

# DEVELOPMENT AND BEYOND NEWSLETTER

BOSTON  
MEDICAL  
CENTER  
The Autism Program

A monthly newsletter by The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center for families and individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) & other neurodevelopmental diagnoses

## *Hello September!* Adults Living Skills Class

Last week, five students for the Autism Program's Adult Living Skills Class (ALSC) met for their very first class! Led by our Adult/Transition Specialists, students talked through the essentials of kitchen safety & hygiene and learned how to make a sandwich from scratch.

This weekly class aims to provide a safe space for students to learn and practice essential daily living skills, such as cooking through hands-on experience. Throughout the next 5-weeks, students will make scrambled eggs, overnight oats, pizza, and more.

Alongside live demonstrations and binder full of visuals provided by the program, students will also learn about nutrition, meal planning, how to read a recipe, and more. Many more delicious classes to come - see below for some pictures from last week!



## In this edition:

### PG 1

Autism Program's  
Adult Living Skills  
Class (ALSC)

### PG 2

Learning Opportunities:  
Parent support,  
Community & Recreation

### PG 5

Create a New  
Routine: Step  
by Step

### PG 6

ASD Research  
Participant  
Recruitment

# Learning Opportunities

Upcoming free community workshops & webinars where you can learn about resources & receive guidance.

Click or scan the QR code to reach each website.

## Transition to Adulthood

### Moving to Young Adult Life

September 15<sup>th</sup> | 2:30pm



Join PPAL (Parent/Professional Advocacy League) to learn about transition planning, a formal process to help students with special needs think about what they want to do after high school, how to get there, and what supports and services can help them along the way.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

### Basic Rights: Transition Planning

September 15<sup>th</sup> | 7pm



Join FCSN for an overview of the transition planning process for students aged 14-22. Discuss your right to transition services, why this is important, what it looks like in the IEP, and roles of students & parents.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

### Autism Resources: Before & After an Autism Diagnosis

September 9<sup>th</sup> | 6pm



Join this webinar by Charles River Center to learn about what supports & services are available before and after an ASD diagnosis, and practice utilizing these resources to help your family member and patient access care.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

### Assistance for Applying for DDS

September 9<sup>th</sup> | 6:30pm



If you are a parent or an autistic adult and have ANY questions about the application process, then please join this Q&A session with Shannon Hubley, Intake and Eligibility Manager at DDS SE Region.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

## Parenting Support

### Improving Executive Functioning Skills for Individuals with Autism

September 17<sup>th</sup> | 6:30pm



Join this webinar by the Lurie Center for Autism to learn about what executive functioning is and useful strategies for promoting efficient executive functioning day to day.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

### Supporting Executive Functioning at Home

September 9<sup>th</sup> | 6:30pm



This in-person talk with licensed psychologists & neuropsychologists will provide an overview of EF, how EF challenges often present at home, and recommendations for supporting EF at home through routines, skills, and fostering independence in daily life.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

## Understanding & Treating ARFID in Autistic People

September 18<sup>th</sup> | 12pm



This presentation explores the intersection of Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) and autism, emphasizing identification, neurodiversity-affirming prevention, and supportive treatment strategies. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how ARFID manifests in Autistic individuals, how to distinguish it from typical picky eating, and how to implement individually tailored, collaborative, and sensory-informed care that prioritizes autonomy and well-being.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

**\* \$30-50 registration fee. Financial assistance is available.**

## Active Parenting of Teens Workshop Series

September 19<sup>th</sup> to October 24<sup>th</sup> | 12pm



This virtual 6 session workshop is for caregivers to learn and master critical skills needed for guiding your kids through the teen years. Topics include "The Active Parent", "Winning Cooperation", "Responsibility & Discipline", "Building Courage, Redirecting Misbehavior", and "Drugs, Sexuality, and Violence".

