

# 2020 A Year of Resiliency

# I want to thank you for throwing us a life line!

"Emily and I will spend the next while going through all that you have forwarded on to us and we truly appreciate your expertise and compassion.

It is something that was missing from each phone call and interaction I have made in our quest for help and assistance...so I am truly thankful to have spoken to you."

- A.F.



## Message from the Chair & Executive Director

Resilience can be defined as the ability to recover from difficulty, to get up after we fall. 2020 was a year where we all faced difficulty, and yet we found incredible resilience in our ASD community. We are deeply thankful for the people surrounding us, for the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our corporate partners, the determination of our staff and Board of Directors and the courage of our volunteers.

We are also fully aware that for a large portion of our ASD community this pandemic is an ongoing challenge on all fronts. While 2020 was not easy, we adapted and grew through it, we learned how to be more flexible, to navigate the changes and we saw that our community also adapted with us. That flexibility will help us continue to grow and stay agile as we encounter future challenges, and for that we are thankful.

In the face of adversity, the best response is a community held together by a common purpose, determined to face whatever is approaching side by side. To all of you who made 2020 a success, we are honoured to serve you. Thank you for standing beside us.

Kindest regards,



Dermot Cleary

Chair, Board of Directors



Barbara Patten  
Executive Director

## Land Acknowledgment

In the spirit of reconciliation and working together Autism Canada is thankful for this land, the country of Canada, and our connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to the Elders past and present and extend that respect to all today.



## About Autism Canada

Autism Canada is the only Canadian organization with a national perspective on the issues currently facing those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families, caregivers, and other stakeholders.

Autism Canada has been generating public awareness about ASD in Canada since 1976. Together, with our counterparts, we work to share expertise, build consensus and inform public policy. In addition to encouraging best practices, we actively promote national dialogue on the most effective strategies for building equitable access to funding and services.

Every one of our staff and Board of Directors has a personal connection to ASD and neurodiversity or are on the Autism Spectrum themselves. Additionally, Autism Canada is guided by an external advisory group called "Autism Ambassadors" made up entirely of individuals on the spectrum. The Autism Ambassadors are a consistent and direct connection to the autism community in Canada and act as our consultants on issues relevant to the autism community.

Our strategic objectives focus on changing the future for those on the Autism Spectrum through the delivery of the highest quality programs like the national annual Au-Some Conference, written and presented solely by those on the Autism Spectrum. We are home to the first of its kind Search and Rescue for Autism program as well as the Recognizing Behaviours and Sensory Support programs. Additionally, Autism Canada hosts the Family Services Program which allows us to provide practical and timely support to individuals and families in need.

## Guiding Principles

### Mission:

To advocate for and support people with autism and their families living in Canada.

### Vision:

That people on the Autism Spectrum have full, healthy and happy lives.

### At Autism Canada we:

See the Spectrum Differently

See Potential in People Living on the Autism Spectrum

See & Respect the Person & Individual First

See the Opportunity to Work Together to Make a Difference

See & Understand Behaviour as a Form of Communication

## Advocacy Work:

Autism Canada continues to stand with the autism community as we work toward justice and equal opportunity for those on the Autism Spectrum, their families and caregivers. We have responded to the changing needs in our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and are working toward amplifying our advocacy efforts over the coming year.

## COVID-19 Impact:

The COVID-19 pandemic caused 2020 to be the most challenging year in recent memory. While everyone has felt its impact in different ways, we would like to acknowledge the generosity of our donors. Philanthropic giving trends downward during times of crisis. Despite this, and thanks in large part to the commitment of our incredible donors, Autism Canada has continued to grow and deliver high quality programming across the country.

# Resiliency

re·sil·ience /rə'zilyəns/

noun

noun: resiliency

1.the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

## Imagine Canada Compliance

Imagine Canada's Standards Program awards accreditation to charities and nonprofits that demonstrate excellence in five areas of operations. The Standards are designed to build strong and trusted charities and nonprofits. Autism Canada is Imagine Canada Standards compliant.



## Accessability for Ontarians with Disabilities

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted to expand the government's mission to offer full accessibility to all disabled Ontarians by 2025. All Autism Canada staff and Board Directors are certified compliant with AODA.

# Autism Canada Board of Directors



Dermot Cleary  
Chair



Dr. Suzanne Lewis  
Vice-Chair



Tim Berry  
Treasurer



Larry Bellehumeur  
Director



Paul Finch  
Director



Sally Ginter  
Director



Jennifer Ho  
Director



Tom Jackman  
Director



Kodette LaBarbera  
Director



Liz Phipps  
Director

## Autism Society Canada Treasurer's Report

Despite the challenges faced by many charitable organizations in 2020 related to COVID-19 specifically, around reduced donations, Autism Society Canada saw total revenues increase over 2019. Total revenue for the year was \$606,106, an increase of 11% over 2019. Grant revenue at \$313,902 was 2% higher than in 2019.

