

Speech-Language Pathology Services at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders

Who We Are

The speech-language pathologists at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute are trained to provide specialized evaluations and interventions to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Our Team

Our speech-language pathologists hold a Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) and are licensed to practice in Maryland. They also receive training in specialized ASD assessment tools and evidence-based treatment approaches for children with ASD. Our speech-language pathologists regularly attend continuing education classes to stay abreast of the latest in evidence-based practice, and many of our speech-language therapists have received the ASHA Award for Continuing Education based on their exemplary commitment to ongoing learning and training.

Our Services

Working in conjunction with the professional team at CARD, our speech-language pathologists provide a variety of evaluations for children who have or are suspected of having an ASD.

- **Team evaluations:** Our speech-language pathologists work closely with psychiatrists, developmental pediatricians, neurologists, and psychologists to provide a differential diagnosis regarding ASD. As part of the diagnostic team, speech-language pathologists administer the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, which is used to identify a child's specific strengths and needs regarding communication, social interaction, and repetitive behaviors.
- **Toddler evaluations:** Our speech-language pathologists have trained with leading researcher and clinician Dr. Rebecca Landa to detect signs of autism in children as young as 12 months of age, leading to early intervention and improved outcomes. Toddlers also receive comprehensive speech and language assessments as part of a team evaluation at CARD.
- **Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC):** Our assistive technology program works with children who do not currently have a functional and reliable means of communication. These children may benefit from the Picture



Exchange Communication System or other low- or high-tech augmentative and alternative communication devices. We provide evaluations to identify the most appropriate AAC device or intervention, and assist families with obtaining insurance funding for recommended high-tech AAC devices when appropriate. We also train children and their parents on the use of their AAC system.

- **Evaluation of speech and language development:** Our speech-language pathologists evaluate each child's language development, including receptive, expressive, and pragmatic language skills. Information about a child's play skills may also be included in this assessment. Our skilled clinicians administer, score, and interpret standardized tests and informal assessments to determine specific areas of need. They are also trained to evaluate other speech difficulties, such as childhood apraxia of speech.

Every evaluation done at our center includes a written report with assessment results and treatment recommendations related to a child's speech, language, and social-communicative needs.

We are all born with great potential.
Shouldn't we all have the chance to achieve it?



Center for Autism and Related Disorders
at Kennedy Krieger Institute

Our Treatment Approach

As part of our comprehensive center, our speech-language pathologists provide a variety of treatment options for toddler and school-aged children and their parents.

- **Individual therapy:** These services typically focus on improving a child's receptive and expressive language, social communication, and play skills. Children participate in a weekly therapy session with a speech-language pathologist who develops individual goals and objectives to improve communication ability. Children who lack a reliable means of communication can also benefit from augmentative and alternative communication intervention.
- **Group therapy:** Group therapy services range from small group therapy (two children) to larger group therapy (up to five or six children). Children are grouped based on age and communication needs to ensure that those in the same group are working on similar goals. Group sessions may meet from one to four times per week. Children between the ages of 3 and 6 years attend our Achievements Therapeutic Day program, while children ages 6 and older participate in short-term social skills groups provided in the clinic.
- **Parent/child training:** Our center offers many short-term parent/child training programs. These programs are typically conducted over a series of four to six treatment sessions. The speech-language pathologist works with the child and parent to teach skills that parents can use at home to foster play, language, and communication skills. Parent training includes:
 - **JumpStart** – a parent/child training program for newly diagnosed toddlers that focuses on teaching parents how to play with their children and capitalize on learning opportunities that occur during daily activities in order to promote their child's development of language and social-communication skills.
 - **Picture Exchange Clinic** – provides parent/child workshops for children with minimal verbal skills. Parents and caregivers learn how to help their child's use of picture symbols to communicate.

Community Outreach

Many of our speech-language pathologists provide lectures and trainings both at CARD and in the community. Topics include everything from diagnosing autism to designing and implementing social skills groups and using visual strategies with children who have autism.

Our Research

Many of our speech-language pathologists participate in grant-funded research. Many of our current research projects look at early detection of and early intervention for ASD. Some of our clinicians conduct evaluations and interventions as part of research projects.

Contact Information

Center for Autism and Related Disorders at Kennedy Krieger Institute

To make a referral or schedule an appointment, please call **888-554-2080**.

For more information about our program, call **443-923-7680**.

TTY: **443-923-2645** or Maryland Relay **711**

CARD.KennedyKrieger.org

Physicians & Healthcare Professionals

To make a referral, call our Physician Referral Line at **443-923-9403**.

Clinic Locations:

3901 Greenspring Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21211

1130 Annapolis Road, Suite 200
Odenton, MD 21113

Kennedy Krieger Institute recognizes and respects the rights of patients and their families and treats them with courtesy and dignity. Care is provided in a manner that preserves cultural, psychosocial, spiritual and personal values, beliefs, and preferences. We encourage patients and families to become active partners in their care by asking questions, requesting resources, and advocating for the services and support they need.



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