

NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

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Special Education and Inclusion Parent/Legal Guardian Guides

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) provides many Special Education Guides for Parent/Legal Guardian which contain information about the supports, programs and services available for students with disabilities and special education needs in the TDSB. If, after reading a guide, you require additional information, please reach out to the principal of your child's school/your neighbourhood school. Videos are included within some of the guides.

Important Dates

Elementary PD Days:

November 14, 2025
January 16, 2026
February 13, 2026
June 5, 2026
June 26, 2026

Secondary PD Days:

November 14, 2025
January 29, 2026
February 13, 2026
June 25, 2026
June 26, 2026

School Year Holidays (as per Ministry):

Winter Break: December 22, 2025 – January 2, 2026
Family Day: February 16, 2026
Mid-Winter Break: March 16-20, 2026
Good Friday: April 3, 2026
Easter Monday: April 6, 2026
Victoria Day: May 18, 2026

ASD After School Skills Development Program: Fall/Winter Session

The Fall/Winter session of the ASD After School Skills Development Program will run from **November 25, 2025 to February 24, 2026**.

The program is available to students in Grades 4-10 who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This program provides an opportunity for students to develop, build, and enhance their social communication skills through weekly virtual sessions.

Please see the [attached program letter](#) which includes the link for registration.

The registration period will remain open until **Friday, November 7, 2025**.

Please direct any questions about this program to your school principal.

Resources

The Brain and Empathy

from TDSB Psychological Services

Empathy is a biological skill, rooted in the structure of the brain. As educators help students navigate emotions and relationships, understanding the neuroscience behind empathy can open new pathways for instruction and connection.

Neuroscientists have identified key players in the empathy network:

- **Mirror neurons** activate when we watch someone else's experience, allowing us to feel with them— (e.g. flinching at another's paper cut).
- The **right supramarginal gyrus** keeps our emotions and others' separate, helping us regulate emotions and respond thoughtfully.
- The **medial prefrontal cortex** plays a crucial role in perspective-taking—the ability to imagine what someone else is thinking or feeling.

Empathy is Trainable! Encouragingly, research shows that empathy isn't fixed—it can grow with practice. Mindfulness, storytelling, and social-emotional learning (SEL) exercises strengthen brain pathways involved in compassion and perspective-taking. Programs that build these skills can create lasting changes in students' behavior and brain function. Our brains are wired to empathize more with those we perceive as 'like' us. Educators play a critical role in expanding students' empathy beyond their immediate circles—using diverse books, classroom conversations, and inclusive practices to build a more compassionate worldview.

Autism Regional Services

Monthly Drop-In Hours for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

The Autism Regional Services (ARS) Team is pleased to introduce Monthly Drop-In Hours—an initiative designed to offer accessible support, guidance, and resources for families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These sessions reflect our ongoing commitment to fostering meaningful collaboration between TDSB families and the school board's ARS Team.

Each month, families are invited to join us virtually to:

- Connect with ARS Team members
- Ask questions
- Explore strategies and supports
- Strengthen the partnership between home and school



Details:

Date: Thursday, November 20, 2025

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Teams Link: [Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 234 244 949 562 9

Passcode: RH95vT9K

Join on a video conferencing device

Tenant key: tdsbon@m.webex.com

Video ID: 117 231 765 9

No registration is required—parents/guardians are welcome to drop in!

Resources

TDSB Speech Language Pathology (SLP) Services

TDSB Speech Language Pathology (SLP) Services focuses on the early identification and prevention of speech and language difficulties. TDSB SLP Services creates monthly Kindergarten calendars filled with activities to support oral language and literacy at home.

Download your [November Kindergarten Calendar](#) here.

Let's Read Together! 📖 ✨

This month's featured book is *Jabari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall. In this heartwarming story, Jabari takes a big leap—literally—as he faces his fears and finds the courage to try something new. The book helps students explore bravery, perseverance, and confidence, while strengthening their reading skills. You can continue the fun at home by asking your child to share a time when they felt proud of trying something new, or by practising “brave jumps” together—whether off a small step, into a pile of pillows, or into the conversation!



Please view our [lesson here](#). We hope this lesson helps your child see themselves in the story and build their confidence as both a learner and a reader.

