

DEVELOPMENTAL & BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS

NEWSLETTER

BOSTON
MEDICAL
CENTER

The Autism Program

A monthly newsletter for families of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) at Boston Medical Center during COVID-19 Social Distancing



Juneteenth

Juneteenth, also known as "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Freedom Day," or "Emancipation day," is an annual holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the US. It has been celebrated by African-Americans since June 19, 1865, the day in which enslaved African-Americans in Texas were informed of their freedom and the end of the Civil War. Juneteenth was signed into law as a national holiday in June of 2021. Check out the links below to learn more about Juneteenth events in Boston and ways to support your local Black owned businesses.

***Supporting Black Owned Business**

***Juneteenth in Boston**

Pride Month

June is Pride Month! In honor of Pride Month, here is an excerpt from the Asperger and Autism Network (AANE) regarding the intersection of gender identity, sexual orientation, and neurodivergence:

"Because someone is diagnosed with ASD does not mean that person is less capable of determining their own sexual orientation or gender identity. It is more likely that family members or professionals will question their identification with these non-mainstream identities [...] out of concern that their loved one will be part of yet another marginalized, vulnerable group. Someone perceived as autistic may be questioned more by professionals or family members [...]. For some individuals, autistic and not, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression may fluctuate over the course of one's lifetime. They may be more flexible or fluid. This fluidity, particularly in these areas, is often difficult for others to accept and may again be ascribed to the autism and may lead to an individual not being believed." –AANE

End of School Year Transition

The end of the school year is an exciting time for most school aged children but not all. Some kids might feel upset about leaving behind their friends, anxious about a new setting (a new classroom or summer school), or some might not like the change in their routine. We have a few recommendations on how to make these changes smoother for everyone:

- If your child is concerned they will miss their friends, try to connect with the friend's parents and schedule a play date or a zoom call
- If possible, request your child be given the opportunity to meet their new teacher or see their new classroom
- As the end of the school year approaches, try to maintain some form of a schedule similar to what your child had during the school year and what they can expect to follow during summer school

Accessible Recreation Fair!!

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Universal Access Program is hosting their annual Accessible Recreation Fair on Saturday June 10 from 10am-3pm at Herter Park/Artesani Playground in Brighton! There will be a variety of family-friendly, accessible, and inclusive activities including cycling with an assortment of adaptive cycles, hiking and letterboxing with all-terrain wheelchairs and walkers, face painting, kite decorating, sidewalk chalking, golf and other equipment demonstrations, adaptive birding and fishing booths, bubble blowing and games, music, and more. Smokey Bear will be visiting the fair, too! Pre-registration is recommended and can be completed [HERE!](#) For more information, you can check out their website or call (857)-319-2168.



Summer Activities!



Are you looking for some fun summer activities for your family? We have found some fantastic summer events that are free or discounted with a library card! If you do not have a library card be sure to sign up for one with your local library and ask about free or discount tickets!

Summer Music Series

Many local parks will be offering free outdoor concerts throughout the summer. Some locations include:

- Franklin Park
- Hatch Shell
- Boston Harbor Hotel
- Copley Square
- Prudential Center's South Garden (Berklee Summer Concerts)



You can find a complete list of summer concerts and locations [HERE!](#)

Boston Free Museum Days

Boston Free Museum Days has a list of fun free events for the entire family to participate in. Some of the events include:

- Boston Fire Museum
- Boston Children's Museum
- Waterworks Museum
- Commonwealth Museum
- The Institute of Contemporary Art

You can find more Boston Free Museum Days events [HERE!](#)

Accessible Beaches and Pools!

As the weather gets warmer it can be super fun to cool off in a pool or at the beach. The Mass.gov website has an extensive list of beaches with access to beach wheelchairs, accessible pools, and accessible splash pads. The sites are linked below:

- [Beach](#)
- [Pool/Splash Pads](#)

As always water safety is VERY important, see the next page for some water safety tips and information on swimming lessons!



Safety Tip of the Month:

Water Safety



Drowning is the leading cause of death for children between the ages of 1-4 and the second leading cause of death for children between the ages of 5-14. According to the CDC every year there are 4,000 fatal drownings and 8,000 non-fatal drownings. That is an average of 11 fatal drownings per day and 22 non-fatal drownings per day. Constant supervision, bright bathing suits, flotation devices and swimming lessons can all help to create a safe swimming environment for your child.

Swim Suits

The color of your child's bathing suit may be more important than you realize and whether or not it can be immediately seen if your child goes underwater could save their life.

Most swimsuit colors virtually disappear or are not identifiable as a struggling child when only a mere 18 inches below the surface of the water.

When possible, look for large chunks of color blocks or pair contrasting colors with different colored rash guards and swimsuit bottoms and trunks. For example, look for a bright orange rash guard and pair it with hot pink or day-glow yellow bottoms.

Flotation Devices

Life Jacket: Life jackets are personal flotation devices specifically designed to keep someone afloat. A life jacket will turn its wearer face-up with their mouth and nostrils above water. A type 2 jacket includes neck and head support which can help a younger child with poor body control stay safer.

Puddle Jumper: Puddle Jumpers are US Coast Guard approved flotation devices that are less bulky than a life jacket but safer than swimmies. These flotation aids combine elements of a swim aid and a safety vest.

Swim Lessons

Recent studies suggest that water survival skills training and swim lessons can help reduce drowning risk for children between ages 1-4. Classes that include both parents and their children also are a good way to introduce good water safety habits and start building swim readiness skills. If your child seems ready, it's a good idea to start lessons now.

Children who are independent swimmers still need to be monitored for safety throughout their time swimming

Check with your local YMCA to see if they offer swimming lessons. For a more detailed guide on swim safety and swimming lessons, check out our Water Safety Guide located on the Autism Program's website!

Supervision

Be close and constant: Supervising adults should be close, constant, and free from distractions. It's recommended to have a designated "watcher" at all times. That watcher should be free from conversations and any other distractions.

Keep children who are unable to swim with-in arms reach: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends "touch supervision" for beginning swimmers, meaning the adult should be within an arm's reach of the child so he or she can pull the child out of the water if the child's head becomes submerged.

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

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

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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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