

Project First Responder will assist AAIDD citizens in Louisa County by having alerts placed on the homes, cars or personal identification associated with the AAIDD person advising first responders of the crucial information provided by caretakers, prior to any interaction. If the AAIDD person travels outside the County of Louisa, stickers can be provided to alert first responders of the presence of a person that may not be able to communicate or respond to verbal commands by first responders.



### Joining the Program

Families, caretakers, or anyone else interested in the program can either fill out and submit the "Voluntary Autism, Alzheimer's / Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Informational Form" online or download the form and mail or bring it to the Louisa County Sheriff's Office.



### Louisa County Sheriff's Office Project First Responder

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# PROJECT FIRST RESPONDER



Building a bridge across  
the communications gap,  
bringing first responders  
and those with intellectual  
and developmental  
disabilities together for a  
safe encounter



## What is the need?

It would seem there are frightening, tragic headlines involving law enforcement virtually every day. For families of people with Alzheimer's, Autism, and Intellectual Development Disabilities (AAIDD), the concern about their loved one's world clashing with law enforcement can be terrifying. Fear, suspicion, and the resulting increase in reported violence across the world only makes their anxiety worse.

These families feel particularly uneasy as they deal with the daily stresses of AAIDD, as well as negotiate the unpredictability of the outside world. For many, AAIDD leads almost inevitably to an interaction with law enforcement. During a crisis, the difference between aid and tragedy often comes down to a first responder's familiarity with, and response to all forms of AAIDD. Children and adults who have difficulty processing stressful situations may exhibit behaviors that are unfamiliar to many, creating possible communication problems. One answer is to train the first responders to have a working knowledge of the **many** behaviors exhibited in emergency situations by those with AAIDD, but the best answer would be to ensure the first responders have the proper information before the call for service.

### An AAIDD person might among other things:

- Have an impaired or false (heightened) sense of danger
- Wander to bodies of water, traffic or other dangers
- Be overwhelmed by presence of first responders
- Fear a person in uniform (ex. Fire turnout gear)
- Exhibit curiosity and possibly reach for objects (ex. Shiny badge, handcuffs, or even firearms)
- React to "fight or flight"
- Not respond to "stop" or other commands OR become angry, agitated or upset by such "firm" commands
- Have delayed speech and language skills or have perfect speech but inability to communicate needs and feelings effectively
- Not respond to his/her name or verbal commands
- Avoid eye contact
- Engage in repetitive behavior/stimming (self stimulatory behavior—rocking hand flapping, spinning)
- Have sensory perception challenges
- Have epilepsy or other seizure disorder.

If a first responder is able to identify that a child or adult may have AAIDD, he or she can then



## What is Project First Responder?

The Louisa County Sheriff's Office has developed a program to assist first responders in improving outcomes for people with Alzheimer's, Autism, & Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The Project First Responder program will allow family members and other caregivers to provide crucial information about their loved ones to first responders, prior to any reported incidents. This information will be utilized by emergency personnel to properly respond to situations involving AAIDD children or adults with details about proper interaction and care.