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FSU experts available to share research insights for Autism Acceptance Month

BY: BILL WELLOCK (MAILTO:WWELLOCK@FSU.EDU) | PUBLISHED: MARCH 31, 2021 | 1:55 PM | SHARE: [f](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fnews.fsu.edu%2Fnews%2Fexpert-pitches%2F2021%2F03%2F31%2FFSU-EXPERTS-AVAILABLE-TO-SHARE-RESEARCH-INSIGHTS-FOR-AUTISM-ACCEPTANCE-MONTH%2F) (HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SHARER/SHARER.PHP?U=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FNEWS.FSU.EDU%2FNEWS%2FEXPERT-PITCHES%2F2021%2F03%2F31%2FFSU-EXPERTS-AVAILABLE-TO-SHARE-RESEARCH-INSIGHTS-FOR-AUTISM-ACCEPTANCE-MONTH%2F) [t](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?source=http%3A%2F%2Fhttps%3A%2F%2Fnews.fsu.edu%2Fnews%2Fexpert-pitches%2F2021%2F03%2F31%2FFSU-EXPERTS-AVAILABLE-TO-SHARE-RESEARCH-INSIGHTS-FOR-AUTISM-ACCEPTANCE-MONTH%2F&text=FSU+EXPERTS+AVAILABLE+TO+SHARE+RESEARCH+INSIGHTS+FOR+AUTISM+ACCEPTANCE+MONTH:%20HTTPS%3A%2F%2Fnews.fsu.edu%2Fnews%2Fexpert-pitches%2F2021%2F03%2F31%2FFSU-EXPERTS-AVAILABLE-TO-SHARE-RESEARCH-INSIGHTS-FOR-AUTISM-ACCEPTANCE-MONTH%2F) (HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/INTENT/TWEET?SOURCE=HTTP%3A%2F%2FHTTPS%3A%2F%2FNEWS.FSU.EDU%2FNEWS%2FEXPERT-PITCHES%2F2021%2F03%2F31%2FFSU-EXPERTS-AVAILABLE-TO-SHARE-RESEARCH-INSIGHTS-FOR-AUTISM-ACCEPTANCE-MONTH%2F&TEXT=FSU+EXPERTS+AVAILABLE+TO+SHARE+RESEARCH+INSIGHTS+FOR+AUTISM+ACCEPTANCE+MONTH:%20HTTPS%3A%2F%2FNEWS.FSU.EDU%2FNEWS%2FEXPERT-PITCHES%2F2021%2F03%2F31%2FFSU-EXPERTS-AVAILABLE-TO-SHARE-RESEARCH-INSIGHTS-FOR-AUTISM-ACCEPTANCE-MONTH%2F)



The Autism Society of America celebrates April as Autism Acceptance Month as part of the organization's efforts to build a better awareness of the signs, symptoms and realities of autism.

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. It affects an estimated 1 in 54 children in the United States.

Florida State University has autism experts available to speak to media and offer context for articles on the subject.

Bradley Cox, associate professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, College of Education
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Cox is an associate professor of higher education in the College of Education and is also the founder and executive director of the College Autism Network, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to using evidence-based advocacy to improve experiences and outcomes for college students with autism. His current scholarship examines the systemic, institutional and personal conditions that shape college access, experiences and outcomes for college students with autism.

"Students with autism are coming to college in record numbers. The distinctive characteristics of autism affect nearly every aspect of college life: completing assignments, living on campus, attending football games, engaging with classmates and preparing for a career. Our research highlights the ways in which these characteristics can help autistic students thrive in college. Yet, these students are often misunderstood by their instructors or marginalized by their peers. While many institutions' standard operating procedures create unnecessary barriers to these students' success, emerging evidence suggests that both simple changes and innovative initiatives have the potential to maximize the students' opportunities for postsecondary success."

Veronica Fleury, assistant professor, School of Teacher Education, College of Education
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Fleury's research focuses on optimizing learning opportunities for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Her work explores how core behavioral characteristics of ASD promote or inhibit students' ability to participate in learning activities and examines evidence-based practices that support individuals with ASD.

"Our knowledge about autism spectrum disorder has grown exponentially over the last several decades, but misinformation disseminated through internet platforms and social media has had a strong influence in education broadly and the education of students with ASD specifically. Despite a strong — and growing — body of research aimed at identifying effective evidence-based practices for individuals with ASD, many pseudoscientific practices continue to be used. This means that well-intentioned individuals are spending time, effort, money and hope using a treatment or strategy that is unlikely to yield desired results."

Jenny Root, assistant professor, School of Teacher Education, College of Education

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Root is a board-certified behavior analyst who uses applied behavior analysis as a theoretical framework in designing and evaluating interventions and practices. Her research focuses on instructional methods to promote academic learning for students with autism and intellectual disability.

"Awareness is the very minimum of what individuals with autism deserve. We need to continually evaluate what we think we know or have done in the past and consider how it impacts the very individuals meant to benefit. My own teaching, scholarship and advocacy focuses on how to give students with autism meaningful access to academic instruction, particularly in the area of mathematics. This is an area where individuals with autism have historically been victims of low expectations, yet a growing body of research is evidence that ceilings on their mathematical knowledge are a byproduct of educators not knowing how to support them."

Amy Wetherby, Distinguished Research Professor of Clinical Sciences,

College of Medicine and director of the Autism Institute

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Wetherby is the director of the Autism Institute in the College of Medicine at FSU as well as a fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association with more than 35 years of clinical experience. Her research interests include early detection of autism and parent-implemented early intervention for children with autism.

*"What does autism look like at 18 months? Or 12 months? Research at the FSU Autism Institute is using video technology to show the early signs to a global audience. The institute has an unparalleled video collection of infants and toddlers from years of researching early social communication development. This research inspired the creation of **Autism Navigator** (<https://autismnavigator.com/>)> online courses and tools that illustrate the early signs of autism and how to improve early detection and access to care.*

*The institute's research team has also built **Baby Navigator** (<https://babynavigator.com/>)>, which provides resources and tools for families to celebrate and support their baby's early learning and nurture the development of language and success in school and life. Early diagnosis and intervention are critical to help children with autism reach their potential. Parents can start interventions right away at home to support the growth of their child's social communication skills."*

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