

DEVELOPMENT AND BEYOND **NEWSLETTER**

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

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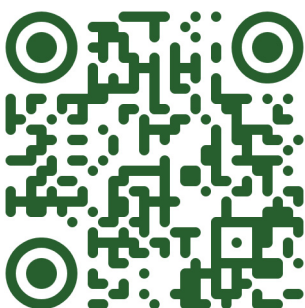
April is Autism Acceptance Month!

This month—and every day—we celebrate autistic individuals, their families, and the resilience, joy, and brilliance they bring into the world. It's an honor for The Autism Program to serve this incredible community and continue uplifting autistic voices.

To mark Autism Acceptance Month, we've put together a **calendar full of exciting events** for autistic individuals and families! From virtual and in-person gatherings to concerts and sensory-friendly experiences, there's something for everyone.

Check out our events calendar and see what's coming up! The full, downloadable PDF with clickable links is available on the next page, as well as our Instagram page.

Stay tuned all month long for weekly event reminders and **patient highlights**, where we'll share how autism acceptance shapes supportive, inclusive care in a hospital setting—helping our patients thrive.



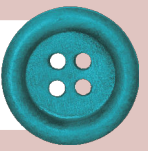
Access the full calendar of upcoming events via this QR code, or by visiting this link: <https://linktr.ee/autismatbmc>

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

2026

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 Click each title for more information! QR codes are available on our Instagram page.		1 <u>Sensory Storytime @ Chelmsford Public Library</u> 10am to 10:30am	2 <u>Supporting Siblings of Autistic Youth</u> Virtual event 5:30pm to 7pm	3 <u>4th Annual Bunny Bash</u> The Arc of South Shore 10am & 11am	4 <u>Willy Wonka Jr. Musical</u> sensory friendly musical @ Gardner 11am	5 <u>Take a Big Breath.....</u>  <u>Autistic Self-Care Toolkit</u>
6 <u>Special Art for Kids</u> Virtual event 5:30pm to 6:30pm	7 <u>Especially for Me</u> Sensory friendly hours @ Discovery Museum Acton 1:30pm to 4:30pm	8 <u>21st Annual Autism Advocacy Day</u> @ MA State House 10AM to 11:30AM	9  SUMMER GUIDE 2026 Look through this guide for a comprehensive list of inclusive summer camps across MA.		11 <u>The Super Mario Galaxy Movie</u> Sensory friendly screening @ AMC	12 <u>Chucky Cheese Sensory Sundays</u> In multiple locations 9am to 11am
13 <u>Intro to Autism for Families</u> Virtual webinar with AANE 7pm to 8pm	14 <u>Special Education & the IEP Process</u> Q&A in English & Spanish with DDS 6:30pm to 8pm	15 <u>Autism & the Microbiome</u> Virtual webinar with Lurie Center 6:30pm to 7:30pm	16 <u>Sensory Friendly LEGO Club for Adults @ Norwood Public Library</u> 12:30pm	17 <u>Sensory Friendly Art Classes for Adults @ Norwood Public Library</u> 10:30am to 11:45am	18 <u>6th Annual Autism Awareness Walk</u> @ Great Barrington Rain date 4/25 11am to 2pm	19 <u>Stars of the Spectrum: Concert for Autism Acceptance</u> Free tickets 12pm to 3pm
20 <u>Special Art for Kids</u> Virtual event 5:30pm to 6:30pm	21 <u>Community Inclusion Day</u> Medford Police Department 10am to 1pm	22 <u>Strategies for Inclusive Healthcare Transition</u> Perkins School 12pm to 1pm	23 <u>Assent-based Clicker Training in ABA</u> Virtual training 4pm	24 <u>After School Zoo Club (Ages 5-12)</u> Virtual club with Autism Alliance 4pm to 4:30pm	25 <u>Gala for Autism</u> @ Encore Boston, Everett, MA 7pm to 11pm	26 <u>Caregiver Yoga</u> In-person event @ Hanover, MA 4pm to 5pm
27 <u>Navigating Special Education</u> Virtual webinar 5:30pm to 7pm	28  Autism Program is here to help. Contact us! Questions?	29 <u>Putting the Good in Goody bye: Shift to Adult Care</u> Perkins School 12pm to 1pm	30 <u>34th Annual Autism Conference 2026</u> @ Springfield, MA 8am to 4:30pm	 Want a calendar of autism friendly events sent to your inbox every month? Simply sign up for our monthly newsletter!		

upcoming learning opportunities



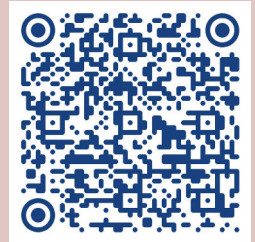
Click the title or scan the QR code to find more information.
Resources below are free of cost or offer financial assistance.

4/7 Mediation & Facilitation

12pm & 7pm | Bureau of Special Education Appeals

The Bureau of Special Education Appeals is hosting a webinar on BSEA Mediation and Facilitation. Mediation and Facilitation are essential processes in special education to resolve disputes and improve communication between parents, schools, and service providers. All are welcome to join the hour long Zoom sessions to learn about how mediation at the BSEA works and to ask questions.