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

## How to Advocate for your Child

September 30<sup>th</sup> | 7pm



Effective advocacy is a learned art. Learn soft skills, such as how to prioritize and collaborate, to best advocate for your child. The workshop also addresses how to manage conflict and communication barriers.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

# Wings for Autism



Wings for Autism™ is a free program specifically designed to support families of children with autism, creating a **travel test run to help ease the stress of airline travel**. By getting comfortable with the airport and flight experience (without actually leaving the airport), parents and their children with special needs can gain the familiarity & confidence they need to take future trips. Practicing in advance helps establish a travel routine — so important for many children with autism who rely on repetition and structure.

## Upcoming Event

**9/13 Worcester Regional Airport**

**11/8 Boston Logan Airport**

More information available on website



## Insurance

## Demystifying Insurance for Autism & Behavioral Health

September 30<sup>th</sup> | 6pm



Join the Insurance Resource Center for an IN-PERSON workshop on accessing services & supports throughout

the lifespan, whether through employer insurance or MassHealth, or both.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*

## MassHealth: The Basics

September 30<sup>th</sup> | 6pm



Join this virtual presentation to understand what services are available through MassHealth and how to apply.

*Registration is required - more info on website.*



## Community & Recreation

# Special Olympics MA

Special Olympics MA (SOMA) offers year-round sports training and competition, recreational activities that help develop an environment of empowerment, strength, teamwork, and compassion for athletes with disabilities. Programs include various sports opportunities (competitive, recreational, and young athlete programs available) for many age groups and ability levels. **SOMA is currently accepting applications for multiple Young Athletes programs across MA for sports such as soccer, golf, basketball, and pickleball. Registration for many programs close this month** - if you're interested, be sure to check out their website ASAP to guarantee a spot!



## Franciscan Children's

Franciscan Children's is a children's hospital located in Brighton, MA, with a vibrant adaptive sports season all year long. Offering many different types of affordable sports program each season, Franciscan Children's adaptive sports is a great way to be active, find friendship, and learn fitness skills.

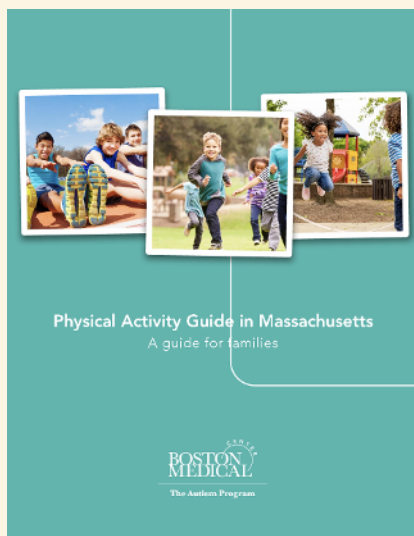
**Fall programming is now accepting registrations for basketball, gymnastics, skating, track, tumble tots.** Spots can fill up quick, so make sure to apply ASAP!

Reach out to Paul Ward, Director of Adaptive Sports, at [paward@franciscanchildrens.org](mailto:paward@franciscanchildrens.org) to register or inquire.



## Looking for more?

If you want to find more adaptive recreation programs in your community, try reaching out to your town's **recreation department, school programs, and the public library.** They often offer a variety of free programming for youth & adults.



The Autism Program also has a comprehensive **Physical Activities Guide** available on our website for free that offers a list of programs and at-home physical activities for youth with special needs. This list is broken down by regions!



# Create a New Routine

With back-to-school, comfortable routines can feel disrupted. Repeat these steps to help transition into new ones!

1

Children thrive with **structure & consistency**. Creating a **written and/or picture schedule** as part of your daily or weekly routine can support maintaining structure!

2

Start to fill in your schedule with **consistent eating, sleeping, and hygiene routines** (i.e. set wake-up time, mealtimes, bedtimes, times for hygiene tasks). Add in other activities around these specific routines.

4

Goals should be **clear & realistic** for your family! **What exactly** do you want your child to accomplish each day?

3

**Be specific** with your child regarding what exactly needs to be completed for each activity. **Breaking each activity down into smaller steps** can be very helpful! **Using pictures** can support your child's understanding of the activity.

5

Once your routines have been set, identify **easy to deliver rewards** for your child to earn when following through with their routines.

