

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

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CHECK IT OUT!!

- [What is UDL?](#)
- [Dr. Dan Siegel: What it means to "flip your lid".](#)
- [Truth, Love, & Racial Literacy | Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz | TEDxPenn](#)
- [Why Do We Lose Control of Our Emotions?](#)

IMPORTANT DATES:

KEY DATES 2024-2025

ELEMENTARY PD DAYS:

September 27, 2024: Professional Development
 October 11, 2024: Professional Development
 November 15, 2024: Parent-Teacher Conferences
 November 29, 2024: Professional Development
 January 17, 2025: Professional Development
 February 14, 2025: Parent-Teacher Conferences
 June 6, 2025: Professional Development

SECONDARY PD DAYS:

October 11, 2024 - Professional Development
 November 15, 2024 - Professional Development
 November 29, 2024 - Professional Development
 January 30, 2025 - Professional Development
 February 14, 2025 - Professional Development
 June 26, 2025 - Professional Development
 June 27, 2025 - Professional Development

SCHOOL YEAR HOLIDAYS (as per Ministry of Education)

Labour Day: September 2, 2024
 Thanksgiving: October 14, 2024
 Winter Break: December 23, 2024 – January 3, 2025
 Family Day: February 17, 2025
 Mid-Winter Break: March 10-14, 2025
 Good Friday: April 18, 2025
 Easter Monday: April 21, 2025
 Victoria Day: May 19, 2025

Special Education and Inclusion Parent Guides

Special Education and Inclusion Drop-in Sessions for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

Learn more about navigating special education services, resources and supports, ask questions, and connect with other families. [Calendar of Drop-In Sessions for the 2024-2025 School Year](#).

Resources

Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy (OT/PT) Services

Outdoor Play Time is good for us all year long!

We all know and recognise the importance of outdoor play time and the benefits to taking learning outdoors. Fresh air and sunshine can help to promote better health and a stronger immune system.

Click on our [Outdoor Play Newsletter](#) to learn more about the benefits of the great outdoors. Can't get out? **Bring the outdoors in!** Let in as much natural sunlight as possible, open windows, [play nature sounds](#), and, try planting seeds and watching them grow!

Click [here](#) for great ways to make WINTER FUN and for ACCESSIBLE ideas.



Accessible Outdoor Options

Looking for ways to encourage your families to have fun in the winter? Toronto has many **accessible recreational programs and venues** such as Illuminarium, ROM, Cineplex movie cinemas and more venues. The [Access 2 Card](#) offers free caregiver accompaniment for individuals with disabilities!

Outdoor places such as Evergreen Brickworks offer short walking trails that are maintained over the winter. In the heart of downtown, Nathan Phillips Square is decorated with lights and has skate/ sledges/ skate aides available for rent (good idea to call for availability ahead of time). Both are easily accessible by TTC



World Braille Day: January 4, 2025

The TDSB supports several students who exclusively rely on braille for accessing their curricular materials. In honour of World Braille Day on January 4, 2025, we aim to raise awareness about the significance of this alternative format.

January 4 marks the birthday of Louis Braille. In 1824, this visionary created the first braille code at the remarkable age of 15.

World Braille Day serves as an important reminder of the essential role of Braille literacy and how braille fosters accessibility and independence for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Despite advancements in alternative formats such as audiobooks, screen readers, and text-to-speech technologies, braille remains the sole medium through which blind students can learn to read.

As we celebrate World Braille Day, we acknowledge the ongoing significance of braille in providing a unique and irreplaceable avenue for educational and personal growth for those with visual impairments.

For more information, please visit [World Braille Day | United Nations](#).



Resources

Entry to School for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The Ontario Autism Program (OAP) recently introduced **Entry to School (ETS)**, a new program for young students with ASD. In Toronto, ETS is delivered by the **Toronto Autism Network (TAN)**.

This is a six-month, group-based, skill-building program with a focus on building school readiness skills in young children with ASD who have never attended school to transition to Kindergarten or Grade 1.

The ETS program has two options:

1. **Childcare Consultation:** Transition Facilitators consult with Childcare Centre staff biweekly
2. **ETS Skill Building Classrooms:** Children attend a small group program in a classroom environment that is modeled after an Ontario Kindergarten classroom for 3-hours/day, 5-days/week.

Across both options, the following components are provided:

- At the end of the program, children enter school with a portfolio prepared by the ETS Transition Facilitators. This portfolio outlines the strategies that were used to support the child in their skill building classroom or childcare.
- The ETS Transition Facilitator is available to consult with the classroom teacher around that portfolio for the first 6-months following the child's transition to school

The goal of the ETS transition phase is to set students and their teachers up for success during their first educational milestone.

