**About Us**

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) was created in December 2001– the product of the shared vision and unique life experiences of OAR’s seven founders. Led by these parents and grandparents of children and adults on the autism spectrum, we set out to use applied science to answer questions that parents, families, individuals with autism, teachers and caregivers confront daily. No other autism organization in the nation has this singular focus.

**Mission**

OAR’s mission is to apply research to the challenges of autism.

The mission of “applying” research to answer questions of daily concern for those living with autism drives each of the goals and objectives that define our programs and determine our budget.

We define applied research as research that directly impacts the day-to-day quality of life of learners with autism. It entails the systematic investigation of variables associated with positive outcomes in such areas as education, communication, self-care, social skills, employment, behavior, and adult and community living. In this context, it extends to issues related to family support, the efficacy of service delivery systems, and demographic analyses of the autism community. We fund studies that address these issues, and use the knowledge gained from research to develop and disseminate resources that are relevant and responsive to the everyday experiences of the entire autism community.

In simplest terms, applied autism research is “practical research that examines issues and challenges that children and adults with autism and their families face everyday.”

**Research**
We fund pilot studies and targeted research within specific modalities and issues affecting the autism community, primarily for studies whose outcomes offer new insights into the behavioral and social development of individuals with autism with an emphasis on communications, education, and vocational challenges. The identification of priorities for OAR’s research will be undertaken with focus groups comprised of parents, educators, clinicians, and leading authorities whose life work is the promotion of autism research and the dissemination of information to the autism community. Our immediate task is the creation of an overall strategy for research to address issues "across the lifespan." While OAR´s scope encompasses applied and biomedical research, its emphasis from the beginning is heavily weighted toward the applied.

**Programs**
OAR’s programs revolve around funding new research and disseminating evidence-based information in a form that translates the technical information into layman’s terms for the non-scientific consumer.

**Current OAR Programs**

* Annual Applied Research Competition
* Annual Graduate Research Grants Program
* *Life Journey through Autism* series - Reader-friendly resource guides that provide practical information to parents, educators, and professionals.
* *Operation Autism*: Web site that directly supports the unique needs of U.S. military families affected by autism, featuring a base-by-base resource directory.
* *The OARacle*: Monthly newsletter that features current research, useful resources, and helpful guidance for families.
* *Autism in the Schoolhouse* Initiative: Production and dissemination of resources that support students with autism.
	+ *Kit for Kids*
	+ *Understanding Autism: A Guide for Secondary Teachers DVD*
	+ *Navigating the Special Education System*
* *Autism Sibling Support* Initiative: Set of resources that help typically-developing children and teens foster positive relationships with their brothers and sisters on the spectrum
	+ Autism Sibling Support Initiative
* OAR Scholarship Program
* Latino Outreach Program
* Adult Employment Initiative
* *RUN FOR AUTISM* fundraising program