



About Us

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) was created in December 2001– the product of the shared vision and unique life experiences of OAR’s seven founders. Led by these parents and grandparents of children and adults on the autism spectrum, we set out to use applied science to answer questions that parents, families, individuals with autism, teachers and caregivers confront daily. No other autism organization in the nation has this singular focus.

Mission

OAR’s mission is to apply research to the challenges of autism.

The mission of “applying” research to answer questions of daily concern for those living with autism drives each of the goals and objectives that define our programs and determine our budget.

We define applied research as research that directly impacts the day-to-day quality of life of people with autism. It entails the systematic investigation of variables associated with positive outcomes in such areas as education, communication, self-care, social skills, employment, behavior, and adult and community living. In this context, it extends to issues related to family support, the efficacy of service delivery systems, and demographic analyses of the autism community. We fund studies that address these issues, and use the knowledge gained from research to develop and disseminate resources that are relevant and responsive to the everyday experiences of the entire autism community.

In simplest terms, applied autism research is “practical research that examines issues and challenges that children and adults with autism and their families face every day.”

Research

We fund pilot studies and targeted research within specific modalities and issues affecting the autism community, primarily for studies whose outcomes offer new insights into the behavioral and social development of individuals with autism with an emphasis on communications, education, and vocational challenges. The identification of priorities for OAR’s research will be undertaken with focus groups comprised of parents, educators, clinicians, and leading authorities whose life work is the promotion of autism research and the dissemination of information to the autism community. Our immediate task is the creation of an overall strategy for research to address issues "across the lifespan."

Programs

OAR’s programs revolve around funding new research and disseminating evidence-based information in a form that translates the technical information into layman’s terms for the non-scientific consumer.

Current OAR Programs



- Applied Research Competition. Research grants of up to \$40,000 awarded via a three-phased, peer review process annually.
- Graduate Research Grants Program. Research grant program to support graduate students conducting research in fields related to autism. Grant levels: \$1,000 for Master's students; \$2,000 for doctoral and post-doctoral students. Awarded annually.
- *Life Journey through Autism* series – Presently nine reader-friendly resource guides that provide practical information to parents, educators, and professionals.
- *Operation Autism*: Web site that directly supports the unique needs of U.S. military families affected by autism, featuring a base-by-base resource directory.
- *The OARacle*: Monthly newsletter that features current research, useful resources, and helpful guidance for families. More than 5,000 subscribers.
- *Autism in the Schoolhouse* Initiative: Production and dissemination of resources that support students with autism.
 - *Kit for Kids*
 - *Curriculum in a Box*
 - *Navigating the Special Education System*
- *Autism Sibling Support* Initiative: Set of resources that help typically-developing children and teens foster positive relationships with their siblings on the spectrum
- OAR Scholarship Program. Awards \$3,000 scholarships to students with autism pursuing undergraduate studies, transition/life skills programs, or vocational-technical training.
- *Hire Autism* Adult Employment Initiative. A jobs portal to connect jobseekers with autism with autism-friendly employers who will consider them.
- *RUN FOR AUTISM* fundraising program. Charity running program that is OAR's signature fundraising activity with runners in major races in the U.S. and abroad in London and Berlin.
- *Sex Ed. for Self-Advocates* online sexuality and sex education guide for people on the autism spectrum age 15 and up.
- OAR Webinar series educates on topics of high interest to the autism community through accessible, interactive online events.