



Local services available

Sites help people on the autism spectrum get more out of life

This week's column is the third and final in a series reviewing the five online hubs for the Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence. This month is Autism Awareness Month, so it seems like a good time to look at the regional services and programs that can be accessed online.

Hope Enterprises

Hopeability.org, based in Williamsport, is where north-central Pennsylvania residents can find access to help for intellectual disabilities, including autism. The site covers four areas of support for people of all ages and on all points of the spectrum.



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InSites

The Children's Campus section offers services for preschoolers through high school, which can mean up to age 21 for those with intellectual disabilities. There are five subsections in this part of the site. The first one is for the Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence. Here users can connect with other services in the region that may not be available locally.

The next subsection is Early Intervention. Information on in-home and daycare services for kids from birth to age 3 is provided. Educators work on a range of developmental areas, including physical and occupational therapy. Research shows that early intervention is very important for positive outcomes.

Therapy Services is the next subsection, which provides access to physical, occupational and speech therapy for kids in school up to age 21.

The TeenLink section is for high school-aged kids. It offers programs that teach life skills, such as, personal hygiene, social skills and cooking to help kids

make the transition to independent living. The last section is a link to the state's Women, Infants, Children (WIC) program that provides financial assistance to buy nutritious food.

The other three main sections of the site are geared to helping adults. Residential Options is for finding living arrangements in community homes or private residences that will provide for special needs. The Employment Services section matches an individual's capabilities with real, paying jobs in the community. Finally, the Home and Community Support section offers a range of programs that help people live more independent, richer lives.

Children's Service Center

The last hub is one section of a larger site, **cscwv.org**. The section is the Autism Family Support Hub and is based in Hazleton. It helps guide people to the services available in the area, as well as health care providers for diagnosis. The parent site offers lots of other services for children with a range of mental health and other family issues.

There is support available for people on the autism spectrum. Seek it out to help them make the most out of their abilities.

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