What does your child **REALLY** want to play with or do during the day?

Keep these items **out of reach** until your child has completed the identified tasks.

Provide them with the item/activity immediately after they have "earned" it.

Throughout each day, provide your child with more **praise instead of negative consequences**.

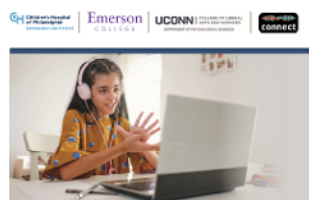
Kids want attention (it's normal!) & you want them to learn that the best way to get your attention is by following expectations.

**Set clear expectations** for engaging with a reward.

How long will your child be allowed to engage with this?



# SEEKING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS



**CHILDREN AGES 12-15  
NEEDED FOR THE "READY TO  
CONNECT" STUDY**

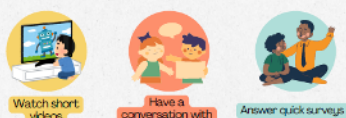
**WHO IS THE STUDY?**  
The purpose of the "Ready to Connect" research is to  
explore how children on the autism spectrum interact with their peers.

**WHO CAN BE A PART OF THE STUDY?**  
The study is open to autistic and non-autistic  
children ages 12-15. Participants will complete two to three tasks  
which will help us understand how children on the autism spectrum  
interact with their peers. Participants will be compensated for their time.

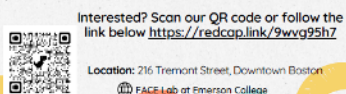
**I WANT TO HELP WHO DID I CALL?**  
If you are interested in participating in the study  
please contact us at [readytoconnect@emerson.edu](mailto:readytoconnect@emerson.edu)

**Participate in our  
Conversations Study!**

We are seeking children ages 8-14:



At the FACE Lab, we hope to understand and raise awareness  
about how children on the Autism spectrum perceive and  
produce social cues.



**FACE Lab** at **Emerson College** is currently recruiting autistic and non-autistic children to be a part of their research studies. The **Ready to Connect study** (virtual) aims to learn about how language & social skills impact teens' (ages 12-15) conversations with their peers. The **Conversations study** (in-person) aims to understand how children on the spectrum perceive and produce social cues. Participants will be compensated for their time with both studies.



► [Ready to Connect](#)



► [Conversations study](#)



**Social Media, Body Image, and the Autism Spectrum Study** at **Northeastern University** is currently recruiting autistic individuals (ages 18-25) to be a part of their research study. They will be investigating the experiences of social media use, body image, and eating among autistic young women and non-binary people. Participants must be 1) autistic, 2) be assigned female at birth, 3) identify as either female or outside of the gender binary, and 4) be between the ages of 18-25. Upon completion of the survey, participants can choose to be included in a raffle to receive \$75.



- If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact [r.rodgers@northeastern.edu](mailto:r.rodgers@northeastern.edu).
- Visit this [website](#) for more information.

## Connect With Us!

Are you seeking to spread the word about your upcoming events, services and/or programs for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders? Reach out to [autismprogram@bmc.org](mailto:autismprogram@bmc.org) to inquire about being featured on our monthly newsletter.

## Resources



The Autism Program continues 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!



[www.bmc.org/autism](http://www.bmc.org/autism)  
[Autismprogram@bmc.org](mailto:Autismprogram@bmc.org)



The Autism Program



@BMCAutismProgram

## Clinic

Our DBP 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 Elansary, MD

Audrey Christiansen, MD

Sarah Canale, MD

Mary Ellen Killion, NP

Arielle Spellun, MD

Bridget Poznanski, PhD

Rachel Vuolo, MD

## ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

*Development and Beyond* is brought to you by the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center, a family support program of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. **To join our mailing list for future newsletters, community resources and more, scan the QR code to the right!**



**Do you have an idea for a future newsletter?**

**Email us at**

**[autismprogram@bmc.org](mailto:autismprogram@bmc.org)**

**with your suggestions!**