



April is Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month

The 7th annual Autism Advocacy Day will be held at the Oklahoma State Capitol on April 30th, 2024. Families, self-advocates, and resource providers from across the state will meet at the Capitol to advocate for and with autistic Oklahomans. For more information on autism, including statewide social events and community resources related to autism, please visit the [Autism Foundation of Oklahoma](#) website and [AFO's Facebook page](#).

Down Syndrome Association of Central Oklahoma Receives National Award

The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) [recently awarded the Down Syndrome Association of Central Oklahoma \(DSACO\) the Affiliate Group Award](#). This national award recognizes a group that has performed outstanding service on behalf of people with Down Syndrome and their families. DSACO Executive Director, Sarah Soell, will accept the award at the NDSC Convention this upcoming July in Phoenix, Arizona.

Recap: 2024 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day at the Capitol

Self-advocates, providers, family caregivers, and legislators came together to advocate at Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day at the Capitol on March 27th. This year's theme was We're All In. We send very special thanks to [Representative Hefner](#), [Representative Steagall](#), [Representative Provenzano](#), [Representative Deck](#), and [Senator Kirt](#) for speaking at the event. You can find pictures and videos of the event by searching for the hashtag #WereAllIn across social media. [A new Facebook page has been created](#) to share information for the annual event. Follow the page to stay updated!

Social Security Administration Will Change the Way it Calculates SSI Benefits

The [Social Security Administration will no longer be calculating](#) food when determining in-kind support and maintenance. Currently, if SSI recipients are provided meals and/or groceries, the amount of their monthly benefit can be reduced up to one-third. This new change is set to go into effect on September 30th.

Events and Announcements

April 19th | 17th Annual Joining Forces Conference | In-person and Remote Site Options

The 17th Annual Joining Forces Family – Professional Partnership Conference, hosted by the [Oklahoma Family Network](#), will be held on April 19th. There will be an in-person option in OKC or remote locations throughout Oklahoma, including sites in Poteau, Duncan, Enid, and Tulsa. The conference offers learning opportunities and support for individuals and families by establishing partnerships with community members, agencies, and organizations throughout Oklahoma. [Joining Forces Conference - Register now](#).

April 24th | OK ABLE training | 6-7:30PM (Virtual)

Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) created a path for people who rely on supports that have an asset limit to be able to save money over that asset limit. OK ABLE is a savings account which does not affect a person's Medicaid or disability benefits. Come to this training to learn more about OK ABLE accounts, how they work and how they can help people with disabilities achieve a better life! OK ABLE [Registration is required](#)

April 25th | OK ABLE training | 12-1:30PM (Virtual)

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April 30th | Autism Advocacy Day at the Capitol | 9am-12pm | OK Capitol, 2nd Floor Rotunda

Plan a morning at the Capitol for a day of community, acceptance, advocacy, and celebration! Visit vendor tables, learn about resources, be inspired by speakers, and visit your legislators to let them know what issues are important to you. For more information and to learn about the hosts, [please visit the Autism Advocacy Facebook event page](#).

We want to hear from you!

Do you have news or an event to share? Please send all information including a link (if applicable) to learn2lead-ucedd@ouhsc.edu. All submissions should be in no later than the fourth Friday of the month before publication (ex: 4th Friday in June for July's newsletter).

Sign-up to receive our free monthly newsletter *focus facts on community living* <http://tiny.cc/focusfacts>

Or use your cell phone camera and point it to this QR code



The University of Oklahoma advances a diverse, equitable, and inclusive university community by embracing each person's unique contributions, background, and perspectives. OU Norman, OU Tulsa, and the Health Sciences Center recognize that fostering an inclusive environment for all, with particular attention to the needs of the historically marginalized populations, is vital to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of our institutional mission and enhances the OU experience for all students, faculty, and staff. *focus facts* is published for the University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network members. Its purpose is to highlight specific information and data items relevant to developing and sustaining positive community environments. Individual information items are provided for use in this form, or for further circulation. When re-printing information please reference *focus facts* and the month of issue noted below the banner at the top of this page. The name of a contact person for additional information on items referenced in the newsletter is provided for your convenience. If you have data, information or a story to report relevant to community living, please send it to *focus facts* Editor at the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD OU Health Sciences Center, PO Box 2690, Oklahoma City, OK 73126. Please include the information source, by title, a one paragraph (or less) description or story, a contact name who can provide additional information on the subject, and a daytime or evening telephone number for the contact.

If you have questions regarding the format for submissions, please call the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Headquarters Office at (405) 271-4500. The University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network is open to membership by any organization or individual who shares the interests of Network members. The Network is dedicated to identifying opportunities for collaboration and information exchange among its participating members, which leads to improving our statewide, regional or local capacity to provide a better living environment in Oklahoma for people with developmental and other disabilities and their families. The Network is partially supported through a grant from the U.S. Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Offices of the Designated Representatives of the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Collaborating Partners.

If you have a disability (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, Blind/low-vision, mobility, cognitive, etc.), and require accommodations, please reach out to Learn2Lead@ouhsc.edu. It is helpful if you share what type of accommodations will be needed to ensure that you are able to use the resource materials.