RSVP required. Virtual webinar.



4/9 Turning 3 Essentials: En español

1pm | Federation for Children with Special Needs

Una presentación virtual gratuita para familias en español. Explica las diferencias entre la intervención temprana y la educación especial, la conferencia de planificación de la transición, los procedimientos de educación especial que incluyen la derivación, la evaluación, la reunión del equipo, la determinación de la elegibilidad, los servicios, los objetivos, la colocación, las opciones de respuesta y los derechos procesales de los padres para resolver disputas.

Es necesario confirmar asistencia. Seminario web virtual.

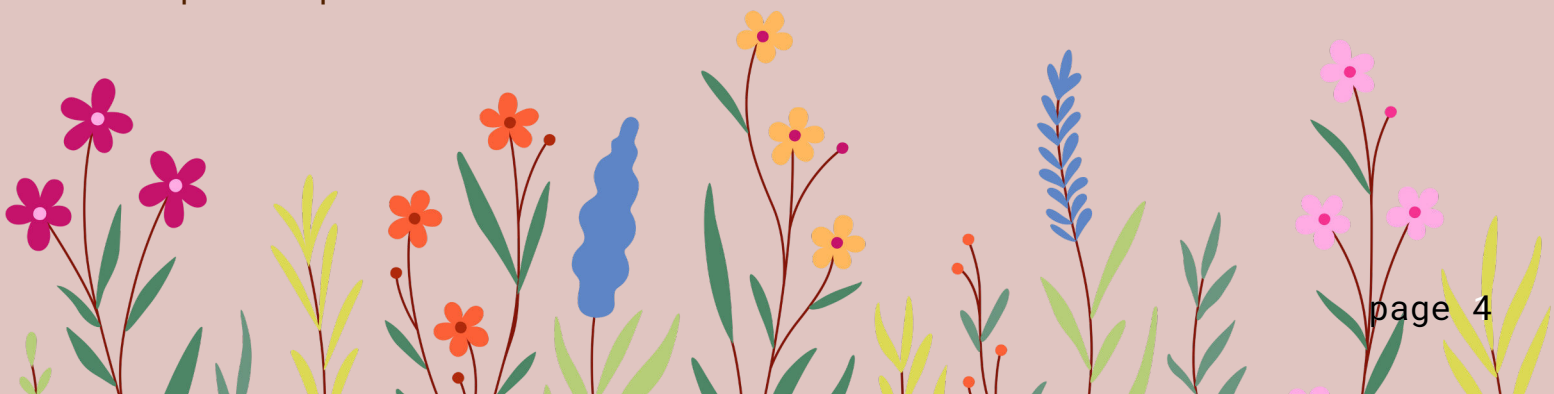
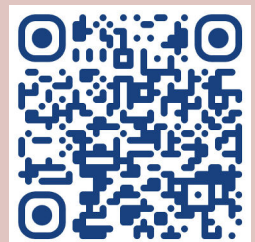


4/16 Transforming Classroom Practices to Build Belonging

7:30am | Chris Walsh Center

Join the Chris Walsh Center for an engaging, in-person professional development experience focused on creating classrooms and schools where every student feels accepted, supported, and valued. You will leave with practical, classroom-ready strategies they can implement immediately, such as including & affirming language, responding to student needs without shame, supporting student self-advocacy, and creating environments where neurodivergent learners belong.

RSVP required. In-person event.



MFA Boston

April Vacation Week (April 22nd - 25th)
Included with General Admission

April break is coming up, and MFA is offering a week full of fun and creative programs that you can check out! All are invited to the April Vacation Week for free programs where you can explore the natural world, patterns, and design through hands-on art making and interactive programs.

All ages & abilities are welcome; children must be accompanied by an adult. No registration required. **For more information,** visit <https://www.mfa.org/event/special-event/april-vacation-week>



Patterns in Nature Nature is full of fascinating patterns! Some are mathematical, some are for attraction or camouflage, and some are more about functionality. Take a closer look, explore, and record some of these patterns using magnifying glasses, graph paper, and drawing materials. Can you find more patterns in “Framing Nature: Gardens and Imagination,” in Calderwood Courtyard, and in other artwork from the Museum’s collection?

Planting a Garden April showers bring May flowers! Celebrate the start of spring and the season’s blooms by decorating a flower pot with paint and mixed media. Then pick up a seed-starting kit to plant flowers in your pot at home!

Physics Meets Art Get inspired by the simplistic and balanced works of artist Alexander Calder on view in galleries 154, 258, and 332. Then make a kinetic artwork of your own while considering balance, shape, and structure.

april break ideas!



Discovery Cart Discover how artists transform colorful pieces of glass into a stained glass work of art. Drop by to handle the tools and materials that artists use, discuss techniques with knowledgeable staff, and view demonstration pieces and artwork reproductions that reveal how artists create these kinds of objects.

