

**AUTISM** ANSWERS

# DIGITAL TOOLKIT

Sample posts, topics, hashtags and more for parents, providers and advocates in the autism community.



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**FOR**  
**PROVIDERS:**  
*STRATEGIES*  
*FOR*  
*SUCCESSFUL*  
*VACCINATION*



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- Identify a point of contact within the vaccination clinic to address reasonable accommodation needs.
- Identify accommodations needed prior to appointment.
- Ask a caregiver what is helpful, how best to communicate, favorite things to talk about, interests, what may be problematic.
- Speak directly to the child whenever possible.
- Use social stories and storyboards to explain what will happen before, during and after vaccination.
- Provide extra time before and after the appointment.
- Eliminate/minimize wait times in the clinic (separate line or check in, wait in car until a room is available).
- Provide individual rooms and a calm, quiet environment.
- Consider room dividers if individual rooms are not available.
- Minimize the number of patients in the clinic at one time.
- Allow a caregiver, support person, or emotional support animal to accompany individual.
- Have sensory fidgets, tablets, noise cancelling headphones available.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use one step directions.
- Allow additional time to respond to questions or directions.
- Use pictures/communication board, iPad/tablet, smart-phone.
- Talk about topics of interest.
- Use social stories and storyboards.

**FOR  
PARENTS:**  
*STRATEGIES  
FOR  
SUCCESSFUL  
VACCINATION*



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- Your child can sense your emotions, so the calmer you are, the calmer your child is likely to be.
- Teach your children that doctors and nurses are friendly people, and they are working hard to keep children healthy.
- Let the clinic know they have a patient coming to their office with special needs so they can make your visit more comfortable.
- Ask your child to choose a favorite toy to bring from home to play with while they are waiting (e.g., toy, iPad, book, or stuffed animal). A beloved toy or activity can help to reduce anxiety and pass the time.
- Give your child a positive end to the experience.

# SOCIAL MEDIA *POST EXAMPLES*



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**AAOM NAVIGATORS ARE  
HERE TO HELP!**

# #DID YOU KNOW

There is no evidence of a connection between vaccinations and autism. This is true of ALL vaccinations, including the COVID vaccine.

AAoM can help you find a physician or clinic that can answer your questions about vaccinating your child.



## FACEBOOK

- Parents and caregivers of children living with autism need knowledge and support to provide efficient care for their loved ones – AAoM Navigators are here to help! For all your questions, big or small, the navigators can provide you with information on anything ASD related. Whether it's questions about vaccines or evaluations, we are here for you! Click the link for more information: <https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/project/minavigator/>
- There is no evidence of a connection between vaccinations and autism. This is true of ALL vaccinations, including the COVID vaccine We urge you to continue practicing physical distancing, wear a mask, and get the shot if you haven't been vaccinated yet. AAoM can help you find a physician or clinic that can answer your questions about vaccinating your child. Click the link for more resources: [insert link]
- The pandemic has thrown up many obstacles and that goes double for parents and caregivers. COVID vaccines are safe and effective for your loved one with autism. Whether you are racing for an appointment or still doing the research, take your time, protect your family and if you have questions, contact a navigator!





## TWITTER

- Parents and caregivers of children living with autism need knowledge and support to provide efficient care for their loved ones. Whether it's questions about vaccines or evaluations, #AAoM Navigators are here to help!
- There is no evidence of a connection between vaccinations and autism. This is true of ALL vaccinations, including the COVID vaccine. #AAoM can help you find a physician or clinic that can answer your questions about vaccinating your child.
- The pandemic has thrown up many obstacles and that goes double for parents and caregivers in #Michigan. COVID vaccines are safe for children with autism. We urge you to take your time, protect your family and if you have questions, contact a #navigator!

# HOLIDAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS

*POST  
EXAMPLES*



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# Autism Awareness Day

Let's celebrate the difference!



## **AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH (APRIL)**

- April is Autism Awareness Month – a time to increase awareness and understanding of autism in all aspects, shapes and color. Let's celebrate the difference!

## **WORLD KINDNESS DAY (NOVEMBER 13TH)**

- Today is #WorldKindnessDay! We challenge you to do something kind for yourself or someone else today!

## **OTHER DATES**

- World Autism Awareness Day (April 2nd)
- National Immunization Month (August)
- National Bullying Prevention Month (October)
- National Influenza Vaccination Week (December 6th-12th)

# HASHTAGS TO USE

**#DidYouKnow**

**#AskANavigator**

**#AAoM**

**#AAoM Navigators**

**#Michigan**

**#COVID19**

**#vaccines**

**#migov**

**#mileg**

**OTHER HASHTAGS, WHEN RELEVANT**

- #booster
- #omicron
- #parents
- #caregivers

# LANGUAGE TO USE

When developing a social media post, remember individuals with autism share two common things, social language and behavioral differences. They learn differently. Other than that, the many things known about autism are trends and related factors among individuals with autism, things that we need to discover about **everyone** with autism along their unique journey.

Autism is so diverse can look quite different from person to person but is also quite a different experience of diagnostic and treatment factors, and journey along the way.

Many different terms are used to describe autism. There is no agreement within the community of autistic people, parents, their broader support network, or the wider community on the best terms to use. There is a wide range of language to describe autism by different individuals, including professionals, parents, supporters and individuals with autism.

Despite these differences, when we communicate in any way about individuals with autism, we try to use **person-first language that acknowledges the individual**, such as “my daughter with autism” or “my friend who has autism” and not the diagnosis, such as “autistic child.” Others in the autism community prefer to use the word autistic, such as “autistic people.”

The most important thing to remember is that many people with autism see their autism as a fundamental part of who they are, **so it’s important to use positive language.**

If you are referring to a particular person or group, ask them how they would prefer to be described. **This preference should take precedence over the recommendations outlined below.** Because there is no uniform consensus on any one descriptive way to describe individuals with autism. Here are some general guidelines:

#### **DO SAY:**

- Person/people/child/children with autism
- Person/people/child/children diagnosed with autism
- The autism community
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the medical diagnosis for autism
- There are no longer sub-diagnoses, such as Asperger Syndrome or Autistic Disorder; do not use those other terms
- Individuals/families/children living with autism spectrum disorder (or ASD)
- Has an autism diagnosis
- The “spectrum” in autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
  - We recommend using “the spectrum” only in the context of referring to the many varying strengths and challenges people with autism may have, such as individuals who have an accompanying learning disability and need support to do everyday things like clean, cook or exercise. Other people with autism may live independently, work in full-time jobs, and need very little, if any, extra support.
- Neurotypical (note: neurotypical is primarily used by people with autism, so this may not be applicable in, for example, many social media posts or the popular press.)

**AUTISM ALLIANCE OF MICHIGAN**

**THANKS  
YOU**

**Contact us**

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