Donations of \$200,635 were lower than in 2019 by 13%. This was offset by the receipt of \$67,148 from the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program. Expenditures for 2020 were \$475,435, a reduction of 11% over 2019. The organization achieved a surplus of \$130,671.

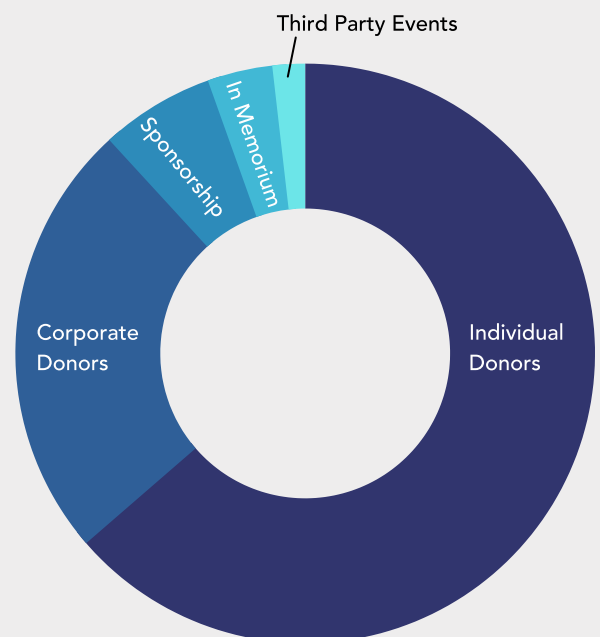
Autism Society Canada received a qualified audit opinion for 2020. This was due to the fact that we derive revenues from fundraising activities and donations, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. This type of qualification is common among charitable organizations engaged in fundraising activities.

Tim Berry, MBA, CPA, CMA  
Treasurer

## Every Penny Counts

Where our Donations Come From

- 61%** Individual Donors
- 27%** Corporate Donors
- 6%** Sponsorship
- 4%** In Memorium Donations
- 2%** Third Party Events



# Gifts and Giving

## Third Party Events

Third party fundraisers are crucial to Autism Canada's efforts in accomplishing our mission critical activities. The services we provide would not be possible without the generosity of volunteers across Canada who take time out of their busy lives to contribute to our cause.

## Matching Gifts

A matching gift is a charitable donation made by a corporation that matches an employee's donation, most often dollar for dollar. It is a thoughtful and respectful way of supporting not only a cause like autism but your employees as well. Autism Canada is incredibly thankful to the corporations who participated in a matching gift campaign in 2020.

## Memorial Gifts

In a time of loss, it is inspiring to know that many people's thoughts turn to helping others in need. Over the last year, numerous families contacted us to set up memorial donations in memory of a loved one. As a not for profit, we are humbled and deeply appreciative of the wonderful families who think of us at such a difficult time. Our hearts and thoughts go out these wonderful individuals and their generous, loving families.

We recognize your right to confidentiality and pledge to protect your privacy. We adhere to the strict standards of the privacy guidelines of both the Ontario Privacy Commissioner of Canada and Imagine Canada. For this reason, we have chosen not to list our donors by name.



Autism Canada would like to thank all our donors and sponsors in 2020. It is because of your incredible support that we can accomplish so much.

Thank you for believing in us and coming with us on your journey.



In 2020, our Family Support team received and responded to

**2,817**

calls & emails,

an increase of

**44%**

over 2019.



## Family Support Services

Autism Canada's Family Service Program has been operational for over a decade and serves as our front-line connection to individuals and families in need. Our dedicated staff and volunteers receive and respond to thousands of inquiries annually, providing resources, referrals, services, and crisis support to those struggling with an ASD diagnosis and potential co-occurring conditions.

Each inquiry is researched and responded to with available resources by province or community. This can include employment, education, diagnosis, housing, and funding according to location and nature of severity. With the current global pandemic and the simultaneous suspension or elimination of essential support programs, uncertainties within school networks, job loss, homelessness, and severe mental health concerns, crisis inquiries have become increasingly common.

The Family Service Team at Autism Canada is trained to provide the support necessary for the crisis situations some on the Autism Spectrum may be facing.

To donate to the Family Services Program, click [HERE](#).

