

DEVELOPMENTAL & BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS

NEWSLETTER



The Autism Program

A monthly newsletter for families of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) at Boston Medical Center

Happy December!

With 2024 officially coming to a wrap, The Autism Program wishes every family a happy holiday season! We express our heartfelt gratitude for all of those who share their experiences, inform our care, and help day in and day out to strengthen our wonderful community. We hope that this season will bring health and blessings to all.

In this edition...

- ▶ **Pg 1: Holiday Gift Assistance:** List of community programs that provide gifts
- ▶ **Pg 2: Virtual Cooking Class** for autistic teens & young adults
- ▶ **Pg 4: 2024 Holiday Gift Guide for Families & Children**

Wishing everyone peace & warmth this season!



Where To Receive Holiday Gift Assistance

My Brother's Keeper: This Christmas Assistance program serves families all over eastern Massachusetts (*from Boston to Cape Cod area*). To request a gift, call (508) 238-2562.

ABCD Toy Drive: Fill out **this form** to check eligibility for ABCD programs and services (including holiday gift assistance). Click **here** to find an ABCD location near you and their contact information!

Globe Santa: Globe Santa provides holiday gifts to children and families in need throughout the Greater Boston area! Families can request toys for 12 y.o. & younger. Click to see **"How to Apply"** .

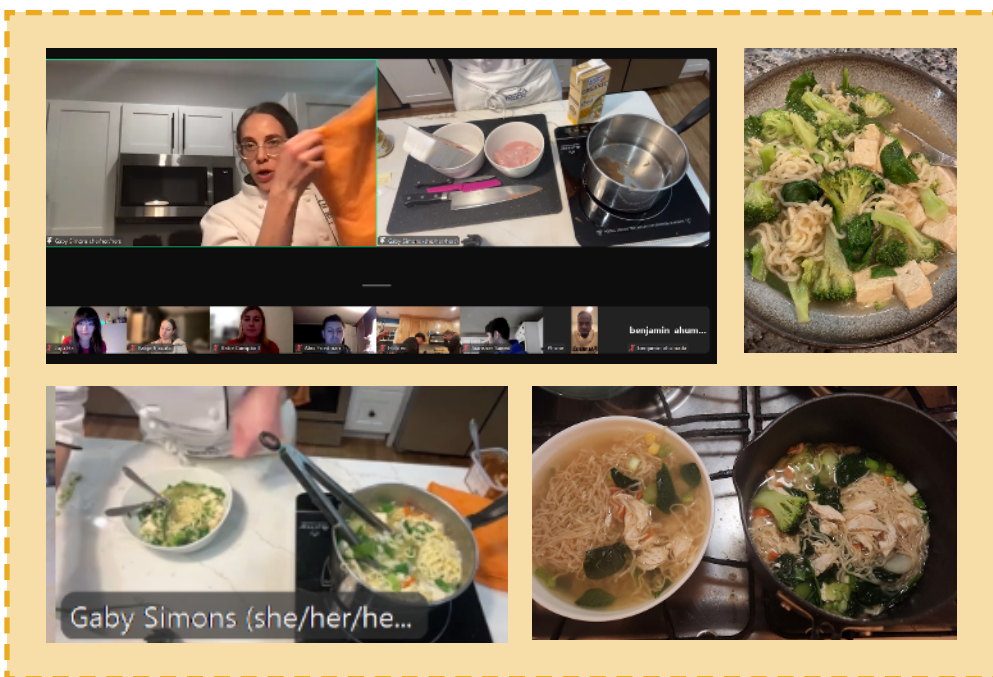
Salvation Army: To be eligible for holiday gift assistance, families must provide proof of ID, financial need, residence, along with the birth certificate of each child under the age of 16 in their household. Find a Salvation Army near you by clicking **here!**



Cooking Together

The Autism Program collaborated with **BMC Teaching Kitchen** to host an exciting virtual cooking class for autistic individuals (ages 14+) last month! Our **TEAM** (*Teens Engaged as Mentors*) and **TEACH** (*Teens Educating, Advocating, and Collaborating in Healthcare*) members gathered together just in time for dinner with the wonderful **Gaby Simons (MS, RD, LDN)** from the Teaching Kitchen.

Menu of the day? **Delicious & healthy bowl of Ramen noodles!**



What did we learn?

