



**ONTARIO
AUTISM
COALITION**

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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OAC Releases Education Recommendations

As the province works toward reopening childcare centres and schools, the autism community is deeply concerned that the needs of children with autism are not being considered as plans are being finalized. Students with autism have often borne the brunt of education cuts. Students have been left to struggle with dwindling support and less access to vital resources. COVID-19 has only served to exacerbate the inequalities that already existed within the education system in Ontario.

With these concerns in mind, the Ontario Autism Coalition has presented a **list of recommendations** to the Ministry of Education. This report outlines key concerns held by the autism community as well as suggestions and solutions that the government must act on to ensure that students with autism remain able to equitably access a quality education.

Key recommendations from the report include:

- Hiring more educational assistants across Ontario school boards;
- Providing additional funding to school boards to provide Educational Assistants with specialized autism training;
- Hiring more qualified professionals to supervise Educational Assistants; and
- Immediately issuing a policy direction to all school boards with restrictions on when and how a principal may exclude a student from school.

Ontario Autism Coalition President Laura Kirby-McIntosh (herself a teacher) believes this is an opportunity for key stakeholders to come together to make important changes. Kirby-McIntosh explains “with the challenges experienced under COVID-19 we’re also seeing opportunities to do better in how we support learners with autism. We know that one size does not fit all, and that students with autism need additional support and consideration. With a willing government we hope that we can work together to enact changes within the education system that will better the lives of students with autism, not just now, but in the future as well.”

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For more information please contact:

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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