

1 [Autism Awareness Month - April 2025]

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3 **Resolution recognizing April 2025 as Autism Awareness Month in the City and County**
4 **of San Francisco to promote understanding, inclusion, and support for the City's**
5 **neurodiverse community.**
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7 WHEREAS, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental condition
8 that affects communication, behavior, and social interaction, impacting millions of individuals
9 and families across the nation; and

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

13 WHEREAS, In California, approximately 900,000 individuals are estimated to be living
14 with autism, with over 23,000 students in the state's public schools receiving special
15 education services for autism as of 2024; and

16 WHEREAS, In San Francisco, the Department of Public Health (DPH) and San
17 Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) report that the number of students diagnosed with
18 autism has increased by over 30% in the past decade, underscoring the need for expanded
19 services and tailored educational programs; and

20 WHEREAS, SFUSD has autism-focused Special Day Classes to address the needs of
21 students who benefit from smaller and more specialized learning environments for students in
22 Pre-k through 22 years old; and

23 WHEREAS, San Francisco has made significant strides in supporting individuals with
24 autism, including the establishment of the Felton Early Autism Program, which provides
25 inclusive, center-based early intervention services; the launch of the Bay Area Autism

1 Collective, an organization led by autistic individuals to promote self-advocacy and peer
2 support; and the introduction of sensory-friendly spaces at San Francisco International Airport,
3 the Exploratorium, and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital to improve accessibility for
4 neurodiverse individuals; and

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

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, The Arc San Francisco's Youth ACHIEVE program, which partners with
23 SFUSD, focuses on the transition from high school to employment and further education for
24 youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ensuring that individuals with autism
25 gain the skills and support they need to thrive in higher education, jobs, and careers; and

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 Awareness 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 2025 as Autism Awareness 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.