

Karen Pierce, PhD

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Dr. Pierce has been studying autism spectrum disorder (ASD) for the past 25 years and is a leading expert on the neural and clinical phenotype of ASD. Her research spans a range of topics from early screening and detection to eye tracking and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Her early detection approach that focuses on mobilizing pediatricians, called the Get SET Early Model, has identified several hundred ASD toddlers around the 1st birthday and has resulted in rapid treatment access. Using eye tracking and brain imaging technology within this early-detected population, Dr. Pierce's work has revealed unusual patterns of eye gaze and brain activity that helps elucidate the behavioral and biological heterogeneity of ASD.

Dr. Pierce has been invited as a keynote speaker on the topic of autism at both national and international conferences. Her work is published in high-impact journals and has been highlighted in the public media including CNN, The Wall Street Journal, and Time Magazine.

Her research is funded by the NIH and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as well as private organizations such as the Simons Foundation.



She has been honored by several awards and recognitions including US Department of Health and Human Services IACC Top 20 Research Paper, Autism Speaks Top 10 Research Paper, and the San Diego Health Hero Award.