Autism Awareness 2020

SECAC Presentation
April 21, 2020
Prince George’s County Board of Education

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Participant Outcomes

Participants will:

● Learn about PGCPS Autism Supports and Programs for the 2019-2020 school year.

● Review resources created for students and parents by PGCPS Autism Specialists.

● Learn about RDI and the Margaret Brent RDI Cohort.
Autism Team Members

Jennifer Brown, Instructional Supervisor for Special Programs

Betty Adkins, Autism Specialist

Katherine Govoro, Autism Specialist

Jessica Krumm, Autism Specialist

Laura Sibbald, Autism Specialist

Debbie Perhach, Twice Exceptional Autism Resource Teacher

Yvonne Alleyne, BCBA with Ivymount
Autism Supports Across all Environments

- Neighborhood School
- Early Childhood Programs
- Elementary Autism Programs
- Autism Extensions Program
- Regional Programs
Autism Programs Locations

**Elementary**
- Barnaby Manor
- Beltsville
- Bradbury Heights (Extensions)
- CT Reed (Extensions)
- Glenn Dale
- Kenilworth
- Paint Branch
- Rosaryville
- Seat Pleasant
- Suitland

**Middle**
- Kenmoor
- Isaac Gourdine

**High**
- Largo
- Parkdale
- Surrattsville
Crisis Intervention Resource Teachers

- **Year 1 SY 2019-20**
  - Barnaby Manor Elementary School
  - Catherine T Reed Elementary School

- **Distance Learning**
  - Google Classrooms (K-5) using resources from ReThink Social Emotional Learning
  - Weekly lessons for students and families
  - [ReThink Parent Homepage](#)
  - Additional resources to support SEL/Behaviors

- **Year 2 SY 2020-2021**
  - All Elementary Autism Programs
Sensory Calming Rooms

• Provided to Elementary School Autism Programs 2019-2020.

• Some program sites are completed and some are pending final equipment delivery.

• Required training for staff prior to use of the sensory calming rooms once equipment installed.

• Focus on use as a preventative intervention to assist student in self-regulating.
What is the Sensory Calming Room?

- A Sensory Calming Room is a designated space furnished with items that are physically comfortable and calming to the senses.

- A safe place where students, who are closely supervised by adults, can experience visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli, as well as movement and deep pressure, to promote self-regulation skills.
The Sensory Calming Room Is **NOT**

- An indoor recess, classwork or homework location.
- A replacement for a crisis room; if the student is harmful to himself or others or has no self-control, this space might be unsafe.
- A reward for good behavior; this is what a student *needs* not what he *earns*. 
Autism Resources for Parents at Home

The Autism Team would like to share the following resources:

- **Affirm**
- **Sometimes, School Changes Social Story** (Secondary)
- **Sometimes, School Changes** (Elementary)
- **My New Schedule Social Story** (Secondary)
- **Pandemics and the Coronavirus Social Story by Carol Gray**
- **Wearing A Mask**
- **Parent Tip Sheet**
- **Zones in the Home**
• What is RDI?

  – Parent led, **developmentally based** intervention that establishes the guiding relationship between children and their families.

  – Focuses on developing dynamic intelligence; creating children who can **think for themselves**.

  – Builds social referencing skills and emotional regulation abilities to promote **meaningful engagement**.
Children are working to build the following skills:

- Decrease prompt dependency
- Increase initiation skills
- Novel communication skills
- Increase social engagement
- Increase self advocacy/self awareness
A bit of history:

- In 2009 The first RDI parent groups were established
- Parent groups go through extensive training
  - a combination of in person and online sessions

Importance of RDI for Families:

- Restore, Recover, and Understand
- Sense of Community: a safe place to share, build skill knowledge
- A sense of empowerment
The RDI Teacher Institute is a certification program for teachers working with students with autism.

- The focus is on establishing the guiding relationship with students in order for them to develop their dynamic intelligence.

- Helping teachers learn to develop activities that promote engagement and independent thinking.

- This is relevant for students at any age or cognitive level.
RDI Teacher Institute Continued

• RDI Teacher Institute began in 2017-18.

• Educators across multiple disciplines and settings have been certified.

• Educator Feedback:
  – Highly positive
  – Feeling empowered
  – Noticeable difference in student engagement in functional, social, and academic activities
RDI Teacher Institute Continued

• In SY2019-20, we are in our 3rd cohort, focusing on the staff at Margaret Brent School.

• Four online trainings were held in the fall, followed by three in person workshops.

• Prior to closure, onsite observations were in process.

• Currently working on completing requirements online, with final project due after schools re-open.
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