1. How to approach & navigate a **recipe**
2. Safely handling certain **kitchen tools**
3. Thinking about **balanced nutrition** by easily swapping ingredients
4. Animal & plant-based **protein**: what are they?
5. Creating & assembling a **warm bowl of Ramen**
(*Perfect for the chilly nights ahead!*)

We know that cooking is not easy, especially if you are just beginning to learn. So to break it all down, participants received helpful visuals of the ingredients, tools, and steps that are needed to make the dish prior to the event (*shown right*).

During the event, **Gaby Simons** from the **BMC Teaching Kitchen** guided the group through the recipe, as well as many important culinary skills knowledge. It was an evening full of joy, cooking together and seeing the delicious meals that were created all while having fun with family & friends!

Ramen Bowl

Ingredients: *Vegetarian Recipe*

 6 cups of water	 1 pack of firm tofu	 1 tablespoon of vegetable Bouillon
 2 handfuls of spinach	 1 1/2 cups of frozen stir-fry vegetables <small>(or fresh veggies)</small>	 2 ramen packets
 OPTIONAL: 1/2 tablespoon miso paste <small>(half bouillon quantity if using miso)</small>	 OPTIONAL: 1/2 cup chopped cilantro, scallions, or basil	

Ramen Bowl

Instructions: *Meat-Based Recipe*

Step 1: Measure out all of the ingredients. Look at the ingredients list for the amounts.

Step 2: Add 6 cups of water, 10 oz. of chicken and 1 tablespoon of beef/chicken/vegetable Bouillon to a small pot. **OPTIONAL:** if using miso, only add 1/2 tablespoon of beef/chicken/vegetable Bouillon.

Step 3: Put the pot on the stove top. Turn on the heat. Bring the water to a boil and cook for 5-8 minutes. **Be careful of the hot stove, pan and water!**

Interested in making this dish at home?

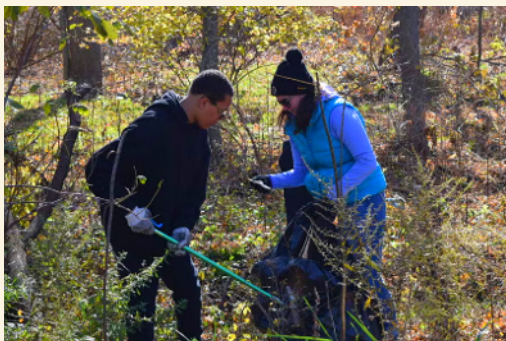
Follow the simple & healthy recipe from BMC Teaching Kitchen by clicking the bowl or scanning the QR code.



Special thanks to the BMC Teaching Kitchen for their collaboration, as well as our Transition Specialist Katie Campbell and all participants for this wonderful event.

Make sure to keep an eye out for more cooking events in the future! Cooking is a life skill that many young adults are learning when transitioning to adulthood. **We would love to hear feedback from autistic teens** about their experiences in learning how to cook, as well as what supports might be helpful in building cooking skills. Please feel free to share your thoughts with us at autismprogram@bmc.org!

TEAM (Teens Engaged as Mentors)



TEAM is a mentoring program that runs from September through May and hosts monthly recreational and community service events for youth (ages 9-22) on the autism spectrum. Similar to the cooking class, TEAM events involve fun activities and opportunities for participants to learn something new such as roller skating, visiting a farm, volunteering at Cradles to Crayons, laser tag, arts & crafts, and more!

Please reach out to us at autismprogram@bmc.org if you are interested in joining the TEAM program. Visit our website for more info!



BMC Teaching Kitchen



Teaching Kitchen at BMC is a wonderful program consisting of skilled dietitians who regularly host many virtual cooking classes in the lens of "*culinary medicine*". By incorporating food and nutrition into the practice of medicine, the Teaching Kitchen aims to promote education, prevention and treatment of health conditions.

Feel free to explore their **website** for fun, healthy recipes, cooking classes & information on nutritious cooking!



