



## SUPPORT, PARENT GROUPS, & COUNSELLING

- You may want to reach out to family, friends, and other support networks for support.
- There are some parent support groups.
- There are also some workshops for siblings offered periodically.
- You may wish to seek out supportive counselling with a professional to talk through some of what you are going through. Some options for this might be:
  - Some employer health benefit plans offer counselling through an Employee Assistance Plan (sometimes referred to as EAP).
  - Free & Low Cost Counselling through community organizations.
  - St. Amant (May be available if you become involved with their programs. St. Amant will be discussed in later slides).
- You can reach out to the Autism Social Worker with the Child Development Clinic, Faith LaRose at 204-258-6629 or [llarose@rccinc.ca](mailto:llarose@rccinc.ca).

SOMETIMES THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR CHILD, IS MAKING SURE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF



## WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)?

1. Persistent Deficits in Social Communication and Social Interaction
2. Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behavior, Interests, or Activities

## WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)?

1. Persistent Deficits in Social Communication and Social Interaction
  - Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity
  - Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviours used for social interaction
  - Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships

### PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

**Winnipeg Parents of Autistic Children Everywhere (PACE):**

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Nonprofit-Organization/Autism-Winnipeg-PACE-974460162687351/>

**SSCY Parent to Parent Café:**

For more info or to register contact 204-258-6539 or

[familynetwork@sscy.ca](mailto:familynetwork@sscy.ca)

**SSCY Family Advisory Council:**

For more information contact Tessa at [tplett@rccinc.ca](mailto:tplett@rccinc.ca)

### SIBLING WORKSHOPS

**Sibshops:**

For more info or to register contact 204-258-6539 or

[familynetwork@sscy.ca](mailto:familynetwork@sscy.ca)

### FREE & LOW COST COUNSELLING

**Family Dynamics:**

<https://familydynamics.ca/services/counselling/>

**New Directions:**

<https://newdirections.mb.ca/family-therapy-services/>

**Aurora Family Therapy Center:**

<https://www.aurorafamilytherapy.com/>

**Aulneau Renewal Center:**

<https://aulneau.com/counselling/>

**St. Amant Counselling:**

<https://stamant.ca/blog/news/counse>

## WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)?

### 2. Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behavior, Interests, or Activities

- Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech
- Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of non-verbal behaviour
- Highly restricted, fixated interests with abnormal intensity or focus
- Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment

## WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)?

- Autism is considered a "spectrum disorder", meaning there is a wide range of variation within how individuals with autism may present.
- Autism is typically considered a longterm diagnosis.
  - While we would certainly expect your child to continue to develop and make progress over time, autism is something that is considered to be life long and not something they will fully "grow out of".
- It is not fully understood what causes autism.
  - Research is ongoing and it is believed that there may be a number of factors that contribute, including genetic and environmental factors. But the cause of autism is not fully known at this time. It is something your child would have been born with, and not something that you caused as a parent.

## SO WHAT NOW?

- Many parents feel overwhelmed about what comes next, and want to focus on whatever they can do to support their child's development.
- Remember your child is more like other children than "different" from other children! The things they need most are all the things that all children need, like love, support, nourishment, friends/family, routine, and opportunities to play and explore.
- Don't underestimate the importance of play! Taking time to get down on the floor and play with your child in creative and interactive ways can promote their social and cognitive development.
- While many parents feel compelled to take on the role of therapist for their child. Don't forget, your main role is to be mom/dad/grandparent/caregiver!
- There are some recommended therapies that may be available, that will be discussed in the following slides.

