

Special Education Superintendent Update

October 2016



SPECIAL SERVICES

SOCIAL WORK

1. SAFTETALK, a workshop to familiarize staff with indicators of suicidal thoughts, was delivered to Education Assistants, Child & Youth Workers and Teachers on the October 7th PD day.
2. The TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Policy has been revised. All TCDSB board employees are now required to view a TCDSB media clip regarding Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect on an annual school year basis. The TCDSB School Social Workers will be providing staff training and other opportunities for staff to ask related questions.

AUTISM

Workshops with parents of children with Autism in Grades 7 & 8 to a Transition Planning Workshop on Saturday October 22nd at the CEC beginning at 10:00 a.m. . Flyer attached.

PSYCHOLOGY

A workshop was held on October 7th for teachers who will be using Lexia as an application to help improve student reading with students who have been identified with a learning disability or who may be struggling in reading.



It's October— Child Abuse Prevention Month – a reminder that everyone in the community has a role to play in protecting children from abuse and neglect.

Go Purple Day

On October 19th, TCDSB will celebrate Go Purple Day -- a day to raise awareness among students about the signs of abuse and neglect, and what to do if they or someone they know is being/or suspected of being abused or neglected.

All people living in Ontario have a moral and legal role to play in protecting children and supporting families. By being alert to the signs of abuse and knowing who to call to help a child at risk of harm, everyone can help prevent child abuse and neglect.

Safety of children is a shared responsibility. Let's "Break the Silence" on child abuse and neglect this October.

Twitter: [@October_is_CAPM](#) Hashtag: #iBreakTheSilence

It is the policy of the Toronto Catholic District School Board that employees shall comply fully with the Child and Family Services Act and report forthwith any suspicion of child abuse or neglect of pupil of the Board directly to a Children's Aid Society. Procedures for the Investigation and Reporting of Child Abuse and the Record of Suspected Child Abuse Form can be found on the board website at:

<http://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Pages/S17.aspx>

Please contact your School's Social Worker should you have any questions about this policy or procedures.

Also, please see the important resources from Toronto Catholic Children's Aid Society go to <https://www.tcdsb.org/pages/october-is-child-abuse-prevention-month.aspx>



AUTISM PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Transition Planning Workshop for Parents of Children with Autism in Grades 7 and 8



Supporting Students to Grow and Learn in New Environments

Date: October 22nd, 2016

Location: 80 Sheppard Avenue East, 2nd floor

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Presented by:
**Autism Programs and Services – Transition Team
&
School Support Program, Surrey Place Centre**

OCTOBER IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH



In Canada, October is Autism Awareness Month. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviours. Autism statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identify around 1 in 68 children as on the autism spectrum – a ten-fold increase in prevalence in 40 years.

This increase in the number of students with autism has also been observed in the Toronto Catholic District School Board. There are over 1,400 students with autism in our schools, making this the third largest exceptionality in the board.

In response to the increasing number of students with autism in the TCDSB, a range of programs, services and resources are available 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.



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 for students with high functioning Autism. Students are supported through a one-day per week withdrawal program.



Information about resources by Autism Department staff are available on the board's website at <https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SpecialEducation/Autism/Pages/default.aspx>. Visuals and materials for board staff can be accessed at <http://sharepoint01/AutismTeam/default.aspx>.



Parent workshops for students transitioning into secondary school and for students transitioning into post-secondary will be offered in October and November.

The following are some websites that may be of interest for those looking to learn more about autism:

Autism Ontario: www.autismontario.ca

Autism Canada: www.autismcanada.org

Autism Speaks: www.autismspeaks.org

For additional information, please contact Autism Programs and Services at 416-222-8282 ext. 2799.

Look forward to information on events being planned in April for World Autism Awareness Day!