

November 18, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Autism Belize is a group of passionate parents working to build a strong and vibrant community of Autism and other Special Needs Families, Professionals Working in the field, and Autism Champions and Supporters. Our mission is to **Teach** Autism, **Promote** Awareness, **Show** Acceptance, and **Provide** Support.

In April 2020 we launched the Gift of Communication Campaign in order to provide tablets with augmented and alternative communication (AAC) apps to children, youths, and young adults who are non-verbal and who have no form of assisted communication whatsoever.

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AAC Apps quite simply gives the gift of communication to a child. It eases their frustrations, increases their independence, helps them build better social connections, and gets the child participating more in day to day life. Also studies show that between 60 to 80 percent of persons who use AAC devices or apps also have an increase in verbal communication too.

Autism Belize is excited that Pat King and Believe in Belize have joined us in our efforts to give this gift of communication to the many Belize students and young people who have been struggling with communicating. We know the children and families in Corozal will benefit tremendously with these devices.

Please note that Autism Belize also commits to providing free training for parents and teachers on how to use the AAC apps and work with our special needs kiddos.

Thank you in advance for your generous support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Christy Castillo

Founder & Executive Chairperson,
Autism Belize





Autism Fact Sheet

An educated Belize will be a kinder, stronger Belize. It will help to start an important conversation about what autism is, how it affects families in Belize, and how people with different abilities need to be accepted and understood. Here are some facts about autism.

What is autism?

Autism (or autism spectrum disorder) is a developmental disability that typically appears during early childhood. It can impact a person's social skills, communication, relationships, and self-regulation.

How does autism look?

Autistic people may be non-speaking and may find it hard to interact with other people. They sometimes find things like bright lights or loud noises overwhelming or stressful. Because autism is a spectrum, every person with autism is different. Some autistic people need little to no support. Others may need help from a parent or caregiver every day.

What is the prevalence of autism in Belize?

Statistics in the United States show that the prevalence of autism has more than doubled in the last 15 years, affecting 1 in every 59 persons. Unfortunately, due to lack of services and information in Belize, there are no established statistics for the number of persons with autism here. However, because Autism Belize works closely with Belizean families and special need entities, we know that Belize is no different from the rest of the world. **There is a significant number of Belizeans—children and adults—on the autism spectrum.**

What does Autism Belize do?

Autism Belize is a nonprofit organization led by a group of passionate parents with children on the autism spectrum. We partner with specialists and autism champions working in the field to **teach autism**, **promote awareness**, **show acceptance**, and **provide support**.

What has Autism Belize done in a year?

Autism Belize has held 15 Live Guest Speaker Presentations and 35 Sensitization and Awareness Talks. Since July 2020, Autism Belize has facilitated 29 trainings for over 700 parents and teachers. We host monthly parent support group meetings. We do a blog titled, A Parent's Perspective. We also work directly with families to counsel and help with their various needs - mostly by finding professionals who can guide - even from afar. All our activities, trainings and presentations are FREE of cost.