

ECHO Ontario Autism Schedule - Cycle 8 (2025-2026)

Please note that each ECHO Ontario Autism session will be 2-hours long (11:30AM -1:30PM) and will include a didactic presentation (20 minutes) and discussion, 1 participant-generated case presentation (10 minutes), group discussion and recommendations (45 minutes)

| Date | Topic/Presenter |
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| September 23, 2025 | What is Autism? Presenter: Dr. Jessica Brian-Psychologist <i>This presentation will cover:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of autism • Core symptoms of autism & the DSM-5 criteria for an ASD diagnosis |
| October 7, 2025 | Surveillance, screening and next steps Presenter: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difference between surveillance and screening • Guideline recommendations in Canada • Understanding different ASD screening tools available and developing an approach to using them in your practice • What to do if there are developmental concerns identified |
| October 21, 2025 | Autism Diagnosis Part 1: history and collateral information Presenter: Dr. Cecilia Lee-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to introduce the ASD diagnostic assessment • What questions to ask to elicit ASD symptoms • Other essential components of the history • Strategies for collecting collateral information from daycare, schools, and other relevant people & places |
| November 4, 2025 | Autism Diagnosis Part 2: observation, interaction, and physical examination Presenter: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for getting good observations throughout the assessment • Tips & tricks for informal interactions to elicit ASD symptoms • Important aspects of the physical examination |
| November 18, 2024 | Autism Diagnosis Part 3: formulation, feedback and next steps Presenter: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to prepare for the diagnostic feedback session • Balancing a structured approach and responding to family needs during the feedback • Connect to relevant information, resources, and funding |

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| December 2, 2025 | <p>Autism Acceptance Presenters: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician and Maddy Dever-Autistic Advocate/Parent <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of language used to speak about autism and behaviour • Developing sensitivity to the emotions experienced by families and how to build acceptance into clinical care • Increasing comfort level in addressing questions of curing/treating autism • The risks of non-acceptance |
| December 16, 2025 | <p>While you wait: what parents can do at home Presenter: Dr. Jessica Brian-Psychologist <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefits & caveats of parent-mediated intervention • How to help parents: build social routines to foster relationships and promote social communication; manage repetitive play and intense interests; and build and expand on their child's interests |
| January 13, 2026 | <p>Principles of Autism Therapies: Presenters: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician and Justine Wiegelmann -BCBA <i>This presentation will cover: Evidence and practice in the following areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour • Speech • Occupational Therapy • What to look for in a qualified service provider • Goal setting |
| January 27, 2026 | <p>OAP Update Presenter: Robin Hermolin- Social Worker <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of applying for OAP funding • What services are covered • How to support parents through the process |

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| February 10, 2026 | <p>Is it Sensory? Presenter: Moira Pena-Occupational Therapist <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 8 sensory systems • How sensory processing challenges may present • Recognizing the difference between sensory processing challenges and other co-occurring conditions |
| February 24, 2026 | <p>Culturally Responsive Diagnostic Assessments Presenter: Dr. Mohammad Zubairi-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role culture plays in informing parent/caregiver understanding of child & youth development • How to access best possible information about our diverse children, youth and their families in our practice using autism-focused screening & diagnostic tools • How the language we use in our clinical encounters can help families digest the diagnostic, etiologic and prognostic information we provide |
| March 10, 2026 | <p>Emotion Regulation: Clinical Concepts and Insights from Autistic People Presenters: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician and Dr. Christie Welch-Occupational Therapist <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of emotion regulation and its correlates • Risk factors for and of emotion regulation challenges • A structured clinical approach to assessing emotion regulation challenges • Management options • First person voices of emotion regulation from autistic children/youth/adults |
| March 24, 2026 | <p>Screening for and managing medical comorbidities: seizures, sleep, constipation/GI Presenter: Dr. Cecilia Lee-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening for and managing seizures in children with ASD • Screening, strategies and treatments to address sleep difficulties • Screening for and managing GI issues • Screening for pain |
| April 7, 2026 | <p>School, special education and IEPs: role of the medical provider in supporting parents Presenter: Susan Cosgrove-Family Advisor <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of special education in Ontario • Ideas of how to support parents through the process • Special needs education resources |

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| April 21, 2026 | <p>Taking a Behavioural History Presenter: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ABCs of a behavioural history • How to ask about co-occurring conditions • Medical contributors |
| May 5, 2026 | <p>Autism and ADHD Presenter: Dr. Evdokia Anagnostou-Child Neurologist <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening, assessment, and diagnosis of ADHD in a child with ASD • A review of interventions (behaviour & medications) |
| May 19, 2026 | <p>Anxiety, Depression and Autism Presenter: Dr. Evdokia Anagnostou-Child Neurologist <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of depression, anxiety and anxiety disorders in children with ASD • Differentiating symptoms of ASD from the symptoms of anxiety • A review of appropriate treatments as well as the role of medication in the management of depression, anxiety and anxiety disorders |
| June 2, 2026 | <p>Irritability and Autism Presenter: Dr. Evdokia Anagnostou-Child Neurologist <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk factors for irritability • Assessments and interventions for irritability • Pharmacologic treatment and prescribing considerations • CAMESA Guidelines for monitoring medications |
| June 16, 2026 | <p>Autism and Adolescence Presenter: Dr. Melanie Penner-Developmental Paediatrician <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do puberty and sexuality differ in ASD compared to typical development? • What are the key pieces of anticipatory guidance for puberty? • Guidance around masturbation • Management of menstruation |
| June 30, 2026 | <p>Transition to Adulthood for Youth with ASD Presenter: Ullanda Niel-Family Physician <i>This presentation will cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and when to begin planning for transition • Best practice guidelines • Developmental disabilities primary care initiative (DDPCI) healthcare transition tool • Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) application process |