

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



KATE BROWNING
County Legislator, 3rd District
Health and Human Services, Chair

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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

1120 Montauk Hwy., Suite G
Mastic, NY 11950
Fax: (631) 852-1303

Contact: Joshua Slaughter
631-852-1300
631-456-1718

APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Legislator Browning Urges Parents to Address Signs Early

Mastic, NY – In 2007 Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) co-sponsored legislation to designate April as Autism Awareness Month. With more and more children being diagnosed every year, the Suffolk County Legislature felt it was important to bring more awareness to this disorder, and to help educate families on how to detect and treat autism early.

According to the Autism Society of America (ASA) autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. According to the Centers for Disease Control statistics, Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability affecting as many as 1 in every 110 children born in the United States.

Autism is treatable, and studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes.

According to ASA, here are some of signs to look for in the children in your life:

- Lack of or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Persistent fixation on parts of objects

"Parents can greatly improve their child's ability to cope with this life altering disability if they detect and treat it early," stated Legislator Browning. "We declared April Autism Awareness Month in order to create an avenue of information in Suffolk County and to increase education among parents so that they have the necessary tools to detect it early on."

Public awareness of the condition is a key component for the dissemination of information relating to ongoing scientific research, educational opportunities, early warning signs, and treatment options available to affected families.

For more information please visit www.autism-society.org.