



Back to School with AAoM - Tips, Resources, and Training for a Successful Year Ahead!

Contributed by Erik Gallery, BCBA, LBA, Navigator Manager

It seems like we say it every time when this season starts to end, but wow, that was a quick summer! With the end of summer comes the return of the school year. This can be both an exciting and anxious time for students and families alike, whether they're a returning student or entering the school environment for the first time. We at AAoM wanted to present a list of helpful tips to consider in easing this transition.

Talk to your child about the upcoming school year: This doesn't have to be a formal, sit down conversation. This is an opportunity to keep your child aware of the transition, but also opens the door for you and your child to speak more on the subject. A visual tool can also be used during this time. Utilizing a calendar with the back to school date noted can aid a child in better anticipating this big change to their routine.

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Create a new morning routine and practice it: We all have high hopes as to what the perfect morning routine looks like...though it doesn't usually go the way we plan in our heads. Creating a morning routine ahead of time, and involving your child in the planning process can help to ensure they are both aware of this new routine, and have a voice in it, which can make it more motivating to actually follow.

Take a tour of the school, meet staff ahead of time (if possible): Even if your child is a returning student to the school, it can still be beneficial to see the location of a new classroom, gain a reminder on locations of bathrooms and other common areas. This act is another piece of easing that transition and keeping your child aware of coming changes. It never hurts to request to meet a teacher ahead of time, but be mindful that this may be difficult to arrange prior to the school year starting.

Keep school staff informed, provide a “snapshot” where needed: For children with specific needs, providing a 1 page overview of those items can be helpful. Items regarding dietary restrictions, sensory aversions, communication and behavioral needs, can all act as a great reference to the staff serving your child. It's also beneficial to list reinforcing items and activities, as well as methods that are used to treat those needs should they arise in the classroom.

Ensuring any “plans” are in place for the first day: Whether your child has an IEP, a behavior support plan, etc. it's good to ensure that the accommodations and resources from those plans will be prepared for the first day of school. Don't hesitate to request a meeting to ensure all parties, including potentially new staff, are clear on the expectations.

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Be prepared for incoming communication: Your child's educators are going to want to keep you in the loop about progress and needs where they can. Often they'll need your support to ensure your child is having a successful school year. Be mindful that our educators serve many students and have limited windows of communication. Adapt where you can to keep that communication going!

Don't be afraid to ask: A new school year can present needs and challenges that we can't always anticipate, no matter how much we prepare. As resources and options are discussed, make sure you're informed and understanding of the process. Never hesitate to ask for more guidance!

Find the joy where you can: Easier said than done...but despite all the changes and expectations, don't forget the purpose of school, an opportunity for your child to learn, grow, connect with their peers. Support that where you can, and between the homework, forms, and lunches, don't forget to enjoy time with your child.

While the above items can provide general direction for navigating the start of school, we realize that further resources may be needed in addressing more focused needs and special education support.

Please utilize the following link or QR code to access our [AAoM's Education Resource Guide](#):





We also encourage our families interested in learning more about special education needs and support for their children to consider registering for our upcoming **Special Education Advocacy Summit** that will include a Wrightslaw Training session with Pete Wright!

Click the Flyer for More Information!

Special Education Advocacy Summit

December 1st-3rd, 2022 | Detroit, MI

Improving access to educational opportunities
and raising expectations for students with disabilities

Presented By



MiPAAC
MICHIGAN PARENT, ADVOCATE
& ATTORNEY COALITION

+

Wrightslaw

Powered by AAoM

Pre-summit Meet & Greet

Meet and network with other Special Education Advocacy Summit attendees!

Thursday, December 1st | 6:00pm - 8:00pm | Detroit Marriott Southfield

Wrightslaw Special Education Law & Advocacy Training

Friday, December 2nd | 9:00am - 4:30pm | Marygrove Conservancy

Putting Your Advocacy into Action! Interactive Sessions.

Take what you've learned from the Wrightslaw training and apply it to specific advocacy issues.

