

2024



"The Goose and the Night Flies"
Artwork by Ericka

Autism Program Annual Report

BOSTON MEDICAL
Developmental &
Behavioral Pediatrics
Boston Medical Center

Letter From Leadership

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with immense pride and gratitude for the opportunity to serve individuals with autism and their families. Our mission has always been to create a welcoming, compassionate environment where every patient receives the care and support they deserve. This year, we have continued to strengthen our commitment to improving the lives of those affected by ASD through a holistic approach that integrates specialized services, family support, and community engagement.



The unique needs of individuals with autism require a tailored, multifaceted approach to care. Our dedicated team of professionals works tirelessly to ensure that each patient receives personalized attention and resources that consider their specific challenges and strengths. We remain focused on enhancing access to evidence-based practices that can make a lasting difference in the lives of our patients.

We recognize that supporting individuals with autism extends beyond direct care. Families play a pivotal role in the success of any support system, and we remain committed to empowering families with the strategies, tools, and emotional support they need. This year, we expanded our reach to over 2,500 patient referrals and built upon our vast array of multi-lingual resources to help families navigate the often complex journey of raising a child with autism.

Furthermore, we have continued to invest in the development of community partnerships and advocacy initiatives to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote inclusivity for those living with autism. Through collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders, we have worked to ensure that autism services are accessible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of our communities.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are more determined than ever to build on the progress we've made. We are committed to further enhancing our services, exploring new innovations in support, and continuing to foster an environment of understanding and acceptance for individuals with autism.

We are deeply grateful for the trust you place in us and for the unwavering support of our patients, their families, our dedicated staff, and our partners. **Together, we will continue to create a future where all individuals with autism can thrive, feel understood, and reach their fullest potential.**

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Warm regards,

Shari Krauss, M.A., MPH
Program Director

Alex Friedman, MPH
Program Manager

Our Team



Shari Krauss
Program Director



Alex Friedman
Program Manager



Liz Ferriero
Program Co-lead



Hillary Hollis
Program Co-lead



Jacqueline McKendry
Behavior Specialist



Maddy Goskoski
Autism Resource
Specialist



Katie Campbell
Transition
Specialist



Juju Ha
Autism Resource
Specialist



Katherine Shields
Adult Autism
Resource Specialist



Christina Chow
Autism Resource
Specialist

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Today's Landscape

1 in 36

Autistic Children
in the U.S.



5 million

Autistic Adults
in the U.S.