Story Hour Drop by for an interactive children’s story program. Stay for one story or for the whole hour.

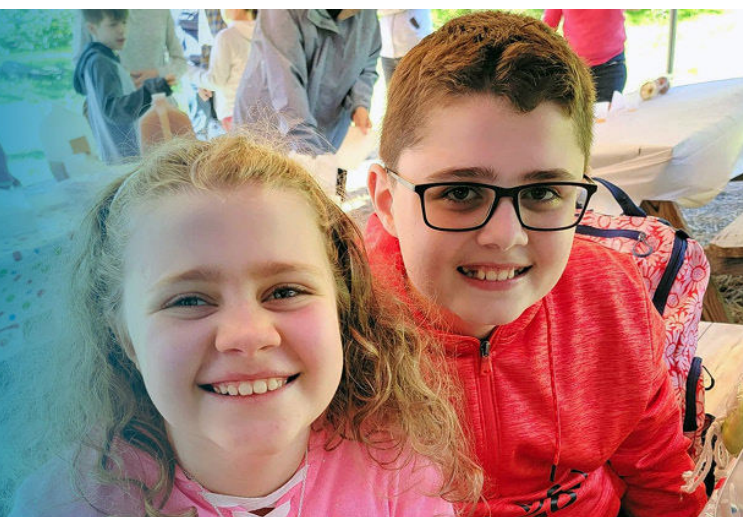
Family Tours Join us on a family-friendly tour that takes a closer look at the science we can find in art. Tours are 30 minutes and fun for all ages!

Conservators in Action Stop by to observe an MFA conservator work on an ancient Etruscan ceramic piece. The conservator answers questions in the Conservation Center Lobby from 3 to 3:30 pm each day.



Autism Alliance

A Program of Advocates



Do you live in or near Natick, MA? This is for you. Autism Alliance, a Program of Advocates and one of the **autism support centers** across Massachusetts, is hosting an amazing array of events throughout the week of April 19th to 24th. See below for some of the events planned - and visit their website to view the full week's calendar and to register (required)!



Pizza & Pixar: Toy Story 2

April 17th, 5:30pm

Autism Welcoming Center
@ Natick Mall

Continuing their Toy Story Marathon in anticipation of *Toy Story 5*, this month is the time for *Toy Story 2*! Come hang out, unwind, and enjoy pizza in a sensory friendly space.

Register [here](#).



LUSH Teen Workshop

April 21st, 1pm

Autism Welcoming Center
@ Natick Mall

Join for a fun & hands-on experience with LUSH and create fresh, handmade bath products together! Register [here](#).



Your autism support center may also be hosting an exciting week of local programming - reach out to find out! List of autism support centers are [here](#).



Magic at the Mall

April 22nd, 11am

Autism Welcoming Center
@ Natick Mall

Join this Family Magic Show featuring Mike Martell! Register [here](#).



Spring Carnival

April 23rd, 10am

Autism Welcoming Center
@ Natick Mall

Spring Carnival will be full of exciting games, crafts, and fun! Register [here](#).



Sensory-Friendly @ AMC

April 17th, 10:30m

AMC, Framingham

Join for a private sensory friendly movie experience at AMC Theater! Autism Alliance families are invited to watch The Super Mario Galaxy Movie together in a comfortable setting. Register [here](#).

partners for youth with disabilities

Mentoring

This program connects youth with disabilities ages 12-24 with an adult mentor who provides guidance, support, and encouragement and work together on personal, career, or independence goals.

It offers the option for **one-to-one, peer, or group mentoring**, creating a dynamic space where youth build real-world skills through trusted relationships, goal-setting, and shared experiences. Mentors and mentees meet with to do activities of their choosing or just to stay connected for 4-6 hours per month for at least one year. To sign up for mentoring, simply visit this website and fill out their form!

<https://pyd.org/youth-opportunities/mentoring/>



Youth Leadership

PYD also offers an **After School Youth Leadership Program** for 14 to 22 year olds and those looking to be peer mentors (with or without disabilities). It's a **free 8 week session** from **April 6th to May 27th**, where youth with disabilities can meet new friends while finding leadership voice! It will be held in BCYF Roslindale Community Center on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30pm.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) has served youth with disabilities since 1985. Here is a brief overview of some of the incredible programs & events coming up - but we encourage you to check out their website for the full scope of programs, services, and support they provide for youth with disabilities!



Youth Leadership forum

In addition, the **Youth Leadership Forum** held every year is designed to further help students with disabilities develop advocacy and leadership skills, equipping them to be better prepared for future employment, higher education, and independent living.

This year, the forum will take place in-person from **June 25th through June 29th** at Emerson College in Boston. Join to experience living on a college campus in Boston, hear from renowned keynote speakers, attend workshops, explore careers network with professionals, and gain access to valuable resources!

<https://pyd.org/youth-leadership-forum/>



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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

[@BMCAutismProgram](https://twitter.com/BMCAutismProgram)

autismprogram@bmc.org

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.

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. Join our mailing list for future newsletters, community resources and more - just scan the QR code to the right!

