

# Local Specialist Now Recruiting Providers, Host Sites, and Families with Developmental Disability Concerns

---

*Local Specialist Now Recruiting Providers, Host Sites, and Families with Developmental Disability Concerns*

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, July 19, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ --

The grant funded program will focus on inclusive care for historically marginalized communities.

A pilot program aimed at providing rapid autism clinical evaluations (RACE) to high-risk minoritized children ages 18-36 months is moving into the recruiting process in the greater Richmond area. Inclusive RACE, the program spearheaded by Anjali Gowda Ferguson, Ph.D., will be hosted on-site at participating local primary care settings, childcare centers, neighborhoods, and community centers as early as August 2022. Fifty families of young children with developmental disability concerns and primary care facilities needing expert identification for diagnostic purposes, and educational facilities are invited to participate.

The program addresses the barriers to culturally-responsive assessments and bridges the gap to earlier intervention for historically marginalized communities. The state of Virginia is currently ranked 48th in the country for access to early developmental screenings. Data worsens as research identifies Black and Latine children with behavioral and developmental needs receive diagnoses much later in development, or are often misdiagnosed, despite early intervention and access to care having significant long-term positive effects on symptoms and later skills. By providing the clinical evaluations as early as 18 months, it ensures substantial time to connect families with early intervention services through the Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia and other resources.

“Black and Latine children receive ASD (autism spectrum disorder) diagnosis significantly later in life, with a majority receiving a diagnosis after age 6. We hope to address Virginia’s developmental screening needs while also creating culturally-responsive materials that address historic disparities for marginalized communities,” says Dr. Anjali Ferguson, early childhood clinical psychologist with expertise in trauma-informed, culturally responsive care and developmental disabilities.

The program, funded by a grant from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental

Services ensures fifty families undergo a free evaluation using the Rapid Interactive Screening Test for Autism in Toddlers (RITA-T), a play-based assessment, by qualified clinicians beginning as soon as August 2022 and concluding November this year. Evaluated families will receive a report and are connected to Early Intervention, local speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapies and given a curated list of resources. The evaluation takes less than 30 minutes and is hosted at various partnering sites within the area to promote easier accessibility to families.

"We are beginning the Inclusive RACE in the greater Richmond area with hopes to train and create centers statewide eventually. I've practiced intervention and assessment services for children ages 1-18, focusing on ages 1-6, in the greater Richmond area for the last seven years. I hope to continue identifying avenues of care for under-resourced and marginalized communities, reduce barriers to interventions, and continue education around trauma and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)," says Dr. Ferguson.

The grant also covers 25-50 interested professionals with specialty training on trauma-related experiences specific to the ASD community and RITA-T screening. Findings from the Inclusive RACE will assist with creating future culturally-responsive materials that address diagnostic needs, stigma, trauma, and access to care for minoritized families. To become a host site, register your child, or learn more about Inclusive RACE, please visit [www.draferguson.com](http://www.draferguson.com).  
####

Julie Khanna  
Khanna Connections  
+1 5616030557  
[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/581996159>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2022 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.