

Good morning,

Please see below for information and resources related to your work with older youth.

- IL Site Visit Webinar
https://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Webinars/Webinars_ILSiteVisitOverview20262027.htm
- Office of Developmental Programs Resources
- The Aging Out Podcast
- LGBTQ+ Resources

Office of Developmental Programs Resources:



Bringing autism resources together.

[Para Español, Haga Clic Aquí](#)



Notice: Medicaid Changes in 2027

Changes are coming to Medicaid in 2027. It is important to plan for the changes to keep your coverage. Community Behavioral Health and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services have

tips on how to prepare for these changes. ASERT will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

- [Keep Your Medicaid Coverage](#)
- [Changes Coming to Medicaid in Pennsylvania in January 2027](#)

Introducing the New Edition of ODP's Gold Book

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is pleased to release a new edition of The Gold Book! Designed as a foundational resource, this book helps families understand and navigate the service delivery and support system. Available in both English and Spanish!

[ENGLISH VERSION](#)

[SPANISH VERSION](#)

Calling all Artists on the Spectrum!

The PATC 2026 Call for Artists is now live! ODP is looking for artists on the spectrum to showcase their artwork in a virtual “art gallery” at the 2026 Pennsylvania Autism Training Conference (PATC). **The deadline is October 2nd.** If you have any questions, please contact: info@paautism.org.

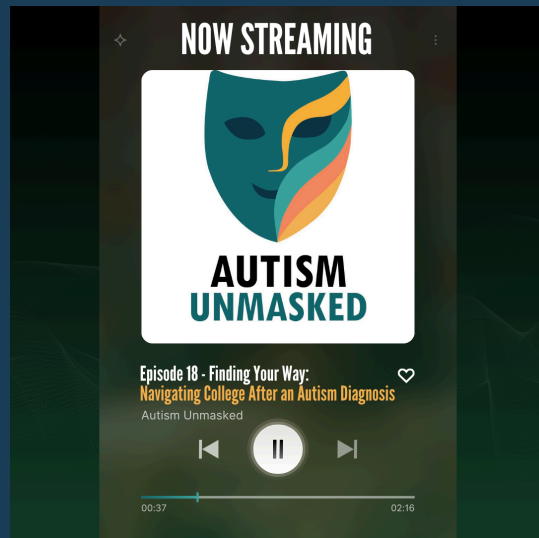
[VIEW THE CALL FOR ARTISTS](#)

Listen to Our Most Recent Autism Unmasked Episode

Join our guest Emma for an honest conversation about discovering autism in college, finding the right support, and navigating this important transition as you learn more about who you are.

[LISTEN HERE](#)

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



[VIEW ALL EPISODES](#)



[LEARN MORE](#)

Save the Date: The 2026 Pennsylvania Autism Training Conference

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) invites you to save the date for its 19th annual Pennsylvania Autism Training Conference (PATC). **The conference will be held virtually with an interactive schedule on November 4th and 5th of 2026.**

Featured Resources: National Suicide Prevention Month

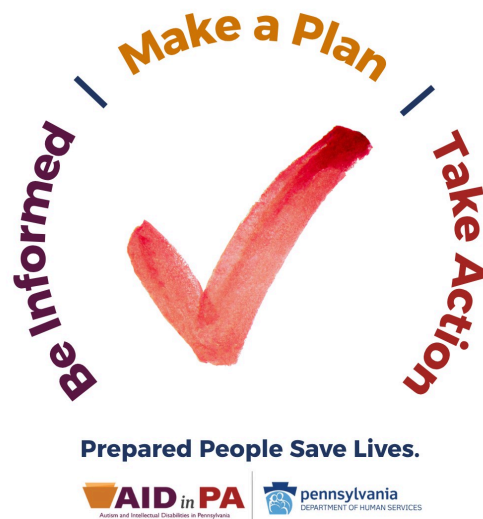
September is recognized as National Suicide Prevention Month. Check out some of our suicide prevention resources below to help increase awareness.

- [Be Well, Think Well: Suicide Resources](#)
- [Noticing Signs of Mental Health Crisis](#)

- [What are Suicidal Thoughts? A Social Story](#)

ODP Launches 'Prepared People Save Lives' Campaign

September is National Preparedness Month, and ODP is launching the statewide [Prepared People Save Lives campaign](#)! Each week in September, MyODP will release short videos and resources that break down preparedness steps — with examples and tools you can use right away. Find links from AID in PA for individuals and families



ASDnext
Spotlight



**Find social
events
near you!**

ASDNext Social Calendar

ASDNext does not sponsor, endorse or profit from any listed events. ASDNext is not responsible for the specific content or outcome of any event. We encourage you to use this list as a guide and do further research to determine which events you would like to attend.

OUTSIDE INSIGHTS

Emotional Support Lions, Tigers, and Bears...Oh My!

Danielle Winn, Real Estate Instructor &
Advocate for Inclusive
Homebuying/Selling

*"In Late 2020, US Department of
Transportation announced it was
revising its guidelines. Bottom line:
service animals are permitted;
emotional support animals are not. But
what about in housing?"*

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

To keep up with all guest articles and
view the newsletter archive, visit the
[Stay Connected](#) page!



Neurodivergent News: **Collaborative Autism Movement Provides Sensory Bags to Pennsylvania State Police Stations Across the Commonwealth**

*"For families of children with autism, an
emergency can be one of the most
overwhelming experiences they face.
Knowing that first responders across
Pennsylvania will have access to sensory
tools and communication resources brings a
sense of comfort and reassurance to families"*

[READ MORE](#)



Where in the World is ASERT?

