

World Autism Day

Elementary
Educator's Toolkit

AutismONTARIO

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Introduction to the Campaign

World Autism Day

Autism Ontario's World Autism Day campaign unites families, schools, communities, government, and professionals in recognizing World Autism Day, and brings to light the triumphs and struggles of people on the autism spectrum.

Autism Ontario is excited to have you participate and celebrate with us. Through this initiative, we are building stronger, more inclusive communities for people on the autism spectrum. We are highlighting ongoing work happening across the province, and the work that still remains to remove systemic barriers and help children, youth, and adults on the autism spectrum live their best life.

Thank you for being part of this important day and celebrating with us!

Celebrate the Spectrum

Celebrate the Spectrum is our theme for World Autism Day 2022 celebrations. It is an opportunity for positive action to provide spaces of support and advocacy for our diverse communities while learning about autism and how to make our communities better for people on the autism spectrum.

The campaign is flexible and there are lots of great ways to get your students involved, including:

- Hosting your school's own World Autism Day third-party fundraising event
- Entering the design your flag contest
- Writing an article for *Autism Matters* magazine
- Donating to Autism Ontario

Learn more at celebratethespectrum.com

Please take photographs and share your stories and celebrations with us using the hashtags [#WorldAutismDay2022](https://twitter.com/WorldAutismDay2022) and [#CelebrateTheSpectrum](https://twitter.com/CelebrateTheSpectrum)

What's Next?

Check out celebratethespectrum.com to find videos, supplementary activities, and information to help enhance your World Autism Day celebrations with Autism Ontario!

These resources are available in French and English and are suitable for elementary, secondary, and post-secondary students as an orientation to autism.

Don't forget to share your classroom or school experiences with us! Visit celebratethespectrum.com to learn how.

For More Information

If you have questions, comments, or feedback, connect with us at celebratethespectrum@autismontario.com.



Video Introduction

Video Presentation & Class Discussion Guides with Activities on Developing Healthy Relationships with Students on the Autism Spectrum

Autism Ontario has developed a video series for elementary and secondary school students as an orientation to autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These guides have been created to help promote further classroom discussion on accepting and celebrating people on the autism spectrum.

Each video shares stories about autistic students who are affected in various ways by their autism. The students in these videos have close friendships and acceptance in their school community. This, however, is not always the case. Due to the nature of autism, it can be difficult for many people on the autism spectrum to make and keep friends. Sometimes, autistic students are isolated and not accepted by their peers.

These videos demonstrate how to get to know someone on the autism spectrum despite the negative social pressures of other peers. Through these presentations, students learn that social pressures are not exclusive to issues faced by young people on the spectrum; they also apply to many interpersonal issues all students deal with at some point in their life.

Please preview these videos with all school personnel and/or your parent council prior to showing them in the classroom setting.

Classroom Discussion Guide: Meet My Friend Dylan Video

Initiating Student Dialogue on Accepting Autistic Students

My Friend Dylan is a story about Dylan, an eight-year-old girl on the autism spectrum. She goes to school in the most supportive environment, from the principal to the crossing guard. In this 10-minute video, Dylan's classmates share their feelings about her and their relationship with her.

Students offer tips and ideas that they've found helpful in getting to know Dylan. Their support helps with Dylan's progress, but in the end, it's obvious, they're the ones benefitting most from their friendship with Dylan.

Educators – Please note, the video references a 2005 statistic quoting approximately 8,000 autistic students in Ontario. More recent (2018) figures state that 1 in 66 Canadian children and youth (ages 5-17) are diagnosed with autism.

Communicating Without Using Words

Sometimes children on the autism spectrum communicate using sign language by using their hands to make words and pictures.

Have you ever tried to communicate with someone without using words? Many of us have played games that rely on us watching, listening, and being aware of what is happening around us with no talking. Follow the leader is a good example.

Tips for Peers and Friends Supporting Someone with Autism in the Classroom and on the Playground

1

Practice understanding. Get to know your peers on the autism spectrum: What do they love to do? What are some of their favorite things? What are they good at? How do they let you know this?