Saturday, December 3rd | 9:00am - 3:00pm | Marygrove Conservancy

Register at mipaac.org/summit



With Generous Support From



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Karen Colina
Wilson Smithbauer

For any further support, we remind you to utilize AAoM's MiNavigator Program and speak to a Navigator! We can be reached at [877-463-2266](tel:877-463-2266) or navigator@aaomi.org



LEARN MORE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT AAOMI.ORG OR CALL [877.463.2266](tel:877.463.2266)



Health Care Disparities Affecting Individuals with Autism

Contributed by AAoM's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

The health care system can be intimidating and confusing to navigate. However, for autistic individuals facing disparities when it comes to accessing quality health care, the problem is compounded.

A recent study by researchers at Cambridge University showed that “Autistic adults reported lower quality healthcare than non-autistic”...“including poorer access to healthcare and poorer communication, alongside increased anxiety, sensory sensitivity, system-level problems, shutdowns, and meltdowns.”

When a patient is met with an unpleasant or ableist experience from a health care provider this often causes people to delay seeking the care that they need. Some medical professionals have suggested, “trying to get more disability content into our medical school curriculum, making sure that our students are learning how to take care of disabled patients.” While that is a step in the right direction it is clear that these issues are systemic and will require many solutions.

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Unfortunately, the problems don't stop there, "Black, Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander autistic people in the United States have [higher odds of having co-occurring health conditions](#), such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease or hypertension, compared with white autistic people."

These racial disparities are caused by multiple factors and also affect the general population and the healthcare industry as a whole. Researchers at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA have stated, "To ease racial and ethnic disparities, public health interventions, such as Medicaid expansion, should use targeted outreach efforts and provide more healthcare services in autistic people's homes or communities."

There are many problems with no one clear solution. It is imperative that patients stand up for themselves but even more imperative that medical providers listen to their patients and treat each patient with the respect and dignity that they deserve. Patients can assess their doctors by using sites like [Yelp](#) or [Vitals](#) or even reading Google Reviews. If you have been the recipient of unethical health care practices you can file a complaint with the [Bureau of Community and Health Systems \(BCHS\)](#).

Contact the [Michigan Alliance for Families](#) or the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services \(MDHHS\)](#) for more health and wellness resources. Individuals can also seek mental health support through [Psychology Today, Find a Therapist](#). As always, the [Autism Alliance of Michigan](#) is here to support you and help you navigate.

References:

<https://www.norwoodnews.org/disability-rights-ny-highlights-healthcare-inequity-among-people-with-disabilities/>

<https://www.spectrumnews.org/news/autism-comorbidities-reflect-racial-ethnic-disparities/>





Upcoming Community Events



Date	Event
August 30	Adult Autistic Peer Support Group (Online)
August 30	Virtual Group Peer Support (Online)
August 30	Phenomenal Women Support Group (Online)
August 30	Essentials of Business Solutions Professional (BSP) for Career Service (Online)
August 31	Serving on Special Education Committees (Online)
September 1	Yoga for All (Online)
September 1	Brain Injury Survivors Group (Online)
September 3	Family Days for Children With Autism – Arts, Beats & Eats 2022! (Royal Oak)
September 7	IEP: A Closer Look (Online)
September 8	REC IT Class: Inclusive Art

Looking for more to do?
Scan the QR Code for
more events!





Upbound Staffing, a fully integrated program within the Autism Alliance of Michigan, leads and supports disability-employment initiatives throughout the State of Michigan.

Contact Upbound Staffing:
Employee Pre-Assessment:
<https://aaomi.org/employee-pre-assessment/>
Website: <https://upboundatwork.com/>
Email: upbound@aaomi.org
Phone: [1-\(248\) 508-8693](tel:1-248-508-8693)



Michigan Parent, Advocate & Attorney Coalition (MiPAAC) is a newly formed statewide group focused on student centered advocacy.

Contact MiPAAC:
[MiPAAC membership Form](#)
<https://mipaac.org/>



The MiNavigator team is a group of professionals ready to serve and connect those touched by autism with the most up to date services and resources available in our state.

Contact MiNavigator:
Website:
<https://aaomi.org/project/minavigator/>
Email: navigator@aaomi.org
Phone: [877-463-2266](tel:877-463-2266)

Navigators are available Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 5pm

