions. Regardless of the degree of disability, we must have support to make our decisions. We must be allowed to take risks. It must be up to us to ask for help from those we trust.

Equal opportunity

All people must have equal opportunity to be supported as full members of their communities, without regard to race, culture, or sexual choice.

Learning and living together

Keeping people apart from their communities is not acceptable. We have the right to participate in the community, attend our public schools, and grow up with

other children. We must have the opportunity to do the same things as everyone else and to share the joys of daily living.

Institutions are bad for people

Being in an institution is not a human way of life. Institutions remove all of the things worth living for – joy, happiness, love, tenderness, feelings, emotions – and make you give up on life itself. As self-advocates we must close down every institution and liberate our unfortunate brothers and sisters who are now wasting away.

Non-labeling

People have the right to be recognized as the person they are, and therefore must not be labeled. Labels devalue us and should not be used to identify us. A true understanding of who we are will include knowledge about disability.

“All people must have an equal opportunity to be supported as full members of their communities...”

‘Sesame Street’ Expands Autism Focus

by Shaun Heasley | Originally appeared on April 5, 2018

On television, online and at their theme park, the people behind “Sesame Street” say they are adding more resources and increasing efforts to include kids on the spectrum.

Sesame Workshop said this week that it will air a special “Sesame Street” episode focused on Julia, the first Muppet with autism, and it’s launching a host of new online materials aimed at educating youngsters about the developmental disorder.

Meanwhile, Sesame Place — a theme park based on “Sesame Street” — said that it is the first such attraction to be designated a Certified Autism Center meaning that staff are specially trained to accommodate those with ASD.

The developments come more than two years after “Sesame Street” introduced Julia online and a year after she first appeared on the venerable television show.

“Seeing the difference that Julia has made since her debut on Sesame Street has been heartwarming, and we’re thrilled to expand our commitment to the autism community with new resources that can make a real difference in the lives of children and families,” said Sherrie Westin, executive vice president for global impact and philanthropy at Sesame Workshop. “Sesame has long celebrated the uniqueness of every child as well as what all children share in common. Julia has shown that all children, autistic and neurotypical alike, are amazing in their own ways.”

As part of the ongoing “Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children” initiative, Sesame Workshop said its website will feature a storybook about Julia and her family, four videos starring Julia and her friends and digital routine cards with step-by-step instructions showing Julia and other muppets getting a haircut, going to a birthday party and participating in other potentially challenging activities.

In addition, a “Sesame Street” episode airing April 9 on HBO and PBS KIDS will focus on Julia’s unique perspective as she and her friends hunt for shapes in everyday objects.



Meet Lucas —
the first child
with **Down
syndrome** to
be named a
Gerber baby!



Gerber Baby representative, Lucas.

Woah Baby!

The Gerber baby announced this year is taking the world by storm! The 18 month old tyke, Lucas Warren, will be the “spokes baby” for 2018. Lucas’ photo was chosen from over 140,000 entries. Why is his adorable face taking the world by the heart?? Lucas is the first child with special needs to be chosen to represent the brand since the contest was started in 2010.

"He may have Down syndrome, but he's always Lucas first," said mom, Cortney. "He's got an awesome personality and he goes through the milestones of every child... we're hoping when he grows up and looks back on this, he'll be proud of himself and not ashamed of his disability."

"We're hoping this will impact everyone — that it will shed a little bit of light on the special needs community and help more individuals with special needs be accepted and not limited," dad Jason Warren said. "They have the potential to change the world, just like everybody else."

Having this adorable kiddo capture the title will bring new light to the special needs community.

Upcoming Events

July

August

September

October

Evolving Definition Of Autism Prompts Questions About Prevalence

by Michelle R. Davis | June 19, 2018

Original article published by disability scoop <https://www.disabilityscoop.com/>

Did You Know?

Did you know that WYSAIL will be hosting monthly meetings?? What are monthly meetings you ask?

Monthly meetings will meet on the third Saturday of each month and we will cover a variety of topics and skills!

Some topics will be split into a couple sessions, for example, our nutrition workshop will be divided into two sessions because there is so much great information! We will not only learn about nutrition, we will learn how to COOK a nutritious meal! Getting hands on with our learning makes it fun and engaging!

Keep a look out for our fliers announcing the dates and times.

The latest government data shows that autism prevalence is on the rise, but a newly-adopted standard for diagnosing the developmental disorder may be muddying the numbers.

The definition of autism got a major overhaul in 2013 when the American Psychiatric Association adopted a new edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, known as DSM-5.

Under the updated manual, Asperger's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder and pervasive developmental disorder, not otherwise specified were folded under a broader diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, with clinicians indicating a level of severity. The revised criteria for autism — which some consider more restrictive — require both deficits in social communication and social interaction as well as restricted repetitive behaviors, interests and activities for a diagnosis. However, it also includes anyone who had a previous diagnosis of autism.

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Now, for the first time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is factoring the changing definition of autism into its regular tracking of autism prevalence.

Figures released in April show that 1 in 59 children have autism — an increase from reports two years ago that found 1 in 68 children were on the spectrum. However, the latest numbers, which rely on data collected on over 300,000 children who were 8 years old in 2014, are based on the older definition of

autism.

In the same report, the CDC then evaluated the children under the newer DSM-5 criteria, finding that 18 percent fewer would qualify for an autism diagnosis. Using the updated definition and also including children who had previously received a diagnosis of autism, 4 percent fewer children were found to have autism.

