

Franklin Park Mall Renews Certified Autism Center™ Status, Continuing Inclusive Experiences for Shoppers and Families

The mall's CAC designation renewal is part of a larger effort to attract more travelers to the city as it works toward becoming a Certified Autism Destination™.

TOLEDO, OH, UNITED STATES, August 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Franklin Park Mall](#) renews its [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC) designation, reinforcing

its commitment to providing welcoming and inclusive experiences for autistic and sensory-sensitive guests. Awarded by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), the CAC certification renewal reflects the mall's continued investment in specialized autism and sensory training for staff members.



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Mackenzie Fork, marketing & business development manager

"Creating a place where everyone feels welcome is important to us," says Casey Pogan, Franklin Park Mall's general manager. "Renewing our IBCCES certification isn't just about earning a designation; it's about reinforcing our commitment to making Franklin Park Mall an inclusive destination where every guest feels comfortable, supported, and valued. We've made meaningful progress through initiatives like our Family Lounges, Autism Walk and Soothing Santa, and we're excited to continue building on that foundation by introducing additional sensory-friendly experiences and amenities. We will continue to

evolve and invest in our certification to ensure all guests can enjoy everything Franklin Park Mall has to offer."

"I was genuinely impressed by the IBCCES training and how informative it was," says Mackenzie Fork, marketing & business development manager at Franklin Park Mall. "It challenged me to

look at the guest experience from a completely different perspective and gave me a much deeper understanding of the everyday challenges autistic individuals and those with sensory sensitivities may face. The training had a lasting impact on me, and it's changed the way I think about planning events, creating marketing materials, and developing experiences at Franklin Park Mall. It's rewarding to know that even small changes can make such a meaningful difference in helping every guest feel welcome and included."

Franklin Park Mall offers two Family Lounges that provide a comfortable, quieter space where families with young children can take a break from shopping. These welcoming spaces may be especially helpful for guests with sensory sensitivities who would benefit from stepping away from the activity of the mall for a few moments. Each lounge features toys, kid-friendly programming, private nursing areas, and baby changing stations. Family Lounges are located in the JCPenney Wing near the Family Play Land and in the Food Court near Sbarro.

The mall also proudly hosts its annual "Soothing Bunny" and "Soothing Santa" events, sensory-inclusive experiences that provide guests with the opportunity to enjoy cherished holiday traditions in a calm, low-stimulation environment with reduced noise, smaller crowds, and a welcoming atmosphere.

As part of its ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion, Franklin Park Mall is actively exploring additional sensory-inclusive amenities, programs, and enhancements to further improve the experience for guests with sensory sensitivities.

"Franklin Park Mall's renewed Certified Autism Center™ designation reflects its ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive experience for every shopper and visitor," says Myron Pincomb, IBCCES CEO & board chairman. "For autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families, trained staff and inclusive accommodations can make everyday outings more



comfortable and enjoyable. By maintaining this designation, Franklin Park Mall continues to strengthen Destination Toledo's [Certified Autism Destination™](#) initiative while making the mall more welcoming and accessible for all."

The mall's CAC designation renewal is part of a larger effort by Destination Toledo to attract more travelers to the city as it works toward becoming a Certified Autism Destination™ (CAD), a designation awarded by IBCCES to communities with many trained and certified lodging, recreation, and entertainment options.

For 25 years, 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.

To further support inclusivity efforts, Franklin Park Mall is featured on the IBCCES Accessibility App, which is free to download. This app provides individuals with a variety of disabilities real-time guidance on certified destinations, sensory-friendly spaces, and tailored recommendations. By connecting users to accessible locations worldwide, the app helps ensure seamless, enjoyable experiences for everyone.

IBCCES also provides access to resources such as [AccessibilityCertified.com](#) and [AutismTravel.com](#), which are free online tools for families that list certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the sites has met IBCCES certification requirements.

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About Franklin Park Mall

Franklin Park Mall is a 1.3 million sq. ft. super-regional shopping center located in Toledo, Ohio, with easy access to US-23, I-475, I-75 and the Ohio Turnpike. Featuring 150+ local, regional, and national stores, the community destination offers a premier selection of shopping, dining, and entertainment options. Anchored by Dillard's, JCPenney, Dick's Sporting Goods and a Cinemark



16 & XD, visitors can enjoy the region's only Dave & Buster's, BJ's Brewhouse, and Apple Store. With destinations such as Altar'd State, American Eagle, Dry Goods, Zumiez, H&M, PINK, Pandora, JD Sports, Abercrombie & Fitch, and a popular outdoor shopping promenade featuring DSW, Old Navy, Maurices, and Ulta Beauty, customers will find the most robust store offerings in Northwest Ohio. A bright and airy Food Court serving fast casual favorites such as Chick-fil-A, Steak Escape, and Auntie Anne's complements popular full-service restaurants including Don Juan Mexican Grill. Franklin Park Mall is located at 5001 Monroe St., in Toledo, Ohio. Hours are Monday – Thursday: 11:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday and Saturday: 10:00 am – 8:00 pm, and Sunday: 11:00 am – 6:00 pm. Restaurant and department store hours may vary. For more information visit our website at www.visitfranklinparkmall.com or find on social media at Facebook: @Franklin Park Mall, Instagram: @franklinparkmall, or Twitter: @FranklinParkOH

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 industry leaders and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. For 25 years, IBCCES has been a global leader, setting the industry standard in autism and cognitive differences training. IBCCES works in over 125 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 AccessibilityCertified.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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