



MEMORANDUM

TO: Special Education Advisory Committee

FROM: Peter Symmonds, Superintendent, Learning Support Services
Amy Hannah, System Principal, Learning Support Services
Kate Stoudt, System Principal, Learning Support Services

DATE: 2 March 2022

RE: **World Autism Awareness Month**
World Autism Awareness Speaker Series
Autism Spectrum Disorders/Developmental Disabilities Team Initiatives

The purpose of this memo is to provide details for the events and initiatives that have been organized across the District to recognize World Autism Awareness Month (WAAM). The theme this year is ***“Everyone Belongs; supporting inclusion and well being”***. The goal of the month’s focus is to raise awareness and acceptance about autism. Supporting students with autism is ongoing throughout the year through many initiatives.

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH (WAAM)

Every school within the District is being invited to showcase student inclusion, wellbeing and awareness, through various activities at their schools. Schools are reminded to incorporate their Autism Ontario Flag and World Autism Awareness Banner that they received in previous years. Learning Support Services (LSS) will be providing each school with the following items:

- Speaker Series poster to display in their schools;
- [WAAM Awareness Kit](#) that includes ideas to support inclusion and wellbeing, curriculum links, staff meeting suggestions, resources, and videos for Elementary and Secondary schools; and
- Autism Ontario Educator Toolkits.

Communications will be coordinating social media throughout the month, and schools are encouraged to share their photos and tag @OCDSB. Schools can also use hashtags like #WorldAutismAwarenessMonth and #EveryoneBelongs when they share their photos.

AUTISM AWARENESS SPEAKER SERIES FOR EDUCATORS

Open to all OCDSB employees from 4:30 p.m. - 6:15 p.m. via Zoom. As there may be limited enrollment (300), and presentations will not be recorded or live streamed, educators are encouraged to register early.

Tuesday, April 5, 2022 Dr. Paula Kluth

[*"You're Going To Love This Kid!": Educating Students with Autism In Inclusive Schools*](#)

Monday, April 11, 2022 Dr. Paula Kluth

[*"Just Give Him the Whale": Using Passions, Areas of Expertise, and Strengths to Support Students with Autism.*](#)

AUTISM AWARENESS SPEAKER SERIES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND ALL STAFF

Open to all OCDSB parents/caregivers and staff from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. Each presentation will be live streamed to our OCDSB Youtube Channel as well as recorded and available for 30 days after the presentation.

Thursday, April 7, 2022 Lauren Kerstein, LCSW

[*Emotion Regulation Strategies in Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder*](#)

Thursday, April 21, 2022 Lauren Kerstein, LCSW

[*Sensory Issues and Emotions: A Guide to Assisting Children and Adolescents with Self-Awareness and Strategy Development*](#)

ASD/DD TEAM INITIATIVES SUPPORTING INCLUSION AND WELLBEING:

New Initiatives:

ASD/DD Toy Bin was originally introduced to support students on the waitlist for ASD Specialized Program Classes (SPCs). Currently 71 schools across the District have a bin. There are six bins available through the lending library. The ASD/DD structured play resource bin provides play-based activities that promote the development of pre-language skills such as engagement, joint attention, emotional regulation, imitation and turn-taking.

Art of Music Program is being used in eight junior ASD SPCs with additional eight junior ASD-SPCs being introduced this spring. The Art of Music Program was a collaboration between Learning Support Services (LSS) and Program and Learning (PAL). The purpose of this program is to provide practical, relevant and engaging music lessons, resources and assessment for teachers to use with students with autism to support social, communication, and self regulation skills.

Additional Resources:

- ASD/DD open office hours for staff Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday from 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.;
- Tip sheets for educators and parents supporting students transitioning back from holidays;
- Video for educators and parents on supporting mask wearing.

Ongoing Initiatives

- New Teachers Induction Program (NTIP);

- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Professional Development; and
- Social-Emotional Training and Resources.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kate Stoudt at kate.stoudt@ocdsb.ca or at 613-596-8211 ex: 8111.

Attach.

cc Senior Staff
 Administrative Assistants
 ASD Team
 Corporate Records

Resource Links:

[WAAM Awareness Kit](#)
[Butterfly colouring page](#)
[Educator Toolkits](#)