

Spectrum Spotlight

Summer 2020 | Issue 3
August 13, 2020

Welcome to the third edition of our newsletter!

I am pleased to welcome you to the latest edition of the Kinark Autism Services newsletter, Spectrum Spotlight. I hope you have kept safe and healthy during this unprecedented time. I understand for many families the COVID-19 emergency has created disruption to your lives, the services you and your child have customarily received, as well as the stresses of balancing work, home, and caregiver roles. To best support our clients, their families, and the autism community, we have adapted many of our services to be delivered virtually until we can once again resume in-person services.



Scott Bark
Director, Autism Services

Like many families, Kinark has been closely following developments in the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) over the winter and spring. We welcome the recent government announcement of universal, free, foundational family services that will help meet the needs of children and youth and their families in the OAP. As a provider of evidenced-based autism services for the past 20 years, we are pleased to offer a range of free foundational family services. Whether you are on the waitlist for the OAP, currently receiving behavioural services, or have previously received behavioural services, Kinark's foundational family services are available to meet your needs. I encourage you to visit our [website](#) or call us at **1-800-283-3377** to learn more.

Finally, I would like to share with you an update on Kinark's plans for reopening in-person services. First and foremost, safeguarding the health and safety of our clients, families, and staff remains our utmost consideration as we plan for reopening our services. As the province has moved toward a phased reopening, we have been in continual contact with our local public health authorities. We know many of you have questions as to when you can begin to receive in-person services again. As part of our plan for reopening, we will be looking to engage with clients and families to understand your needs, concerns, and input to inform our preparations. Please look to our website, speak with your Kinark worker, or contact us at our toll-free number to share your questions and concerns. While all of our services are currently being provided virtually, we look forward to resuming in-person services in the near future.

We are here to help, so please reach out to us. If you have any questions about the information provided in this newsletter, you can contact us at **1-800-283-3377** or email autisminfo@kinark.on.ca.

Wishing you all good health and happiness.

Scott Bark
Director, Autism Services

Workshops

Kinark offers free group-based workshops on a wide range of topics that share tools and techniques for parents and caregivers of children with autism. These workshops share knowledge and skills to better equip parents and caregivers at home and in the community as their children grow and develop new skills.

Our workshops are currently delivered virtually through our WebEx video conferencing platform to ensure the safety of staff and participants. Registration is still open for selected workshops this summer.

Visit our [website](#) to find a workshop that is best suited for your family's needs!

Workshops

August 17, 2020

Teaching your Child to Wear a Face Covering Using Evidenced-Based Practices

August 19, 2020

Kinark Creates Q&A: Visual Schedules

August 20, 2020

Transitions Done Right

[View our Events](#)

Acronym Central

OAP: Ontario Autism Program

ABA: Applied Behaviour Analysis

BCBA: Board Certified Behavior Analyst

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

BBC: Brief Behavioural Consultation

An Update on Foundational Family Services

The Ontario Government announced new details related to changes to the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) and the provision of foundational family services. To read the full update, visit the Ministry's [website](#). While we continue to await further announcements related to the full rollout of the OAP, we believe this announcement is good news for children and youth with autism and their families, broadening the range of publicly funded services available to them.

Not only do these publicly funded foundational family services provide support for children and youth, they also offer much needed complementary programs for siblings, parents and caregivers. These programs help build capacity for caregivers and families to support children and youth living with autism.

Kinark and its team of clinical experts, including Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), psychologists, and social workers, stand ready and able to support the success of families and children. Our team will continue to strengthen and expand our services to meet the needs of the children, youth and families that we serve.

To learn more about our foundational family services, please visit our [website](#). If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at **1-800-283-3377** or email autisminfo@kinark.on.ca.

Ask a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)!

Question: My child is starting school soon and I'm worried about how he is going to handle this change. What are some things I can do to support them during this transition process?

Answer: We all experience change, and change can be difficult, but transitions are a part of life and are shared experiences. Transitions can be big (moving from one stage of life to another such as moving schools, changing grades, moving homes) or small (changing from one activity to another such as going from watching TV to eating dinner). Right now, we are in a big change and adjusting to going back to school in September will probably be difficult for most of our children. However, when we find ways to prepare for these transitions, the process can be easier. Transitioning to school can be intimidating, but below are some transition strategies based on the science of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) that may be helpful for facilitating smoother transitions.

What are Transition Strategies?

Transition strategies are techniques used to support children with autism during changes or disruptions to activities, settings, or routines. The techniques can be used before, during and after a transition, and can be presented verbally (such as telling them what they need to do) or visually (such as showing them a picture of where they are going). The strategies attempt to increase predictability for individuals on the autism spectrum and to create positive routines around transitions. This will help decrease the natural anxiety that comes with the changes of transitions and increase the predictability of the transition or what to expect when the time comes (Hume, 2008).

To learn more about transition strategies, [click here](#).

About Our Services

Kinark is proud of our 20-year history providing high quality, evidenced-based, individualized services responsive to the needs of children and youth with autism and their families in Ontario.

Our team of skilled clinicians include Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), psychologists, and social workers who deliver caring, responsive and family-centred ABA services to meet the unique strengths and individual needs of each child and youth with autism.

