

LINKED- AUTISM SAFETY PROJECT

The South Fire District excited to announce a new and innovative program called [Linked- Autism Safety Project](#).

LINKED was created by an Autism mom, Ashley McClain, to build a relationship between emergency responders and the members of the Autism and special needs community. This project was created as a collaborative effort with a network of public safety professionals, autism professionals, and autism parents.

This program is a voluntary registration for the Middletown's official Autism Alert System. Caregivers of the Middletown Autism and special needs community can access the registration form [HERE](#) or by stopping by the South District to fill out a hardcopy of the registration form.

Upon completing the online registration form, it will be automatically directed to the South Fire District coordinator of the LINKED program. This information will provide first responders with important individualized information about the person with autism and within the special needs community. This will allow the responder to create a pre-arrival plan to best assist those within the community. All registrations are secure and confidential and used only for the response of Middletown emergency services.

Each family that registers for the LINKED program will receive a Family Emergency Planning Folder with individualized instructions and a guide that includes tips and tools to navigate this program in an emergency situation. Additionally, the Family Emergency Planning Folders provide an emergency preparedness social story, created by professionals, which is a personalized learning tool containing text and illustration that supports the safe and meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals, and people within the special needs community of all ages.

Additionally, first responders will be equipped with a sensory pack in every emergency vehicle which contains a variety of sensory products recommended by professionals in the field.

To accompany the sensory packs, LINKED- Autism Safety Project is providing an Emergency Picture Exchange Communication System, which is a picture communication tool for non-verbal residents developed by professionals to assist in the dialogue between the child and emergency responders.

The South Fire District is committed to the Autism and special needs community and developing best practices and increasing the quality of services to all our residents. We will continue to provide training to our officers and are seeking new, innovative platforms to further provide greater services.

This program is free and open to all Middletown residents. Please share this post with your neighbors and friends.

A special thank you to SERVPRO for providing the financial backing and understanding the importance of this program.