## THERAPIES

### SPEECH THERAPY

- Speech Therapy is typically a recommended therapy with Autism. Your child may or may not already be connected with a Speech Therapist through Children's Therapy Initiative. A speech therapist works with you and your child on strategies to support further language, communication and social development.
- If your child is preschool age and not yet connected with a Speech Therapist, you can self refer through Children's Therapy Initiative Central Intake. The contact number is 204-258-6550, and the link for the referral form is in the information attached.
- If your child is school age, Speech Therapy is typically offered through the public school system. You may wish to discuss this with your school team.
- If your child is not eligible for the above Speech Therapy options, or you would like more Speech Therapy than what is available, you may wish to seek out *private* Speech Therapy. \*Note this would be at a cost to you\*. You may wish to see if your employer health benefit plan may cover a portion of the cost. The link for the directory of Speech Therapists in Manitoba is in the information attached.



### CHILDREN'S THERAPY INITIATIVE REFERRAL FORM

<https://sscy.ca/wp-content/uploads/Winnipeg-CTI-referral-form-March-2016.pdf>

### PRIVATE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST DIRECTORY FOR MANITOBA

<https://caslpm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/FFS-Listing-v2-2018-12-06.pdf>

## THERAPIES

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- Occupational Therapy is also often a recommended therapy with Autism. Some of the things Occupational Therapists look at include: fine motor skills, feeding concerns, adaptive play skills, self care skills, peer interactions, sensory processing challenges, and delays in development.
- If your child is preschool age, they may be eligible for Occupational Therapy through Children's Therapy Initiative. They may already be involved with an Occupational Therapist, or be on the waitlist for Occupational Therapy (\*please note the current wait time for preschool Occupational Therapy through is 18-24 months, and is only available until children start kindergarten). If you want to check if your child is on the waitlist for Occupational Therapy or would like to self-refer, contact Children's Therapy Initiative Central Intake at 204-258-6550.
- If your child is school age, they may be eligible for Occupational Therapy through the public school system. You may wish to discuss this with your school team.
- If you are on a waiting list for Occupational Therapy, or would like to receive more Occupational therapy than what is available through the public system you may wish to seek out *private* Occupational Therapy. \*Note this would be at a cost to you\*. You may wish to see if your employer health benefit plan may cover a portion of the cost. The link for the directory of Occupational Therapists in Manitoba is in the information attached.



### CHILDREN'S THERAPY INITIATIVE REFERRAL FORM

<https://sscy.ca/wp-content/uploads/Winnipeg-CTI-referral-form-March-2016.pdf>

### PRIVATE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DIRECTORY FOR MANITOBA

<http://www.msot.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-2021-Services-for-Children.pdf>

## PLAY MATTERS

- Your child may have been referred to the Play Matters program at the Child Development Clinic. During a Play Matters Session, parents are provided with ideas of how to use play to engage with their child. Through play, a child with ASD can learn communication and coping skills by watching and responding to an adult's actions. These experiences help children to expand on their own interests, develop self-control, and feel a sense of accomplishment. All of this is achieved while learning to connect with others and develop relationships in a safe and fun way.
- Typically, up to 3 Play Matters sessions are offered.
- The Early Child Development Facilitator who facilitates this Program is Sarah Negus. She should be in touch with you in the coming weeks, or you can reach out to her at 204-258-6608.

## AUTISM PARENT INFO SESSION & PRESCHOOL AUTISM THERAPIES

- If your child is preschool age, we encourage you to register for the Parent Information Session that outlines the 2 public preschool age autism programs in Manitoba: St. Amant Early Learning Program (A&A) & Winnipeg Autism Outreach.
- These parent information sessions are held virtually once a month.
- To register for this you need to contact Nathalie Polinchuk at 204-256-4301 ext. 3443 or [npolinchuk@stamant.ca](mailto:npolinchuk@stamant.ca).
- This Parent Information Session will provide more information about St. Amant Early Learning Program and Winnipeg Autism Outreach. From there, if you decide you would like to apply, you will need to submit an application to each program.
- If this is something you are considering, we recommend attending the Information Session and submitting the applications as soon as you are able, as both programs will have waitlists, and are only available until children start kindergarten.
- Note: You have the option of applying to both programs, but you can ultimately only receive services from one of them.
- Also Note: St. Amant A&A is offered in rural areas.