2

Respect the person's independence. Let them do it on their own: How can we help without taking over? How can we all support classmates who might need a little extra help?

3

Be patient: Each of us has different needs. Sometimes we learn things fast and sometimes it takes a little longer or even a long time to really understand. What are some of the ways we can practice patience with one another?

4

Friendship: Friends are very important. Friends can make you feel better when you are having a hard day or a sad day and celebrate with you when you are feeling good. How do you make friends? What are some of the ways we can involve and include one another?



Questions to Ask:

- What are some of the signs of autism that Dylan shows?
- What are some of the ways Dylan's friends have gotten to know her during their time at school together?
- What might other kids say about you if you became friends with a person like Dylan? How would you deal with this?
- Do you think Dylan's sister might be treated differently or teased? How do you think she would feel?
- How would you feel if you saw someone behaving differently?
- Do you think a person with autism could be picked on in our class or school? How and why?
- Let's look at our school community. What are some of the ways we can invite, include, and understand students on the autism spectrum? What are we doing well? What could we do better? What could we do differently?

Additional Information on Autism

The Autism Ontario website features a range of resources that can benefit educators, administrators, support staff, care providers, families, and advocates of individuals on the autism spectrum. Don't forget to share your classroom and school experiences with us!

Visit celebratethespectrum.com to learn how!

ACTIVITY: "I'm feeling..."

1

Cut several strips of paper or use index cards.

2

On each strip of paper, write down a word or show a picture of a mood or emotion such as happy, sad, proud, hurt, surprised, worried, scared, etc.

3

Fold the strips of paper and put them into a bowl.

4

Have each student choose from the bowl and without talking, act out the mood or emotion on the card. They must remain silent!

5

Other students must guess the mood or emotion that is on the card.

Classroom Discussion Guide: Experiencing Autism Video

Initiating Student Dialogue on Accepting and Embracing Students on the Autism Spectrum

Experiencing Autism is a 17-minute video that can be viewed on its own, but to have the greatest impact, we suggest a class presentation with discussion time.

Experiencing Autism presents some of the behaviour we might see in someone on the autism spectrum. Although people on the autism spectrum can demonstrate similar behaviour or characteristics, which are things they have in common, not all children on the autism spectrum show the same behaviours. This is how children with autism are different from each other. Autism presents as a spectrum of behaviours requiring a variety of supports. *Experiencing Autism* will show you how some of these behaviours may look in a child on the autism spectrum.

The video has been structured as follows:

- Introductory session with information about autism from Former Toronto Raptors GM Rob Babcock. The Raptors' organization has been a great supporter of autism awareness.
- Five interactive games demonstrated by a group of students from Pope John Paul II in Bolton, Ontario, that you can try with your students in class.
- The video can be stopped at any of the above segments to allow for classroom discussion.
- The students' comments from the video and the following suggestions may help facilitate dialogue with your students.

Game 1: VLOCKNAR

1. Why did Lisa have trouble understanding VLOCKNAR?
2. What happened to help Lisa understand VLOCKNAR?
3. How else could you help a child on the autism spectrum when giving them a verbal instruction?

Game 2: Overload

1. Even though Domenico, Kristy, and Brandon are all on the autism spectrum, how do they differ from each other?
2. What happens when someone like Casey, has too much or too little sensory input?
3. How do you think other autistic children behave when there is too much sensory information in their environment?

Game 3: No Reason at All

1. What is a meltdown and why does it happen?
2. What can we do if we see a person on the autism spectrum have a meltdown?





Game 4: Clear Language

1. Why is the statement “dogs taste better” hard to understand?
2. How can we communicate so students on the autism spectrum will better understand us?

General Discussion

1. What are some of the lessons you have learned from this video, and how can you apply them to other situations in your life?

Game 5: Social Rules

1. Name some social rules we have to follow at school.
2. How can we help our classmates on the autism spectrum learn these rules?

