

1 [Autism Appreciation Month - April 2026]

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3 **Resolution recognizing the month of April 2026 as Autism Appreciation Month in the**
4 **City and County of San Francisco.**

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6 WHEREAS, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental condition
7 that affects communication, behavior, and social interaction, impacting millions of individuals
8 and families across the nation; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),
10 approximately 1 in 36 children in the United States is diagnosed with autism, highlighting the
11 growing need for awareness, support, and early intervention services; and

12 WHEREAS, California’s autism-related special education population has grown
13 substantially over time, increasing from approximately 14,038 students in 1990 to 120,089
14 students in 2018, representing an 8.5-fold increase, and autism now accounts for about 16%
15 of special education enrollments compared to 10% in 2011; and

16 WHEREAS, Over 800,000 children and youth in California (ages 0-22) received special
17 education services in 2020, representing about 13% of all students in the state, reflecting
18 continued growth in demand for disability and autism-related educational services; and

19 WHEREAS, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) has autism-focused
20 Special Day Classes to address the needs of students who benefit from smaller and more
21 specialized learning environments for students in Pre-K through 22 years old; and

22 WHEREAS, San Francisco has made significant strides in supporting individuals with
23 autism, including the establishment of the Felton Early Autism Program, which provides
24 inclusive, center-based early intervention services; the launch of the Bay Area Autism
25 Collective, an organization led by autistic individuals to promote self-advocacy and peer

1 support; and the introduction of sensory-friendly spaces at San Francisco International Airport,
2 the Exploratorium, and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital to improve accessibility for
3 neurodiverse individuals; and

4 WHEREAS, The City has also taken steps toward inclusive housing solutions, such as
5 the Kelsey Civic Center development, which reserves units for individuals with disabilities,
6 including those with autism, ensuring equitable access to stable and supportive living
7 environments; and

8 WHEREAS, Despite these advancements, a 2024 report by the San Francisco Human
9 Rights Commission found that individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities
10 face higher rates of unemployment and housing instability, with an estimated 80% of autistic
11 adults in San Francisco experiencing underemployment or unemployment; and

12 WHEREAS, State and local funding for autism services remains critical, particularly as
13 San Francisco faces challenges related to affordability and the availability of specialized
14 healthcare providers, with families reporting long wait times for essential diagnostic and
15 therapeutic services; and

16 WHEREAS, San Francisco’s investment in local programs, such as Bridges from
17 School to Work, which helps young adults with autism and other disabilities navigate the
18 transition into the workforce, offers real job opportunities that match talents with employers’
19 needs, further addressing the city’s unemployment challenges for those with developmental
20 disabilities; and

21 WHEREAS, The Arc San Francisco’s Youth ACHIEVE program, which partners with
22 SFUSD, focuses on the transition from high school to employment and further education for
23 youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ensuring that individuals with autism
24 gain the skills and support they need to thrive in higher education, jobs, and careers; and
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1 WHEREAS, Organizations such as Support for Families of Children with Disabilities
2 provide vital services to families navigating the complexities of raising children with autism,
3 offering education, peer support, and individualized assistance to ensure that families are
4 empowered with the resources they need; and

5 WHEREAS, These programs and others represent important steps toward meeting the
6 needs of San Francisco’s neurodiverse community, yet gaps remain in access to education,
7 employment, and social services, underscoring the continued need for investment in
8 programs that support individuals with autism and their families; and

9 WHEREAS, Autism Appreciation Month serves as an opportunity to promote
10 understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of individuals with autism in all aspects of society
11 while also encouraging further research and policy development to improve their quality of life;
12 now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
14 hereby proclaims April 2026 as Autism Appreciation Month in San Francisco and encourages
15 all residents to participate in activities that promote awareness, education, and inclusion; and,
16 be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors commends the efforts of local
18 organizations, advocates, and families working to improve the lives of individuals with autism,
19 including those supported by programs such as Bridges from School to Work, The Arc San
20 Francisco Youth ACHIEVE, and Support for Families of Children with Disabilities, and pledges
21 continued support to policies that enhance services, accessibility, and opportunities for all
22 those impacted by autism, while also advocating for continued funding at the city level to
23 address the needs of autistic individuals and their families in San Francisco.

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