

# Aquatica® Orlando Becomes The First Water Park In The World To Be A Certified Autism Center

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ORLANDO, Fla., Jan. 8, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Aquatica Orlando in conjunction with the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), announced the completion of a staff-wide autism sensitivity and awareness training as well as an onsite review of the park property and guest experience. The completion designates Aquatica Orlando as a Certified Autism Center (CAC) as distinguished by IBCCES — the first water park in the world to receive such a distinction. This accreditation follows sister park Sesame Place, which became the world's first certified autism center theme park last April.

Working closely with IBCCES, the staff at Aquatica will be continually trained to assist guests with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families, to help ensure a positive experience during their visit. Guests will also be provided with specific information about attractions and experiences along with in-park accommodations to help them plan their day and make informed choices best suited to their individual needs.

For almost 20 years, IBCCES has been the industry leader in autism training for licensed healthcare professionals and educators around the globe. IBCCES recognized that many families with children who have special needs have limited travel options, and in response, created training and certification programs specifically for the hospitality and travel industry. As a Certified Autism Center, Aquatica Orlando is required to provide ongoing training to ensure that team members have the requisite knowledge, skills, temperament and expertise to interact with all families and children with special needs, specifically on the autism spectrum. Training takes place in the areas of sensory awareness, environment, communication, motor and social skills, program development, and emotional awareness as well as a comprehensive autism competency exam. The autism training must be taken every two years in order to maintain the certification.

"As the first water park in the world to complete the training and become a Certified Autism Center, Aquatica Orlando is proud to provide fun and memorable experiences through exceptional service," said David Heaton, Vice President of Aquatica Orlando. "We continually strive to create safe and meaningful experiences for all of our guests, and we are committed in our efforts to offer families inclusive activities for children with autism and other special needs."

Robust pre-visit planning resources will be added to the park's website including a sensory guide developed by IBCCES. This sensory guide will make it easier for parents to plan activities that satisfy their child's specific needs and accommodations by providing insight on how a child with sensory processing issues may be affected by each sense for each attraction. The park will also have a quiet room inside the park with adjustable lighting and a comfortable seating area for guests to take a break.

"We know that training and certification is the best way for organizations to ensure they can accommodate all families," explained Myron Pincomb, IBCCES Board Chairman. "IBCCES is proud to work with Aquatica Orlando and other leaders in the industry to increase the availability of certified options and help individuals have a safe and enriching experience when traveling or visiting a new place. With the rise in diagnosis rates of cognitive disorders, there is a huge need for these options and for organizations to make a long-lasting commitment to their guests."

Aquatica Orlando has been voted the nation's top water park, and this certification comes as the park readies for the opening of its newest attraction – Kare Kare Curl – this spring.

For more information: [Aquatica.com/Orlando](https://www.aquatica.com/Orlando). To keep up to date on park hours and events, follow Aquatica's social channels on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

To learn more about the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, please visit: <https://ibcces.org/>

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SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. owns or licenses a portfolio of recognized brands including SeaWorld®, Busch Gardens®, Aquatica®, Sesame Place® and Sea Rescue®. Over its more than 50-year history, the Company has built

a diversified portfolio of 12 destination and regional theme parks that are grouped in key markets across the United States, many of which showcase its one-of-a-kind zoological collection. The Company's theme parks feature a diverse array of rides, shows and other attractions with broad demographic appeal which deliver memorable experiences and a strong value proposition for its guests. SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment is a wholly owned subsidiary of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., a publicly traded company. Visit [www.seaworldentertainment.com](http://www.seaworldentertainment.com) for more information.

### International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES)

In 2001, IBCCES identified a need for standardization within healthcare, education, and corporate environments to meet the growing needs of those with cognitive disorders. We assembled a board of thought leaders and experts in these fields to address the growing international need and create a series of certification programs in autism, ADHD, sensory disorders, dementia, mental health, dyslexia, and other cognitive disorders and special needs.

Our globally recognized certification programs were established to set the industry standards and create a worldwide community of trained and knowledgeable professionals. As the impact of cognitive disorders now reaches 1 in 4 people, our team continues to grow and expand our reach to ensure professionals in these industries are aware of the latest research and applications.

IBCCES adheres to international standards for boards that grant professional credentials. The IBCCES certification procedures and content undergo various reviews and validation, pursuant to the professions that are eligible for certification, as well as standards established by content experts in the field.

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