## CHILDREN'S DISABILITY SERVICES (CDS) & CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

- At your appointment, the doctor may have also discussed a government program called Children's Disability Services (CDS). CDS is a government program that provides services to families of children with disabilities. (If you provided consent, the doctor will have already done this referral and you don't have to do anything. CDS will be in contact with you in the coming months).
- If your child is preschool age, CDS will assign you a Child Development Specialist that can work with you and/or your child's daycare or preschool on goals related to your child's development.
- Once your child is school age, they will assign you a case manager, who you can contact with questions regarding services, provide advocacy and support, attend school meetings, and potentially some respite and behavioural support if eligible.
- If you have questions about Children's Disability Service, you can contact Darcy Brooks at 204945-8311.

## INCONTINENCE SUPPLIES

- If your child is 3 years or older, you are the legal guardian, and you have received your eligibility letter in the mail from CDS, you can request diapers or pullups and wipes to be provided through CDS. The DHSU Medical Supplies Form is the form required for this, and the link for this form is in the information attached.  
\*Note: Because your child will be eligible for CDS, Section 2 does not have to be completed by a doctor. You can complete and submit this form as parents.
- If your child has Treaty Status, diapers or pullups would be provided by First Nations Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) instead. To do this, you would get a prescription from your family doctor or pediatrician and take it to your pharmacy, who would then submit a request to FNIHB for funding.
- If you are a foster parent of a child in CFS care, please speak with your CFS worker regarding incontinence supplies.

### DHSU MEDICAL SUPPLIES REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION FORM

[https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/dhsu/pubs/medical\\_supply\\_request\\_form.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/dhsu/pubs/medical_supply_request_form.pdf)

## WHAT ABOUT DAYCARE?

- Participation in an early childhood program such as daycare or preschool can be very positive for children's social and emotional development, as it provides more opportunities for peer interactions and practicing social skills.
- If your child is not in a child care program but you are interested in this, you may wish to start an account with the Manitoba Online Child Care Registry (the link is in the information attached, and add them to the waitlists for some daycare centers. We also recommend reaching out to these centers by phone. Note: Most centers have waitlists.
- If your child is already in a daycare or preschool program, you may wish to speak with the center about applying for *Inclusion Support* if it feels like some additional support might be needed for your child. Inclusion Support would mean the daycare would apply to the government for extra funding for additional staff in the daycare environment to support a child with participating in the program.

### MANITOBA ONLINE CHILDCARE REGISTRY

<https://onlinechildcareregistry.gov.mb.ca/OCCRWeb/en/Registration>

### INCLUSION SUPPORT

[https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/families/family\\_info/inclusion.html](https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/families/family_info/inclusion.html)

## WHAT IF MY CHILD WILL BE STARTING SCHOOL SOON?

- Children with ASD generally attend regular school programs just like any other child without ASD. They may have more involvement with the school resource program or school therapies, may have some work adapted to meet their needs, and/or may have additional support in the classroom environment if needed.
- If your child is eligible for school soon, we recommend registering for Kindergarten at your catchment school as early as possible. This will allow for appropriate planning for your child (if your child is eligible to start Kindergarten in September, the registration period typically starts around the February before, but varies a bit by school division).
- It is up to you as the parent, but we typically recommend sharing the information about the diagnosis and the assessment report with the school if you are comfortable.
- When you meet with the school, you may want to ask about availability of Speech and Occupational Therapy, and any other supports the school may have for children with autism.

## WHAT IF MY CHILD IS ALREADY IN SCHOOL?

- Again, it is up to you as the parent, but we typically recommend sharing the information about the diagnosis and assessment report with the school if you are comfortable.
- You may wish to find out if there is any Speech Therapy or Occupational Therapy available through your school, as well as any other supports they may offer for children with autism.  
\*The only alternative for Speech and Occupational Therapy for school age children would be private speech and occupational therapy that were mentioned earlier.
- You might also wish to reach out to MATC, who may also be able to provide some consultative support to school teams. The contact number is 204-958-9600.

