



OAR Launches Autism “A Guide to Safety” for Parents and First Responders

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 19, 2014

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ARLINGTON, VA – The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is expanding its collection of informational materials and shining the spotlight on a critically important topic: safety throughout the lifespan of individuals with autism. To kick off its “Guide to Safety” resource, OAR is pre-releasing the free online version for viewing, downloading and printing on December 19th.

No parental instinct is as intense and fundamental as keeping one’s child safe. Autism presents its own set of vulnerabilities that can make safety even more challenging to handle. Parents with children newly diagnosed with autism may suddenly be faced with overwhelming responsibilities and emotions as they try to develop effective safety plans, especially without access to the smart tools they need to begin.

The Life Journey Through Autism: A Guide to Safety outlines major safety risks of concern throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood for individuals with autism, and offers tips, resources, and strategies to assist parents. This comprehensive tool can be used as a reference for addressing basic safety skills, developing preventative safety measures, and getting a sense of what types of safety concerns can be expected later on in life.

A Guide to Safety not only gives parents comfort in knowing they are not alone, but also offers practical and age-appropriate guidance on life-threatening issues that their children with autism are likely to experience. With that in mind, the resource covers a range of safety topics, including: wandering and elopement, physical and sexual safety, bullying, internet safety, and money safety. It also includes appendices that contain useful tools and information, such as: sample identification documents, advice from an adult self-advocate, and evidence-based safety skills lessons.

This resource, which was written in collaboration with parents, first responders, and professionals in the autism community, can be used independently or as a supplement to a more



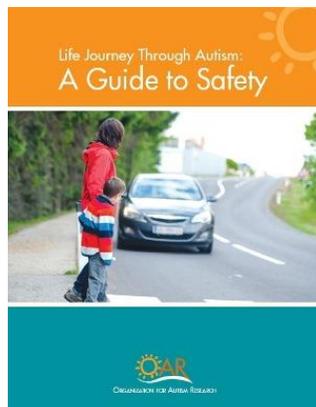
comprehensive, already-established family safety plan. While the guide was written with parents in mind, it can also be used as an aid for first responders (law enforcement, firefighters, etc.) to reinforce their current autism safety plans.

The online parent-friendly, easy-to-use document includes a clickable directory that parents can use to navigate directly to topics that are most relevant to what their families are experiencing—or could experience.

A Guide to Safety is available in the Resources section on OAR's Web site as a PDF document starting December 19th. Hard copies of the *Guide to Safety* will be available starting January 15th, 2015. If you are interested in reserving a free hard copy in advance, please send an e-mail to programs@researchautism.org with the subject header "Safety Guide". Be sure to include a mailing address, purpose of use (if someone other than a parent), and number of copies requested.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about OAR's *A Guide to Safety*, or if you have ideas on how you would like to help expand the project in this critical area, please contact Kimberly Ha, Programs and Outreach Associate, at 703-243-9762, or kha@researchautism.org.

About OAR: The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national non-profit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. OAR is dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions. Learn more at their Web site: www.researchautism.org.



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