

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

HAPPY DECEMBER!

With 2025 officially coming to a wrap, The Autism Program wishes everyone a joyous holiday season! We express our heartfelt gratitude for all of you who share your experiences, inform our care, and help day in and day out to strengthen this wonderful community. We hope that this season brings health, laughter, warmth, and blessings to all.

Winterlights at The Bradley Estate

Come visit the sensory-friendly hour at the Bradley Estate, where you can experience a gentle, less crowded, supported experience geared towards individuals with sensory needs. Winterlights will be a magical outdoor light show with handcrafted desserts and drinks for the whole family! Advanced ticket purchase via website is required - click [HERE](#).

More sensory-friendly holiday events!

Visit [this calendar](#) full of events by SPEDChildMass.

Food & Gift Assistance Programs

Are you looking for support with finding food and gifts during this season? Look through [last month's newsletter \(pg 3\)](#) for helpful resources!

WINTER EVENTS & RESOURCES

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL SHOWCASE

Save the Date for a citywide School Showcase by Boston Public Schools! Are you looking to learn more about the right school options for your child? This event will give families the opportunity to meet school leaders, ask questions, and find out what makes each school unique - all in one place.

December 13th | 9AM to 1PM

Bruce Bolling Building 2300 Washington St, 02119

No advance registration is required to attend. BPS will also provide FREE shuttle bus transportation from various points across the city!



FLYER FOR MORE INFO:

[English](#) | [Español](#) | [العربية](#) | [Kabuverdianu](#) | [中文](#) |
[Français](#) | [Kreyòl](#) | [Português](#) | [Afsoomaali](#) | [tiếng Việt](#)

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Winter events,
resources, BPS

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learning opportunities

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Research
studies seeking
participants

Community Learning

Click or scan the QR code to register and find more information about the event.



12/9

Caregiver Connections: No Perfect Parent

6pm | Justice Resource Institute (JRI)

JRI's Family Advisory Council is offering a Caregiver Connection Series, a facilitated conversation to create spaces for support and resource sharing. We are all trying our best even on our worst days.

Let's support each other in an nonjudgmental space and celebrate our parenting journeys.



12/9

The Power of Constituent Services & Policy Updates

12pm | The Arc of MA Government Affairs

The discussion will go over what constituent services entail, such as how offices can intervene with state agencies like the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) or federal agencies like Social Security Security & Medicaid. Updates on key policy challenges impacting the intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) community will also be shared.



12/11

Fostering Healthy Relationships

6:30pm | Minute Man Arc

Building satisfying and appropriate connections in the ID/D and autism population can be especially challenging. We all need companionship, in whatever form that may take, but we also need to be sure that any relationships are healthy and safe for all parties involved. This training will assist with developing healthy and insightful skills to navigate various types of relationships.



12/15

Chaos to Calm

12pm | Parent/Professional Advocacy League

Join PPAL to breathe together as caregivers and share strategies to help you stay upright and move yourself, family, and child forward.



The Neurodiverse Family: Embracing Neurodivergence as a Caregiver & Family

December 19th, 12pm

Many neurodivergent parents embark on a parallel journey, discovering their own neurodivergence through their child's diagnosis. This workshop will explore the challenges & strengths associated with neurodivergent parenting, the complexities of co-parenting with differing neurotypes, and various strategies for creating a supportive home environment.



2025

Holiday Gift Guide

If you were wondering about what to get for your loved ones this holiday season, look no further! The Autism Program's 2025 Gift Guide has your back.

Please note: The Autism Program is not sponsored or affiliated to any of these products, companies and organizations.

Gifts for Sensory Comfort

Noise Canceling Devices

Noise canceling devices can be a great gift for anyone who experiences noise sensitivity. Explore options such as headphones and earplugs to find the right fit! Click [here](#) to read an overview by The Ability Toolbox of some popular options.



Sensory Toys and Items



Fidget Slug Toy



12-sided Fidget Cube



Chew Necklaces

Sensory-friendly clothing are made for children with sensitivities. This can mean no tags, flat seams, soft fabrics, compression, or even built in sensory tools that can help provide sensory regulation!



