



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

## April Is Autism Awareness Month

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March 30, 2010

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**(Albany, New York)**- Senator Neil D. Breslin (D-Delmar) recognizes April as Autism Awareness Month and encourages New Yorkers to learn more about autism and its effects on children and their families, as well as what can be done to help the cause. Since the 1970s, April has been designated by the National Autism Society as *National Autism Awareness Month* in order to highlight the growing need for advocacy and awareness about autism. Only recently, however, has autism become a focus of the national conscious as the number of children diagnosed with autism has skyrocketed.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the fastest growing neurodevelopmental disabilities in America. According to a recent U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study, autism spectrum disorder affects as many as 1 in 110 American children. In New York State, it is estimated that 33,000 children and youth from birth to age 17 have autism. Autism impairs social interaction and communication, and is characterized by restricted and repetitive behavior.

Early identification of the signs of autism in children is vital to helping the children and their parents understand the disorder and how to effectively take action. Research has indicated that the earlier a child is diagnosed, the sooner they can benefit from one of the specialized intervention approaches to treatment and education.

“Autism is a disorder that effects many children and families, however, for most people it is a disorder that is very hard to understand” said Senator Breslin. “By dedicating the month of April to raising awareness, we increase the ability of parents and caregivers to properly identify the signs of autism and give these children the proper attention they deserve.”

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