

## **RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

**The Adult Autism Group (TAAG)** is a nonprofit organization in Springfield with the mission to help adults on the autism spectrum live more successful, fulfilling lives. Pre-Covid hosted monthly meetings and recreational activities for young adults with ASD.

### **Self-Advocacy:**

The Alliance <https://selfadvocacyalliance.org/> is a statewide team of self-advocacy groups in Illinois, working to make life better in our local communities and working to make services better in Illinois.

**ASAN – Autistic Self Advocacy Network:** The Autistic Self Advocacy Network seeks to advance the principles of the disability rights movement with regard to autism. ASAN believes that the goal of autism advocacy should be a world in which autistic people enjoy equal access, rights, and opportunities. We work to empower autistic people across the world to take control of our own lives and the future of our common community and seek to organize the autistic community to ensure our voices are heard in the national conversation about us. Nothing About Us, Without Us!

### **Employment and Autism:**

**Aspiritech** specifically hires neurodiverse individuals. They have a Chicago office. Here is a link to their Career page to apply: <https://www.aspiritech.org/careers>.

Many other companies have Neurodiversity hiring programs; Amazon, Dell, HP, Google, Microsoft, Ford, JP Morgan Chase, SAP, Tesla, and Walgreens to name a few. This article is probably the best one I've found: [10 Examples of Companies with Autistic Hiring Programs | Ongig Blog](#). If you click the company name in blue for each one, it takes you right to their autism hiring program page! Pretty cool. For example, I clicked SAP and here is where it took me - SAP's Autism at Work Program:

<https://www.sap.com/about/careers/your-career/autism-at-work-program.html>. Most of these jobs are in IT/computer science, but there are so many more! For example, there is a website [www.art4autism.com](http://www.art4autism.com) featuring the artwork of autistic individuals for purchase.

### **College and/or employment:**

The **Autism Training and Technical Assistance (ATTA)** project through the Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support at Illinois State University creates, supports, and delivers professional development for career and technical education professionals across Illinois. The **ATTA website** has monthly webinar series, resources for supporting students at college, career, and employment information as well as various assessments tools within each category. Website here: <https://autismcollegeandcareer.com/>.

## **RESOURCES FOR PARENTS**

**#1 Resource – the Autism Speaks Transition Tool Kit** (free) covers topics such as: developing independent living skills, planning for transition, legal matters, community living, employment, postsecondary education, housing, health, and technology. Click on the link on this page. You will be asked to enter your email and almost immediately they will send you the link to your free download.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/transition-tool-kit?msclkid=a5bafa26c0d811ec944c61d0640a2e84>

## Resources

[The Arc of Illinois](#) is the state's largest advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They work on public policy and advocacy and provide education and training through various programs. They have many free trainings for parents through the [Illinois Life Span Program](#) and the [Family to Family Health Information Center](#), which are typically scheduled during the lunch hour. Trainings are recorded and archived on the website as well. Topics have included applying for social security and health benefits for my child, IL Secretary of State Services for people with disabilities, Person Centered Planning, Guardianship and so many more!

**Services in Illinois** are managed through the [Illinois PUNS](#) (Prioritization of Urgency of Needs for Services) database. There are children's waivers and adult waivers that fund various home and community-based services (e.g., home based services, CILA group home independent living/supported independent living.) To get on the PUNS list, you need to contact your local Independent Service Coordination (ISC) agency, which in Central Illinois is [Central Illinois Service Access, Inc.](#) (CISA). Phone: 217-732-4731.

Here is a link to the **Illinois Division of Developmental Disabilities** website: [IDHS: Developmental Disabilities \(state.il.us\)](#).

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[College Internship Program \(CIP\)](#) is a private young adult transition program for individuals 18-26 with autism, ADHD, and other learning differences that offers comprehensive and specialized services.

[College Living Experience \(CLE\)](#) is a similar private program of post-secondary supports for your adults with autism and/or learning differences.

### **Guardianship:**

There are several types of guardianship that move from least restrictive to most restrictive. The [Special Needs Alliance](#) provides attorneys who have years of experience and dedication to the practice and study of this complex and specialized area of law. For a list in Illinois with their contact information: <https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/find-an-attorney/illinois/>. They also work on Special Needs Trusts and financial planning.

### **Financial planning:**

[Illinois ABLE](#) accounts are accounts that give people with disabilities and their families greater financial independence while preserving benefits.

### **Respite Services:**

The [Illinois Respite Coalition](#) (IRC) has a new, statewide respite toll-free line to provide statewide information and referrals for respite across the state, and lifespan. The toll-free line can be reached at 866-ILL-RESP (866-455-7377).

## Resources

### **Sibling Support:**

The [Sibling Leadership Network](#) provides networking, connection, resources, and support to and for siblings of individuals with developmental disabilities. The [Sibling Support Project](#) provides similar connections.

### **Parent Support via social media:**

- 1) "**Loving Neurodiversity**" FB group was started by a mom of an autistic daughter here in Springfield, in-response to the many requests we received at Autism Support of Central Illinois for support groups. Michelle is now on the board of ASCI. It remains at least a virtual platform for parents to communicate about topics related to neurodiversity and parenting.
- 2) "**Autism Support of Central Illinois**" is on Facebook and offers recreational community programs for families with autism free of charge (typically younger ages, but all ages join us for horse riding.) Like the FB page to receive notifications of upcoming events.
- 3) "**TASC**" is a similar not for profit autism group around the Hillsboro area I think. They have a Facebook group.
- 4) "**IPADDUnite**" group on Facebook is very active. A lot of times the posts have to do with benefits (SSI & Medicaid) and adult services.
- 5) The "**Southwestern Illinois Autism Resources and Support**" Facebook group is great for getting tip sheets, visuals, and resources.
- 6) "**Matt Cohen and Associates Advocacy Colloquium**" is a Facebook group that deals with special education topics. Matt Cohen is a special ed attorney in the northern part of the state.
- 7) "**Breaking Autism**" is a special education law firm in the Chicago area and regularly posts information pertinent to special education rights and federal law on their Facebook page.
- 8) "**TAAG**" or "**The Adult Autism Group**" is another group in Springfield that hosts recreational events for young adults/adults with autism to get together and socialize – website and on Facebook.

### **Reliable training on Autism topics:**

[Autism Research Institute](#) – access to research, high-quality information and free webinars, newsletter

[ECHO Autism](#) – free on demand-training, videos, handouts, tip sheets

[OCALI Autism Center](#) – access to research, resources, and evidence-based training

[OCALI Autism Internet Modules \(AIM\)](#) – free self-paced internet modules on numerous autism topics

[The Autism Program of Illinois \(TAP\)](#) – annual autism symposium, training in the administration and scoring of the ADOS-2 diagnostic instrument

[Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative \(SFARI\)](#) – genomic research in autism

[International Society for Autism Research \(INSAR\)](#) – global autism research community

### **Bullying Resources:**

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/2012/10/30/research-brief-children-with-autism-at-risk-for-bullying>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/categories/prevention>

<https://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/how-the-autism-society-can-help/safe-and-sound/bullying-prevention/>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/7-steps-take-stand-against-bullying>

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/>