### MATC NEURODEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES:

<https://matc.ca/services/nds/>



## THE DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

- The Disability Tax Credit should have been mailed to you with the assessment report.
- The doctor will have completed the majority of this form, all you need to do is complete the FRONT PAGE, and then mail it in to the Winnipeg Tax Center at 66 Stapon Rd. in Winnipeg.
- The Disability Tax Credit is a non-refundable federal tax credit that helps families supporting children with disabilities reduce the amount of income tax they have to pay.
- It also makes you eligible for other benefits, such as:
  - The Child Disability Benefit (CDB)
  - Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

### DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue->

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE INFO

- St. Amant Fulfilling Potential Workshops
  - These are workshops offered by St. Amant for anyone who cares for or works with an individual with developmental disabilities or autism. Some of the topics covered include Challenging Behaviour, Teaching Strategies, Potty Training, and an Intro to Autism.
  - To find out about an upcoming installment of these workshops, contact April Plett at [aplett@stamant.ca](mailto:aplett@stamant.ca).
- SSCY/RCC Newsletters
  - You can sign up for the newsletters on the RCC website (the link for this is in the information attached). The RCC/SSCY Family Network, LIFE Program, and Specialized Communication Resources Newsletters can all have helpful information including information about the Parent to Parent Café, Sibshops, recreational opportunities for kids and families, and educational workshops for parents.
- Jordan's Principle
  - If your child is First Nations and has Treaty Status, you may wish to reach out to the Jordan's Principle Special Needs Advocacy Unit to see if any further support may be available. The contact number is 204-987-4137.
- Family Dynamics
  - Family Dynamics has a number of different programs including supportive counselling, in-home family support, and behavioural support for childcare centers. The contact number is 204-947-1401.

### ST. AMANT FULFILLING POTENTIAL WORKSHOPS

<https://stamant.ca/learning-centre/autism/workshops-training/fulfilling-potential-workshop-series/>

### SSCY/RCC NEWSLETTERS

<https://rccinc.ca/>

(newsletter sign up is about half way down the page)

### JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

<https://eagleutc.com/services/special-needs-advocate-unit/>

### FAMILY DYNAMICS

<https://familydynamics.ca/>

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW? IF YOUR CHILD IS PRESCHOOL AGE

- Ensure you are following up with your Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist if assigned (if you are not sure if you have been referred for these or would like to self refer, you can contact Children's Therapy Initiative Central Intake 204-258-6550).
- Register for the Autism Parent Information Session regarding the public preschool age autism programs. To register, contact Nathalie Polinchuk at 204-256-4301 ext. 3443 or [npolinchuk@stamant.ca](mailto:npolinchuk@stamant.ca).
- Complete and submit the Disability Tax Credit
- If your child is in daycare/preschool, you may wish to share the diagnosis and assessment report with the daycare and inquire about Inclusion Support if appropriate.
- Reach out to any of the organizations of interest in the previous "Additional Resource Info Slide".



## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW? IF YOUR CHILD IS SCHOOL AGE

- Check with your school team to inquire if your child is receiving Speech Therapy or Occupational Therapy through school or if these are available.
- Complete and submit the Disability Tax Credit
- You may wish to share the information about diagnosis and assessment report with the school so that they can plan appropriately and ensure any supports needed are in place.
- Reach out to any of the organizations of interest in the previous "Additional Resource Info Slide".



## MY CONTACT INFO

- If you still have questions, please feel free to reach out to me at the contact information below:

Faith LaRose - Child Development Clinic Autism Social Worker

Phone: 204-258-6629

Email: [flarose@rccinc.ca](mailto:flarose@rccinc.ca)