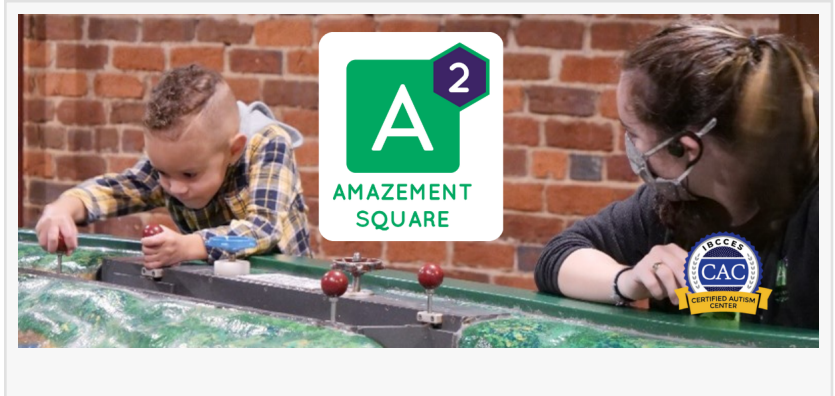


Amazement Square Becomes the First Museum in Virginia to Earn Certified Autism Center™ Designation

IBCCES has named Amazement Square a Certified Autism Center™ (CAC), marking the first Museum in Virginia to earn this accolade.

LYNCHBURG, VA, UNITED STATES, April 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) has named [Amazement Square](#)

a [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC), marking the first Museum in Virginia to earn this accolade. The CAC designation is granted to organizations that have completed training and certification to better serve autistic and sensory-sensitive visitors. The training program covers various topics, including sensory awareness, environment, communication, motor and social skills, program development, and emotional awareness. IBCCES will also conduct an onsite review to provide additional ways the Museum can accommodate visitors and create detailed sensory guides for each exhibition as part of the certification process.



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We're excited to partner with the Amazement Square team to expand and enhance their ability to help serve autistic visitors and their families looking for more welcoming and accessible spaces.”

Myron Pincomb, Board Chairman of IBCCES

Many autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals may find it challenging to visit new places or plan family trips due to a lack of staff training and understanding, the potential for sensory overload, or the need for flexible options or accommodations. In response to this need, IBCCES created training and certification programs for museums, hotels, zoos, aquariums, and other attractions to ensure all families and individuals can have fun and create memories. IBCCES is the only credentialing board offering these types of programs, which include training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, long-term support, continuous learning, onsite reviews and more.

"Since its inception, one of the guiding principles of Amazement Square has been inclusivity and accessibility. The Museum's Everyone is Special program reflects our commitment to and appreciation for people of all abilities and backgrounds," shared Mort Sajadian, PHD, President/CEO of Amazement Square.



Sajadian continues, "By becoming a Certified Autism Center™, we are making Amazement Square even more accessible to audiences diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder by providing STEAM--based experiential learning with ASD sensory manipulatives and resources, virtual museum tours,



identified quiet places, and outreach adaptive learning programs in schools. We are very excited to be a part of the IBCCES certification process, and we're fully committed to enhancing Amazement Square's experiential learning environment that is accessible to ALL."

Amazement Square, a multi-disciplinary and interactive museum, has served children of all abilities with various programs and lifelong learning opportunities. Access to Museum's exhibitions and curriculum-based educational programs for all remain priorities for the Museum. Amazement Square offers an in-museum and school outreach program, Everyone is Special (EIS), designed to meet the needs of families with autistic children. The Everyone is Special program also offers free quarterly Family Fun Nights. These events allow for exclusive museum exploration in a sensory-conscious environment.

Before exploring the Museum, visitors can access sensory sensitivity resources, including a virtual tour, museum guides, and social stories to share with their children. The Museum also offers sensory guides, designated quiet areas, and, when needed, use of our available distract packs.

"We are excited to see Amazement Square participating in this certification process and receive the resources and training that it provides to make their staff better prepared to support the needs of the Museum's visitors who are on the autism spectrum."

"Becoming a Certified Autism Center™ is a significant undertaking by Amazement Square, and it will strengthen the Museum's Everyone is Special and outreach school program, which is a wonderful educational resource for our community and schools," said Teresa L. Brennan, MD, Developmental Pediatrics and Jitendra R. Annappareddy, MD, Autism and Developmental Services

at Centra Autism and Developmental Services Clinic.

"There are a large number of children and families that are in the Lynchburg area and surroundings that will benefit from these programs and the training and expertise the Amazement Square staff will receive."

"We're excited to partner with the Amazement Square team to expand and enhance their ability to help serve autistic and sensory-sensitive visitors and their families looking for more welcoming and accessible spaces," said Myron Pincomb, board chairman of IBCCES. "Implement lasting and impactful programs such as our certification, Amazement Square can continually meet the community's needs and develop programming."

Additionally, Amazement Square provides materials-rich STEAM curriculum-based programs in adaptive classrooms and in Early Learning Center, which was nationally recognized with The National Medal for Museum & Library Services award in 2015. Amazement Square also created a partnership with regional schools to provide free STEAM curriculum-based programs to adaptive classrooms and continues its quest to enhance, expand, develop, and reimagine free educational programs to best address the needs of its community.

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About IBCCES

Delivering the global standard for training and certification in the field of cognitive disorders, IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

For more than 20 years, IBCCES has been the leader in cognitive disorder training and certification for healthcare, education and corporate professionals around the globe. IBCCES created programs specifically for hospitality and recreational organizations such as hotels, theme parks and other attractions so staff would be more knowledgeable of accommodations offered to this growing but underserved part of the community.

IBCCES also created AutismTravel.com, a free online resource for families that lists certified destinations and connects families to other resources and each other. Each destination listed on the site has met the Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

About Amazement Square

Amazement Square is an award-winning, multi-disciplinary, interactive museum located in historic Downtown Lynchburg, Virginia. The museum offers 8 galleries of hands-on, interactive exhibitions designed to make learning fun. Visitors of all ages and abilities can paint on the walls in the Kaleidoscope Gallery, explore life on the farm, create a rainstorm over downtown Lynchburg, float a boat down the James River, and even rock out on stage in a band of their own!

Amazement Square also provides educational programs and outreach initiatives supporting Central Virginia students.

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