Autism Awareness

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By now you’ve probably heard the numbers. The CDC says one in 68 children has an autism spectrum disorder, up 30 percent from two years ago.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham shows us how the programs offered inside WKU’s Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex remain engaged in the front lines of this battle.

You can’t say it enough. Early detection of autism is key. A series of 14 to 15 questions can help you determine if your child needs further evaluation. If the answer is yes, WKU’s CEC is the perfect place to turn to for help.

Cara Keown \ Izaiah’s mom

Lisa Murphy \ Dir., Renshaw Early Childhood Center

 “I do stay and watch sometimes and it’s funny to watch how he reacts to them as to how he does to us at home.”

Cara Keown first began to notice odd behavior in her three year old son Izaiah when he was around 18 months old.

 “It was hard to see him not be interested in things peers or people his age was interested in.”

An evaluation confirmed Izaiah was on the Autism spectrum, but now, two years later, he’s thriving at Big Red School.

 “He’s beginning to talk, he interacts, he was not engaged at all when we first got him.”

Big Red School in the Renshaw Early Childhood Center is an integrated developmental play group. It currently has a waiting list of more than 50 children.

No surprise considering the latest statistics.

 “We are definitely seeing more children that fall in this umbrella of symptoms than we did in 1990 when I started.”

Murphy says awareness of the disability has played a role in the increased numbers. This year the CEC was asked to take part in the 5th annual Light up Blue campaign, a global initiative to shine a light on autism.

 “The leaning Tower of Piza has blue lights and the international space station has blue lights, very honored that we were asked to do that.”

For children like Izaiah, the therapy is working and his mom says she has such an appreciation for every accomplishment.

 “I’m just so proud of everything he does, it’s just a celebration, everything.”

An autism screening event is coming up later this month at Griff’s Deli in Bowling Green.

Children from 12 though 48 months can be screened on April 21st from ten am until 7 pm. Griff’s will donate ten percent of profits from the day to the Renshaw Early Childhood Center.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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