

Special Education Superintendent Update

October 2018


OCTOBER IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH





In Canada, October is Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that includes impairments in language, communication skills, and social interactions combined with restricted and repetitive behaviours, interests or activities.¹ Today prevalence rates of ASD in Canada are approximately 1 in 66.²


An increase in the number of students with Autism has been observed in the Toronto Catholic District School Board. Currently there are over 1,700 students with Autism in our schools, making this the third largest exceptionality in the board.


The TCDSB offers a range of programs, services and resources to support students, staff and families.

 Multi-disciplinary staff on the Autism Team are available on a referral basis to help support schools and students in building capacity around best practices focusing on ABA strategies.


 Connections For Students is an Ontario government initiative, intended to facilitate the transition of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders from Autism Intervention Programs (AIPs) to school. This initiative partners schools boards with AIP providers.

 The Program to Assist Social Thinking (PAST) is an elementary school program for students with high functioning Autism. Students are supported through a one-day per week withdrawal program.

 Information about resources available through the Autism Department are available on the board's portal [Autism Programs and Services](#). Resources and materials for board staff can be accessed at [Autism Team Site](#).

 Parent workshops for students transitioning into secondary school and for students transitioning into post-secondary will be offered again this year.

During the month of October:

 A group of students with Autism who attend the PAST program will be attending an overnight Outdoor Education experience at Teen Ranch.

 Weekly tip sheets around best practices focusing on ABA Strategies will be shared with schools.

The following websites may be of interest for those looking to learn more about Autism.

Autism Ontario: www.autismontario.ca

Autism Canada: www.autismcanada.org

For additional information, please contact Autism Programs and Services at 416-222-8282 ext. 2799
Watch out for information on events being planned for World Autism Awareness Day on April 2nd!

¹ American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5 (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.

² Public Health Agency of Canada. (2018). Autism Spectrum Disorder among Children and Youth in Canada 2018: A Report of the National Autism Spectrum Disorder Surveillance System. Ottawa, ON.