

Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center and Clarian Health Partners at Riley Hospital for Children—Preventing Secondary Conditions Associated with the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs): Expansion of a Community Training Model



Expansion of a Community Training Model: The Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center (CSATC) and Clarian Health Partners at Riley Hospital for Children have joined together to develop the *HANDS in Autism* (Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists in Autism) Program through a grant provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The *HANDS in Autism* Program will include the development and implementation of a hands-on training program for professionals working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs), starting with school system personnel and extending to various professionals across central Indiana. The plan is to develop a model training program and a site for formal observation opportunities.

Outreach Activities: The Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center (CSATC) at Riley Hospital is the only pediatric academic and research program on autism in the state and is one of the largest autism centers in the United States. Currently, the CSATC is actively treating more than 800 children in a premiere facility, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Among its individual and group services, the Center works closely with families and school personnel in the community. In addition, the CSATC is committed to providing outreach training through presentations and workshops for a diverse audience across the state and nation. The Center is dedicated to bringing the most current and accurate information to professionals, students, and consumers.

Community Training: The CDC grant will allow CSATC staff to create a program for intensive training for teachers, administrators, and other school personnel that is built upon the current community-based model. Participants will learn information such as to how to provide behavioral support, visual schedules, and other tools to foster the learning development of children affected by ASD. The program will include multiple opportunities to practice in a mock classroom environment the strategies for working with children with ASD and to receive modeling and feedback.

Networking: CSATC staff will visit other programs with similar intervention and training missions throughout the United States. The information gathered during these visits will be considered in developing this model to provide the most advanced techniques and best practices available. The CSATC will provide direct training to a number of personnel from local school districts. At the conclusion of the grant period, the CSATC will continue to offer direct training and formal observation of the model program to educational specialists and other caregivers nationwide.

Other Benefits: In addition to the model training program, the CSATC will conduct a variety of outreach activities including distribution of information and tools for use by pediatricians, libraries, and Clarian facilities across central Indiana. Among the materials will be screening posters, sensory activity kits, and distance learning materials.

Participant Benefits: Local families and professionals seek model treatment programs to observe and in which to train. The hands-on or “coaching” model provides an opportunity for active participation and promotes learning. The program will also educate and benefit students and families rotating through the program.

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