Ontario

NEWS

Spring 2010

For parents of children & youth with autism

MINISTERS' Message

Welcome to our new e-newsletter for parents of children and youth with autism spectrum disorders.

This issue includes a story about the new school transitions teams and how they are helping to ease the transition from IBI therapy to ABA instructional methods in publicly funded schools for kids. We'll also chat with a graduate of the College Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science.

Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services

Our government understands the challenges that you face as families with children and youth with autism spectrum disorders, and we're determined to continue to make progress to support you and your kids.

That's why we're working with you, experts in the field and service providers to broaden supports and services for kids with autism, including those available in schools. We want to make sure that children and youth with autism and their families receive the right support at the right time.

Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Education

We know from experts that Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) therapy can be effective for many children, and we continue to support IBI services. We also know that Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) based approaches can be very successful in helping kids with autism build the skills needed to learn and be more independent.

Over the next several months, we will be expanding the range of ABA -based supports available to children and youth with autism in the community and in school. These supports will include behaviour management and skills development programs, offered in ways that best meet the needs of all children and youth with autism and their families.

In the coming weeks, we will be consulting with you and other experts and service providers in the field to share and discuss our plans, and we will incorporate the advice received as we move forward.

We are also looking at ways to promote consistency and transparency in clinical decision-making and assessment for IBI and help us provide the right supports at the right time to kids with autism across the province. We understand that you as parents need to feel confident that your children are receiving the treatment and services that best meet their needs.

These changes build on the progress we've already made since 2003 — more kids are getting support and we've widened the range of supports.

We are taking a thoughtful and measured approach. We want you to feel confident that your child is being supported in school and in the community.

We believe that all children and youth deserve a bright future. By continuing to work together, we can help children and youth with autism be the best they can be.

We hope you find this issue of the newsletter interesting and helpful.

Glossary of Terms

ABA: Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) uses methods based on scientific principles of learning and behaviour to build useful repertoires and reduce problematic ones, and involves careful measurement of behaviour change. (Adapted from the Report of the Ministers' ASD Reference Group)

IBI: Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI), an intensive application of ABA, is an approach delivered to children with autism to decrease challenging behaviours, increase appropriate behaviours and promote development. (Source: Ministry of Children and Youth Services)

Speech-language pathologists: Speech-language pathologists are autonomous professionals who have expertise in typical development and disorders of communication and swallowing, as well as assessment and intervention for these areas. (Source: Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA))

Developmental paediatrician: A Developmental Paediatrician is a medical doctor with specialized training in paediatrics who has additional training and experience in developmental paediatrics. This sub-specialty of paediatrics involves consultation regarding normal growth and development, childhood behaviour, and development in the context of chronic medical illness. (Source: Thames Valley Children's Centre)

Psychologists and Psychological Associates: Psychologists and Psychological Associates are trained in the assessment, treatment and prevention of behavioural and psychological conditions. They use a variety of approaches directed toward the maintenance and enhancement of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and interpersonal functioning. The College of Psychologists of Ontario regulates the profession of psychology in Ontario. (Source: College of Psychologists of Ontario)

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More Instructor Therapists Graduating in Ontario

By looking at her credentials, to say Tammy Woode is energetic is an understatement. She has a diploma in Early Childhood Education, achieved honours while studying to become a Developmental Services Worker, and has 10 years of experience working in Ontario's child care system. Tammy is also a recent honours graduate from the College Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science.

This program is part of the government's efforts to increase the number of qualified therapists in Ontario working with children and youth with autism. The program, which is offered full-time, part-time, in-class and online, includes a field placement that involves training while working in the community. This provides students with an opportunity to build relationships with professional therapists. Over 500 students have graduated from the program since it was established in 2005.

Tammy Woode

Tammy recalls being excited about getting accepted into the program at Fanshawe College in London, one of 12 colleges across the province that offers the certificate program. "I've always had an interest in behavioural sciences," she says. "At one daycare where I worked, I remember a child who had severe behavioural challenges. I worked with him and we were able to reduce the number of aggressive incidents per week from approximately 150 to just five."

Now working as an instructor therapist, Tammy believes one of her strengths is treating each child as an individual. She directs each session with a child towards his or her personality. "If the child is struggling with a target skill, by using their interest I find they are able to acquire the skill faster. It's great to celebrate the successes with the child."

She is also working her way towards a Master's degree by taking university-level courses in psychology. "I'd like to become a senior therapist, so that I can write and create new treatment programs for my clients".

To parents of children with autism, Tammy advises, "Embrace every moment. A child with autism will reach milestones, just like any other child. Expand on those moments and on their interests. Take it one day at a time: your child is a blessing."