Sensory-friendly Clothing

Explore brands:

- [Sense-ational You](#)
- [Kozie Clothes](#)
- [Sensory & More](#)



Weighted Blankets



Weighted Lap Pads

Weighted Items

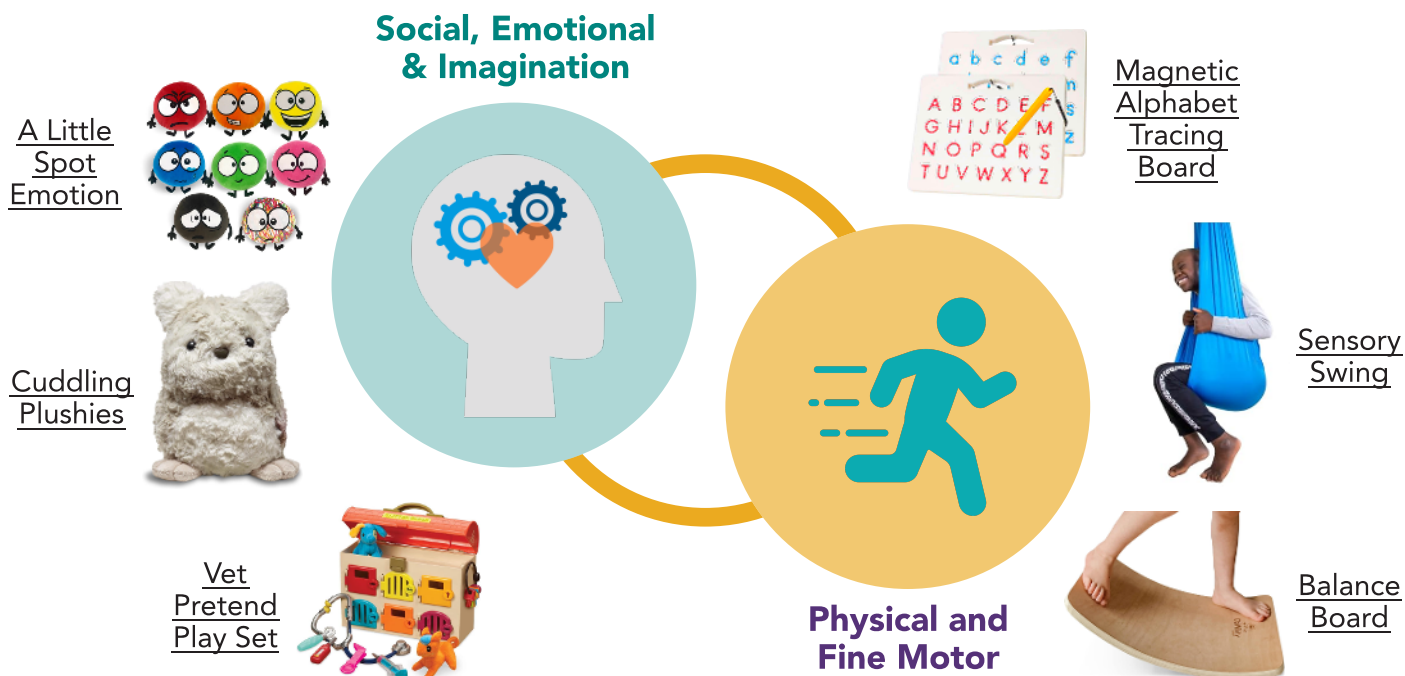


Compression Vests and Clothing

2025

Holiday Gift Guide

Gifts for Learning & Child Development



Gifts for Creative Fun



2025

Holiday Gift Guide



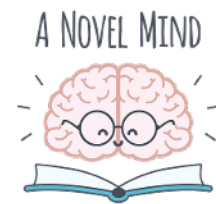
The Autism Program

Gifts for ASD & Neurodiversity Pride



The Autism Books By Autistic Authors Project is an online catalog of books (fiction & non-fiction) written about and related to ASD by Autistic authors. Browse their categories of topics, reading level and more to find the book that feels just right for you!