Parent Engagement Opportunities for November 2025

Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Services	This session will focus on practical strategies to support families with developing skills to manage stress while strengthening bonds and relationships. Practical approaches will be shared to help children and families develop coping and self-soothing skills that will promote identity-affirming well-being and independence.	November 18th, 2025	10:00 am - 11:00 am	Nov 18 AM Session Registration
Practical Strategies to Support Regulation and Relationship		November 19th, 2025	6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Nov 19 PM Session Registration
Webinar				
Autism Regional Services Drop-In Session	The Autism Regional Services Team (ARS) is available to support families by answering questions, sharing resources, and providing guidance on strategies that promote student success and inclusion both at school and at home.	November 20, 2025	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Teams Link

Resources



Psychological Services

Supporting Gifted Learners

At the TDSB, Giftedness means that your child/student has extremely high cognitive abilities. This may mean that they learn new things quickly, show deep curiosity, or have advanced skills for their age. Gifted children might need more challenging or varied activities to stay engaged and continue growing. Here are some ways to help:

	<h4>Encourage Intellectual Curiosity</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer opportunities for enrichment and exploration in areas of interest through books, documentaries, or educational programs. • Encourage independence and self-directed learning/exploration, allowing children to pursue their interests at their own pace.
	<h4>Support Emotional Well-Being</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge feelings by recognizing and validating intense emotions. Encourage open discussions about feelings and stressors. • Help your child/student develop coping mechanisms for managing perfectionism and stress, such as mindfulness or relaxation techniques.
	<h4>Encourage Balance and Socialization</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children have well-rounded schedules that includes physical activity, downtime, and social interactions. • Encourage social interaction by creating opportunities for children to interact with peers, both those with similar interests and those with different interests, to support social development. • Create a classroom environment that encourages collaboration and helps students build relationships with their peers.
	<h4>Provide Opportunities for Creativity</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage independent projects at home and at school. Allow children to explore topics in depth through independent or group projects that align with their interests and talents. • Foster creative thinking by integrating activities that promote creative problem-solving and critical thinking. • Adapt learning materials and instruction to provide more challenging and enriched content tailored to the child/student's advanced abilities.
	<h4>Engage in Ongoing Assessment and Feedback</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor progress by regularly assessing and providing feedback on both academic progress and social-emotional development to ensure that gifted students are being supported appropriately. • Be prepared to adjust strategies based on ongoing assessment to meet the evolving needs of gifted students.

For more information and resources, please check out our Google Site at:
<https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/psychologicalservices/home>



Independence Skills

Building independence through simple tasks throughout the day fosters self-esteem and pride. This process requires patience and dedicated time.



And of course, plenty of practice.

Partner with your child's school to encourage practice of these skills at school as well!

[Click here for tips on building independence for mealtimes, some simple household tasks and other daily skills.](#)

Fine Motor Skills

Developing **fine motor skills** - working the small muscles in your hands is crucial for building **independence**. Practice strengthening the muscles needed for everyday self-help tasks. Check out the below handout to learn more about developing fine motor skills and hand strengthening activities.

tdsb | Occupational Therapy & Physiotherapy Services

Components of Fine Motor Skills and Strategies to Support Hand Strengthening

Palmar Arches:



Mealtime Solutions

Do you have a child who is **developing eating skills with specific food preferences**? Food sensitivities are common and some quick tips to consider can be found in this handout, [Mealtime Solutions](#). Seeking medical attention may also be necessary to rule out any swallowing, stomach, digestive or dental issues.

tdsb

Occupational Therapy & Physiotherapy Services

[Text Only Version](#)

Meal Time Solutions!

Feeding and eating behavior is dependent on a child's development. Medical, maturation and body mechanics issues all have an impact on oral motor abilities and a child's ability to eat. Challenging feeding & eating behaviors in the classroom can be stressful for the child and the caregivers. Try some of the following strategies and suggestions to ensure eating at is enjoyable for everyone!

