



MEDIA ADVISORY
April 3, 2017

Education System Must Change to Meet the Needs of Students with Autism

On April 4, 2017, at 10:00 am, the Ontario Autism Coalition (the “OAC”) will hold a news conference at the Queen’s Park Media Studio to release an important report on Autism and Education. Entitled “*New Horizons*,” the report lists more than 64 recommendations on how to improve outcomes for students with autism in Ontario’s schools.

The OAC’s **top five** recommendations call upon the Ministry of Education to:

1. Increase and improve training in special education for teacher candidates;
2. Revise [PPM 140](#) and enforce its application;
3. Reform education funding with a focus on a needs-based approach to special education funding and more accountability for money transferred to school boards;
4. Allocate funding to hire more EA’s and to deliver more extensive training in Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) for all those who work with autistic students; and
5. Establish a Demonstration School and/or a Provincial School for students with autism.

Students with autism and their parents will attend, and their patience is running out. Despite government efforts, too many educators still do not have adequate training about autism, which affects 1 in every 68 children. PPM 140, an 11-year-old document that opened the door for ABA teaching techniques to be used in schools, has failed to deliver on its initial promise. Despite huge investments in special education, autistic students are frequently denied the EA support they need. The lead author of the report, OAC Vice-President Laura Kirby-McIntosh says, “As a mother of two autistic students and as a teacher myself, putting together this report made it clear to me that if we want better outcomes for all exceptional students, then parents, teachers, EA’s, ABA professionals and clinicians *must* work together. But the government *must* take a leadership role. Autistic students need evidence-based interventions, and the system must become more accountable.”

The OAC will deliver the report to the Hon. Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education in a meeting on April 5th. The time for awareness is long past. The time for *action*, especially during International Autism Awareness month, has come.

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#AutismDoesntEndAtSchool

The Ontario Autism Coalition is a non-profit Ontario corporation dedicated to advocacy and political action on behalf of people with autism.
www.ontarioautismcoalition.com