Additional Information on Autism

The Autism Ontario website features a range of resources that can benefit educators, administrators, support staff, care providers, families, and advocates of autistic individuals. Don't forget to share your classroom or school experiences with us!

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Educator Resources from Autism Ontario: CommunityConnect

Autism Ontario has curated a selection of learning resources designed specifically for educators from our *CommunityConnect* portal to further promote autism acceptance.

If you'd like to access more information on autism, simply visit our website to search for learning resources. The site contains a series of brief, easy-to-understand documents that are relevant to the lives of children, youth, and adults on the autism spectrum and their families. The documents can be read online or printed, and address a variety of topics benefiting English and French-speaking people on the autism spectrum, families, caregivers, service providers, educators, administrators, support staff, and advocates.

Visit autismontario.com.

Please check out the resources below to help make your classroom and school community a supportive environment for all students on the autism spectrum!

iPad Facts for Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder & Other Exceptionalities

With the launch of the iPad and the surge of apps continuously being developed for children, youth, and adults on the autism spectrum, the iTunes App Store (where iPad apps are purchased for classroom implementation) can seem overwhelming.

Check out the following article to see how this type of technology changes the way many learners on the autism spectrum can, for example, learn new skills and meet curricular expectations, etc. The following facts can help with building a strong entry-level foundation of professional knowledge and skills required to support students on the autism spectrum in the classroom using iPad-based technology.

autismontario.com/node/685

45 Ideas for Classroom-Friendly Fidget Toys

A fidget toy is an object that a student can use to get sensory input. Fidget toys can help improve concentration and attention to tasks by allowing the brain to filter out the extra sensory information.

Check out the following article to learn how you can support elementary students who may be easily distracted in the classroom and seeking sensation to stimulate or calm their nervous system.

autismontario.com/node/683

Understanding the Role of the Educational Assistant

This resource is designed to help support parents in navigating the role of their child's educational assistant, including team membership, communication, and key responsibilities.

autismontario.com/node/474

Educator Resources from Autism Ontario (continued)

Strategies for Effective Home/School Communication

Communication between a student's home and school can have a significant impact on their school experience, the ongoing development of skills, and the relationship between parents and teaching staff. Many parents report that they wait anxiously to read the communication book at the end of the day and that their emotional state can be considerably influenced by its content.

Check out these easy tips for setting up a successful home/school communication system.

autismontario.com/node/449

Depression in Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum

Depression is more common among teens on the autism spectrum than teens who are not autistic. Rates of major depressive disorder have been reported as high as 37% in adolescents on the autism spectrum compared to about 5% of adolescents in the general population.

Studies that measured parent reports of depressed mood have revealed a rate as high as around 50%. There is also emerging research showing an increased risk for suicidal thoughts and tendencies among teens with on the autism spectrum.

This means that parents and school staff play a critical role in being attuned to the signs of depression.

autismontario.com/node/488

Facing the Challenges of Post-Secondary Education: Strategies for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum

Post-secondary students are expected to take the lead when it comes to their education and family members are encouraged to be less involved than they may have been in previous years. By law and by the institution, students are considered adults; therefore, their written permission is needed before college or university personnel can communicate directly with a parent.

Students are responsible for knowing due dates for assignments and test dates, completing assigned work, evaluating whether they need help or support, and asking for it.

Although busy professors and instructors may be available for individualized student support, they may not initiate communication with students, even if they are not performing well.

The following information has been designed to support students on the autism spectrum transitioning from secondary school into to post-secondary education.

autismontario.com/node/479

Model for an Autism Centre

A resource for educators on designing an Autism Centre for students in grades 7-12. The article describes a novel support model where the characteristics, associated features, and needs of students on the autism spectrum guide the activities with the goal of continually providing tools to the students in preparation for the eventual transition to adult life.

autismontario.com/node/487

Educator Resources from Autism Ontario: Webinars

Autism Ontario's Webinar Series is designed for parents and professionals supporting children, youth, and adults on the spectrum in the classrooms and out in their communities.