2024 Holiday Gift Guide

Gifts for Learning & Child Development

Social, Emotional & Imagination

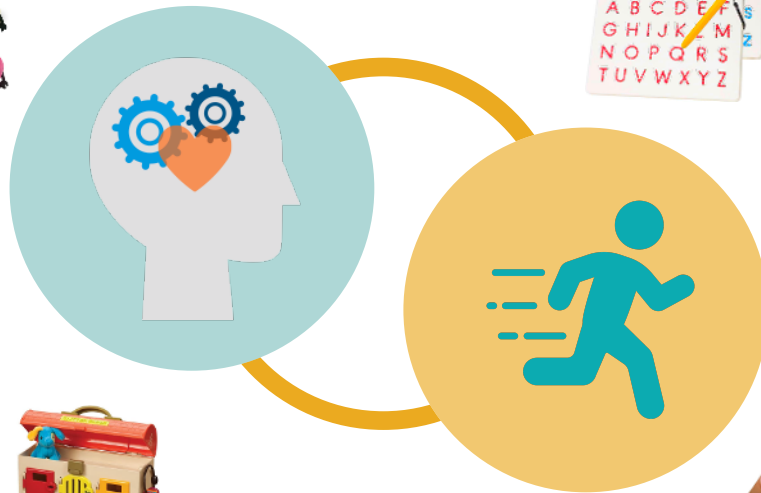
A Little Spot Emotion



Cuddling Plushies



Vet Pretend Play Set



Magnetic Alphabet Tracing Board



Sensory Swing



Balance Board

Physical and Fine Motor

Gifts for Creative Fun



Washable Paint Stick



Water Doodle Mat



Digital Writing Pad

2024 Holiday Gift Guide

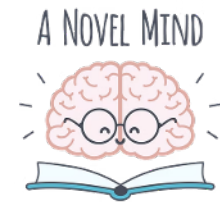


Gifts for ASD & Neurodiversity Pride



Books about Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Autism Books By Autistic Authors Project is an online catalog of books (fiction & non-fiction) written about and related to ASD by Autistic authors. Browse their categories of topics, reading level and more to find the book that feels just right for you!



A Novel Mind is a great website for exploring mental health & neurodiversity representation in children's fiction. Visit their website for a searchable online database of over 1,000 books!

Jai At Play

Jai At Play is a brand of self-advocacy products and programs created together by Jaiden, a young autistic kiddo, and Shekira, his mom. Check out their website for awesome educational tools such as their "Autism Through The Alphabet" flashcards, coloring book and workshop! You can also purchase autism pride merchandise such as t-shirts, hoodies, sweaters and mugs.



Neurodiversity Pride Merch



Neurodiverse Network

Neurodiverse Network is a community organization based in Pennsylvania that creates merch for celebrating neurodiversity. From t-shirts, tank tops, tote bags, mugs, fidget toys, pins and more, check out their website to shop!

Need More Gift Ideas?

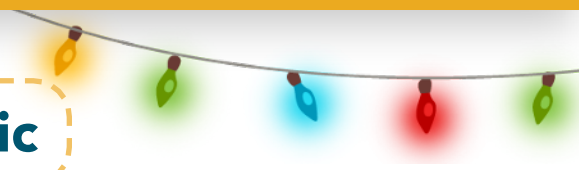
Check out additional gift guides!



Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) 2024 Gift Guide



Autism Network 2024 Autism Toy & Gift Guide



Resources



The Autism Program is continuing to support families in many ways both inside and outside of Boston Medical Center. Check out our website to learn more about the services, supports and programs we offer including our Autism Friendly Hospital Initiative, Teens Engaged as Mentors (TEAM) program, and our training offerings. We also have a huge resource library where you can access free information on a variety of topics such as safety, behavioral support, transition to adulthood, insurance and more!

<https://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program>

Do you have an idea for a future newsletter? Email us at.

autismprogram@bmc.org

with suggestions.

Clinic

Our clinicians are available for developmental evaluations, assessments and follow up. To connect with the clinical team, please call 617-414-4841 and follow the prompts for Developmental Pediatrics.





Our Clinicians

- Marilyn Augustyn, MD
- Arathi Reddy, DO
- Rachel Amgott, NP
- Christina Lazdowsky, NP
- Mei Elensary, MD
- Audrey Christiansen, MD
- Sarah Canale, MD
- Mary Ellen Killion, NP
- Arielle Spellun, MD
- Bridget Poznanski, PhD
- Rachel Vuolo, MD
- Selcen YarogluKazanci, MD

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is brought to you by the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center, a family support program of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. We are committed to supporting any family of DBP during this time, regardless of diagnosis. Please don't hesitate to reach out, and follow us on social media for more tips and information! **To unsubscribe, please reply by email with the word "stop!"**

 BMC.org/autism
Autismprogram@bmc.org

 The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center

 @BMCAutismProgram