

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument Becomes First National Park to Earn Certified Autism Center™ Designation

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument earns Certified Autism Center™ status, making it the first national park to enhance inclusivity for autistic visitors.

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The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) proudly awards the [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC) designation to [Castillo de San Marcos National Monument](#), signifying their commitment to enhancing inclusivity for autistic and sensory-sensitive visitors. The first national park to earn the designation, Castillo de San Marcos staff completed a specialized training and certification process, equipping them with resources and best practices to assist visitors. IBCCES also conducted an onsite review to create sensory guides and offer additional recommendations to improve the visitor experience.



“Castillo de San Marcos National Monument is proud to be the first U.S. national park designated as a Certified Autism Center™ by IBCCES,” says Gordie Wilson, Superintendent. “Park staff are committed to the National Park Service's vision to provide amazing, meaningful experiences for everyone who visits these national treasures. This initial step helps us rise to the challenge of creating a fun, equitable, and accessible environment where visitors thrive.”

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument joins a growing number of tourism and recreation-related organizations in the area to complete certification as part of a larger initiative led by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, aiming to achieve the [Certified Autism Destination™](#) (CAD) designation. This initiative will ensure that the area offers multiple certified options for

entertainment, recreation, and lodging for autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families.

In the summer of 2024, the Castillo hosted a Youth Empowerment Stewards (YES) Program intern in partnership with Conservation Legacy who conducted extensive ground-truthing to produce accessibility guides for the public. These, along with sensory guides and feedback from an onsite review by IBCCES, will be used to inform park managers about decision making and program development in the coming year. The park is excited to make the in-person and online visitor experience more accessible to all.



“We’re proud to partner with Castillo de San Marcos National Monument as they provide critical knowledge about our past and protect this amazing historic landmark,” says Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman. “We applaud their efforts and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will continue to make on every guest that visits.”



For more than two decades, IBCCES has been a leader in providing autism, sensory and neurodiversity training and certification for professionals worldwide, including those in healthcare, education, public safety, travel, and corporate sectors. As the only credentialing board offering these programs, IBCCES provides training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, along with long-term support, continuous learning, onsite reviews, and renewal requirements to ensure continued growth and lasting impact

IBCCES also created AutismTravel.com, a free online resource for parents that lists certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the site has met Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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About Castillo de San Marcos:

Built in the 17th century by the Spanish in St. Augustine to defend Florida and the Atlantic trade



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*Gordie Wilson,
Superintendent*

route, Castillo de San Marcos National Monument preserves the oldest masonry fortification in the continental United States and interprets more than 450 years of cultural intersections. For more information, visit the park website at www.nps.gov/casa or follow us on Facebook and Instagram (CastilloNPS).

About IBCCES

Committed to providing 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.

Meredith Tekin

IBCCES

+1 904-508-0135

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