

DEVELOPMENTAL
& BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS

NEWSLETTER

BOSTON
MEDICAL
CENTER

The Autism Program

A monthly newsletter for families of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) at Boston Medical Center

What's Happening?



October is AAC Awareness Month — let's celebrate and spread awareness on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) this month! **AAC is all the various ways someone communicates through besides talking.** There are many different types of AAC to fit many different reasons and individuals! If you want to learn more about AAC this October, feel free to check out this wonderful and insightful guide, "**All About AAC**". If you are looking to explore the world of AAC for your child, please contact our Autism Program for further support!

Wings for Autism

Everybody does better with a little practice beforehand! This free event will provide children and families with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the airport setting and its frequently daunting travel procedures. You will be able to experience entering the airport, the check-in process, security screening, boarding the plane, preparing for takeoff, and exiting the plane!

Click **BELOW** for more information, including how to register and a video on what to expect!

Worcester Airport
October 14th
9 AM to 12 PM

Logan Airport
November 2nd
9 AM to 12 PM

Did you know that **AANE** recently changed their name from Asperger/Autism Network to

Association for Autism & Neurodiversity?

Check out their **FAQ** to explore all the factors and motivations behind this change. And while you're there, make sure to check out all the amazing **resources and services they offer for the entire family!** From support groups, social groups, workshops, trainings, consultations, to far beyond, **AANE is a great place to start!**

ASD Friendly Halloween Events

Halloween sits at the end of this month, building up its spooky anticipation and suspense day by day. If you were looking for some awesome autism-friendly Halloween events for your family, you are at the right place! There are some great community events we found throughout Massachusetts to ensure that all children can enjoy Halloween to their fullest comfort and excitement. **Check out the list below and click on the event title for more information!**

October 11th

- **Sensory-friendly Trunk or Treat Extravaganza** in Randolph: Hosted by Bierman Autism Centers, this free event will be a fun evening full of ghoulish carnival games, crafty cauldrons, monstrous mischief, treats and terrors!

October 20th

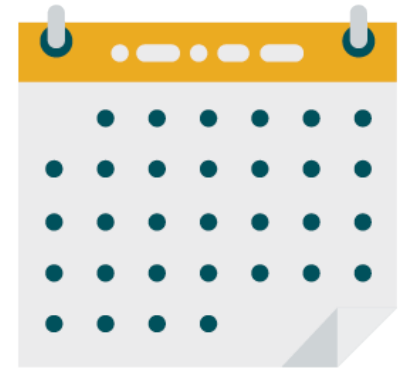
- **Trunk or Treat** in Stoughton: Hosted by YMCA Stoughton, this will be a safe and fun alternative to trick or treating where kids can trick or treat from trunk to trunk in a line-up of goodies-filled vehicles!

October 21st

- **Tricks & Treats** in Pembroke: Hosted by Raising Harts, this will be a sensory-friendly event where kids can safely trick or treat from local businesses and play while parents learn about ABA, therapists, and gain resources. There will be bouncy houses, face painting, arts & crafts, balloon animals, and a sensory area!
- **Haunted Hallways** in Brockton: Hosted by the Arc of Greater Brockton, wear your costumes (or not, everyone is welcome!) and trick or treat throughout their Halloween decorated halls!

Halloween costumes can be **tricky** — but if done right, it can be a **real treat!**

Keep an eye out for our Instagram this month as we will be rolling out some awesome sensory and cost friendly Halloween costume ideas!



Safety Tip of the Month

Falls are the leading cause of injury under the age of 5, but all children and young adults with autism are at risk for falling. The Boston Public Health Commission has a program called the "Window Falls Prevention" Program, which makes window guards affordable to families in and outside of Boston. Window guards are completely removable and include an emergency-release mechanism. It's highly recommended that window guards are installed for families living on the second story or above and with a family member at risk of falling from a window. Learn more about the Window Falls Prevention Program by contacting **Boston Building Resources** at (617) 442-2262 or accessing their website [here!](#)

Here are some additional safety tips to prevent falling:

- A child can fall out of a window with as little as **2 inches of clearance**.
- **Don't substitute window guards for screens.** Screens are meant to keep bugs out, not children in.
- **Lock** all unopened doors and windows.
- **Open windows from the top** instead of the bottom.

If you have any safety concerns for your child, please schedule an appointment with your child's DBP provider to discuss available resources.

DDS Autism Waiver Open Enrollment



What's Happening?

It's that time of year again, where the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Autism Waiver Service Program (AWP) will be accepting applications! The Autism Division at DDS runs the **Autism Waiver Program, which provides "Expanded Habilitation" and Education (intensive in-home services and supports) services as well as with other related support for your family.**

Services are provided by trained clinical staff and are available for a **total of three years**. At the end of three years, the child may access supplemental services that meet the child's needs and help with the transition out of the intensive Autism Waiver Program until the child's 9th birthday.

Who Can Apply?

- Child must have a **confirmed Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis**, subject to verification by DDS
- Child is **between ages 0-8 years old** and has not reached his/her 9th birthday
- Child is a **resident of Massachusetts**
- Child meets the level of care required for services in an Intermediate Care Facility for persons with an Intellectual Disability (ICF/ID) as assessed by DDS
- The family chooses to have the child receive services in the home and community
- The child must be able to be safely served in the community
- The child must have a legally responsible representative able to direct the services and supports of the Waiver
- The child must be found by the MassHealth agency to be **eligible for MassHealth Standard coverage, based on family income**
- **For families who have not yet applied for MassHealth, this must be done at the time of the filing of the Waiver Program Request Form**
- Child has a **Social Security Number**

Translations

Translation and interpretation for Autism Waiver Program Open Request Application are available free of charge in multiple languages:

Arabic, Burmese, Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese (Cantonese & Mandarin), Haitian Creole, Khmer, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Nepali, and Somali

Time Frame

Applications must have a postmark or date stamp between **October 16, 2023** and **October 31, 2023**.

Applications received outside of this designated time period will be discarded. Click **HERE** for additional information!

Apply At:

1. **Submit by Mail:**

Department of Developmental Services
Autism Division
Attn: Children's Autism Waiver Program Open Request
1000 Washington Street,
Boston, MA 02118

2. **Submit by E-mail:**

AutismDivision@state.ma.us

Resources



The Autism Program is continuing to support families in many ways both inside and outside of Boston Medical Center. Check out our website to learn more about the services, supports and programs we offer including our Autism Friendly Hospital Initiative, Teens Engaged as Mentors (TEAM) program, and our training offerings. We also have a huge resource library where you can access free information on a variety of topics such as safety, behavioral support, transition to adulthood, insurance and more!

<https://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program>

Do you have an idea for a future newsletter? Email us at.

autismprogram@bmc.org

with suggestions.

Clinic

Our clinicians are available for developmental evaluations, assessments and follow up. To connect with the clinical team, please call 617-414-4841 and follow the prompts for Developmental Pediatrics.



Our Clinicians

Marilyn Augustyn, MD

Arathi Reddy, DO

Rachel Amgott, NP

Christina Lazdowsky, NP

Mei Elensary, MD

Audrey Christiansen, MD

Sarah Canale, MD

Britany Weissman, MD

Mary Ellen Killion, NP

Arielle Spellun, MD

Bridget Poznanski, PhD

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is brought to you by the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center, a family support program of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. We are committed to supporting any family of DBP during this time, regardless of diagnosis. Please don't hesitate to reach out, and follow us on social media for more tips and information! **To unsubscribe, please reply by email with the word "stop!"**



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The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center



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