

## Linking Research to Real Life: The Autism Internet Modules (AIM)

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[www.autisminternetmodules.org](http://www.autisminternetmodules.org)

Numerous studies have suggested that the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in the United States has increased significantly in the past decade. According to the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (ADDM), as reported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the prevalence of ASD is approximately 1 in 110 (ADDM, 2009). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) reports the prevalence at 1 in 91 (Kogan et al., 2009). Whatever study is referenced or prevalence rate is used, the established need is significant and the impact is clear – individuals with ASD require continuous and comprehensive supports in the home, school, work and community setting that match their unique strengths and challenges.

*"I am one of the Autism Specialists for Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest district in the nation. We currently serve more than 9,300 students with an eligibility of autism in a variety of educational settings. Our staff is in need of quality information that can be accessed without having to pull them out of the classroom. I believe that this can be accomplished by having our teachers, paraeducators, administrators, and others go through the OCALI AIM modules . . . ."*

–Debbie Moss, MA, LAUSD Autism Specialist, Los Angeles, CA

Parents need access to information and strategies to ensure safety and support in the home and community. Educators need access to the tools to effectively reach and teach their students. Employers need to understand the unique challenges faced by this population and the structure necessary to ensure success in the work place. Friends, social outlets and networks are needed for the individual with ASD to become engaged in his/her community. In short, parents, families, friends and professionals are searching for accurate and comprehensive information about ASD. The Autism Internet Modules (AIM) can help provide a solution.

Modules featured in AIM include:

- Visual Supports
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Structured Teaching
- Assessment for Intervention
- Preparing and Supporting Individuals with ASD to Obtain and Sustain Employment
- The Incredible 5-Point Scale
- Transitioning Between Activities
- Restricted Patterns of Behavior, Interests, and Activities

AIM is an online learning environment that contains comprehensive information on ASD at no cost to users. Yes, AIM is free! Hosted by the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and developed in collaboration with the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, the Autism Society, Geneva Centre for Autism in Toronto, Canada, and the Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorders Network, this online environment is designed to meet the needs of the adult learner.

AIM includes many features specifically designed for the adult learner. Module categories such as “Autism at Home” help the user navigate to topics of interest. Once inside a module, the module menu leads the user sequentially from pretest to posttest; however, if time is limited, users can also choose to focus on just one aspect of the module, such as “Visual Schedules,” and view information specific to that topic.

Content within AIM is enhanced with pictures, charts and videos. Case examples help the user envision how others have used a strategy. All these aspects provide adults with the opportunity to “learn today” and “use tomorrow.” A glossary of key terms is provided to ensure users develop an understanding of the terminology associated with ASD. Discussion questions and activities are designed to extend the learning, providing options outside the online environment to facilitate discussion and application of the online content. Parent support groups, university faculty, or professional developers can use these questions and activities in face-to-face trainings.

*“Thank you for the wonderful resources you are providing on the web for professionals and families who work with children with ASD. The modules are outstanding! I look forward to seeing the new modules! This site is terrific!”*

– Amy Finch, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Department of Communication Disorders,  
Fort Hays State University, Hays, KS

Modules cover characteristics, assessment and interventions for this diverse population. By using AIM, professionals and family members can gain an understanding of ASD, and learn ways to support individuals with ASD in the home, school, work and community setting.

Start using AIM today by signing up for your free account at [www.autisminternetmodules.org](http://www.autisminternetmodules.org)

If you would like further information, please contact OCALI at 614.410.0321 or email [aim@ocali.org](mailto:aim@ocali.org).

#### References

Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (2009). *Prevalence of the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) in multiple areas of the United States, 2004 and 2006: Community report from the autism and developmental disabilities monitoring (ADDM) network*. Atlanta, GA: Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

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