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Governor Honors New Autism Guide for Families and Professionals

Missouri leads the way with comprehensive guide to evidence-based interventions for individuals with autism spectrum disorders gets strong reviews

Recognizing Missouri's leadership in helping families dealing with autism, Governor Jay Nixon hosted members of the Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative in a ceremony in the State Capitol. The Initiative recently published its second book, *Autism Spectrum Disorders: Guide to Evidence-based Interventions*. The publication is the first of its kind, summarizing six recent nationally recognized systematic research reviews of evidence-based ASD interventions and has gotten positive reviews from professionals from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Autism Speaks.

The *Guide* is designed to help families, healthcare providers and educators make informed decisions about selecting and implementing ASD interventions. The project is sponsored by the Thompson Foundation for Autism, the Missouri Department of Mental Health, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Mercy Children's Hospital in St. Louis and Springfield.

In addition to summarizing research reviews, the publication includes input from parents and professionals representing the knowledge and perspectives of families, educators, healthcare professionals and community-based service providers. Using a framework of evidence-based practice, the *Guide* outlines the intervention process, works to clarify the process and encourages collaboration between families and various service providers.

The Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative is a collaboration between 50 parents and professionals with ASD experience who are working together to improve outcomes for those with ASDs. The *Guide* is the Initiative's second publication, following a compilation of best practice guidelines for screening, diagnosis and assessment published in 2010.

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Both publications are available at no cost thanks to support from the Missouri Foundation for Health. To order *Autism Spectrum Disorders: Guide to Evidence-based Interventions*, visit www.autismguidelines.dmh.mo.gov. The companion publication, *Missouri Best Practice Guidelines for Screening, Diagnosis, and Assessment* is available online.

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Photo Caption:

In a ceremony at the State Capitol, Governor Jay Nixon issued a proclamation recognizing the success of the latest publication of the Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative. From left: Director of Missouri Department of Insurance John Huff with Initiative members Lee Falk, Jenny Frisbee, Marilyn Cox, Joan Armstrong, Vicki McCarrell, Al Eberhard, Ron Ashworth, Governor Jay Nixon, Bernie Simons, Keenan Stump, Gay Tompkins, Stephen Barr, Micah Mazurek, Janet Farmer, Julie LePage and Susan Henderson and Kit Glover.