Accessing a webinar is easy! Simply fill out the required information to access the webinar at any time, in the comfort of your own home or office.

autismontario.com/programs-services/webinars

Everyday ABA: Using Behavioural Principles to Effectively Support People on the Autism Spectrum

In her Everyday ABA Webinar, Dr. Leslie Cohen provides an overview of the basic behavioural toolbox and explores some principles used to address challenging behaviour and techniques to help viewers to become more familiar with behavioural problem-solving strategies. Length: 60 minutes.

autismontario.com/node/463

Addressing Bullying in Youth on the Autism Spectrum: Research and Strategies

Jonathan Weiss, Ph.D., C.Psych., Chair of ASD, York University, explores different types and rates of bullying experienced by youth on the autism spectrum, best practices for counselling youth on the autism spectrum who have been bullied, and strategies for brief and effective consultations with families and schools to address bullying. Length: 60 minutes.

autismontario.com/node/445

The Science of Making Friends for Teens and Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum: The UCLA PEERS® Program

This lively and engaging webinar includes tips for parents, professionals, and educators on how to provide social coaching using concrete rules and steps of social behaviour derived from the widely popular PEERS® program.

This webinar explains easy-to-use strategies to assist teens and young adults in making and keeping friends and handling peer conflict and peer rejection, including research-supported strategies for managing bullying. Length: 60 minutes.

youtube.com/watch?v=3Wr9HIM19MI

Activity: Design Your Flag

Celebrate the Spectrum Flag

Flags are a wonderful form of communication. In previous World Autism Day campaigns, Autism Ontario used its flag to communicate to families, schools, and communities that autistic people are important members of the community. The Raise the Flag campaign united school communities supporting people on the autism spectrum committing to making your school a better place for autistic classmates.

This flag-making activity is a wonderful way to generate excitement in young students about raising awareness about autism. This activity is intended to be a supplemental activity for students who have watched the videos for classroom discussion and have had a chance to talk about autism.

Summary

Children can create their own flag to Celebrate the Spectrum for World Autism Day with Autism Ontario by using the template provided. Your students can also enter the Design Your Flag Contest for a chance to win a prize or share their creations on social media.

Use our printable flags to make bunting to decorate your school or classroom. You can make 3 or 4 holes at the top of each flag and simply thread a piece of string, ribbon, or twine through the holes to hang the flags. Hang the flag banner by tying the ends of the string to nails in the wall or using masking tape.

Discussion

Talk to your class about the importance of World Autism Day. Ask them about some of the ways the class can include and understand students on the autism spectrum. What is your class already doing well? What are some of the ways your class could be more supportive to students on the spectrum? What are some of the things, as a group, you could do differently?

Time:

45 minutes

Age Group:

Kindergarten to Grade Three

Materials:

Printable flag picture

Colours – crayons, pencil crayons, paints, colour pens, markers, or get really creative and use materials like sparkles, coloured rice, grains, or lentils

1 Popsicle stick or straw per child

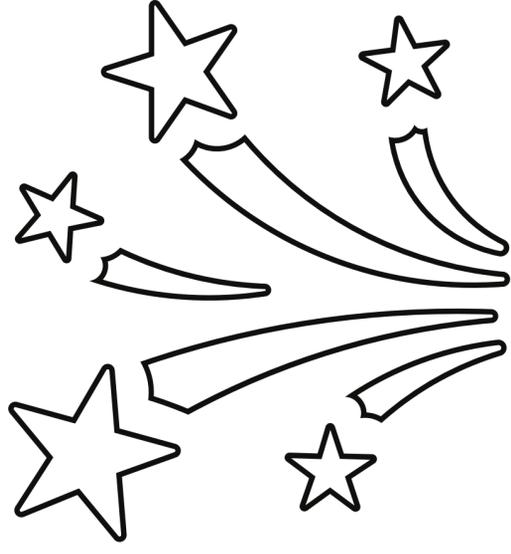
Glue/staples

Additional Information on Autism

The Autism Ontario website features a range of resources that can benefit educators, care providers, families, and advocates of students on the autism spectrum.

