

DEVELOPMENTAL & BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS NEWSLETTER



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

What's Happening?



School Re-opening Plans

On March 9, 2021 [new guidance](#) was issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Commissioner Jeffrey Riley. The guidance states that hybrid and remote learning options for districts across the commonwealth will no longer count towards meeting the required student learning time hours. This means that schools will have to shift their learning model to full-time, in-person instruction, 5 days per week, starting on the dates specified below. Families, however, have the right to keep their children in remote instruction for the duration/rest of the school year. Also, entire districts can submit a waiver that requests an extension of district-wide virtual learning.

- **Monday April 5th:** Elementary Schools return to in-person learning
- **Wednesday April 28th:** Middle Schools return to in-person learning
- Highschool date **TBD**

*To learn more about what your child's school is planning, please visit your district's website or contact school staff.



Passover 2021

Passover, also known as Pesach, is one of the Jewish religion's most sacred and widely observed holidays. It begins on Saturday, March 27th and lasts for eight days to commemorate the freedom of the Israelites from the Egyptians. Families typically observe this important holiday with a commemorative meal, the seder, using a book called the Haggadah, which tells the story of Passover and passes down the traditions and lessons of the story to children, relatives, and friends. Check out this [Haggadah](#) recording specifically written for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.



1 Year Later: Silver Linings of the Pandemic



There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for children and families, and we are all still adjusting, even as our communities slowly return to "normal". We are curious to know though...what have been your *silver linings*? Where have you found joy? What new opportunities or experiences have you had a result? We polled our staff and this is what they had to say...

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"During the pandemic, I've had more of a chance to slow down and be more present. It's also forced me to spend more time outside."

- Hillary

"The silver lining of the pandemic for me is the amount of time I have had with my children (9 months and 4 years) to experience little joys of life that I normally would not have been able to be part of."

- Liz

"Last March, we decided to adopt a family dog, thinking we'd have lots of time to spend with her and get her trained. Even though we're only 1/2 with those, getting her remains the best decision we could've possibly made as she has brought us SO much joy (and stolen socks!)"

- Shari

"One 'silver lining' of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the feelings of deep appreciation that I've felt for my loved ones...plus all of the extra time in my pajamas!"

- Alex

"One silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic for me personally has been getting to know and work with the amazing Autism Program and DBP team!"

- Jacqueline

"Getting two new kitties to join our family and being able to spend more time with them."

- Belinda

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Share with us your silver linings by tagging us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) for an opportunity to be featured on our social media!

Back to School Decision-Making



With the commissioner's announcement last week and schools making plans to re-open their doors to all students, the decision of whether or not to send your child back may be weighing on you. Here are some questions you may consider:

- Does my child's school have a safe-opening plan? Have plans been communicated to me in a way that I understand and feel comfortable with?
- Does my child's school have the ability to implement plans to reduce any chance of the virus spreading? (Are vaccinations offered to staff? Can students stay 6 feet apart?)
- Do I have reliable and safe transportation for my child to and from school?
- Can my child comfortably wear a mask? If my child cannot comfortably wear a mask, are there other plans that will put in place?
- In what environment does my child thrive? In what ways have my child's skills strengthened or regressed as a result of the new learning environment?
- Who can I speak to about my worries?

Ultimately, the best decision is the one that works for YOUR child and family. In case it is helpful though, here are some more websites to help guide you: [CDC](#) | [Maven Clinic](#)



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. Know of something to add?

Email us at

autismprogram@bmc.org

with suggestions.

For past recordings of our webinar series: Caring for Kids with Autism and Developmental Differences, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCifYfJKUuSa8XzytUcn-Anw>



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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 Naomi Steiner, MD
 Arathi Reddy, DO
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 Jodi Santosuosso, NP
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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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The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center



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