Parent can refer to this [information document](#) to learn more.

Ontario Autism Program (OAP)

The Ontario Autism Program (OAP) is a provincially-funded program that offers a range of services and supports to families of children and youth on the autism spectrum. In the needs-based OAP, all children/youth up to age 18 with a written diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from a qualified professional, are eligible to register for the OAP. Families have access to several service pathways and program supports, one of which is the Entry to School (ETS) program.

Further information can be found on the [AccessOAP website](#).

Speech Language Resources

TDSB Speech Language Pathology (SLP) Services focus on the early identification and prevention of speech and language difficulties. Every year, TDSB SLP Services create monthly Kindergarten calendars filled with activities to support oral language and literacy at home. Download your [January 2025](#) calendar here or ask your child’s Kindergarten teacher to send you a copy today!

TDSB SLP Services is committed to engaging the TDSB community by sharing the latest research in our field, as well as strategies to support children’s speech and language development at home. SLP Services uses social media platforms to share this information.

This month, @tdsb_slp highlights pretend play!

Pretend play isn’t just fun! It’s a powerhouse for language and social development. These imaginative moments help children to build communication skills, problem solving abilities and creativity! Check out the pictures below for some tips for developing pretend play skills at home and

Tips for Developing Pretend Play

• Items like blocks, blankets, cardboard boxes, scarves, figurines, and kitchen items can spark creativity and a variety of pretend scenarios.

• These encourage the child to imagine the objects as anything they want, such as a car, house, or a magic wand

Start By Modelling

• Children often learn through imitation - we can start by modelling pretend play for them!

• Example: Pretend to eat with a toy spoon while narrating your actions. "I'm stirring the soup. Yum, it's delicious!"

• Use simple and repetitive actions to make it easy for the child to copy.

Use Familiar Objects and Scenarios

• Start with toys and objects that represent real-life experiences the child knows well

• Encourage the child to act out daily routines, such as cooking, feeding a baby, or driving to the store.

Narrate and Expand

• Observe what the child is doing and add new ideas: "Wow, you're making tea! Should we invite Teddy to join us?"

• This expands their pretend play scenarios and can also introduce new vocabulary to support oral language development.

Encourage Problem-Solving

• Present pretend scenarios that require solutions:

- - "Oh no, the doll lost her shoe! What should we do?"
- - "The toy car ran out of gas. How can we fix it?"



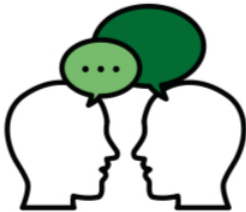
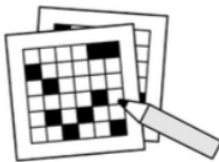

Psychology Resources



Psychological Services

Developing and Supporting Language Skills

Language processing and reasoning is how our brain understands and uses words and sentences to communicate and solve problems. These skills are crucial to how we interact with and make sense of the world, and they impact nearly every aspect of our lives. Here are some tips:

	<h4>Develop a Language-Rich Environment</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with children using new words and sentences when you're playing, cooking, or shopping. • Read books together, ask questions, and talk about what's happening. • Help children come up with their own stories and share them with you.
	<h4>Boost Vocabulary</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to talk about new words they find when reading. • Before starting a new topic or lesson, go over important words. • Create cards with new words and their meanings. Include visuals. • Repeat and review new words frequently and regularly. Repetition is key to learning new vocabulary.
	<h4>Support Expressive Communication</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for conversation. • Allow extra time for responses. • Teach and use augmentative communication systems.
	<h4>Solve Verbal Puzzles and Games</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to play word games, do crossword puzzles, and complete riddles and logic puzzles to think about words and their meanings in a fun way in order to help with verbal reasoning.
	<h4>Use Aids and Alternatives and Get Help</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use visuals to support understanding. Provide tools such as work samples, story maps or mind maps, and assistive technology. • Consider consulting with a Speech-Language Pathologist, if needed.

For more information and resources, please check out our Google Site at: <https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/psychologicalservices/home>



Social Work Resources

TDSB Social Workers

present the



VIRTUAL

DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES
CONNECT

Supporting Parents/Caregivers
of Children, Youth and Young
Adults with Developmental
Disabilities and Complex Needs.



