



## **IBCCES Recognizes Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando's Continued Commitment to the Autism and Sensory-Sensitive Community**

Orlando, FL – August 22, 2023 - Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando is proud to announce its recertification as a Certified Autism Center™ by IBCCES, the leading authority in autism certification and training. With this recertification, Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando reaffirms its dedication to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families.

Kyle Smith, Creative Show Operations Manager from Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando, expressed their commitment, stating, "Here at Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando, we are always looking for ways to improve the guest experience for families with a member on the autism spectrum. Resources and training are provided to every ambassador playing a role in the guest experience here at Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando."

Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando has implemented ongoing autism certification training from IBCCES for every ambassador working within the park. Smith further added, "This program has helped our entire team feel more comfortable interacting with guests and providing a positive, safe, and friendly space for autistic guests visiting Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando."

Acknowledging the significance of autism certification, Rob McNicholas, SeaWorld Orlando's Vice President of Operations, emphasized the benefits, saying, "One of the best things about being autism certified is that our ambassadors know the right steps to take when interacting with a guest on the spectrum. They can listen and have solutions in order to ensure that every member of the family will enjoy their day at the park."

IBCCES has designed specific training programs for travel and entertainment organizations, including theme parks and other attractions, to enhance staff knowledge and offer appropriate accommodations for individuals with autism and sensory sensitivities, an underserved part of the community that continues to grow. The training programs encompass understanding autism, communication strategies, and best practices for enhancing the onsite experience. To achieve certification, 80% of all guest-facing staff are required to complete the training.

IBCCES is the only credentialing board offering such comprehensive programs, which involve training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, as well as long-term support, continuous learning, onsite reviews, and more. AutismTravel.com, an online resource developed by IBCCES, serves as a free platform for families to access a list of certified destinations and connect with additional resources and support from other families. Each destination featured on the website has met the rigorous CAC requirements.

Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando and IBCCES worked closely to have all of the park's attractions, shows, and parades audited on a sensory scale to create a branded Sensory Guide, which is available online, at Guest Relations, and part of each attraction signage within the park area.



Myron Pincomb, Chairman of the IBCCES Board, shared, "Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando's recertification as a Certified Autism Center™ exemplifies their unwavering dedication to providing a magical and inclusive experience for all guests, especially those who are autistic or have sensory sensitivities. By prioritizing ongoing training, resources, and support for their staff and park guests, Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando continues to set the highest standard for inclusive entertainment destinations. Our programs and accessibility tools play a vital role in helping the park expand upon and enhance their inclusive practices, ensuring that all families can have an extraordinary time and create cherished memories together."

In 2015, Sesame Workshop introduced Julia, Julia, a 4-year-old autistic Sesame Street Muppet, as part of its Sesame Street and Autism: Seeing Amazing in All Children initiative. Julia can be spotted at Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando for meet & greets on select days.

Guests can find IBCCES' sensory guides and other accessibility information at <https://seaworld.com/orlando/help/certified-autism-center/>.

#### **About Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando**

Laughter and learning live at Sesame Street and Sesame Street lives at SeaWorld Orlando! Bring your family to the neighborhood your favorite furry friends call home. Take a stroll down Sesame Street and stop by the famous stoop at 123. Explore the inside of Hooper's Store, then head for big fun at Big Bird's Nest. Sesame Street is exactly as you imagined, and with an award-winning parade and attractions, it's more fun than you could ever dream. Come and play with Elmo, Cookie Monster, Abby Cadabby, Julia, and their friends at Sesame Street Land at SeaWorld Orlando.

#### **About IBCCES**

Delivering The Global Standard for Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

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