Don't forget to share your classroom or school experiences with us!

Visit celebratethespectrum.com to learn how.



**CELEBRATE
THE SPECTRUM**

**CÉLÉBRONS LE
SPECTRE DE L'AUTISME**

Mural Activity Overview: Seeds of Potential

Objectives

This activity is intended to be a supplemental activity for students who have watched the videos for classroom discussion and have had a chance to talk about autism.

The objective of the Seeds of Potential Mural is to engage your class in a fun and creative art project while inviting them to think about the importance of inclusion and understanding of autism within their school. Before you start, ask students what kinds of actions or specific behaviours help to create a supportive school for not just students on autism spectrum, but everyone. How can your classroom community support of everyone's unique differences?

What Might This Look Like?

The intention with this activity is to show students that, although every seed or idea will be uniquely one of a kind, all ideas about how to make school a better place are equally beautiful in their own way. In other words, all seeds have the potential to grow and flourish, and when placed together all seeds have the potential to create a beautifully diverse and colourful mural – and ultimately a beautifully diverse school community.

What To Do

1. Accompanying these guidelines, you will find a printable template for a “seed of potential”. Print out as many copies as you have students.
2. Have students write or draw their ideas about the statement “A supportive school means”.
3. Invite students to share their ideas with the class.
4. Once the ideas and seeds have been planted, ask students to close their eyes and imagine what it might look like if their school was to incorporate these ideas. What would class look like? What about the playground?
5. Have your class work together as a team to design the mural. An example could be a green field and blue sky or your school yard.
6. Make sure to include as many ideas or “seeds of potential” in the mural as possible.
7. Hang your completed “seeds of potential” ideas and your mural outside your classroom for everyone to see.

Time:

15-60 minutes (depending on materials used)

Materials: (* denotes optional)

Large sheet of craft paper
8.5 x 11 paper
Water-based paints and/or markers
Paint brushes*
Water cups for rinsing*
Glitter*
Pompoms and pipe cleaners*
Scissors
Computer printer
Glue stick

Additional Information on Autism

The Autism Ontario website features a range of resources that can benefit educators, administrators, support staff, care providers, families, and advocates of students on the autism spectrum.

Don't forget to share your classroom or school experiences with us! Visit celebratethespectrum.com to learn how.



Name: _____

A supportive school means:



Name: _____

A supportive school means:

Announcement Activity

Your school can use the days leading up to World Autism Day to get the entire school community thinking about autism and how to Celebrate the Spectrum. A great way to get students, teachers, administrators, and support staff thinking is to ask them what they know about autism. Get everyone involved in the conversation!

Announcement One

This year, our school is participating in Autism Ontario's Celebrate the Spectrum campaign for World Autism Day. World Autism Day is a historic day in Canada for the autism community because it brings to light the struggles and triumphs of people on the autism spectrum and unites families, schools, communities, government, and professionals to make Ontario a more supportive and inclusive place for people on the autism spectrum.

How many years do you think Canada has been officially celebrating World Autism Day? Stay tuned for the answer tomorrow...

Answer: On April 2, 2012, Canada joined 192 other United Nations members who agreed that World Autism Day would bring autism, a neurological difference that affects an increasing number of families around the world, to the attention of all. Our school is helping to celebrate the spectrum!

Announcement Two

Currently autism affects 1% of the population. If autism affects 1% of the population, how many people are living with autism in Ontario right now? Stay tuned for the answer tomorrow...

Answer: Visit Statistics Canada's website for the most recent statistics on the population of Ontario and multiply by 1-2% to calculate the approximate number of people in Ontario that live with autism. Autism doesn't go away; children on the autism spectrum grow up to be adults on the autism spectrum, so it is really important that schools like ours and communities are able to support the needs of students on the spectrum so they can live productive and meaningful lives.

