

EAGLES AUTISM CHALLENGE

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Philadelphia Eagles to Host 3rd Annual Eagles Autism Challenge on May 16, 2020



The Philadelphia Eagles have announced that the **3rd annual Eagles Autism Challenge** presented by Lincoln Financial Group will take place on **Saturday, May 16, 2020** at Lincoln Financial Field. One hundred percent of participant-raised funds from the team's signature cycling and 5K run/walk event will continue to benefit institutions conducting cutting-edge autism research and care.

Participants can now register for the Eagles Autism Challenge at www.eaglesautismchallenge.org.

Led by Philadelphia Eagles Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Lurie, players, coaches, team legends, Eagles fans and autism supporters, the team's 2nd annual fundraising event raised **more than \$3.5 million** in May 2019. A total of **3,645 participants** came out to bike, run, and walk, while a remarkable **25,301 donors** supported their fundraising efforts.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Digital assets of the Eagles Autism Challenge presented by Lincoln Financial Group can be downloaded by [clicking on the link here](#). Photo credit can be given to the Philadelphia Eagles.

"In just two short years, the Eagles Autism Challenge has raised more than six million dollars in new funding for institutions specializing in autism research," said **Ryan Hammond**, Eagles Autism Challenge Executive Director. "Our impact has been life-changing for so many families, and it is all thanks to those who have graciously answered our call to serve as community leaders. This event started with Jeffrey Lurie and his vision to bring people together to raise critical funds for autism research and care. Over time, with everyone rallying together as a community of supporters, we have been able to achieve that and so much more. We look forward to seeing everyone again in May as we continue on our path to advancing autism research."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that **one in 59** people under the age of 21 living in the United States are on the autism spectrum. Autism is a complex neurological and developmental condition that expresses itself differently in each individual. The spectrum can range from having challenges in the areas of social skills and nonverbal communication to repetitive interests and behaviors. While it has become one of the fastest-growing developmental disorders in the country, it has historically been underfunded, misunderstood,

and under-researched. The Eagles Autism Challenge is partnering with thought leaders to advance scientific discoveries all with the goal of having a transformational impact around the world.

The Eagles Autism Challenge is a **one-day bike ride and family-friendly 5K run/walk** that begins and ends at Lincoln Financial Field. The event features three cycling routes – the **Wawa Junior 10-Mile Ride**, **Wawa Shorti 30-Mile Ride** and the **Wawa Classic 50-Mile Ride** – that offer participants a chance to navigate through the City of Philadelphia and its suburbs. The **Five Below 5K Run/Walk** has been mapped and certified by US Track & Field and will take participants on a scenic journey around the neighborhood. For families and participants with sensory challenges, the **Five Below Sensory Walk** provides a shorter course around the outside perimeter of Lincoln Financial Field. All five routes end at Lincoln Financial Field with participants crossing the finish line at the 50-yard line where an on-field celebration awaits. There is also a virtual participant option for those who want to fundraise but are unable to ride, run, or walk on event day.

Championed by Lurie, whose family has been personally touched by autism, the Eagles Autism Challenge sets out to fund innovative research, drive scientific breakthroughs, and provide critical resources, all in an effort to create a major shift from awareness to action.

In partnership with leading institutions specializing in autism research, the Eagles are bringing fresh ways of thinking to the field. Thanks to the **\$2.5 million raised in 2018**, a total of eight research projects have received grant funding. In February, a [scientific advisory board](#) was formed to independently evaluate and approve each proposal. The projects were assessed by Dr. Emanuel DiCicco-Bloom, the lead scientific advisor, and nine internationally recognized researchers who have demonstrated a clear and steadfast commitment to autism research. The funding process for the **\$3.5 million raised in 2019** is currently underway and will award institutions with grants in early 2020. The Eagles Autism Challenge has received **52 Letters of Intent** from seven Philadelphia-area institutions requesting grant funding, and of that, **29 research proposals** are expected to be submitted by mid-September.

As proud and committed advocates of autism research, the team has created a culture of inclusiveness for Eagles fans everywhere, both on and off the field. In partnership with [KultureCity](#), the Eagles announced the **official certification of Lincoln Financial Field as a sensory-inclusive stadium** on Sunday, Aug. 4 with the opening of its state-of-the-art sensory room. The Lincoln Financial Field Sensory Room presented by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia has been designed to accommodate guests of all abilities in a welcoming and nurturing environment. The Eagles have become **one of the first sports franchises** to build a state-of-the-art sensory room in its home venue.

All returning and new participants who sign up as a cyclist or runner/walker by Saturday, Sept. 7 will have 50% of their registration fee waived. Registrants can use the promo code “TC19” on www.eaglesautismchallenge.org.

Participants will receive access to Friday’s kick-off party and Saturday’s finish line celebration at Lincoln Financial Field, free food and beverage, a cycling jersey or 5K t-shirt, finish line medal, and a complimentary gift bag. Exclusive experience prizes and autographed memorabilia will be offered to participants who reach certain fundraising milestones during the year.

About the Eagles Autism Challenge

The Eagles Autism Challenge is dedicated to raising funds for innovative autism research and programs. By providing the necessary resources to doctors and scientists at leading institutions, we will be able to assist those currently affected by autism as well as future generations. Our event aims to inspire and engage the community, so together, we can provide much needed support to make a lasting impact in the field of autism.

