



WAISMAN CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

19<sup>th</sup> Annual

## *In-person and Virtual* **Waisman Center Day with the Experts: Autism**

Learn about the latest advances in autism research and services and hear from a panel of experts — individuals with autism and family members.

**Saturday, January 21, 2023 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

**Refreshments at 8:30 a.m for in-person attendees. Virtual via Zoom.**

9:00-9:05 a.m.

### **Welcome**

*Qiang Chang, PhD, Director, Waisman Center*

9:05-9:30 a.m.

### **Impact of The Great Recession on Autistic Adults and their Families**

*Emily Hickey, PhD, Scientist, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities*

Autistic individuals and their families are at risk for difficulties in employment and mental health. They also may be particularly vulnerable to the long-term effects of broad societal changes. The aim of the current longitudinal study was to understand the impact of the “Great Recession” of 2007-2009 on autistic individuals and their mothers, who are often the primary source of support for the autistic family member. Results showed that the behavior challenges of autistic adults increased in the years following the recession. Similarly, the rate at which they moved away and lived separately from their families slowed during the recession. Mothers reported lower levels of household income after the recession, compared to before the recession. In many other respects, the autistic individuals and their mothers did not experience negative outcomes, suggesting resilience and a strong safety net. These included the physical health and employment/vocational outcomes of the autistic individuals and their mothers. These results may be relevant to other societal shifts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and reinforce the need for comprehensive family services across the life course.

9:30-10:00 a.m.

### **Engaging Community in Recognizing Autism Early**

*Gail Chodron, PhD, Director, WI LEND Program, UCEDD*

Recognizing autism early can help families get services and supports that help the autistic child and the whole family. Available autism screening tools can identify signs of autism in young children. A child with a concerning screening result can then be referred for an evaluation to confirm or rule out autism. Even though some high-quality autism screening tools are available free and in multiple languages, many young children are not screened for autism. Doctors should be offering autism screening to every child during well child visits at around 18 and 24 months of age, but many parents report that their child was not screened at the doctor’s office. Recently, researchers have looked at how other community programs serving young children can support early identification of autism. This presentation discusses community-based strategies that support recognizing signs of autism in early childhood.

10:00-11:00 a.m.

**PANEL DISCUSSION** — A panel of experts that includes individuals with ASD and family members. Moderated by Nancy Alar, Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin.

**Please register at [www.waisman.wisc.edu/event/experts-autism-2023/](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/event/experts-autism-2023/)**

*Hosted by the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin and the Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Sponsored by the Friends of the Waisman Center*



**Autism Society**  
South Central Wisconsin

[autismsouthcentral.org](http://autismsouthcentral.org)

Waisman Center | 1500 Highland Avenue | Madison, WI | [www.waisman.wisc.edu](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu)  
EVERYONE WELCOME

For additional details, call 608.263.5837 or email [palumbo@waisman.wisc.edu](mailto:palumbo@waisman.wisc.edu)