84%

Parents who
found the
diagnosis
process very
or quite
stressful

75%

Parents who
received **no**
support
after their
child's
diagnosis

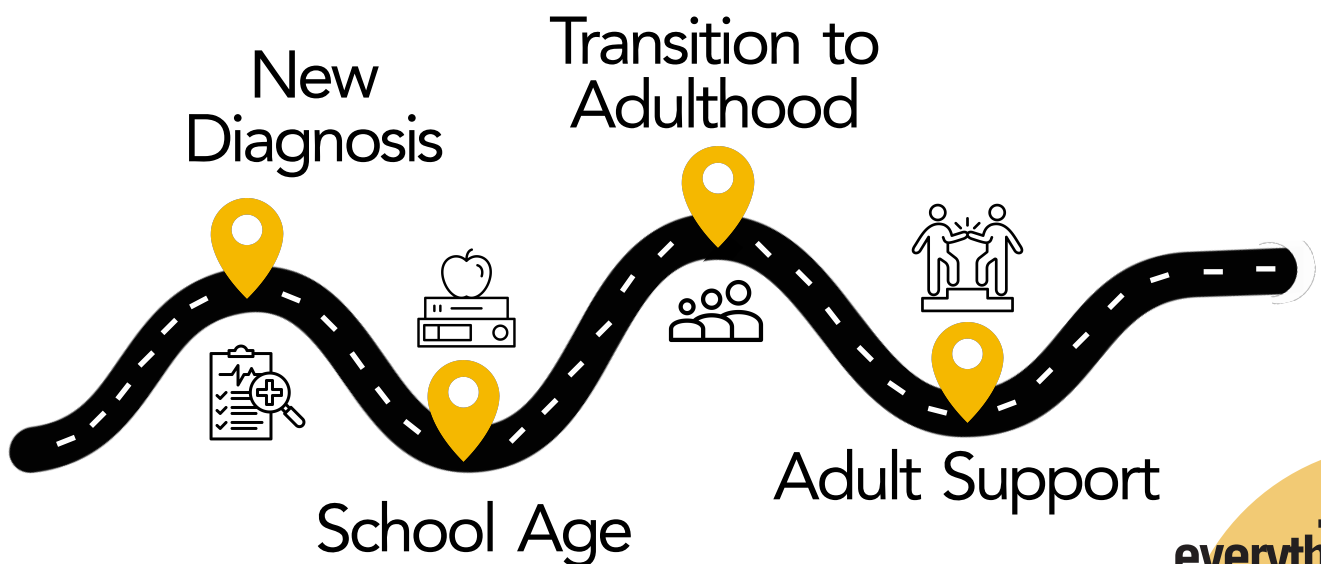
80%

Autistic adults
who report
difficulty
visiting a
general
practitioner

Our Impact

Since 2007, the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center assists & empowers autistic individuals and their families through direct patient support, provider education, and community-based outreach. We strive to meet the needs of the community in Massachusetts in a culturally competent manner by offering high quality and comprehensive care to all.

The Autism Program is a **one-stop-shop** that provides **individualized support & resources** for patients **across their lifespan.**



... and
everything in
between &
beyond!

At a glance:

Services provided

“ The work of the Autism Program is so important because it ensures **better communication, understanding**, and creating a **safer environment** for everyone.

“ Finding ourselves with all of this has been something that has **greatly changed our understanding of the diagnosis** and the **support we receive**.

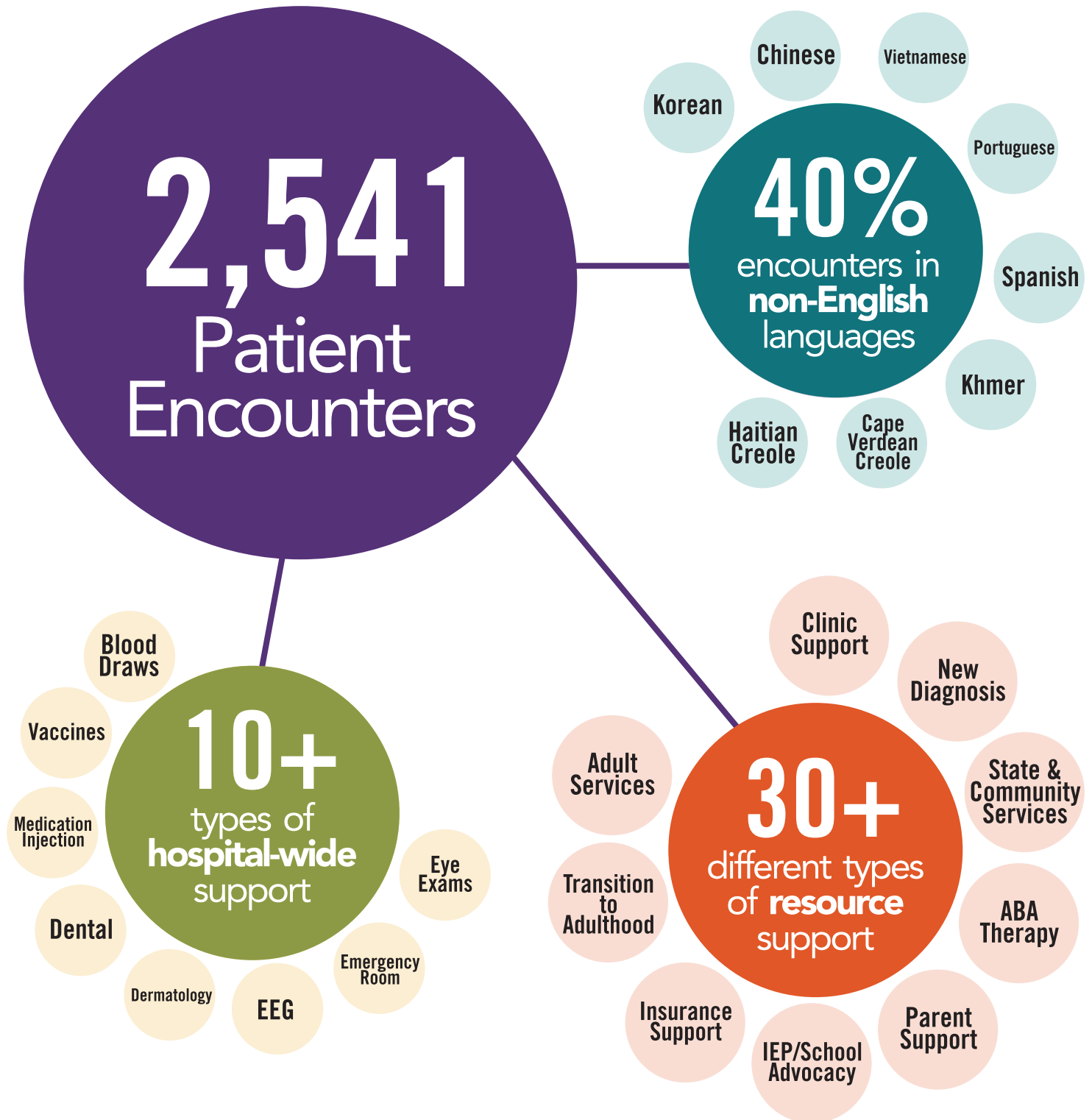
“ As a primary care physician... the support and coaching [*of the Autism Resource Specialist*] have been **irreplaceable** to getting my patients through challenging imaging studies, complete eye exams, and dental exams, **many for the first time**.