Announcement Three

Just because someone can't use words to communicate doesn't mean they aren't able to understand. Think about all the ways we communicate with each other without using words. Think of three ways to communicate with the person beside you. Do they understand? How does it feel if they don't?

Announcement Four

We are working hard to make our school an inclusive and supportive place, not only for students on the autism spectrum, but for everyone. Some of the ways we can do that is to show understanding and be inclusive. What are some of the ways we can show understanding of one another? What are some of the ways we can include one another? Where can we do these things? Stay tuned for some answers tomorrow...

Answer: Classroom suggestions can be recorded, submitted, and reviewed, and then read aloud.

Celebrate the Spectrum

April 2 is World Autism Day! We are celebrating the spectrum because when we talk about autism, we are working together to make our school community a more understanding, inclusive, and welcoming environment for everyone!

Welcome to Autism Ontario

Autism Ontario and its regions support people on the autism spectrum and their families across the province. We offer information and resources and support autism research while implementing programs and services for the autism community. Here are some examples of services we offer:

Service Navigation Program

The Service Navigation Program is a free service open to anyone looking for information or guidance about autism services in their community. We provide direct support to families who are accessing or are interested in accessing the OAP by helping them :

- Understand and make informed choices about their services options in the OAP
- Make informed choices on how to receive funding
- Find and select a qualified service provider
- Complete and submit required documentation and reconcile invoices
- Feel supported in connecting to available support and services in their local communities

autismontario.com/servicenavigation

CommunityConnect

CommunityConnect is a centralized community portal home to our service listings, learning resources, and events. You can search for autism services, and Autism Ontario resources and events.

autismontario.com/communityconnect

Family Events

Designed for children, youth, and adults on the autism spectrum and their families and caregivers, these events provide easy access to a supportive environment in local communities. From movie mornings to recreational and social programs, they allow time for families to come together and connect in autism-friendly environments within the community.

autismontario.com/events

Provincial Newsletter

A free online newsletter in English and French to stay connected with Autism Ontario.

autismontario.com/newsletter

To learn more about the programs and services offered by our provincial office or our local regions, please visit our website: autismontario.com

Thank You

Dear Students, Teachers, Administrators, and Support Staff:

On behalf of Autism Ontario and the thousands of people on the autism spectrum across Ontario, we would like to thank you for participating in this year's Celebrate the Spectrum campaign in celebration of World Autism Day. Without your school's participation and commitment to making Ontario a more supportive and inclusive place for students with autism, World Autism Day could not have been such an outstanding success.

Together, we were able to promote awareness and increase understanding about autism, which are critical first steps in creating more supportive environments for autistic people in the classroom and in communities across the province. By participating in World Autism Day, we have started a collective conversation about the importance of community, inclusion, and understanding in classrooms across Ontario. Our hope is that this conversation will continue both inside and outside the classroom and throughout your lives.

We also want to thank you for your commitment to fundraising on our behalf. Your dedication to raising funds for Autism Ontario is a testament to your school's investment in the work we do in the community and across the province through awareness campaigns such as World Autism Day. Please feel free to contact celebratethespectrum@autismontario.com if you have any questions.

With the campaign drawing to an end, we would also like to encourage you to share your stories and experiences with the World Autism Day campaign. This is the best way that we can spread the word about your school mobilizing to create a more supportive environment for students on the autism spectrum.

Visit autismontario.com or connect with us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube to share your experiences and read other inspiring stories about autism in Ontario.

With your support, we are one step closer to creating a more inclusive Ontario.

Sincerely,



-  autismontario.com
-  [autismontarioprovincial](https://www.facebook.com/autismontarioprovincial)
-  [@AutismONT](https://twitter.com/AutismONT)
-  [autism-ontario](https://www.linkedin.com/company/autism-ontario)
-  [@AutismOntario](https://www.instagram.com/AutismOntario)
-  [autismontario](https://www.youtube.com/autismontario)