

VISION for OKLAHOMANS WITH AUTISM & THEIR FAMILIES

Beginning at the first meeting and continuing until the end, the Working Group used the information it received and its own valuable experiences to craft a vision for Oklahoma's system of services and supports. Refined continually throughout the process, the vision provides a comprehensive statement of the beliefs, dreams and goals of the Working Group for people in Oklahoma with autism.

Oklahoma has a system of support for people with autism or other autism spectrum disorders (Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified, Asperger's Syndrome, Rett's Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder) and their families in which each individual's strengths and needs are identified early and provide the basis for his or her specific plan of care, education, services, employment and residence. The personal preferences and values of individuals with autism and their families are respected and reflected in the development and implementation of each person's plan.

In Oklahoma all people with autism are safe and none are denied services. A seamless continuum of effective, integrated options for assistance, including crisis intervention, is available for every person across his or her life span. Oklahoma's full range of flexibly-funded options includes high quality, effective education, care and support reflecting the current and continually updated "best practices" for people with autism.

Each person with autism resides in the least restrictive setting capable of providing that individual with consistent safety, security and maximum independence. Ideally, a person with autism lives in his or her own home in an Oklahoma town, city or rural area.

Oklahoma health care providers understand these disorders and provide cutting-edge care through community-based services which provide each person a regular place to receive continuing care that meets his or her individual needs.

People with autism or autism spectrum disorders have access to the full range of employment and day services, including supported employment, enabling each person to achieve his or her potential. People with autism and their families are fully accepted and actively participate in their community, interacting effectively with their friends, neighbors and local service providers. People with autism expand their opportunities through interactive Internet access.

All professionals working with people with autism are competent, educated to provide contemporary and effective services and receive ongoing professional development which is based on the most up-to-date evidence-based information. Families and relative caregivers are provided effective support, training and technical assistance, enabling them to ensure the best care possible for their loved one. Every person with autism receives an appropriate, individualized education which assures that he or she masters functional skills and achieves his or her potential. The general public understands autism (particularly emergency responders), complementing professional and family endeavors to ensure appropriate treatment of any person.

Families and service providers are well supported with timely and easy access to resources and services. Safe and time-effective substitute care is available for all ages, enabling care givers to receive effective respite when needed and people with autism to be stabilized during a crisis.

Oklahoma's system of care for people with autism and their families is accountable, with its effectiveness regularly measured and reported through the outcomes achieved. Monitoring, oversight and grievance procedures are effective and involve family members.

Oklahoma leads the nation in its research to identify the causes of autism and document the effectiveness of "best practices" designed to provide support, care and education for individuals and their families.