“ **You just feel safe** with the Autism Program team... My child considers the Autism Program team to be **his family**.



Direct Patient Care

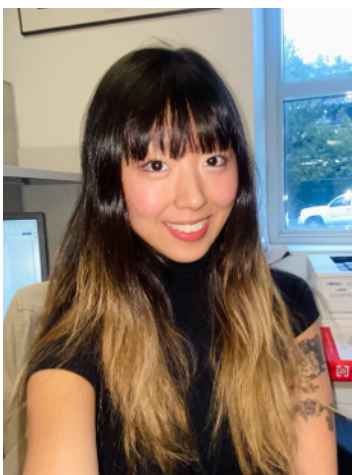
In 2024, we supported...



Support

Behavior Consultation Clinic (BCC)

Our Behavior Consultation Clinic (BCC) provides **virtual behavior analytic consultations for families without in-home ABA support**. BCC assesses challenging behaviors and equips families with practical strategies to implement and refine independently.



Across
The
Lifespan

Transition to Adulthood

240+

 Referrals in 2024

Our Transition Specialist provides support to autistic adolescents and their families in **navigating services across school, medical and social service systems** as they transition to adulthood.

Supporting Autistic Adults

130+

 Referrals in 2024

Our Adult Autism Resource Specialist provides support to autistic adults in **navigating adult services such as state agencies, government benefits, career services, and more**.

Navigating New ASD Diagnosis

Juju, our Autism Resource Specialist, was recognized by the *Parent Training & Information Center of Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)* for her work in supporting a newly diagnosed Portuguese speaking family in navigating state & community services as well as special education.

The image shows the front cover of a guide titled "Reaching Out to Your Police Department". At the top right is the logo for "BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER The Autism Program". The title is in large, bold, black font. Below it is a subtitle in a smaller, black font. The background is white with a light blue dashed border. At the bottom, there is a row of seven stylized hands in different colors (red, teal, yellow, blue, pink, purple, green) reaching upwards, each with a heart shape on its palm. Above each hand is a heart of the same color.

Financial Resources Guide

Finding financial support can often feel overwhelming for families with children on the autism spectrum. This guide is designed to simplify the process by offering a categorized list of potential funding opportunities. Please note, all options below require an application and funding is not always guaranteed. If you are interested in applying for any, please make sure to check each organization's website for their most up-to-date details.

Reach out to your family's DDS Service Coordinator

If your family is already connected with Department of Developmental Services (DDS), we recommend reaching out to your Service Coordinator and/or caseworker to inquire about potential funding opportunities.

