



KENTUCKY AUTISM
TRAINING CENTER

U^L COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Keeping Autistic Kentuckians Safe

Training First Responders,
Supporting Families &
Strengthening Communities

Heidi Cooley-Cook, Deputy Director
Kentucky Autism Training Center
uofl.me/katc

Kentucky Autism Training Center

We Support

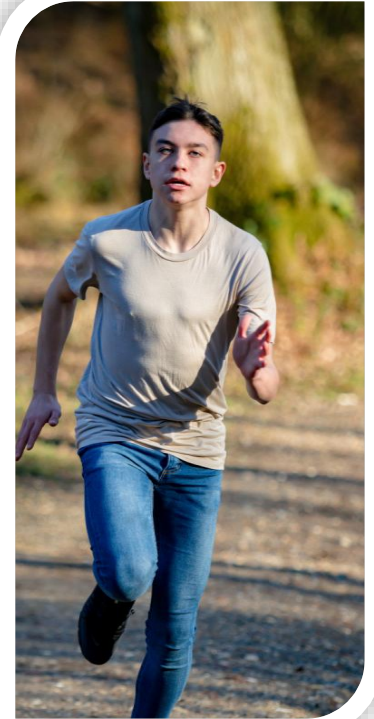
- Autistic people
- Caregivers/Parents
- School Partners
- Community Partners
- First Responders

What We Do

- Training
- Technical Assistance
- Resource Development
- Community Partnerships



What is going on?





Autism & Emergency Response

Autistic people may:

- Communicate differently
- Experience sensory overload
- Need additional processing time
- Respond unexpectedly during stressful situations

Misunderstandings can happen quickly during emergencies.

Practical Skills for Real-World Situations

Training Audiences:

- Law Enforcement
- EMS
- Fire Departments
- Dispatch Personnel
- School Resource Officers
- Corrections Departments
- Streets & Roads Departments
- Hospital Personnel
- Air Evac Crews
- Crisis Response Teams
- Community Partners

Training Topics:

- Recognition of common characteristics
- Communication strategies
- De-escalation techniques
- Sensory considerations
- Wandering & elopement
- Family perspective
- Resources

One of the Most Serious Safety Risks

nearly **50%**
wander or elope

Risks Include

WATER

Traffic

Harsh weather

Getting lost

No response

Delayed rescue



Kentucky IAN Alert

Why It Matters

- Rapid public awareness
- Community engagement
- Additional search support
- Increased recovery opportunities

KATC's Role

- Autism-specific safety resources
- Wandering prevention information
- Family education
- Community awareness

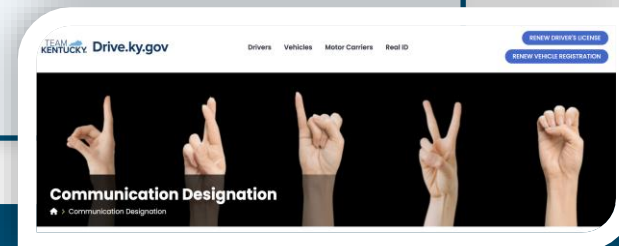
Communication Designation

Benefits

- Improves officer awareness
- Reduces misunderstandings
- Promotes safer interactions
- Supports de-escalation

KATC's Role

- Educational materials
- Community outreach
- Driver resources
- Companion information linked from drive.ky.gov resources



Critical Information When Seconds Matter

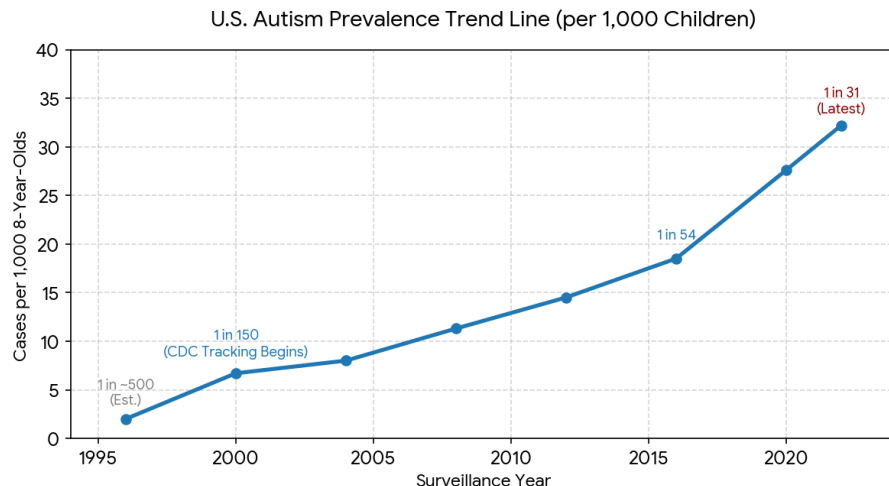
When original funding ended, KATC stepped forward to:

- Maintain the program
- Update materials
- Distribute supplies statewide
- Train first responders
- Promote public participation



*Today, Kentucky residents can receive materials at **NO COST!***

The Need Continues to Grow



KATC continues to receive requests for:

- First Responder Training
- Community Education and Awareness
- Wandering Prevention Resources
- Driver Safety Information
- Technical Assistance

Challenge: Demand increasingly exceeds current capacity

What is going on?



**Rivalry High School
Football Game**
Friday at 10pm
Still 90 degrees



TOUCHDOWN
Students jump up
Loud cheering
Several airhorns go off



Autistic Student

Attends every home game
Classmates are sitting really
close together
He is hot
Everyone jumps up
Everyone is yelling
An airhorn goes off

He bolts down the bleachers
out of the stadium
runs thru parking lot

now pacing by the main street

Safer Communities Through Partnership

Improving Safety Through

- ✓ Training
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Collaboration



120 of 120
Kentucky Counties



KENTUCKY AUTISM
TRAINING CENTER

U of L COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



KENTUCKY AUTISM
TRAINING CENTER

U^L COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Thank You!

Heidi Cooley-Cook, Deputy Director

heidi.cooleycook@louisville.edu | uofl.me/katc

Training. Resources. Collaboration.
Questions? Resources?