Morning Session
January 20, 2025
9:30 am - 12 Noon

Evening Session
(A Repeat)
January 27, 2025
5:30 pm - 8 pm

**CAMPING SEASON IS FAST APPROACHING! BE PREPARED AND START PLANNING EARLY!!
JOIN US AS WE GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU CAN ACCESS**

FUNDING RESOURCES AND REGISTER FOR CAMPS

FROM OUR COMMUNITY AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES:



CLICK TO JOIN THE MEETING



Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 940 1581 5609

Passcode: 445164

OR CALL 647-558-0588 Or 647-374-4685

DOWNLOAD ZOOM

JOIN ON YOUR LAPTOP OR MOBILE DEVICE

OR

SCAN



Learn About Programs that
are best suited to support
your child's needs.

Get Direct Contacts and
Ask Questions about
Accessing
Supports/Services

Connect with TDSB Parent
Community and Relevant
TDSB Professionals.

FOR ANY QUESTIONS CALL
VANESSA WONG: 647-229-0730
OR LARENA CASE: 416-570-3314



Email us at:
VIRTUALFAIRINFO@TDSB.ON.CA

Transitions Resources

Supporting the Transition to Post-Secondary Pathways

Transition planning for post-secondary starts early for students with special education learning needs. It is one of the most significant transitions. The transition process requires careful planning and documentation. The links below are resources to refer to through this transition process.

[Planning for Life After High School For Youth with Disabilities](#)

[Supporting Transitions to Post-Secondary for Students with ASD](#)

The Autism Services website provides resources to support with transition beyond secondary school.

TDSB Tiered Approach to Transition Planning

Transition planning is targeted and uses a tiered approach to address context variables and individual student needs.

For FEW

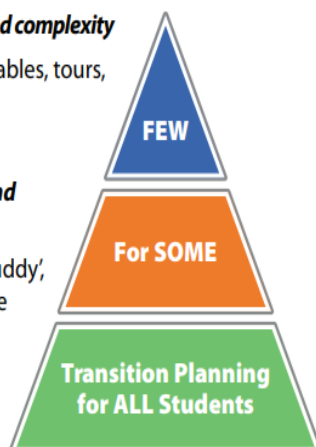
- **Increased number and complexity**
- Individualized timetables, tours, visits and materials

For SOME

- **Increased degree and specificity**
- Partnering with a 'buddy', following a timetable
- Transition materials, summer transition program

For ALL

- **Broadly held and common needs**
- School visits, orientation nights,
- Tours, teacher transition meetings



STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENT TRANSITIONS

Transition Planning is an ongoing and dynamic process. The following offers some ideas for consideration as parents/guardians/caregivers support their child(ren) throughout their educational experiences.

PARTNERSHIP GOALS

All students who attend our schools in Ontario experience various types of transitions including entry to school, transitions between grades, daily transitions within the school and classroom, transitions from elementary to secondary and then from secondary to post-secondary/post-21 pathways.

We know that a strong partnership between school staff and parents/caregivers & students is imperative for successful transitions. We must plan and manage transitions effectively as they are important learning opportunities for students, helping them to build confidence, resiliency and capacity for self-advocacy. (Ministry of Education: Learning for All)

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

- Attend TDSB parent/guardian/caregiver information sessions to deepen understanding of the supports and resources available to support transitions.
- Stay informed, read the Special Education and Inclusion Newsletter for resources on transition planning.
- Attend school information/orientation sessions and/or visit the school with your child before they start.
- Find out what you and your child need to know before school starts (i.e. dress code, code of conduct, timetable, map of the school, and extra-curricular opportunities).
- Stay involved in your child's learning by asking questions about how they are feeling about school.
- Learn about the supports that will be available for your child (i.e. who to speak to and where to go for support throughout the day)
- If your child has an Individual Education Plan, discuss the instructional and environmental accommodations outlined in the IEP with school staff

DEVELOPING SELF-ADVOCACY

To help your child develop self-advocacy skills for school transitions, parents/guardians/caregivers can:

- **Build Self-Awareness:** Help your child understand their strengths, challenges, and areas for growth.
- **Model Advocacy:** Role-play situations with your child to practice asking for help respectfully from teachers and school staff.
- **Teach Communication:** Encourage your child to use clear, confident "I" statements when explaining their needs and preferences.
- **Foster Problem-Solving:** Guide your child to identify solutions and who to approach for support at school.
- **Encourage Decision-Making:** Involve your child in planning and setting realistic goals for their transitions.
- **Promote School Connections:** Teach your child how to build positive relationships with teachers and other school staff.
- **Reinforce Confidence:** Celebrate your child's successes and normalize setbacks as part of the learning process.
- **Use Resources:** Ensure your child knows about and can access the support services available at their school.
- **Stay Supportive:** Monitor your child's progress while encouraging independence in self-advocacy

Empower your child to be an active participant in their own education and transition process. With your support, they can develop the self-advocacy skills needed to successfully navigate various transitions.

