

## ***Should my loved one on the autism spectrum get personal identification?***

The answer is, YES! As your child approaches adulthood, it is important for them to carry some form of personal identification with them, preferably photo ID. In the event of a medical emergency your child should have the name and phone number of someone that can be reached at all times on their person. This is also helpful if your child gets lost or separated from their caregiver or is involved with security or the police. In addition to listing an emergency contact person, it can be helpful to indicate on their ID that they have autism. You can include anything that should be avoided (like speaking loudly) as well as offer strategies that might be helpful in supporting them if they are under stress. This may include considerations to reduce sensory overload, giving processing time before asking additional questions, a method of communicating basic needs should they be non-speaking or should they become involuntarily mute under stress. For resources preparing for and on supporting autistic people in crisis, please refer to our Tip Sheet on Crisis Management.

Personal identification does not have to be expensive or fancy. It can be as simple as writing emergency contact names and phone numbers in fabric marker on the inside label of your child's clothes, or printing a photo with your child's first name, emergency contact and phone number(s). TIP: Do not put names or other personal information where it can be easily seen. Ideally, just use "emergency contact" and a phone number, plus a back-up number.

If your child requires government-issued photo ID for travel purposes, a registry office can issue this. The card is similar to a driver's license. A passport can also be another option for photo ID.

## **RESOURCES**

The Resource Centre (an initiative of The Sinneave Family Foundation) does not endorse or guarantee the exhaustive, complete, accurate or up-to-date nature of information provided and does not assume any risk for the outcome of information or referrals provided.

## **OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION**

### **Service Alberta: ID Cards**

If you are an Alberta resident who can legally live in Canada and don't have a valid driver's licence, you can apply for an ID card to use as photo identification. The minimum age to hold an ID card is 12 years old. Applicants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to provide consent.

**Phone:** 780.427.7013

### **Service Canada: Passport Office**

A passport is an excellent form of identification. Passports do not easily fit in a pocket however, and are difficult to replace when lost or stolen so they may not be ideal to carry every day.

## SERVICES

### MedicAlert

If a loved one has a medical emergency or becomes lost, he or she may be unable to communicate, or be extremely upset by the unfamiliar surroundings. When every second counts, the MedicAlert 24/7 Emergency Hotline staff make explaining your loved one's needs easy, and they help paramedics locate family subscribers. A MedicAlert ID can be a bracelet, necklace, watch, wristband, and more. MedicAlert has a specific Autism Program in partnership with Autism Canada which includes an exclusive Family Notification Service not offered through standard subscriptions.

**Website:** [medicalert.ca/autism](http://medicalert.ca/autism)

### CHILD ID

It doesn't get much simpler than the Child I.D. label (it is a phone number, that when called, provides important information about the child). Iron it on to your child's clothing and the 24/7 toll-free hotline is ready to reunite you with your lost child. TIP: Don't put your child's name on their clothes as it can increase their vulnerability to strangers. Also, your child's unique number, and that 800 number, is a gateway to help. If a child needs medical attention, the 800 number can give them vital medical information.

**Phone:** 1.800.603.1883

### Mabel's Labels

Have labels made with basic contact info and put them inside jackets, shirts, back-packs, etc.

**Website:** [mabelslabels.com](http://mabelslabels.com)

## APPS

### ICE4Autism

Provides first responders and medical personnel with actionable information. The **ICE4Autism** mobile app conveniently and intuitively stores vital information about you and your unique needs, sensitivities, and behaviors directly on your iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch.

### Emergency Chat

There are a variety of Emergency Chat apps available. These allow users to pre-program messages with a brief description of their needs and a request for help. Users can show their device to a member of the public with their pre-programmed message visible. If the person agrees to help they can use the chat feature to communicate with the user in crisis. This can be especially handy for those who experience involuntary (selective) mutism under stress.

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