



## Special Education Family Newsletter

March 2021

This is a monthly Newsletter intended to support parents/caregivers & families across our system and is published and posted here at the beginning of each month.

### Important Dates

- March 8 – International Women’s Day
- March 21 – World Down Syndrome Day
- March 21 – International day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- March 23 – IEPs go home
- March 26 – Purple Day for Epilepsy
- March 27 – Earth Hour

3rd Saturday of each month – 10:30-12:00 – Rural FASD Network meetings, Calvary Bible Church, Smiths Falls -  
livestreamed on Facebook;  
<https://www.ruralfasd.ca/meetings>

### IMPORTANT REMINDER

‘March Break’ is now scheduled to occur the week of April 12-16

# Autism

MY CHILD HAS RECEIVED A DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM. WHERE CAN I GO FOR SUPPORT?

CHEO (Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario) and KidsInclusive each have a variety of supports for parents/caregivers of students with special needs, including autism.

CHEO and Lanark Community Programs (LCP) are the regional autism providers who support students in the Upper Canada District School Board area. Both providers have parent portals on their websites that have links to autism resources and supports for families. Please visit the following links :

[CHEO RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS](#)

[LANARK COMMUNITY PROGRAMS](#)

[AUTISM ONTARIO](#)

*Alternative Learning Menus are updated weekly and can be accessed on the [board website](#).*



### What is Orientation & Mobility (O&M)?

Orientation & Mobility refers to knowing how to navigate one’s position in time and space. It is the development of a specific skill set which, in turn, helps a child get from one place to another.

### The importance of Orientation & Mobility:

Developing orientation & mobility skills allows children to orient themselves and travel as independently and safely as possible within their environments.

Things to do at home to enhance your child’s orientation & mobility skills:

- Play games that increase body awareness (e.g., Simon Says, Hockey Pokey)
- Have your child help map furniture locations within your home
- Estimate then count steps from one location to another
- Teach your child right and left directionality
- Ask questions regarding residential features (e.g., How many bedrooms/bathrooms can you locate? Which room is closest to the front door?)
- Have your child explain the path to a specific location. Include landmarks or identifying characteristics found along the path.
- Play sound identification games (e.g., *I hear with my little ear...*)

Visit [parentmobility.com](http://parentmobility.com) for more ideas and resources on building O&M skills!

# From Our Speech Language Pathologists



## Picture Communication

Picture communication is universally designed to support everyone. It helps us understand even when we do not yet comprehend spoken or written language. Picture communication can be a bridge to learning spoken and written language. Click on each number below to learn more about each type of picture support.

### PCS

1

PCS or Picture Communication Symbols are images that represent language. These are line drawings, either coloured or black/white and are a form of symbolic representation.

### PECS

2

PECS or Picture Exchange Communication System is a 6 phase AAC system that first teaches a person to give a single PCS to a communication partner in exchange for a desired item or action.

### PICS

3

PICS is short form for pictures. These include any pictures for communication including PCS (created with Meyer-Johnson software like Boardmaker).

### Picture Symbols can:

- support attention / focus
- help us understand and remember what work or behavior is expected
- facilitate completion of multi-step tasks or activities
- support understanding of language (concepts, vocabulary, grammar, etc.)
- support expressive communication

### Where can I see picture symbols?

- daily schedules
- behavioural support tools (first / then board, social stories)
- augmentative & alternative communication systems
- adapted books
- choice boards
- activity centres
- manufacturer assembly instructions