Colleges offering the Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science:

Fanshawe College	George Brown College	St. Lawrence College
Lambton College	La Cité collégiale	Canadore College
St. Clair College	Mohawk College	Confederation College
Algonquin College	Seneca College	Northern College

Regional Autism Service Providers

Central East Region
Kinark Child and Family Services
1-800-230-8533
(905) 474-9595
http://www.kinark.on.ca/

Central West Region
ErinoakKids
1-877-374-6625
(905) 855-3557
http://www.erinoakkids.ca

Eastern Region
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
1-877-542-2294
(613) 745-7563
http://www.cheo.on.ca/

Hamilton/Niagara Region
Hamilton Health Sciences
(905) 521-2100 ext. 77315
http://www.mcmasterchildrenshospital.ca/

North East Region
Hands - TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca
1-800-668-8555
(705) 476-2293
http://www.thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca/

Northern Region
Child Care Resources
1-877-996-1599
(705) 525-0055
http://www.childcare.on.ca/

South East Region
Pathways for Children and Youth
(613) 546-8535
http://www.pathwayschildrenyouth.org/

South West Region
Thames Valley Children's Centre
1-866-516-5368
(519) 685-8680
http://www.tvcc.on.ca/

Toronto Region
Surrey Place Centre
(416) 925-5141
http://www.surreyplace.on.ca/

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Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Through Transitions

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services continue to work together to improve outcomes for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

In March 2009, 16 school boards and all nine regional autism service providers began implementing the *Connections for Students* transition team model. These teams are helping to improve transitions for children leaving intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) therapy to begin applied behaviour analysis (ABA) instructional methods.

All publicly funded school boards in the province will have the transition teams in place by spring 2010.

Transition Team Members include:

- Principal (Team Lead)
- Parent(s)/guardian(s)
- School Support Program ASD Consultant
- Teacher(s)
- School board personnel with ABA expertise, as needed

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"Our ministry is working closely with the Ministry of Education to create a seamless system of supports so kids with autism can succeed in school with their peers."

Laurel Broten
Minister of Children and Youth Services

16 School Boards are currently working with Regional Autism Service Providers to help children transition from IBI therapy to school.

School Board	Autism Service Providers
Toronto District School Board	Surrey Place Centre
Toronto Catholic District School Board	Surrey Place Centre
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board	Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board	Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.
Upper Grand District School Board (Guelph)	ErinoakKids
Thames Valley District School Board (London)	Thames Valley Children's Centre
Limestone District School Board (Kingston)	Pathways for Children and Youth
York Region District School Board	Kinark Child and Family Services
Simcoe County District School Board	Kinark Child and Family Services
Upper Canada District School Board (Brockville)	Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'est Ontarien (L'Orignal)	Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
Near North District School Board (North Bay)	Hands – TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca
Rainbow District School Board (Sudbury)	Child Care Resources
Conseil scolaire de district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario (Sudbury)	Child Care Resources
Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board	Child Care Resources
Lakehead District School Board (Thunder Bay)	Child Care Resources

"Since 2006, more than 13,000 educators have been trained and prepared to support ABA in our publicly funded schools."

Leona Dombrowsky,
Minister of Education

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Other relevant providers may be included as part of the team based on the student's needs. These may include:

- Education Assistant
- Special Education Resource Teacher
- Other professionals providing service to the child, e.g., mental health service providers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

Autism Intervention Program (AIP) staff provide IBI therapy services to children with ASD. They initiate the transition process with the school board. About six months before the student enters a school, the transition teams are formed. The teams develop an individualized transition plan and provide support for at least six months after a student leaves the AIP and starts or continues publicly funded school.

"We are committed to ensuring successful outcomes for all students – including students with autism. Since 2006, more than 13,000 educators have been prepared to support ABA in our publicly funded schools," said Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky.

"Our ministry is working closely with the Ministry of Education to create a seamless system of supports so kids with autism can succeed in school with their peers," said Children and Youth Services Minister Laurel Broten.

A Provincial Advisory Team (PAT) was established to provide advice to the two ministries on the implementation of the transition team model in the 16 selected school boards. This information will help the two ministries continue to improve the transition process for children with autism.

Important Resources

ABACUS, Autism Ontario's registry of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) providers
www.abacuslist.ca

Aspergers Society of Ontario
www.aspergers.ca

Autism Ontario
www.autismontario.com

Geneva Centre for Autism
www.autism.net

Ministry of Children and Youth Services
www.ontario.ca/child

Ministry of Education
www.ontario.ca/education

Ontario Early Years Centres
www.ontario.ca/earlyyears

Respite Services
www.respiteservices.com

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For more information, visit **ontario.ca/child** or call toll-free 1-866-821-7770, TTY: 1-800-387-5559.