



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 5
File #: 23-220

Board Meeting Date: 4/11/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor David J. Canepa, District 5
Subject: Resolution Declaring County of San Mateo an "Autism-Friendly" Community

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution declaring County of San Mateo an "Autism-Friendly" community.

BACKGROUND:

One in 24 children is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder in California. Those, diagnosed and undiagnosed, make up 1% of San Mateo County's population. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, sensory, and behavioral challenges. There is often nothing about how people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people, but people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people.

Research has found that families of children with special needs, particularly ASD, are less likely to frequent public places and have higher stress and strain levels than families with typically developing children.

DISCUSSION:

The County of San Mateo prides itself on being an inclusive county. "Autism-friendly" is defined as being aware of social engagement and environmental factors affecting people on the autism spectrum.

The disabilities that impact individuals with ASD and sensory processing issues can't be seen and providing accommodations in the community is not as widespread. Many ASD-focused organizations highlight the importance and benefits of community inclusion for individuals with ASD. Making modifications, as appropriate and when possible, to places or events to alleviate some types of sensory distress can expand opportunities for individuals with ASD to participate in the community. Thus, increasing awareness in the County is essential, which can encourage residents and businesses to be more understanding, patient, and inclusive.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.