While Kinark offices remain closed to the public, we continue to support children and youth with autism and their families.

Our team provides ABA Services, Psychological Consultations and Assessments, as well as individual and group-based counselling with a social worker to children and youth with autism and their families.

Kinark also offers universally accessible foundational family services free of charge:

Brief Behavioural Consultation:

- A BCBA will meet with you for up to three virtual sessions to discuss behaviour-based strategies and provide individualized resources to help address a specific goal

Parent Education Workshops:

- Our virtual workshops offer techniques and tools on a wide range of topics for parents and caregivers to better support their children through group education sessions

Support Groups:

- Groups for siblings and parents of children with autism to connect and share your experiences safely through video conferencing

Resource Kits:

- Individualized resource kits may be requested with materials and activities tailored to meet your child's individual needs

Kinark Creates:

- A series of fun, engaging and educational videos available for you and your child to watch that support child and youth development

Service Information and Navigation:

- Our team of Family Support Workers are available to consult with parents and caregivers about services and supports available in your community

Visit our website to learn more!

Service Feature: Brief Behavioural Consultation

Brief Behavioural Consultation (BBC) is a new and exciting telehealth service offered to provide parents and caregivers with individualized resources that help support their child or youth with autism.

This service is available through telephone and video technology and allows families to connect with a skilled clinician to discuss

behaviour-based strategies which help address a specific goal. Working as a team, the family and clinician will identify an appropriate goal, teaching strategies, and materials to help support each family and their child's development of skills.



Clinicians use video modelling to teach parents and can engage with the child to support the best possible outcome for the goal.

Each session typically lasts an hour and families can access up to three sessions of BBC per goal. Common goal-based topic areas may include support with sleeping, eating, toileting, self-management, communication, social and play skills, and many other domains of learning. Sessions are available to meet the needs of working parents and busy families!

To request a Brief Behavioural Consultation, please complete the intake form on our [website](#). If you have any questions, or require support during registration, please contact our Service Representative at **1-800-283-3377** or email autisminfo@kinark.on.ca.

Kinark Autism Services Staff Spotlight

Music has always been part of my life. I grew up playing the piano and was heavily involved in school bands and choirs. Before I started at Kinark as a placement student, I volunteered with Schizophrenia Services at CAMH playing the piano and flute for clients. From that experience, I realized the enjoyment I had through sharing music with those around me. During my time as a placement student at Kinark, I learned a lot from the staff around me and valued the great working environment.



Jamie Li
Instructor Therapist, Autism Services

At Kinark, we held various activities for the clients and when another staff found out that I was learning the ukulele, they suggested I play it for music time. I learned simple chords and songs online and was able to host singalongs with clients. It was great, everyone loved it! I was very excited and grateful when I officially joined Kinark as an instructor therapist about a year ago. I brought out the ukulele when we held circle time and it was amazing to see everyone react to the music while they danced and sang along. I believe that music is a universal language, it allows us to communicate with those who may have trouble with communication. Not only was it fun to play music for our clients, it was also rewarding to interact with them through music.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, I was worried about the well-being of our clients and their caregivers and wanted a way to connect with them. The Kinark Kreates videos have given me and my colleagues a great opportunity to interact with children while following physical distancing measures. The videos allow us to create a variety of fun content including yoga, art activities, and singalongs. We have been receiving great feedback from the videos, and I hope our clients and their families continue to enjoy the content we release every week! A virtual connection is a connection nonetheless and I'm glad we can continue this connection through the music and videos we are making.

[Watch our Kinark Kreates videos](#)

Caregiver Experience Survey

Kinark is dedicated to providing our clients with the highest level of services and support. Caregivers completed a survey in winter 2019/20 on their experience with Kinark Autism Services. Based on the data, a large

majority of caregivers agreed that Kinark staff understood and responded to each child's needs and concerns to provide services and supports specific to that child's needs and strengths. The survey highlighted that families had a very positive experience working with Kinark staff and valued their expertise and professionalism.

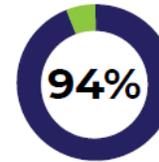
To view our full caregiver experience survey results, [click here](#).

Overall, Caregivers Agreed...

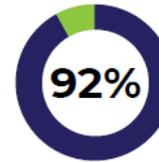
Services are of high quality



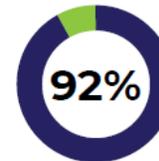
Services helped their child deal more effectively with the challenges in their life



Services helped them deal more effectively with the challenges experienced by their child



They would recommend this service to a friend



DIY Craft: Polka Dot Slime

Enjoy summer days with a fun DIY slime craft! Show us what you create by sharing pictures and tagging us on



Facebook ([@KinarkAutismServices](#)) and Instagram ([@KinarkAutismServices](#))!

See the full directions [here](#).

We want to hear from you!

Are you interested in contributing to our next newsletter? Contact us today by email at autisminfo@kinark.on.ca.

For more information about our services, please book a free consultation by contacting our Service Representatives at **1-800-283-3377** or by emailing autisminfo@kinark.on.ca.

From the staff of Kinark Autism Services, we wish you and your family a safe and happy summer!



Kinark Autism Services

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