ASHA’s Identify the Signs Campaign Welcomes Baby Navigator as Partner

Baby Navigator Resources Complement, Expand on ASHA Campaign’s Early Identification Information—With a Focus on Social Communication and Autism

ROCKVILLE, Md. (PRWEB) May 09, 2019 -- The Identify the Signs campaign, a public education initiative from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) that seeks to educate the public about the early warning signs of communication disorders and the benefits of early intervention, today welcomes Baby Navigator as its newest campaign partner.

Baby Navigator is a comprehensive online resource that provides a variety of tools for parents and professionals to track a child’s social communication development as well as identify the early signs of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Its unique features include the following:

• Photo look books that show specific milestones in children month to month from 9 to 16 months
• A video library containing clips of children demonstrating typical social behaviors from 7 to 24 months of age, along with clips of children exhibiting early signs of a communication delay or ASD
• An enhanced screening tool for communication delay starting at 9 months and for ASD in children as young as 12 months called the Social Communication (SoCo) CheckUp. Parents and professionals can use this online screening tool to facilitate early identification and intervention.

The Baby Navigator resources were developed by the creators of the popular Autism Navigator and FIRST WORDS Project websites, led by Amy Wetherby, PhD, CCC-SLP, an ASHA Fellow and the director of the Autism Institute at Florida State University’s College of Medicine. Dr. Wetherby discusses the website’s resources as well as the importance of recognizing and acting on the early signs of autism in a new ASHA podcast.

“The Baby Navigator team is thrilled to partner with the Identify the Signs campaign,” said Wetherby. “Often, audiologists and speech-language pathologists are the first professionals beyond pediatricians to interact with a child suspected of having a potential social communication disorder or autism spectrum disorder. We hope our collaboration furthers the care and guidance they provide as well as empowers families to screen their child earlier and manage diagnosis and treatment in an informed and positive manner.”

Since 2013, ASHA’s Identify the Signs campaign has educated the public on the early warning signs of speech, language, and hearing disorders. ASHA members—audiologists and speech-language pathologists—are experts in communication development and disorders. Given that social communication problems are one of two defining characteristics of autism—in addition to restrictive, repetitive behaviors—speech-language pathologists are key professionals in autism diagnosis and treatment.

“As a speech-language pathologist, I know just how much ASHA professionals offer to children with autism spectrum disorder,” said Shari Robertson, PhD, CCC-SLP, ASHA 2019 president. “From helping a child find their voice—whether through verbal speech or use of augmentative and alternative communication—to building their social skills, improving their academic performance, and even helping them accept new foods, treatment by speech-language pathologists makes a lifetime of difference. The Identify the Signs campaign and Baby Navigator collaboration promises to help parents recognize the signs of autism early and to facilitate early intervention.”
For more information, visit http://IdentifytheSigns.org and www.babynavigator.com.

About the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)  
ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 204,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. Speech-language pathologists identify, assess, and treat speech and language problems, including swallowing disorders.
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