



Oakbrook Terrace Police Department Autism Awareness Program

The Oakbrook Terrace Police Department, through our Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program, will be launching a new initiative to assist individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who are experiencing a difficult situation. ASD is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3. The fact sheet below describes just how many people are affected by ASD.

Participation in the program is voluntary and families or caregivers of those with ASD can register with the Oakbrook Terrace Police Department to inform our telecommunications center of the person's special needs. When responding to a call involving an individual with special needs, our officers will be better prepared knowing that someone will need special assistance.

Our Department will utilize additional resources and training to help support those dealing with ASD. Responding to calls for service with those facing mental health issues is a top priority within our Department and this outstanding program will enhance our specialized training to further recognize the signs of ASD and effective ways to approach a person with ASD.

Families who sign up for the program will be provided "Autism Notice" decals to display on their windows, doors, or in their vehicles to advise everyone that "A person may not respond to verbal direction – Thank you for your kindness, support, and patience." The puzzle pieces are a widely used and recognized symbol for ASD awareness. The "Autism Notice" symbol alerts responding officers that someone in the household will need special assistance.

Autistic individuals can sometimes appear as a person who is combative or non-compliant. Other challenges presented with ASD can also include touch sensitivity, or sensitivity to textures.

Our new program allows family members an opportunity to provide valuable information related to any special medical assistance or interactions that might assist the individual. For example, what triggers the person, what might calm the person down, or what hobbies the person partakes in. Any and all information we have will tremendously assist our responding officers to effectively interact with the person without scaring them or escalating emotions at the scene. Our Department's goal is to provide caring assistance to the individual and such critical information will improve our responses.

We strongly encourage families with special assistance family members to register with the Oakbrook Terrace Police Department so we can provide our officers with critical information on interacting with individuals during these crisis calls for service. The more information we have, the more likely the interactions will have more positive outcomes.

As a Department, we place a high priority on de-escalating emotions during crisis calls. The Oakbrook Terrace Police Department is very proud to work with our community in adopting this incredibly valuable program to assist those with special needs through difficult times.

Please visit the City of Oakbrook Terrace's website at <https://www.oakbrookterrace.net/> or contact the Oakbrook Terrace Police Department for a registration form. We look forward to working with our community to begin this truly outstanding program.

Sincerely,

Casey Calvello
Chief of Police

10 Facts about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- ASD affects about 1 in 44 children in the United States, with more children identified than ever before.
- ASD is about 4 times more likely in boys than girls.
- ASD affects children of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.
- ASD is a spectrum disorder, which means that every child with ASD has different skills, challenges, and needs.
- While we do not know all of the causes of ASD, we have learned that there are likely many contributing factors, including genes, early brain development, and the environment.
- ASD can be reliably diagnosed by age 2, but children may be diagnosed at earlier ages.
- Early identification of ASD helps children get the services they need.
- There is no "cure" for ASD, but there are several interventions that can help children learn important skills that improve everyday life.
- Typically, the earlier children are diagnosed and receive services, the better their outcomes are.
- Children with ASD can learn and succeed in the classroom and beyond. Like every child, with the help of their families, providers, doctors, specialists, and communities, kids with ASD can thrive.

Autism Puzzle Notice Decal

