#### **International Seminar**

"Inclusive library programs for users with autism spectrum disorders (ASD): practices and potential development"

April 1, Moscow - Russia

# Libraries and librarians: informing to raise awareness and facilitating the inclusion of people with autism in the community



by María Isabel Abalo



# What is autism/ASD?

"Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong condition that alters a person's ability to communicate and relate to others."

The condition is characterized by varying degrees of difficulties in communication skills and social abilities, as well as repetitive/restricted behaviors.

Symptoms can range from mild to

more severe, that is why it is said to be a spectrun

No two people with autism are alike.



Source: REDEA. what is autism? <a href="http://redea.org.ar/info/preguntas-frecuentes/">http://redea.org.ar/info/preguntas-frecuentes/</a>

## Some data:

- 1/160 children have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (WHO)
- Argentina: according to INDEC data (2018) 10.2% of the population has some type of disability.
- Argentina. Law 27.043 (2014): declares of national interest the comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to autism, favors its research, early detection, guarantees its treatment and the social inclusion of people with this condition.
- A large part of the population lacks Social Security => Cannot access treatment.
- Families of children with ASD will go to all types of schools to get their children into school.
- ASD is more common in males than in females, but affects both genders equally.
- Argentina. Currently there are NO official statistics at the country level. We are working on it.

#### Role of the librarian - Action

Civallero (2011: 11): "the librarian goes from being a simple document manager to become a
key social actor, pro-active and committed, who organizes and facilitates a common strategic
good (information) seeking the development and welfare of its community of users (potential
and real), especially those areas that are weaker, needy, unprotected or conflictive1".

# How can librarians take action to facilitate the inclusion of patrons with autism in libraries and the community?

- Generating information services specialized in autism / Application of ICTs.
- Participating in NGO as volunteers => support-collaboration-dissemination.
- Generating spaces in libraries=>Lectures with autism referents.
- Making interventions => Friendly spaces => Cognitive accessibility. Naturalizing diversity in the library.
- Training in autism to know/understand what it is about=>Empathy with users and their families.
- Endorsing local, regional, global campaigns against autism: April 2

### **ACTIONAR - INCLUSIVE LIBRARIAN: suggestions**

- Speak up front, clearly, slowly and with concrete words.
- Accompany words with gestural/facial language.
- Give simple, step-by-step directions.
- Allow more time for response and/or interaction.
- If we notice impatience (anxiety), let's try to give priority in attention.
- Do not panic if users make strange movements (they are regulated).
- Listen/ Be observant: sometimes use devices or cards.
  - to communicate.
- Maintain a friendly look. Be patient





# Brincar escucha

#### "JUMP LISTEN"

Orientation, advice, consultation or simply listening space for families

Frequently asked questions from the community:

- CUD (Single Disability Certificate)
- Laws / rights
- Where can I file a claim?
- Dx / treatment s/charge
- Inclusive schools; special schools, CETs, etc.
- Guides, books on autism for families and teachers.
- other issues

- Site where to concentrate information.
- Operational, simple and user-friendly.
- Organize / group information online.
- Easily accessible from the Internet. Dynamic.



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https://www.brincar.org.ar/queremos-ayudarte/

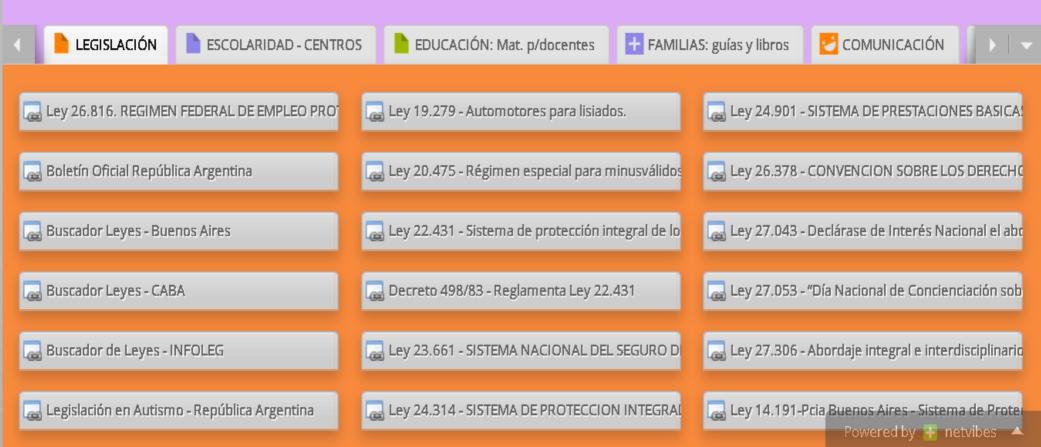
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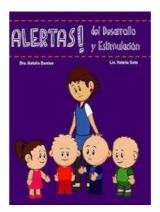


### More resources for families and community:

https://www.brincar.org.ar/

- Developmental alerts and stimulation
- Strategies for parents
- School Inclusion
- Fundamental information for personal assistants
- Cooking Manual
- Miradas del Alma 1, 2 and 3
- Various
- Thinking out loud: The syndrome of Asperger's, my family and me
- Documentary Miradas y UNICO Youlden



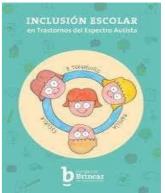








COVID-19 en las personas autistas





#### **RESULTS:**

Dissemination of the TEA Resources Directory (social networks and Buenos Aires City)

Volunteering in Brincar / talks to the community: Buenos Aires and other provinces.

#### Presentation of the thematic

"Inclusive libraries - inclusive librarians & autism spectrum users" at various professional conferences and meetings for librarians.

Talks/workshop: teacher-librarians (early childhood)

**Networks of libraries in social sciences and humanities UNIRED:** 

Face-to-face and virtual lectures on inclusive libraries / autism spectrum.

Adhesion ABRIL AZUL month of Autism.













#### Charla

#### Bibliotecas Inclusivas & Bibliotecarios Inclusivos

Conociendo a nuestros usuarios

"estrategias para interactuar con personas del espectro autista en la biblioteca"

16 y 24 de abril de 2020

Maria Isabel Abalo









"it is not necessary to be experts in anything, nor to do any feat to include another, we simply have to be close, let's ask and be curious but never indifferent, with our look we can open a world to another"

**Carina Morillo (President of Brincar)** 



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