## An email to our Family Support Team:

I love you, you are cool,  
thanks for the talk!

- C.W.





# 2020 Events & Activities



Our free, annual Au-Some Conference included 8 presenters, all of whom are on the spectrum, has been viewed over 1,600 times on YouTube and has an additional 400+ viewers on the individual presentations. We also received over \$3,000 in donations in addition to sponsorships.

We would like to thank The British Columbia General Employees' Union, Cormark, The Uncomplicated Family & R.D Reis for sponsoring the 2020 Au-Some Conference.

The Search & Rescue for Autism Launch and Learn had over 420 registrants and the video has been viewed over 900 times on YouTube.

We would like to thank the British Columbia General Employees' Union, Novotech, Emergency Solutions International and PlaySafe.



On April 15, 2020, we launched the Sharing the Spectrum podcast with an episode about Autism Canada and autism awareness. Over the course of the year, we published seven additional episodes and had 2,500 downloads of the combined episodes.

**AU-SOME CONFERENCE** Saturday, November 28, 2020  
12:00 PM EST - 4:00 PM EST  
On-Line and Free

**Au-Some Presenters**

**Join us!**

**SARA SEARCH AND RESCUE FOR AUTISM** Launch & Learn for Families & Caregivers

**Saturday, October 24, 2020**

**AUTISM CANADA AUTISME** PREVENT PROTECT RESPOND RECOVER

**LISTEN**

Episode 1: Introducing Autism Canada  
Episode 2: What is Autism?  
Episode 3: Temple Grandin  
Episode 4: Autism & Social Challenges  
Episode 5: Parenting on the Spectrum  
Episode 6: Strategies for Success at Work  
Episode 7: Safety & Preparedness with Search and Rescue for Autism

Available on

**Listen Today!**

**SHARING THE SPECTRUM**  
An Autism Canada Podcast

## Sensory Support Kits

Autism Canada's Sensory Support Kits were developed in 2020 as a physical resource for organizations who host or support individuals on the Autism Spectrum. Tactile and sensory items support efforts to self-regulate and remain calm in an emotional, overwhelming or stressful situation. Offering sensory supports to those on the Autism Spectrum when they are experiencing stress can help them avoid a sensory meltdown or a shutdown.

To purchase a kit, click [HERE](#).



# Communications



2020	674	1,237	8,695	9,598	22,230	5,137
2019	1,108	2,181	10,923	10,739	26,231	5,821
Increase	+33%	+43%	+20%	+11%	+15%	+12%

## Social Media

Growing our social media presence and providing our followers with excellent content remained a focus in 2020 and this effort is clearly evident in the follower growth in each of our social media platforms.

## Newsletters

In 2020, we updated the newsletter in look and content to provide our subscribers with the information they were looking for.

Autism Canada CONNECTS is sent bi-weekly and includes information about all relevant happenings in the organization including fundraisers, events and contributor thank you's.

SHARING THE SPECTRUM is also sent bi-weekly and is a compilation of content produced exclusively by our team of Autism Ambassadors, all of whom are on the spectrum.

To sign up for the newsletter, click [HERE](#).



## AUTISM CANADA *Connects*

Your Canadian Autism Newsletter

[Donate today!](#)



December 8, 2020

Your newsletter is beautiful - easy to read, nice big plain font and bursting with colour. It's also well written.

- C.F.





**Katherine**  
**Bruce**  
**Henry**  
**Minni**

**J**  
**B**  
**Jason**  
**Victoria**

**C.E**  
**D**  
**Andrew**  
**Luke**

**Kalem**  
**Haig**

## Autism Ambassadors

Autism Canada's dedicated team of volunteer Ambassadors advocate for the autism community and work to inspire social change on issues that are important to the autism community in Canada. They contribute by writing articles and producing videos on relevant topics for our Sharing the Spectrum Newsletter, by speaking to the media on the community's behalf and by advising the Autism Canada team on how to better support our clients and the autism community in Canada.

We are grateful to each of our Ambassadors and would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank them for their continued dedication, support and engagement.

If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, please email [info@autismcanada.org](mailto:info@autismcanada.org)

## Praise for our Family Support Team:

Thank you so much for taking the time to compile this very complete list of resources.

It was an absolute pleasure to speak to you. Your kindness and patience is greatly appreciated. There is so much to learn it is heartwarming that there are individuals like yourself to speak to in order to try to weed through all of the details and information.

With your assistance and the other organizations that you have so kindly provided hopefully we will be able to find some suitable support.

Thank you so much again! I truly appreciate all of your support.

- W.S.

Thanks for pulling this all together for us.

