



DBP WEEKLY NEWS

A weekly newsletter for families of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) at Boston Medical Center during COVID-19 Social Distancing



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

We are now in Phase 2 of the Massachusetts re-opening process. Services such as outdoor dining, in-store retail shopping, hair salons & barbershops, libraries, day camps & youth sports, and outdoor spaces are available again (with safety precautions). For a full list of businesses that are open now and re-opening soon, visit tinyurl.com/phase2NBCBoston.

ACTIVITY

This easy 2 ingredient rainbow rice activity is a fun way for your child to enjoy some sensory play!

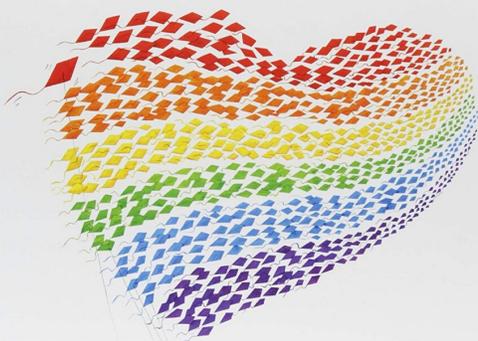
Divide and place white rice into as many ziploc bags of colors as you would like to make. Add a few drops of food coloring into each bag with the rice and shake, shake, shake!

This activity is also a great teaching opportunity to explain to your child what a rainbow symbolizes:

love is love!



LOVE IS LOVE



Written by Michael Genhart, PhD

Illustrated by Ken Min

RESOURCE

In honor of Pride Month, we have rounded up 6 books to read with your child to cultivate awareness and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community.

- ***Love is Love*** by: Michael Genhart
- ***Sparkle Boy*** by: Leslea Newman
- ***Annie's Plaid Shirt*** by: Stacy B. Davids
- ***Love Makes a Family*** by: Sophie Beer
- ***Stella Brings the Family*** by: Miriam B. Schiffer
- ***Peanut Goes for the Gold*** by: Jonathan Van Ness

Reminder: if you are a Massachusetts resident, you are eligible for a free Boston Public Library card or e-card!

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ARTICLE

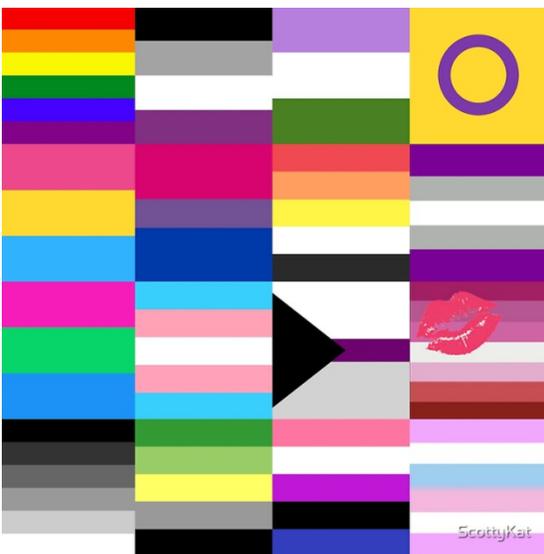
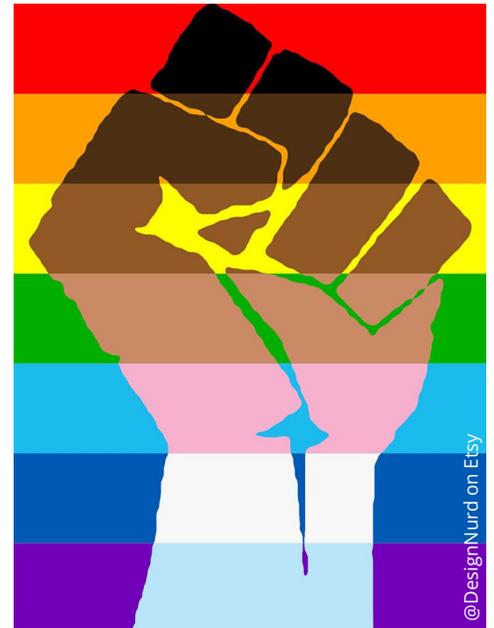
SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

The following is an excerpt from the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) *Sex Ed for Self Advocates* series, written for young people on the autism spectrum. For the full module, including more information and resources for youth and families, visit researchautism.org/sex-ed-guide-sexual-orientation-gender-identity.

Everyone has a sexual orientation and gender identity. People on the autism spectrum are no exception. Sometimes people ignore or don't believe that a person on the autism spectrum can have romantic or sexual feelings towards others, but that is not true! Similarly, some people believe that individuals on the autism spectrum cannot have a nonconforming gender identity or a nonconforming sexual orientation, but that is not true either!

This area can be a difficult subject to talk about and understand - whether you are on the autism spectrum or not. Although it is becoming more common for people to talk about being LGBTQ, not everyone understands or is supportive of LGBTQ people.

The percentage of LGBTQ people who are on the autism spectrum is at least the same as the percentage of LGBTQ people in the neurotypical population. Some research has suggested that there is a higher percentage of people on the autism spectrum who are LGBTQ. Either way, LGBTQ people on the autism spectrum certainly exist, and it is okay to be both on the autism spectrum and be LGBTQ.



Sometimes it takes a while for people - whether they are on the autism spectrum or neurotypical - to figure out their sexual orientation and gender identity. Someone who is questioning may try to date people of the same gender as them to see if that feels good. Or, they may try out different gender roles and expressions to see what feels right to them. It is okay to explore your options and take your time figuring it out so long as you are respectful of others and take the same safety precautions as you would in any other relationships.

If you feel like you are LGBTQ, learning to better advocate for yourself will likely become even more important than before. If your parents or caregivers are unsupportive, it may be helpful to find support or social groups that allow you to express your sexual orientation or gender identity in ways that work for you. Finding support groups for your parents or caregivers can also be helpful so that they can begin to understand your identity. If your doctors or counselors don't believe that you can be LGBTQ because you are on the autism spectrum, or if they are unsupportive, consider finding new care providers that will support you, if those resources are available to you.

For some additional information on LGBTQ+ topics, visit:
aane.org/topics/adults/lgbtq

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RESOURCES

Boston Medical Center is here to support you during this difficult time.

Check out our new resource spreadsheet, which has links to online learning, social stories, music/animal/fitness programs, live online classes and more. See the second tab for free meals and financial services throughout Massachusetts. This spreadsheet is available in multiple languages and will be continuously updated as new resources become available.

[tinyurl.com/
CoronaResourcesBMC](https://tinyurl.com/CoronaResourcesBMC)

Know of something to add? Email autismprogram@bmc.org with suggestions.



Our Autism Program is hosting a bi-weekly virtual information series for parents and caregivers. Sessions are hosted on Zoom and are run by staff & guest speakers who will cover various topics and answer parent questions. To view the topic list and register, visit:

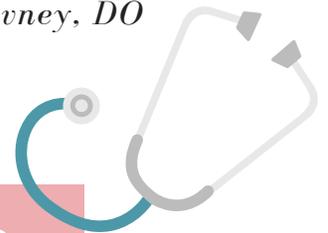
tinyurl.com/BMCParentGroups

CLINIC

*Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics clinicians are available by phone/Zoom for telehealth visits and consultations. Please call us at **617-414-4841** if you have any questions or are in need of support. To create a free Zoom account, visit zoom.us/signup.*

OUR CLINICIANS

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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!



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