

# Media Advisory

**Flag Raising Ceremonies - World Autism Awareness Day**

**Autism Awareness Month – Celebrating the FIREFLY clinicians**

**Announcement of fee-for-service ABA Therapy to support children, youth and families with Autism**

**(April 2, 2020 )** – Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> is World Autism Awareness Day. To celebrate the day, FIREFLY is joining Autism Ontario’s campaign “Raise the Flag for Autism”. Flags are being raised at City Hall in Kenora, Red Lake, Sioux Lookout and Dryden to bring awareness to the triumphs and struggles of those on the Autism Spectrum, to highlight the amazing work that is taking place, and the work that still needs to be done to support autistic children, youth and families. (Please note that, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, these events will not be public gatherings.)

FIREFLY is proud of the work that we do to support children, youth and families with autism. We’re also proud of our clinicians and the amazing children that they work with. Over the next month, you will get to meet some of the team and hear about the incredible work that they do by following our social media accounts.

FIREFLY is pleased to announce on World Autism Awareness Day that we are adding a **new** service to help ensure that children and youth with autism have a wide-variety of services in our area to achieve quality of life.

Working together with our team of Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Infant Development Services and Mental Health Counsellors, FIREFLY is pleased to begin offering Behaviour Consultation, Fee-for-Service options for families, with plans to continue to expand Fee-for-Service options in coming months.

Applied Behaviour Analyst (ABA) therapists, together with Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA) have recently been added to our list of professionals in place to support children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and will soon be available to provide Behaviour Consultation. Plans to launch these services have been delayed due to the current COVID – 19 crisis however we have been busy preparing a variety of online services and education sessions in an attempt to support families.

Behaviour Consultation services will be available to help address issues such as bed time routines, toileting or transitioning between activities. Services will be developed and supervised by a BCBA and delivered by an ABA Therapist.. They will work together with the child/youth/family and the therapy team, such as the Speech and Language Pathologists and Occupational Therapists, to create a program tailored to individual needs.



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If you have any questions or you would like to refer your child for Behavioural Therapy services, contact our FIREFLY Centralized Intake line operated by FIREFLY at 1-833-696-5437.

FIREFLY is excited to provide this service that has been created in the community, for the community.

We will be providing virtual information sessions on Autism to the community through Zoom. Watch our social media and website for further information including dates and times for these events.

## Background:

### **World Autism Awareness Day falls on Thursday, April 2, 2020.**

- It is estimated worldwide that one in 160 children has ASD (World Health Organization) and in Canada this number is 1 in every 66 children aged 5-17 (NASS – National Autism Spectrum Disorder Surveillance System). Autism affects all ethnic and socioeconomic groups with boys being four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls. The possible causes of autism are still far from understood.
- Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. ASD is a spectrum disorder, which means it not only manifests itself differently in every individual whom it appears, but its characteristics will change over the life of each individual as well. A child with ASD will become an adult with ASD. Early intervention affords the best opportunity to support healthy development and deliver benefits across the lifespan.
- Autism Ontario's Raise the Flag campaign, through the simple act of raising a flag, unites families, schools, communities, government and professionals in recognizing World Autism Awareness Day, and brings to light to struggles and triumphs of people on the autism spectrum.
  - <https://raisetheflagforautism.com/about-raise-the-flag/>
- We are highlighting the work done throughout the province, and the work that still needs to be done to ensure that children, youth, and adults with Autism are provided the means to achieve quality of life.

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