

# Jacksonville Icemen's Community First Igloo Becomes First of its Kind to Earn Autism Certification

*Jacksonville Icemen's Community First Igloo works with IBCCES to Become a More Welcoming Space for All Visitors*

JACKSONVILLE, FL, UNITED STATES,  
June 21, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ --

The [Jacksonville Icemen's Community First Igloo](#) has achieved the accolade of becoming the first hockey team sports venue to earn [Certified Autism](#)

[Center](#)™ (CAC) designation. This designation is awarded by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) to help make venues like the Community First Igloo more accessible to autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals by



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*Myron Pincomb, Board  
Chairman of IBCCES*

completing autism-specific training and certification to better understand and welcome these visitors, who may find it challenging to visit unfamiliar places. IBCCES also conducted an onsite review to provide additional ways the venue can accommodate visitors and create detailed sensory guides for each area as part of the certification process.

“We are excited to work with IBCCES and we appreciate their guidance in helping our team and the facility earn their Autism Certification,” said Icemen & Community First

Igloo CEO Andy Kaufmann. “The Community First Igloo offers something for everyone, and we want to make certain that the facility is always welcoming for our autistic and sensory-sensitive visitors.”

IBCCES created training and certification programs specifically for leisure and entertainment attractions like the Community First Igloo to ensure that these individuals and their families can enjoy their visit to their fullest by having access to more accommodations and options if experience sensory overload or have other needs during their visit. The staff training help to

ensure the team have a better understanding of visitor needs and tools and resources to assist.

In addition to training and certification, the Jacksonville Icemen players wore specialty Autism Awareness jerseys during a select game in 2019 and 2020. The concept was well-received by fans and supporters, while money was raised with the jerseys in a postgame auction. During the 2022-2023 season the Icemen hosted a Hockey is for All Night, that featured sensory-sensitive areas at the arena. The team is looking to create a permanent sensory space area for all of its games.



Speaking about the designation, IBCCES board chairman Myron

Pincomb said: "This type of training and certification is vital to enhance the guest experience for all. Our programs make a real difference to families, enabling industry leaders to better serve each and every one of their guests. We are delighted that the Community First Igloo has shown their commitment to all their visitors and their unique needs by earning autism certification."

For over 20 years, IBCCES has been the leader in cognitive disorder training and certification for healthcare, education, and corporate professionals worldwide. IBCCES is the only credentialing organization providing this type of certification, which includes evidence-based training and the perspectives of autistic individuals, alongside other tools and resources such as onsite reviews and customized recommendations, and renewal requirements to ensure the program is a long-term commitment that has a lasting impact.

IBCCES also created AutismTravel.com, a free online resource for parents 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.

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About the Community First Igloo

The Community First Igloo features two NHL regulation sheets of ice, the Icebreakers Bar & Grill, a new concession stand, pro shop and merchandise store and the Keyrenter Esports Video Gaming Lounge. The facility offers public skating, youth and adult hockey programs, along with learn-to-skate and learn-to-play-hockey programs. The Community First Igloo is also the official practice home of the Jacksonville Icemen.

The Community First Igloo has provided training to staff to better serve autistic and sensory-sensitive guests. The facility provides a clutter-free space and is working on completing a low sensory area for guests to take a break if necessary. In addition, guests with special needs may also bring their own food as long as the front desk staff is notified at arrival. The facility is looking to provide additional sensory items for guests as well.

#### 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 worldwide as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

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