General Assistance

Autism Care Today




- Offers grants up to \$3000 to families, with priority given to those with a household income under \$100,000. Funding may be used for ABA, speech, OT, medications, home safety devices, social skills groups, and more.
- <https://www.act-today.org/apply-forgrant>
- Email: grants@acttoday.org
- Phone: 805-506-323 or 877-922-8863

Flutite Foundation

- Provides a variety of funding opportunities for children with ASD in many different areas of support, such as:
 - **Joey's Fund/ Hope's Fund** - wide range of needs
 - **Kodi Lee Green Back Grant** - music/art opportunities
 - **Community Inclusion Grant** - community participation
 - **Ongoing Immediate Financial Assistance** - emergency aid
- <https://flutitefoundation.org/helping-families/direct-financial-support/>

Willpower Foundation

- Provides grants for parents and individuals living in Western Massachusetts. Their grant specializes in funding products and services that are not typically covered by insurance or other resources, including but not limited to mobility and sensory equipment, therapeutic recreation programs, educational advocacy, private tutoring and camp expenses.
- <https://www.willpowerfoundation.org/overview/>
- Email: grants@willpowerfoundation.org
- Phone: 413-341-0151





**DEVELOPMENTAL
& BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS**

NEWSLETTER

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

Happy Autism Acceptance Month!

It's our favorite month of the year! Every day, from April 1st to April 30th, we celebrate the unique talents, intelligence and contributions of all people with autism and this wonderfully diverse community of open hearts. This event for Boston will also be a spotlighting resource for every day of April, so keep an eye out on our Instagram page!



Upcoming Events

4/23 Sensory-friendly Balloon Magic Show
5-7pm **Needham MA**
Hosted by the Sherman Autism Center, join magician Jimmy Jim's Balloon and Magic evening show and feast into a world of wonder! This event is free, sensory-friendly, and open to all with limited space!
[Register for this event here!](#)

4/27 Miss Amazing for Girls/Women with Disabilities
All day **Medford MA**
Miss Amazing celebrates the incredible abilities, goals and dreams of girls and women with disabilities! Get a personalized hair & makeup session and enjoy live activities all day! We have pictures in a photo booth, dancing, games, and more! Participate in the first show along with a "Right-hand man" and have a celebratory dinner with everyone afterward! Quits rooms will be available for those in need of rest & breaks.
[Register for this event here!](#)

The Autism Program is hosting a

VIRTUAL RESOURCE FAIR

and you're invited!

Check Page 6 for more information!

4/18
from 10am-12pm



TEAM SUMMER GUIDE 2024

This guide contains exciting summer activities that reflect each TEAM event from the past year. Explore the activities under your favorite events and see what activities you can take part in for a busy and fun summer!



Illustration of summer items: a girl in a yellow shirt and red pants holding a pink drink, a boy in a striped shirt and blue shorts jumping rope, a slice of watermelon, an ice cream cone, flip-flops, sunglasses, and flowers.

Safety Outside of the Home

http://www.austinsocialwork.com/2014/04/04/safety-outside-of-the-home/

Disclosure: The Autism Program is not sponsored or related to any of these companies or services.

Tracking Devices

Tracking devices are a great option if you want to keep tabs on where your child is located. It can be lifesaving if your child is prone to wandering. Tracking devices come in different forms such as a bracelet, watch, vest, or clip-on. Below you'll find different kinds of devices at varying price points. Click on or scan the QR codes for more product information!

NOTE: Before paying out of pocket, talk to your child's medical team about funding options. If you're in need of a **letter on your behalf** of your child supporting your need for a **tracker or medical identification**, reach out to the **EMIC Autism Program** at:

(617) 414-3842
autismprogram@emc.org

Wrist Wearable Tracking Devices

SafetyNet Tracking Systems

SafetyNet: Tracking Systems has services all over Massachusetts and is partnered with public safety agencies to ensure that children with special needs are returned to their caregivers safely and quickly. They offer watches and bracelets for children. Price: \$120+, available for free through their company program.

TickTack 5

The TickTack 5 is a child-friendly smartwatch without internet, games, or social media. Its features include voice + video talking, talk-to-text messaging, and many more. Carrying on can manage contacts, track real-time locations, set up school maps, and ensure safety with the advanced Parental Control App. Price: \$149.99 + \$9.99/month

Project Lifesaver

Project Lifesaver is partnered with police stations throughout Massachusetts. To get a tracking device a call must be made to the police station to see what kind of availability they have. A list of police stations that are partnered can be found [here](#). Price varies.

Verizon GlomWatch 3

The Verizon GlomWatch 3 is a child-safe smartwatch with parental controls, no internet access, GPS tracking, an SOS button, voice and video calling, and text messaging. It also comes Price: \$149.99 + \$33 activation fee.

