The UA ASD Clinic held its first Sibling Support Group in January for siblings of kids with ASD. We are excited to continue providing services and supports for all family members of individuals with ASD and are thankful for our families who join us for these groups and for our staff and volunteers who help lead them. If you are interested in attending these groups, please contact the clinic.

We also recommend checking out:

- *Brothers, Sisters, and Autism: A Parent’s Guide to Supporting Siblings*
- Sibling Support Project (siblingsupport.org)

The CDC most recently estimated that 1 in 59 people have ASD, an increase from the previous prevalence rate estimates. Scientists attribute this increase to several things:

- Rising awareness of ASD
- Changes in the diagnostic criteria, such as the removal of “Asperger’s Syndrome” as a diagnosis
- As diagnoses of ASD have risen, diagnoses of intellectual disability have fallen.
- Previously underserved groups of people can now access screening and diagnostic assessments more easily

Most scientists agree that more awareness and changing criteria account for most of the rise in prevalence, but biological factors might also contribute. For example, children born prematurely are at higher risk for ASD, and more premature infants survive now than ever before.

Dr. Ted Tomeny and his research team at the Research on Autism and Families Lab are examining how families of children with ASD communicate and cope with stressful situations. They are also examining factors associated with positive outcomes, such as life satisfaction, in families of children with ASD. The team hopes that the results will some day assist in the development of interventions meant to improve family-based outcomes in the ASD community. If you are interested in learning more about this, or other research at the clinic, please visit our website at [www.autism-clinic.ua.edu](http://www.autism-clinic.ua.edu) and click on the “Research” tab.

The 19th Annual Alabama Autism Conference will be held in Tuscaloosa, AL on Feb. 28, 2020. For more information, visit [training.ua.edu/autism/index.php](http://training.ua.edu/autism/index.php).

Upcoming monthly support group meetings:

- **Online Parent Support Group** – February 4, 2020 @ 6:30 PM
- **In-Person Parent Support Group and Sibling Support Group** – February 18, 2020 @ 5:30 PM in the University of Alabama Speech and Hearing Center

For more information or to RSVP, call or email us using the contact info below:

**Email:** autismclinic.ua.edu | **Address:** 603 Hackberry Lane Tuscaloosa, AL | **Phone:** (205) 348-3130