Catch Us at These Upcoming Events in September!

- **9/13** - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Out of the Darkness - *Blair*
- **9/19** - Aveanna Healthcare: Chambersburg Community Disability Resource Fair - *Franklin*
- **9/22-23** - Center for Schools and Communities: Refugee Education Summit - *Montgomery*
- **9/24** - DBHIDS: Recovery Cafe - *Philadelphia*
- **9/26** - Disability Pride PA: Pittsburgh - *Allegheny*

More Statewide Events!

Western PA

9/15 - Children's Museum of Pittsburgh: Sensory Friendly Afternoon - *Allegheny*

9/19 - Venango County Human Services: Disconnect to Reconnect - *Venango*

9/20 - Autism Society NWPA: Family Magic Event - *Erie*

Central PA

9/13 - Crayola Experience: Sensory Sundays - *Northampton*

9/17 - The Arc of Franklin and Fulton Counties: Ice Cream Social - *Franklin*

9/19 - The Arc of York and Adams Counties: Film Festival - *Adams*

Eastern PA

9/11 - PEEA: 2nd Fridays- *Philadelphia*

9/19 - The Shops at Valley Square: Sensory Friendly Event - *Bucks*

9/30 - Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Center for Autism Research: Next Steps for Families with a New Diagnosis - *Online*

[VIEW THE FULL LIST OF EVENTS](#)

****For questions about an individual event, please get in touch with the host organization noted in the event description****



Legal Notice

ASERT | 500 University Dr | Hershey
[877-231-4244](tel:877-231-4244) | info@paautism.org | <https://paautism.org/>

The Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT) is a statewide initiative funded by the PA Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Our goal is to provide streamlined access to information for Pennsylvanians living with autism.

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The Aging Out Podcast:



Penn
Social Policy & Practice
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

The Field Center for
Children's Policy,
Practice & Research

THE AGING OUT PODCAST

Policy. Practice. Possibility.
A Podcast on Aging Out of Foster Care



The Field Center's September Podcast is Here!

*The title previously stated the month of August.

Episode 17: Interview with Rob Scheer,
Founder of Comfort Cases (Gaithersburg, MD)

[Listen Now](#)

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce the release of our **September** podcast episode, featuring **Rob Scheer**, Founder of **Comfort Cases**, a nonprofit organization based in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Our MSSP intern, **Taryn Painter**, sat down with Rob to discuss his own experience as a youth in care, becoming a parent, and his advocacy through similar systems.

During the conversation, he shares his firsthand perspective and identifies areas where individuals and families need greater support. Rob expands on **Comfort Cases** and their commitment to providing youth with *dignity* and *comfort*, in the form of travel bags during their transition to foster care.

Listeners will learn more about the impact of **Comfort Cases**, Rob's personal motivations, and his vision for creating meaningful, social-emotional support for youth with foster care experience.



Other Platforms:

Rob Scheer's episode is available on all podcast platforms, including [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

LGBTQ+ Resources:

Webinar: Understanding LGBTQ+ Overrepresentation Across Intervening Systems
Wednesday, November 18 | 1:00–2:00 PM EST



An examination of the data and systemic patterns behind LGBTQ+ youth overrepresentation in intervening systems. This session will share data illustrating overrepresentation and lived experiences across these systems, alongside stories that highlight the paths young people travel through them, paths often shaped by missed opportunities for intervention and prevention along the way. Participants will explore root causes and practical strategies for interrupting bias at the point of entry into care.

About the Presenter

Avery Irons (She/Her) is a nationally recognized policy advocate and consultant with 20 years of experience strengthening protections for vulnerable youth, families, and communities, including LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice system. A graduate of Columbia Law School, Avery has held leadership roles across policy advocacy, training, and technical assistance, including Director of Training & Technical Assistance at the NYS Youth Justice Institute, Training & Coaching Manager at the LA LGBT Center, and Director of Youth Justice Programs at the Children's Defense Fund.

[Register now.](#)

New Resource: Back to School As You Are (2026-27 School Year)



TransLash Media has released its annual back-to-school guide, tailored this year to reflect a shifting landscape for queer and trans students. The guide walks through what's changed since last fall, including the Supreme Court's June 2026 ruling allowing states to bar transgender girls and women from girls' and women's school sports teams, SAMHSA's discontinuation of the 988 Lifeline's specialized

LGBTQ+ Youth Services, and organizational rebrands (GLSEN is now Glisten; NCTE merged with TLDEF to form Advocates for Trans Equality). From there, it offers separate, practical sections for students (coming-out timing, privacy, know-your-rights hotlines), parents (school-conversation strategies, toolkits from groups like Family Equality, PFLAG, and Gender Spectrum), and educators (classroom practices, curriculum resources, and GSA advising tips), plus pointers to crisis and legal support if things go sideways.

[Access the guide.](#)

New Federal Medicaid Rule Affects Trans Youth Healthcare: Here's What Families Need to Know



Beginning October 13, 2026, the federal government will stop reimbursing states for Medicaid and CHIP coverage of gender-affirming care for trans youth. Advocates for Trans Equality (A4TE) has published a clear, family-facing FAQ that breaks down what this rule actually means, what stays covered, and what caregivers can do next, including how to find a new provider, options if paying out of pocket isn't possible, and how to support a young person through the uncertainty.

[Read the FAQ.](#)

Have a great weekend.

Thanks,

Meghan O'Hare, MSW