Community Engagement

Teens Engaged As Mentors (TEAM)

A novel mentoring program that pairs teens with & without ASD to mentor younger children on the spectrum. Consistent with Boston Medical Center's mission of *"exceptional care without exception"*, this integrated teen mentoring program encourages **empowerment, strong leadership, self-confidence, and positive community relationships** within all participants.

Mentor Training



11

Mentees

13

Mentors

20

Facilitators



Wright Locke Farm

“Coming here, the pressure is off... My child does not need to conform to a neurotypical setting.

Harry Potter Experience



Pottery Making



Healing Pups Visit



“My child loved it from the first time. He made friends. It is a joy to see that he can be in a place where he can truly be himself.

QUALITY = DIGNITY



- SHORT SLEEVE SHIRTS
- LONG SLEEVE SHIRTS
- SWEATERS & SWEATSHIRTS
- LONG PANTS
- PAJAMAS
- SUNSHIRT
- TOYS



Cradles to Crayons

Internship & Volunteer Placement



44 Interns
in 2024

10 Colleges &
Universities



“

I gained a **deeper appreciation for the role of advocacy** in improving healthcare environments.

“

This internship has catalyzed my interest in health equity and medicine and has **offered an opportunity to interact directly** with the community I hope to serve.

Parent Leadership in Autism Network (PLAN)

A diverse network of **empowered and trained parent leaders** who assist with trainings & the development of interventions.

“

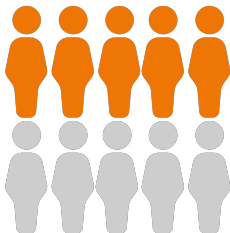
The way the program has helped my child is that it has **empowered his mother, even more.**

“


I was on this journey for a long time by myself. **And now I just want to help those coming in behind me.**



Autism Friendly Initiative

53% 
of Autistic individuals
report difficulties with
communicating with doctors

51% 
of Autistic individuals
face challenges with waiting
room environments

40% 
of U.S.
physicians
are confident in their ability
to provide quality care for
patients with disabilities



Our Autism
Friendly Initiative
(AFI) works to
improve the
healthcare experience
for patients with
autism.

Individualized Care

1,000 Autism Support Checklists gathered,
collecting patient specific information to
ensure respectful, comfortable care at BMC.

Sensory Accommodations

1,500 sensory tool packs distributed to
50+ departments in Boston Medical Center.

Visit Preparations

Healthcare Social Stories available in **8 languages** to prepare patients for
various medical procedures, in addition
to providing during-procedure support.

Training & Education

Provided training for BMC staff across
departments, including endoscopy, dental,
ophthalmology, public safety, and more.

Healthcare Education: Boston Medical Center & Beyond



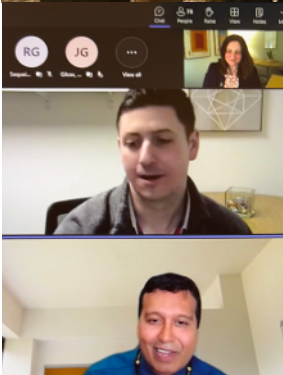
“

I immediately felt more competent than I was one hour ago in caring for patients with ASD.

Critical presentation for my development as a doctor.

“

Some of our staff have had minimal if any interaction with dealing with Autistic individuals. This program has shown our officers **increased awareness of sensory needs** and have **given us tools to better understand autistic individuals.**



Healthcare Education: Boston Medical Center & Beyond

●
In 2024,
we participated in
30 conferences &
engagements
among local,
regional and
national audiences.



American Association
on Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
Children & Families
Supporting Children • Strengthening Families

GEORGETOWNE
HOMES



WRIGHT-LOCKE
FARM WINCHESTER, MA

The New England Pediatric Hospital Medicine Conference

NEPHM23



We Are Made Possible By...

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Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation
Henry and Ruth B. Rosenberg Foundation
The Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation

OUR CLINICIANS

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Audrey Christiansen, MD
Sarah Canale, MD
Mary Ellen Killion, NP
Arielle Spellun, MD
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Rachel Vuolo, MD
Selcen YarogluKazanci, MD

STAY IN TOUCH!



www.bmc.org/autism
autismprogram@bmc.org



The Autism Program at
Boston Medical Center



@BMCAutismProgram



Join our mailing list
to receive the
monthly newsletters &
community resources!





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Boston Medical Center

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