



2025
IMPACT
report
snapshot



**Duke Center for Autism
and Brain Development**
Duke University School of Medicine

Highlights from the Duke Center for Autism and
Brain Development's research and clinical care in 2025.

Dear friends of the Duke Center for Autism and Brain Development,

What a meaningful year 2025 has been for the center. This year, we reached record numbers of families participating in our research, completed more diagnostic evaluations than ever before, and welcomed an incredible community to our monthly educational seminars.

None of this would be possible without you. The time, trust, and engagement you share with us shape the work we do and how we move it forward.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our mission to deepen understanding of autism and to help ensure autistic people can reach their fullest potential throughout their lives—and for standing with us as we work toward a more inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming society.



Lauren Franz, MBChB, MPH
Interim Director, Duke Center for Autism
and Brain Development

BY THE NUMBERS

\$30M+

SPONSORED
RESEARCH FUNDING

19

GRANTS &
AWARDS

8.7k

PARTICIPANTS
enrolled across all studies

35

RESEARCH
STUDIES

939

DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATIONS
↑23% increase over 2024

Duke Women's Soccer Dedicates Game to Autism Center

At their final home game of the 2025 season, Duke Women's Soccer welcomed members of our community. Faculty, staff, and their families greeted players on the field and formed a high-five tunnel as the starting players were announced.

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

read full articles online



Research

Research Including Kids with Intellectual Disabilities Gives More Complete Picture of Autism

The COMET research team takes care to ensure that **every** child has a comfortable experience and completes as many of the study activities as possible.

Can Electronic Health Records Reveal Early Signs of Autism?

Duke data scientists, autism researchers, and healthcare professionals are collaborating to help pediatric providers optimize care for children with neurodevelopmental differences. By leveraging routinely collected health data, they aim to address a critical need for efficient, consistent, and objective methods for early autism screening.



“Machine learning models allow us to reflect these complex factors in a more efficient way.”

BENJAMIN GOLDSTEIN, PHD

Director of data science at Duke AI Health and lead investigator on the electronic health records study



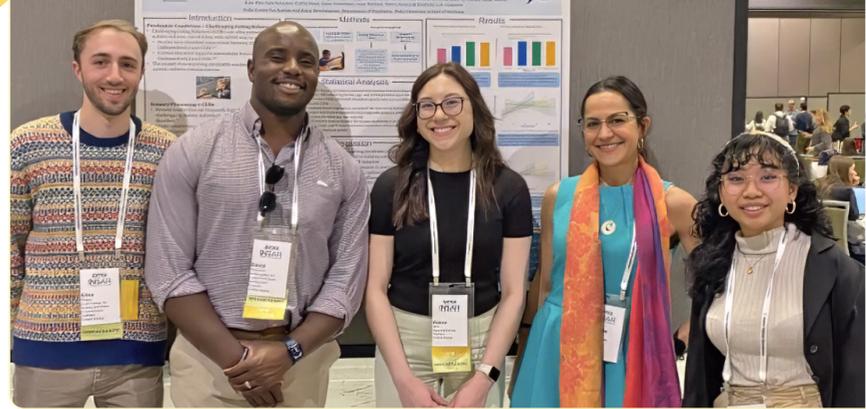
Inclusion & Community Engagement



Watch the video

What is the Autism Spectrum?

We consulted with our Duke ACE Community Engagement Advisory Board to create a new informational video about autism for Duke University's YouTube channel. The video has received more than 7k views!



Education & Training

11 Post-baccalaureate research staff

29 Faculty **30** Staff

59 Students / Trainees

- 1 Intern
- 1 Visiting Graduate Student
- 2 Graduate Practicum Students
- 1 Graduate Medical Student
- 4 Fellows
- 3 Residents
- 8 Postdoctoral Trainees
- 18 Graduate Students
- 21 Undergraduate Students

Monthly seminar series:

Our monthly seminar series brings leading experts and advocates into conversation with a global audience:

+1k in **30**
viewers in countries



After working on the COMET project under the mentorship of Drs. Kimberly Carpenter and David Carlson, co-leads of the COMET study, undergraduate biomedical engineering and pre-med student **Angela Claveria** spent the Spring 2025 semester in Houston on an internship with NASA's Anthropometry and Biomechanics Testing and Analytics team.

PODCAST:

Understanding Autism: Insights from Research and Practice

Lauren Franz, MBChB, MPH, joined the Duke Clinical Research Institute's Beyond the Endpoint podcast for an in-depth conversation about autism research, care, and community.



Clinical Care

Alexandra Bey, MD, PhD, Serves Families Through Research and Patient Care

Alexandra Bey, MD, PhD, is a child psychiatrist in the Duke Autism Clinic and a researcher. Dr. Bey's research and clinical career is dedicated to improving the lives of those with neuro-developmental disorders. We sat down with Dr. Bey for a conversation about her career and research goals, and how her dual roles in research and patient care overlap.

We welcome your support

By giving to the Duke Center for Autism and Brain Development, you are joining in our mission to help each individual with autism reach their fullest potential.

Visit our [website](#) to make your secure online gift.



CENTER LEADERSHIP

Lauren Franz, MBChB, MPH
Interim Director

Geraldine Dawson, PhD
Founding Director

Kimberly Carpenter, PhD
Director, Neurophysiology Lab

Nicole Heilbron, PhD
Associate Director

Jill Howard, PhD
Director, Duke Autism Clinic

Gary Maslow, MD, MPH
Medical Director

Marina Spanos, PhD
Director, Data Management
and Analysis Core

Brian Eichner, MD
Liaison, Duke Pediatric
Primary Care

Duke Center for Autism and Brain Development

EXCHANGE ON ERWIN

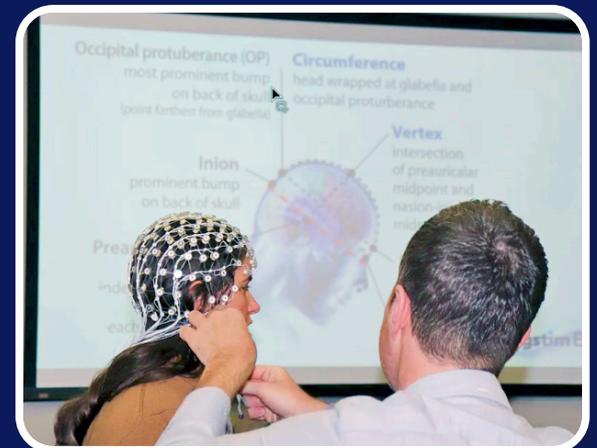
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On the cover (page 1):

We collaborated with Duke University's Nasher Museum of Art to host a sensory friendly event for local families. Kids enjoyed making crafts and tours of the galleries led by Nasher staff, all in a structured, small-group setting.