

The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital Established as a Certified Autism Center™

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ, UNITED STATES, April 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital](#) has been recognized as a [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC) by The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). This designation is awarded to organizations whose staff have undergone autism-specific training to equip them with the supportive skills and resources to provide the best experience possible to every child that visits the hospital.

Through this inclusive training for the entire pediatric staff, The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital aims to create a more positive and therapeutic experience for all patients with autism and sensory disorders, making its pediatric healthcare services more accessible and less intimidating for children with autism.

The training focuses on understanding the unique communication styles, sensory sensitivities, and behavioral cues that autistic children may exhibit. By learning how to recognize and respond to these specific needs, the staff can tailor their approach to reduce potential sources of stress for the child. This may involve using clear, direct communication, providing visual supports, offering sensory accommodations, and employing calming techniques when necessary.

Some of the techniques incorporated into the hospital's approach include providing patients with sensory items such as fidget toys for self-regulation, sunglasses for light sensitivities, and sound-cancelling headphones to minimize the impact of auditory stimuli. The hospital will soon offer communication boards and a mobile sensory station that will provide light and touch



items.

“Achieving the status of a Certified Autism Center™ reflects Saint Peter’s commitment to providing high quality, inclusive care to every pediatric patient. We strive to meet the unique needs of children with autism and their families by fostering an environment where they feel supported and understood, particularly in potentially more challenging and stressful situations such as when seeking emergency medical care,” said Leslie D. Hirsch, FACHE, president and CEO, Saint Peter’s Healthcare System, parent company of The Children’s Hospital at Saint Peter’s University Hospital.



In addition to supporting the child, the training also emphasizes the importance of understanding the parent’s perspective. Parents of children with autism often experience heightened anxiety during medical visits, especially when they feel their child’s needs may not be fully understood or met. By ensuring that clinical staff are compassionate and well-versed in the best practices for working with children with autism, the hospital creates an environment where both the child and parent feel heard, respected, and supported.

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*Leslie D. Hirsch, FACHE,
president and CEO, Saint
Peter’s Healthcare System*

Ethel Cole from North Brunswick is the mother of a 15-year-old son, Joel, who was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) after he turned 3. Joel has visited The Children’s Hospital at Saint Peter’s for various therapies over the years. Since the diagnosis, Cole has worked tirelessly to navigate the challenges of finding healthcare providers who understand the unique needs of

children with autism.

“My son is now a vivacious teenager with an awesome personality,” said Cole. “Every child deserves an environment where they feel safe and understood. Knowing that Saint Peter’s staff is trained to understand and support children like my son means the world to me. It alleviates so much of the anxiety we both face during hospital visits.”

As the parent of a child with ASD, Cole is thrilled to see that the hospital has earned accreditation as a Certified Autism Center™, ensuring that the pediatric staff are trained to interact with children like Joel.

“Any parent knows that hospital visits can be stressful and scary. It’s especially daunting when your child has autism and you’re unsure if they’ll be cared for in a way that makes them feel heard,” said Cole.

“As healthcare providers, we understand how important it is for parents to feel confident that their children will be cared for in the best possible way,” said Pam Harmon, DNP, MSN, RNC-NIC, director, Women and



Children’s Division, The Children’s Hospital at Saint Peter’s University Hospital. “With this certification, we demonstrate that our pediatric healthcare providers have the specialized training and tools to assist children with autism and other sensory issues with compassion and expertise.”

“This certification highlights the dedication of The Children’s Hospital at Saint Peter’s University Hospital to provide exceptional care to every child, especially autistic and sensory-sensitive patients,” said Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman. “IBCCES is proud to designate the children’s hospital as a Certified Autism Center™ and recognize their ongoing efforts to create inclusive and accessible care.”

Since 2001, IBCCES has been the leader in autism, neurodiversity, and cognitive training and certification for healthcare, education, and corporate professionals around the globe. IBCCES created programs specifically for hospitals, emergency rooms, and other medical professionals to better support this growing but underserved part of the community. IBCCES is the only credentialing board offering these types of programs, which include training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, as well as long-term support, continuous learning, and more.

IBCCES also created [CertifiedAutismCenter.com](https://www.CertifiedAutismCenter.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.

To learn more about The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital, please visit saintpetershcs.com/spchildrenshospital.

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About The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital

The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital is a state-designated acute care children's hospital and regional perinatal center sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Metuchen. The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's provides families with access to a full range of pediatric specialties, including a nationally renowned Level IV Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, a dedicated Pediatric Emergency Department, adolescent medicine, cancer care, diabetes, orthopedics, surgery, developmental pediatrics, gastroenterology, allergy and immunology, infectious disease medicine, cardiology, nephrology, neurology, pediatric intensive care, pulmonary/sleep medicine, audiology and physical therapy. Other programs and services include Medical Genetics and Genomic Medicine, which counsels, tests and treats children with rare diseases; the Craniofacial and Neurosurgical Center, which offers corrective surgery and multidisciplinary support for children born with cleft lip, cleft palate and other facial deformities; the Dorothy B. Hersh Regional Child Protection Center, a state-designated regional Diagnostic and Treatment Center for child abuse prevention; For KEEPs, a partial hospitalization program for children experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties; and the Center for Diabetes Self-Management and Education, which diagnoses and treats children with diabetes and other endocrine disorders.

Saint Peter's has received Perinatal Care Advanced Certification and Level IV Maternal Levels of Care Verification from the Joint Commission and the Beacon Award for Excellence from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses for its Neonatal Intensive Care and Pediatric Intensive Care units. The Dorothy B. Hersh Pediatric Emergency Department is the only pediatric emergency department in New Jersey to earn the Lantern Award (2022-2024) from the Emergency Nurses Association.

About IBCCES

Delivering the global standard for training and certification in the fields of autism, neurodiversity, and accessibility – IBCCES provides a series of certification programs that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. For over two decades, IBCCES has been a global leader, setting the industry standard in autism and cognitive differences training. IBCCES works in over 111 countries and provides training in 8 languages, and its programs have been recognized around the world as the leading benchmark in training and certification.

In addition to individual certification programs, IBCCES partners with cities, destinations, and organizations on initiatives like the Certified Autism Destination™ (CAD) and Autism Certified City™ (ACC), ensuring autistic and sensory-sensitive residents and visitors feel welcomed and safe. Destinations that achieve the CAD designation have completed a specialized program that ensures a multitude of recreation, hospitality and entertainment organizations have completed an autism and sensory-sensitivity training, certification and IBCCES facilities review process. The ACC designation expands on that program and includes IBCCES training and certification for the public safety, education, healthcare and workplace sectors.

IBCCES also created the Accessibility App, AutismTravel.com, and CertifiedAutismCenter.com – free resources for individuals with a variety of neurodiversities and disabilities, listing certified locations and connecting individuals to other resources and each other.

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