The goal of doing separate analyses using both definitions was to “really give a direct comparison of the difference in prevalence and characteristics based on those two case definitions,” said Daisy Christensen, an epidemiologist on the surveillance team for the developmental disabilities branch of the CDC. Going forward, the DSM-5 definition will be the primary criteria used by the CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network for its biennial tracking of children with autism, though the research will also include those diagnosed under the previous definition, Christensen said. The CDC will release its next evaluation, based on 2016 data, in two years.

While it's possible that the new criteria for autism diagnosis “might exclude some” children who met only the older definition, it's more likely that any trends of increase or decrease in prevalence will be influenced more by clinicians adjusting their evaluations to the new definition and other factors, she said.

Tom Frazier, chief science officer for the advocacy organization Autism Speaks, said that the impact of the new definition on autism rates will take years to play out.

Evolving Definition of Autism, continued...

"This analysis suggests that it is possible that DSM-5 will result in fewer cases being identified, and this may make it difficult to discern whether autism prevalence continues to increase," Frazier said of the CDC report. Clinicians themselves need to get used to the criteria and applying them, he said. The data will be in a "transitional phase" until DSM-5 is the standard being used universally, Frazier said.

The biggest hope, he said, is that the new definition will provide "a much more solid basis for saying someone has autism. It won't be a blood test, but will still be much more objective and quantitative."

However, Catherine Lord, director of the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain at Cornell University and a professor at Weill Cornell Medical College, who was a member of the committee that crafted the DSM-5 definition, said she doesn't expect the new criteria to significantly impact the prevalence data in the future.

The intention behind the new definition "was to make things more straightforward and clearer, so there's not as much confusion" over separate diagnoses available under the older version.

In fact, Lord said she expects rates of autism to continue to rise, in part because minority communities are becoming more informed about the disorder and minority children are being diagnosed more often.

"You always need to be concerned about missing people," she said, "but there is room for everybody who needs to be there in that new criteria."

"You can sprinkle unexpected moments throughout your everyday life that can benefit those around you with very little effort on your part"

"Be Unexpected"

"Be Unexpected", that is the common theme throughout the speech given by high school graduate, Sef Scott, a usually non-verbal autistic teen who was asked to be a speaker at his high school graduation.

"Unexpected. That is what I want you to remember. Unexpected," Scott began his speech. "First and foremost, I would imagine that to the seniors that know who I am that it is entirely unexpected that I would be standing here giving this speech."

Scott introduced himself to the crowd. "Let me briefly explain this unexpected choice of speaker. My name is Sef Scott and I am a student with learning differences. To be more specific, I have autism and a social communication disorder," he said.

Sef continued on to explain that he has the verbal ability and speaking capacity as anyone in the room, he just chooses not to electively speak often.

Among a few jokes from Sef and rounds of applause the message "be unexpected" resonated with Scott's audience. He gave examples of ways to be unexpected .

Standing in line a restaurant? When your name is called, let the people behind you go first, he

says. "That simple gesture could brighten what could have been a gloomy day." Bought tickets to an event in advance and suddenly not be able to make it? Donate your tickets, he suggested. And pause to say "thank you for doing a great job" to the person with special needs who bagged your groceries.

"You can sprinkle unexpected moments throughout your everyday life that can benefit those around you with very little effort on your part."

Throughout Sef's six minute speech, he encouraged "the biggest unexpected-to live for yourself." Sef encouraged his audience to "Ask yourself: are you next steps where you want to go? If they aren't, step off of that path. Will that be unexpected? It probably will be if you are not sharing your hopes and dreams with your loved ones," he said.

"Don't follow someone else's dreams. Don't waste time on something you never wanted. Do the unexpected. It is your life that you are living, not someone else's so do what fulfills you."

This inspirational message given by Mr. Scott is another amazing example of breaking perceived boundaries and encouraging people to see beyond the differences.



Leadership Workshops

Wyoming State Advocates in Leadership

WYSAIL is an organization dedicated to teaching advocacy skills to individuals with developmental disabilities and guiding them to speak up for themselves to make known their needs and desires. The program consists of a twelve-week class that teaches them skills on how to appropriately demonstrate their wants and needs, whether to a provider of a company they are with, their guardians and family members or legislation.

WYSAIL has created a series of eight classes to teach important skills. These classes help develop the underlying skills to become efficient and effective advocates and leaders.

Class one, Who Am I, is the introductory course. It focuses on getting the participants familiar with one another, gives an overview of what the following seven weeks will entail, and offers some interesting activities.

Class two focuses on communication, and the three styles of communication. It begins the process of starting a community volunteer project and fundraising projects.

Class three finalizes the development on the community and fundraising projects. Participants will use this development in class three to decide their projects and begin putting them into action.

Class four discusses feeling and values. It discusses attitudes and moods, and how those not only affect a person but also affect those around them. Finally it discusses how they can utilize their knowledge about attitudes and moods to be effective leaders.

Class five works on self advocacy and leadership. Learning how to stand up for themselves and appropriately advocate so they have the knowledge needed to succeed and participate in the decisions being made about their lives.

Class six looks at the importance of teamwork. It shows the participants how teamwork can build trust and solve problems.

Class seven dives into Rules, Laws, Rights, and Responsibilities. This class defines each and teaches the participants how each affects their futures.

The final class, class eight teaches the participants about public speaking, and its importance of how public speaking can help when advocating for themselves and others.

All classes are wrapped up with an exciting graduation ceremony where participants can celebrate their successes.

Wyoming State Advocates in Leadership
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