



‘Understanding Autism: A KET Forum’ consults experts about navigating this complicated neuro-difference

FOR RELEASE: June 13, 2023

Editor’s Note: Release updated on June 20 to include information on program’s pre-taped segments.

Join host Kelsey Starks for this KET Forum exploring the complicated spectrum of autism.

Starks is joined by a panel of experts, including doctors, therapists and those affected by this neuro-difference, to help viewers understand how individuals with autism learn and interact with the world around them.

Additionally, panel will discuss education opportunities and early intervention and offer suggestions on ways to navigate the system of resources available. Guests on the program include:

- Dr. Gregory Barnes, director of the Norton Children’s Autism Center in Louisville and chair of the Kentucky Advisory Council on Autism
- Dr. Marisa Toomey, developmental pediatrics specialist at UK Children’s Hospital in Lexington
- Melanie West, executive director of FEAT of Louisville (Families for Effective Autism Treatment)
- Tina Bojanowski, state representative and special education teacher with Jefferson County Public Schools, as well as parent of a child with autism.
- Scott Brinkman, former state representative from Louisville and parent of a child with autism
- Susan Mills, founder and executive director of the nonprofit My Autism Tribe and Lexington parent of child with autism
- Tanya Sturgill, autism resource specialist with Fayette County Public Schools



The program also features stories and interviews with Kentuckians who live with autism or work in the field, including:

- Donovan Blackburn, director of the Appalachian Valley Autism Center (AVA) in Pikeville
- Cody Clark, Louisville-based autistic adult/creator of “Cody Clark Magic”
- Patrick Elias, a Western Kentucky University senior and participant in the university’s Kelly Autism Program
- Michelle Elkins-Burckhard, Ed.D., director of WKU’s Kelly Autism Program
- Drew Hardison, participant in LifeWorks transitional program at WKU
- Joy McAlpine, participant in LifeWorks transitional program at WKU
- Mary & Kris Vaughn, Prospect-based parents of a 16-year-old son with autism
- Sarah Webb, participant in LifeWorks transitional program at WKU
- David Wheeler, executive director of LifeWorks at WKU

Understanding Autism: A KET Forum

KET Tuesday, June 27 • 8/7 pm

KET2 Thursday, June 29 • 9/8 pm

Watch on-demand at KET.org and on the PBS app

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