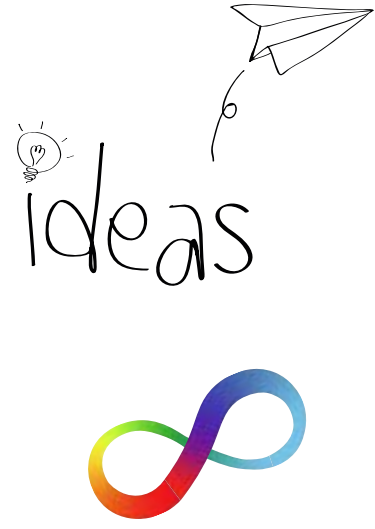



Autism Month: A Shift From *AWARENESS* To *Advocacy*



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EXCLUSIVE EVENT	
HOSTED BY THE COE	
ASD: BARRY PRIZANT	
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Level UP! with Dr.s Amy Laurent & Jacquelyn Fede



Lookout for artwork by autistic LBPSB students



Consult page 2 for more information on how to submit your students' art

Read about autistic individuals' perspective on identity-first language



A symbol for autism that better represents the autistic community



Making our school yards accessible for all!



APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS, ACCEPTANCE, APPRECIATION, EMPOWERMENT, AND ADVOCACY MONTH!

THE MONTH, ONCE NAMED "AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH" IN THE 1970S BY THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA, IS NOW SHIFTING ITS LENS TO BETTER REFLECT THE EXPERIENCES OF THE AUTISTIC COMMUNITY.

Listen and learn from the perspectives and experiences of autistic individuals




Barry M. Prizant

Ph.D., CCC-SLP

UNIQUELY
HUMAN

A DIFFERENT WAY
OF SEEING AUTISM

MARCH 27, 2023

CLICK HERE!

TO REGISTER



Calling All Artists

The Centre of Excellence for Autism (CoEASD) at the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB) would like to highlight the incredible and unique artwork that our students with autism engage in and are passionate about.

We are in the process of collecting these masterpieces to display them on our website (<https://coeasd.lbpsb.qc.ca/>) during the month of April as an act of appreciation of neurodiversity and autism. The artwork can be in the form of a picture, poem, photograph or even a sculpture. A photograph of the work will be showcased.

The artwork will be shared on our website and newsletter. The child's name, grade and school/ school board will be displayed. If you are interested in participating in this initiative please [click here](#), fill out the form and upload your child's work.

Autism Level Up!

awareness
acceptance
appreciation
empowerment
advocacy



Among the wide range of helpful autism resource sites that are available, **Autism Level Up!** differentiates itself by the fact that it has an autistic advocate (Jac) and the co-author of the SCERTS® model (Amy) as its co-founders. Among this dynamic duo's primary aims are raising awareness for autism and helping others determine how best to be an ally of the ASD community. The site also features a diverse set of resources, such as visual tools, ideas on how to advocate, and emotion regulation techniques. You can search by category and most of these resources are free. However, there are certain unique products available for a fee, such as a *Sliding energy meter* designed for a 3-D printer. **Autism Level Up!** also offers in-person and virtual conferences, consultation, and links to their appearances on a variety of podcasts related to their mission. Another unique feature is the *accessibility menu*, with tools to modify text spacing, contrast, and a way to make the site *dyslexia friendly*.

Should I Shouldn't I?

Not all behaviors need to be addressed. Below are some reasons why behaviors should be addressed:

- If the student's behavior is unsafe or harmful to self, others, or property.
- If the student's behavior is having a negative impact on the student and/or the environment.
- If addressing the behavior will benefit the child.
- If the student wants us to intervene.
- If the behavior is preventing the student from experiencing social or academic success.
- If all other ASD best practices have been applied and the maladaptive behavior is still present.



Reasons why behaviors may not need to be addressed:

- If the student's behavior is not any different than that of others.
- If the student's behavior does not have a negative impact on the student and/or the environment (e.g., Johnny stares out the window when the teacher gives verbal instruction).
- If the belief is that the student's behavior is a reflection of the job performances of the adults involved (e.g., Sally gets up and walks around the class when she should be sitting at her desk; if her integration aide cannot get her to stay seated then she must not be very good at her job). Remember a student's behavior is not a reflection of how effectively someone is doing their job.
- If the student is being held to a higher standard because he/she has an integration aide and thus has additional support.



ALL INTERVENTIONS SHOULD BE:

- Aimed at developing the student's functional autonomy, not obedience.
- Based on acceptance of the student including their symptoms of autism [autistic traits].
- About what the child needs, not what we need.
- About what we can offer the student in terms of preventative strategies and techniques, and not only what the student should or shouldn't do in the moment.



Accessibility for ALL



"Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) includes all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. We all use AAC when we make facial expressions or gestures, use symbols or pictures, or write." ²

Individuals with speech difficulties or language problems rely on AAC to supplement existing speech or replace speech that is not functional. By making AAC available to those who need it, we can help increase their social interaction, school performance, and feelings of self-worth.² Inspired by that belief and the well-established goal of offering accessibility to all our students as they enjoy the outdoors, the CoEASD along with the Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) of the LBPSB launched a project where **Communication Stations** using AAC boards (as seen in the pictures on the left and below right) were made available on school playgrounds. This initiative will become more universal as the team forms partnerships with interested municipalities in order to install **Communication Stations** in public parks, allowing inclusive and accessible practices to become the norm.



WEBSITES & REFERENCES



- 1) <https://www.autismlevelup.com/>
- 2) <https://frdat.niagara.edu/support-resources/disability-info/disabilities-definitions-tips-etc/speech-and-communication-impairments/augmentative-and-alternative-communication-aac/>
- 3) <https://cdn.sanity.io/files/p6bm7moz/production/457592c019a8fb8025d59dd26717f16df2a4f188.pdf>
- 4) <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/identity-first-language/>
- 5) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aK1_2LZMDy0