Books about Autism Spectrum Disorder



A Novel Mind is a great website for exploring mental health & neurodiversity representation in children's fiction. Visit their website for a searchable online database of over 1,000 books!

Jai At Play

Jai At Play is a brand of self-advocacy products and programs created together by Jaiden, a young autistic kiddo, and Shekira, his mom. Check out their website for awesome educational tools such as their "Autism Through The Alphabet" flashcards, coloring book and workshop! You can also purchase autism pride merchandise such as t-shirts, hoodies, sweaters and mugs.



Neurodiversity Pride Merch



Neurodiverse Network

Neurodiverse Network is a community organization based in Pennsylvania that creates merch for celebrating neurodiversity. From t-shirts, tank tops, tote bags, mugs, fidget toys, pins and more, check out their website to shop!

Need More Gift Ideas?

Check out additional gift guides!



Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) 2024 Gift Guide



Autism Network 2024 Autism Toy & Gift Guide



SEEKING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS..

NEURODIVERGENT PARENTS OF NEURODIVERGENT KIDS AND TECHNOLOGY STUDY

Are you the **parent** of a child age 9-17 with a diagnosis of autism and/or ADHD, living in the US?

And do you **also** have an autism and/or ADHD diagnosis, or strongly believe you would qualify for one?

We are researchers at Northeastern University studying the ethics of emerging technologies for neurodivergent children (like virtual reality and AI) who need your help!



20 MINUTE ONLINE SURVEY
60 MINUTE ZOOM INTERVIEW

- Answer survey questions
- Talk about technology
- Receive a \$50 Amazon gift card

For more information, please email:
m.alper@northeastern.edu

IRB #25-03-48

Are you the **parent** of a child age 9-17 with a diagnosis of autism and/or ADHD? And do **you also** have an autism and/or ADHD diagnosis, or strongly believe you would qualify for one? Researchers at Northeastern University are studying the ethics of emerging technologies for neurodivergent children (like virtual reality and AI) and are looking for participants!

Complete a 20-minute survey and take part in a 60-minute Zoom interview. Receive a \$50 Amazon e-gift card for your participation. Please contact study PI, Professor Meryl Alper, at **m.alper@northeastern.edu** if interested.

Project ECHO DO YOU HAVE A CHILD 2.5-6 YEARS OLD?

Your child might be eligible to participate in a research study at Boston University

WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BRAIN WHEN CHILDREN SPEAK AND REPEAT OTHERS DURING SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

We are currently recruiting:

- Children without autism spectrum disorder
- Children with autism who often repeat words of others (known as **echo**)
- Children with autism who never/sometimes repeat the words of others

One or two visits to our center

where your child will wear an fNIRS cap while playing with study staff

fNIRS is a non-invasive brain imaging technique
There are no known restrictions for using the device

Center for Autism Research Excellence - CARE
Boston University Charles River Campus

Free parking and childcare
\$25 compensation per visit and performance report provided

Contact us!



Use the QR code or link below to learn more and fill out our screener

617-358-4474



echocare@bu.edu



<https://www.bu.edu/autism/research/current>



BOSTON UNIVERSITY

CARE center
Autism Research
Excellence

Do you have a **child between age 2.5 and 6 years old**? Researchers at Boston University are seeking to understand what happens in the brain when children speak and repeat others during social interactions and are looking for participants, both with and without autism. The study will involve one or two visits to the Center for Autism Research Excellence (CARE) at Boston University where your child will wear an fNIRS cap while playing with staff (non-invasive brain imaging technique). Receive \$25 compensation per visit.

Visit <https://www.bu.edu/autism/project-echo/> to learn more and apply! Questions? Contact **echocare@bu.edu** or **(617) 358-4474**.

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** to inquire about being featured on our monthly newsletter.

Resources



The Autism Program is 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
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

Selcen YarogluKazanci, 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

with your suggestions!