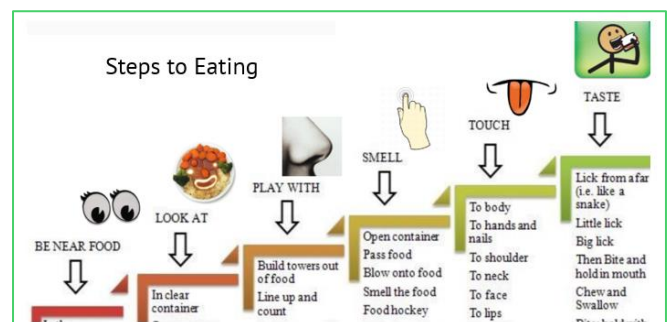
Set up the Environment for Success: Set up tables/chairs, think about positioning and create boundaries (e.g. placemats) help children to understand what food belongs to themselves vs. others. Review a visual

[Listen to a recording from one of our Virtual Office Hours on the topic of "Picky Eating and Healthy Habits"](#)

Steps to Eating



Check out this Steps to Eating resource below that shares a guide on how to introduce new foods to your child.



Resources



Pathways to Adulthood: For Students with Disabilities

In Person Resource Fair

Join us for an exciting, free event designed to support students with disabilities and their families as they plan for life after high school.

When: Saturday, November 29, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (Registration opens at 9:30 a.m.)

- Drop in anytime from 10AM to 2PM!

Where: York Mills Collegiate Institute

Address: 490 York Mills Rd, North York, ON M3B 1W6

Why Attend?

- Meet over 40+ agencies representatives from the disability sector including Post 21 Programs including Day Programs, Employments, Post Secondary Institutions, Community Programs and Supports.
- Take part in hands-on activities for students.
- TDSB Staff: Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Transition Navigators (Teachers) on-site to help answer any questions.
- Quiet/break spaces available.
- TDSB Students require adult supervision at all times.
- Snacks Will Be Provided!

SCAN ME



Register here!



Resources



Supporting Parents and Caregivers in Navigating Services for their
Child, Youth, or Young Adult with
Developmental Disabilities and/or Complex Disabilities

**TDSB Virtual Information Sessions
Hosted by TDSB Social Workers**

DATES:

**November 17th (Morning Session)
9:30 am - 12:00 noon**

**November 24th (Evening Session - A Repeat)
5:30 pm - 8 pm**

**Topic: Introducing Key Disability Sector
Community Agencies**

Connect with Key Developmental Disabilities and/or
Complex Disabilities Community Agencies as they share
important information about resources that support your
child, youth or young adult with Developmental
Disabilities and or Complex Disabilities.

PRESENTERS: Community Living Toronto, Surrey Place, Holland Bloorview, Geneva
Centre and Family Services Toronto



Microsoft Teams

Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 266 605 358 806 6
Passcode: Yn7aj358



virtualfairinfo@tdsb.on.ca

FOR ANY QUESTIONS CALL VANESSA WONG: 647-229-0730 OR LARENA CASE: 416-570-3314

Professional Learning and Resources



**Supporting Parents and Caregivers in Navigating Services for their
Child, Youth, or Young Adult with
Developmental Disabilities and/or Complex Disabilities**

**TDSB Virtual Information Session Dates 2025/26
Hosted by TDSB Social Workers**

November 17 (AM) & 24 (PM)

Introducing Key Community Agencies

Connect with Key Developmental Disabilities and/or Complex
Disabilities Community Agencies

December 8 (AM) & 15 (PM)

Autism Supports in the Community

Join Us As We Invite Community Agencies To Talk About
Autism Supports in the Community.

January 19 (AM) & 26 (PM)

Funding & Camp Resources

Join Us as We Gain Information About Accessing Funding Resources
and Registering for Camps.

February 9 (AM) & 23 (PM)

Planning for Adulthood: Part 1

Learn About Community Supports for Life After High School
including Financial Supports

March 9 (AM) & 30 (PM)

Planning for Adulthood: Part 2

Learn About Community Supports for Life After High School including
Community Day Programs, Employment Programs, and Post-Secondary Options.

April 13 (AM) & 20 (PM)

Future Planning

Learn How to Set Meaningful Goals for Your Child and Explore Key Resources That
Support Growth, Independence, Financial Security, and Community Inclusion.



Microsoft Teams

Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 266 605 358 806 6
Passcode: Yn7aj358



TIMES:
Morning Session: 9:30 am - 12 Noon
Evening Session (A Repeat):
5:30 pm - 8 pm

virtualfairinfo@tdsb.on.ca