

Spectrum Spotlight

Spring 2021 | Issue 5
March 31, 2021

Welcome to the fifth edition of our newsletter!

Welcome to the spring 2021 edition of Spectrum Spotlight! The one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic allows us to reflect on the challenges and triumphs we have all experienced over the past year. As we turn the page from winter, the renewal and growth that spring brings us, provides opportunities for optimism. The recent developments in the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) offer the promise of new services and supports for children, youth and their families.



Scott Bark
Director, Autism Services
Kinark Child and Family Services

World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) is on April 2 and is a time to raise awareness and show support for people living with autism. For many, the past year may have been a time of growth, of family, or of achievement in school or other interests. For others, the pandemic may have been a time of disruption or perhaps mental health challenges. This WAAD, my wish for you is that you celebrate your strengths, achievements and resilience and that the challenges experienced by people living with autism as well as their caregivers and families are elevated into the public consciousness and result in greater public awareness and increased access to much needed services and supports.

At Kinark Autism Services, our goal is to be responsive to the needs of your child and family. We offer a range of free and fee-for-service options that are virtual and in-person for children and youth with autism, caregivers, siblings, and community members. Our team is here to help. Please reach out to us to help you find the services and supports you need at www.kinarkautismservices.ca or call us at **1-800-283-3377**.

Scott Bark
Director, Autism Services
Kinark Child and Family Services

April 6, 2021

- [Beyond the OAP: Accessing Regional Resources - York](#)
- [Managing Meltdowns and More: Part 2](#)

April 7, 2021

- [Sibling Support Group](#)
- [Caregiver Support Group](#)
- [Teaching Your Child to Wear a Face Covering](#)

[View Upcoming Events](#)

In this newsletter:

OAP: Ontario Autism Program

ABA: Applied Behaviour Analysis

BCBA: Board Certified Behavior Analyst

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

BBC: Brief Behavioural Consultation

April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day!

On World Autism Awareness Day, join Kinark Autism Services, and many other organizations and communities, in showing support and raising awareness for individuals living with autism.

This day recognizes the struggles and triumphs of individuals on the autism spectrum and draws attention to the need for innovative programs to support children and youth with autism as they navigate the transition to adulthood.



Kinark will be sharing information on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages to support autism awareness and we hope you can follow to join the conversation!

How you can get involved:

Light It Up Blue

Starting April 2, and throughout the month, Autism Speaks Canada encourages individuals to show their support for individuals with autism by participating in their [Light It Up Blue](#) initiative.

You can wear blue and share your participation in a picture on social media using the hashtag **#LightItUpBlue** to help build a kinder and more inclusive world for people with autism. The international community participates by lighting up landmarks in blue.

Flag Raising

On April 6, Kinark Autism Services will join Autism Ontario virtually in the [flag raising](#) ceremonies held across the province in recognition of World Autism Awareness Day. Since World Autism Awareness Day falls on Good Friday this year, the flag raising will be held virtually on Tuesday, April 6.

Autism Ontario organizes annual flag raisings with the goal of uniting families, schools, communities, government and professionals in recognizing World Autism Awareness Day and supports a strong and more inclusive community for individuals with autism.

Our Foundational Family Services

At Kinark Autism Services we provide a range of high quality, evidenced-based services to children and youth with autism and their families. Our team offers a variety of free foundational family services for children and youth registered in the Ontario Autism Program (OAP). These services also include complementary programs for siblings, parents and caregivers.



Learn more about our foundational family services [here!](#)

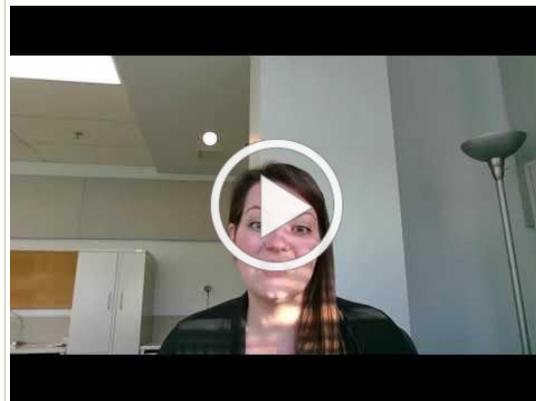
If you would like more information about Kinark's services, please visit our [website](#) or contact our Service Representative at **1-800-283-3377**.

Service Feature: Interactive Ask Us Sessions

Kinark continues to adapt our services to offer a variety of new and innovative ways to meet the changing needs of the families we support.

Learn about two of our new interactive, open forum foundational family services: Ask a School Consultant and Ask a Service Navigator!

[Visit our Website](#)



Supporting Changes in Routine During Spring Break

Spring break is an exciting time for kids looking for a break from school. But changes like this can be difficult for those that tend to thrive on routine and consistency. Some families may need a structured week that includes routines similar to those when in school, while others might want a more unstructured break. Whatever your needs, preparing early and working together to create a plan can help decrease some of the anxiety you or your child with autism may be feeling.



[Click here](#) to read how you can prepare for spring break and how to support your child's routine during it!

To learn more about supporting successful transitions and creating healthy routines, register for a free upcoming parent education workshop on our [website](#).

My name is Kealey Hester, and I am an ASD Consultant at Kinark Autism Services for the Simcoe County area with the School Support Program. I began my career in the field of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) almost twenty years ago! I started as an Instructor Therapist and have worked in many capacities within the field, including Senior Therapist and School Board Consultant. In 2015, I completed my Masters in Applied Disability Studies at Brock University and became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

I began working at Kinark four years ago when I was looking for a position that allowed me to consult with school and family teams using the principles of ABA in teaching.

As an ASD Consultant, I provide ABA consultation to clients to help support individualized goals across home, school and community settings. In addition, I collaborate with families through the Brief Behavioural Consultation (BBC) service and provide short-term consultation to help families to teach their child new skills and reach important goals. I also use ABA techniques to teach a variety of parent education sessions. In each of these roles, I am fortunate to work with an amazing clinical team and alongside wonderful families to support their goals and celebrate their successes.

I enjoy all of my roles at Kinark, but really find that working in ABA consultation has so many rewards. It is wonderful to support families as they identify their goals, teach their child and consider long-term objective development. The role is particularly dynamic as the support is flexible, allowing families to ensure learning happens at home, in the community and in classrooms. I have seen many learners grow and each of their accomplishments are so important. I am very fortunate to have an amazing and dynamic role at Kinark and the pleasure of supporting learners, their families, and school teams as they transition into the education system. It makes coming (or logging in) to work each day a pleasure and something I get excited about!



Kealey Hester, ASD Consultant
Kinark Autism Services

[View our Programs and Services](#)



Rainbow Craft

Let's talk about the six colours of the rainbow! Grab your markers, two cups of water and paper towel and join us in making a colourful rainbow craft together!



Flower Crafts with Forks!

Let's make some beautiful flower crafts! Grab some paint, paper, paintbrushes, a cup of water and a fork to join along.

Watch our Kinark Kcreates Videos

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

We want to hear from you!

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

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



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