

Words to Know

Acetaminophen - a medicine that helps get rid of fevers and pain. Acetaminophen is also called Tylenol.

Autism community - autistic people and the people who support them. The autism community includes:

- Autistic people
- Family members of autistic people
- People who do research about autism
- Medical professionals; and
- Groups that work with autistic people.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) - a part of the United States government that works on health care. The Department of Health and Human services gets called HHS for short.

Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) - a group of people in the autism community that works with the government. IACC has meetings about problems that affect autistic people.

Leucovorin - a kind of medicine. Doctors usually give leucovorin to people who have cancer.

Press conference - an event where someone shares important news with a lot of news reporters. News reporters ask questions about the news at the press conference.

RFK - a short name for Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. RFK is in charge of the Department of Health and Human Services.

On September 22nd, government leaders said [dangerous things about autism](#) that are not based on facts. They said these dangerous things at a press conference. A **press conference** is when the government shares important news. News reporters ask questions about the news at the press conference.

These are some of the dangerous things government leaders said at the press conference:

- They said that pregnant people should not take acetaminophen. **Acetaminophen** is a medicine that helps get rid of fevers and pain. Acetaminophen is also called Tylenol. RFK and President Trump said that acetaminophen causes autism. The best science [shows](#) that acetaminophen does not cause autism. A baby can not get autism from their parent taking acetaminophen. A baby can not get autism from taking acetaminophen. Doctors who take care of pregnant people and babies [say that acetaminophen is safe](#).

- They said that parents should give their autistic children leucovorin. **Leucovorin** is a kind of medicine. Doctors usually give leucovorin to people who have cancer. Doctors also give leucovorin to people who are missing a certain kind of vitamin in their body. Scientists have not done enough research about how leucovorin affects autistic kids. Also, every autistic person is different. What helps one autistic person might not help another autistic person.
- They said that vaccines cause autism. RFK has been saying that vaccines cause autism for a long time. But [vaccines do not cause autism](#). Vaccines are safe. Vaccines help stop people from getting really sick. You can read a plain language resource about vaccines and autism [here](#).

RFK and other government leaders should listen to autistic people about what we need. RFK and other government leaders should work together with the autism community. The **autism community** means:

- Autistic people
- Family members of autistic people
- People who do research about autism
- Medical professionals; and
- Groups that work with autistic people.

HHS could do a lot of things to make autistic people's lives better. HHS has not made a lot of chances for the autism community to share thoughts about HHS choices. There is one group that was made for the autism community to talk about policy choices with government leaders. The group is called the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee. The **Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee** is called IACC for short. IACC has not had a meeting in many months. There is a law that says IACC has to have meetings. The law is called the Autism CARES Act. Government leaders should make an IACC meeting happen soon to listen to the autism community.

Autistic people need supports that help us succeed. We need to be able to choose the services we get. We need resources that help us. We need resources and policies that help the people who support us, like our families. Autistic people and their families deserve respectful support.