

DEVELOPMENTAL  
& BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS

# NEWSLETTER

BOSTON  
MEDICAL  
CENTER

The Autism Program

A monthly newsletter for families of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) at Boston Medical Center

## DESE

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is a state run agency that provides person centered supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These supports are meant to increase and assist in opportunities to become fully engaged members of their community. DDS works with adults with IDD and ASD to connect with employment, day program, community, and residential supports. DDS works with children with IDD and ASD to connect families with support programs/centers, supplemental educations services, and other specialized programs.

A component of DDS available for children is a grant-funded program called the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) program. Through its statewide school improvement initiatives and regulatory functions, DESE strives to assure that all citizens have access to high-quality public education. Requirements of the DESE program include: active family involvement, students must be between 6-17 years of age at the time of enrollment, students must be DDS eligible, and it's important to note that the program ends at age 22, or when the student leaves the school system. Members of the DESE program may receive access to family service navigation, professional staffing, and ancillary goods and services (flexible funding). In the Spring of 2023, the DESE program will have an open enrollment period where families can enter into a lottery to receive services from the DESE program. We will provide more information on this open enrollment period as soon as it is announced.

## New Year's Resolutions!

The start of a new year is a great time to reflect on the goals you want to set for yourself, any changes you want to make in your life, or the things you want to accomplish. It may come as no surprise that there is strength in numbers, and setting New Year's resolutions as a family can lead to more joy for everyone in your home for months to come. Whether you want spend more time outdoors, call relatives who live far away more often, or start a game night routine, new year's resolutions may just be what your family is need to start 2023 off right. Consider some below to get you started! Start a family tradition (maybe it's a once-a-month movie night, a volunteer project in your neighborhood, or cooking a meal together). Make memories (take record of your happy moments by writing in a notebook or journal, encourage your children to draw pictures to add to your stories). Unplug (choose non-technology activities like games, books or crafts you want to try as a family, and make a plan for being "unplugged" every so often).

## Fake Snow



Check out this fun sensory friendly craft project you can do with your family!

### Materials:

- Baking soda
- Hair conditioner

### Steps:

1. Combine 2 ½ cups of pure baking soda with ½ cup of conditioner in a bowl. (Add more baking soda if you don't want it to be as wet.)
2. Mold it into snowballs or make a mini snowman!

You can also bring in some toys or arctic animals like polar bears and penguins. Have some trucks on hand? Use them as snow plows! Wash hands when finished and watch the kids closely to make sure they don't rub their eyes. You can also store this in a baggy for up to five days.

## Morning Star Access

Boston Children's Museum has announced the dates of their Morningstar Access events for 2023! Morningstar Access events offer children with a variety of needs and abilities the opportunity to access the museum in an uncrowded environment, with few other visitors and less concern about infectious and large crowds. There are 2 different versions of Morningstar events: All Masks On! (all staff and visitors ages 2 and older are required to wear masks with no exceptions): Saturday, January 7 (8am-10am), Saturday, March 4 (8am-10am), Friday, March 17 (5:30pm-7:30pm). Masks Optional Event! (masks are recommended but not required for visitors. The museum staff will wear masks when interacting with visitors): Saturday, February 4 (8am-10am). Admission is \$9 per person and free for museum members. Pre-registration is required and can be found [HERE!](#)

## Safety Tip of the Month!



Colder weather means more time inside, it's important to be sure your home is safe! Hazards in the environment such as sharp corners, electrical outlets, and chemical cleaners can all be potentially dangerous. Covering sharp corners with a soft material, blocking electrical outlets, and locking up cleaning chemicals are all ways of ensuring that the environment in your home is safe.

Sharp corners on furniture, counter tops and fireplaces are especially dangerous for smaller children. Corner covers can be found at local stores, online, or you can make your own. You can DIY your own corner covers using double sided tape and bubble wrap or piping foam.

Electrical outlets can be dangerous in many ways and can not only cause harm to children but can also lead to an electrical fire. You can reduce your risk for electrical fire/shock by: updating your outlets, checking cords and covers regularly, not overloading an outlet, unplugging cords slowly and safely, and childproofing outlets. Outlet covers can be purchased at many local stores and online.

Cleaning chemicals can be potentially dangerous if ingested. You can decrease the chances of your child tampering with dangerous chemicals by following a few simple rules. Store chemicals out of reach of children and pets, install child-proof latches on under sink cabinets, store laundry products on high shelves, never leave cleaning supplies open or unattended, keep the number to poison control posted in your home in case of an emergency. Child proof latches can be found at many local stores or online.

If you think your family could benefit from corner covers, electrical outlet covers, or child proof latches, but need financial assistance, please reach out to your DBP or pediatric provider.

## Resources



The Autism Program is continuing 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!

<https://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program>

Do you have an idea for a future newsletter? Email us at.

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

with suggestions.

## Clinic

Our 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  
 Naomi Steiner, MD  
 Arathi Reddy, DO  
 Rachel Amgott, NP  
 Christina Lazdowsky, NP  
 Mei Elensary, MD  
 Alyssa King, PhD  
 Jocelyn Kuhn PhD  
 Audrey Christiansen, MD  
 Sarah Canale, MD  
 Britany Weissman, MD  
 Mary Ellen Killion, NP

## 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! **To unsubscribe, please reply by email with the word "stop!"**



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The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center



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