We really appreciate your help. Your willingness to listen, honesty and advice over the past few days has been invaluable.

And most importantly, knowing you are there, should we have any questions, is a real source of comfort for D and myself.

Many thanks.

- J.B.





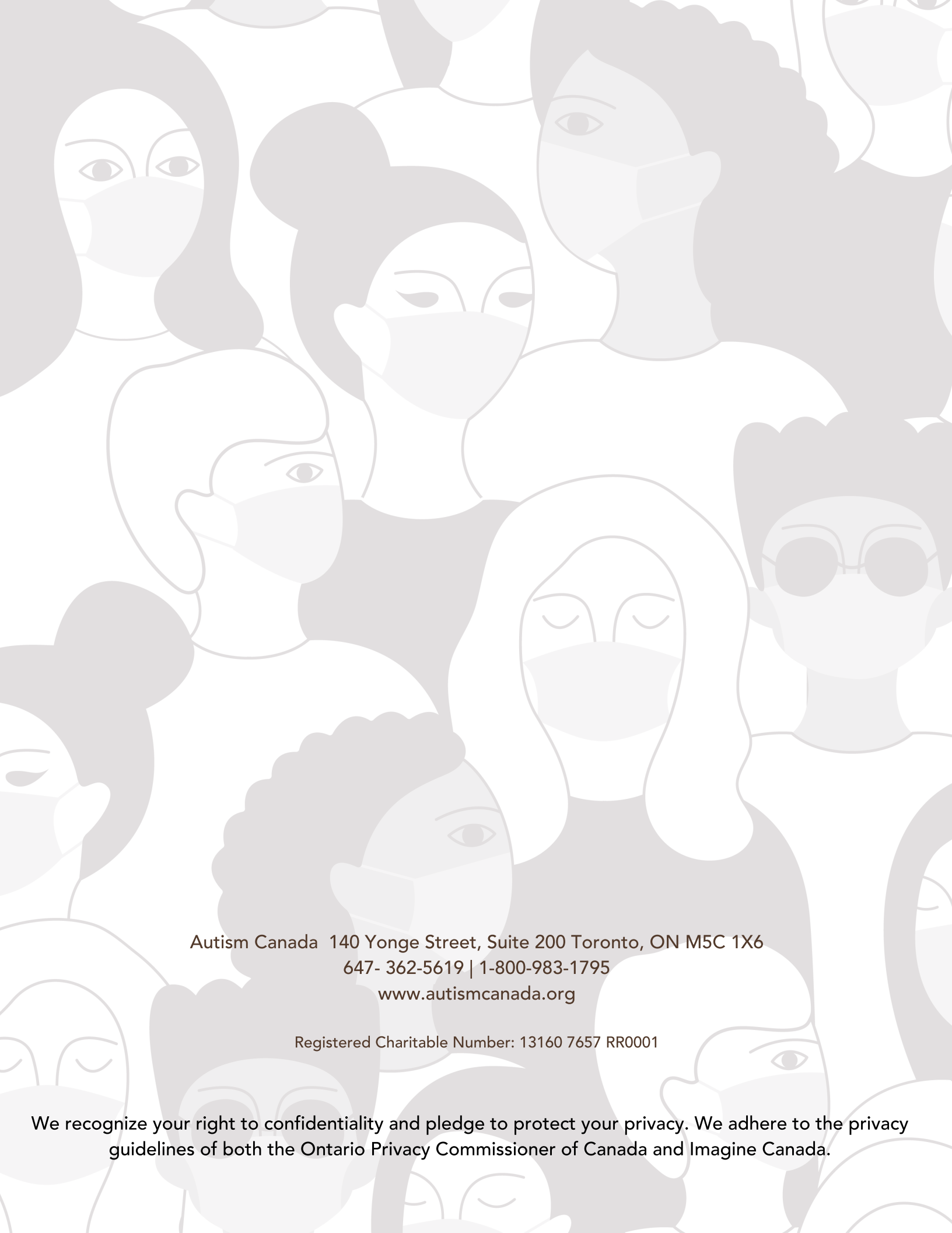


# See the Spectrum Differently

To support our work, donate [HERE](#) today!







Autism Canada 140 Yonge Street, Suite 200 Toronto, ON M5C 1X6  
647-362-5619 | 1-800-983-1795  
[www.autismcanada.org](http://www.autismcanada.org)

Registered Charitable Number: 13160 7657 RR0001

We recognize your right to confidentiality and pledge to protect your privacy. We adhere to the privacy guidelines of both the Ontario Privacy Commissioner of Canada and Imagine Canada.