Welcome to CHEO's Autism Program Newsletter

Welcome to the very first edition of the CHEO Autism Program newsletter. In the coming months we hope to keep you abreast of the latest news and updates of our IBI, School Support and ABA program components. We will also use this newsletter to share some of the “tools of the trade” that work well in our interactions with kids with ASD and their families, in the hope that some of them will be helpful for you as well.

Although this edition of our newsletter is a print version, our following issues will all be email newsletters. We invite you to sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter by visiting our website at www.cheo.on.ca/En/autism.

Together we can make sure that each child and youth with autism living in Eastern Ontario has the opportunity to discover and achieve their full potential.

Warm regards,

Dr. Lise Bisnaire, C. Psych
Director, CHEO Autism Program

Did you know...?
- Our School Support Program Consultants work with teachers and educators from 9 different school boards across Eastern Ontario, in both French and English.

Tip of the Month

You have probably heard the old saying, “Say what you mean, and mean what you say”. You also have probably realized that this is especially helpful when talking to a child with an autism spectrum disorder. However, another helpful tip is to **tell the child what to do, rather than what not to do**. Many children with autism have difficulty at times initiating actions (Rinehart, Bellgrove, Tonge, Brereton, Howells-Rankin & Brashaw, 2006) as well as processing verbal information (Boddaert, Belin, Chabane, Poline, Barthélémy, Mouren-Simeoni, Brunelle, Samson & Zilbovicius, 2003). Because of these difficulties, it can be challenging to listen to a negative instruction (e.g. “don’t run”), decide on a more appropriate action, and then initiate that action. Therefore it may be more helpful for the child if he were told, “Walk, please.” By telling him/her outright what the expectations are, you will make it easier for him/her to meet those expectations.

Parent Satisfaction Survey

We will soon be sending out a satisfaction survey to parents who have a child in the process of transitioning out of IBI.

The purpose of this survey is to help us find out what you think we are doing right and what we need to improve on.

Your feedback is important in helping us improve CHEO’s Autism Program to ensure that it meets the needs of your child as well as your own needs.

We appreciate you taking the time to complete our survey. Stay tuned for more details!
‘Home Runs for Autism’ Raises $10,133!

On May 12, 2012 CHEO Autism parent Evan Malamud faced off against MLB all-star Jose Canseco in a home run challenge. The goal of this event was to raise money and promote awareness for CHEO’s Autism Program. As a longtime lover of baseball, Malamud thought a homerun challenge might be the perfect opportunity to have a little fun while raising money for an organization that has helped his eldest son, Jaedyn, who was diagnosed with autism/PDD-NOS at the age of two.

Malamud contacted Canseco, one of his childhood heroes, and he agreed to participate. The event was well received by the Ottawa community with just over 1500 supporters attending and a whopping $10,133 raised and donated to CHEO’s Autism Program.

We at the Autism Program wanted to give our heartfelt thanks to Evan for the support he has given us through his fundraising efforts. Thank you Evan for helping our program support children with autism spectrum disorders.

Parent Perspectives: Jerry Goudreault’s story

Finding out your child has been diagnosed with autism and not knowing what to do is a scary reality many parents face. Jerry and Alain Goudreault know this reality all too well.

A year and a half ago Jerry and Alain were blessed with the opportunity to adopt a three year old boy named Dakota. When they met Dakota he had already been diagnosed with autism and was on a waiting list to receive Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI). The family, who resided in Hamilton, adopted Dakota in January of 2011 and then later relocated to Ottawa. Soon after their arrival, a space became available for Dakota to begin the IBI program at CHEO that September.

Prior to his son beginning the CHEO Autism IBI program, Jerry was very nervous. He didn’t know much about autism and was unsure what to expect from the program. Thankfully, the whole team at the Autism Program eased Jerry’s worry.

“Each day, when I dropped off Dakota at the Fisher Park location, different teachers would come over and talk to me. It was very reassuring,” reflected Jerry. “Communication was very open about Dakota. His agenda was updated every day with notes about what kind of day he had, what they were working on, and what they wanted to achieve.”

For Jerry and Alain toilet training was one area they were having particular difficulty with when it came to Dakota. CHEO’s IBI program was a saving grace. “Once Dakota started IBI he was toilet trained within 2 days,” said Jerry. “Dakota was so proud of himself. When I picked him up he ran over to me saying ‘Daddy! Daddy! I peed in the toilet!’”

Within as little as three months Jerry and Alain noticed a huge improvement in Dakota’s overall behaviour. “He was sharing at home and his vocabulary had become much better,” said Jerry.

When reflecting on the staff at CHEO’s Autism Program Jerry could not say enough good things. “The staff encouraged Dakota right from the beginning and he has blossomed tremendously since then,” said Jerry. “Everyone who works there has done a fantastic job.” The IBI team had the same expectations and goals as Jerry, which was doing what was right for Dakota and helping him achieve his highest potential. “Working as a team made me feel like my input was very important,” said Jerry. “Everyone was working towards the same goal, which was Dakota’s best interest as their number one priority.”

Since beginning the program Dakota has developed into an outgoing boy who is happy and content. At five years old he is now ready to begin senior kindergarten this September. He will participate in the IBI transition classroom in the morning, and attend regular kindergarten in the afternoon.
