



# Supporting

## Parents as Partners in Education



E-newsletter from DDSB Parents Involvement Committee (PIC)

### Message

from PIC Co-Chair

While we work our way back into some form of normalcy in our schools, we would like to thank parents and guardians for providing your unconditional support for our children, staff, School Community Councils and Parent Involvement Committee.

Brighter days are ahead, and we look forward to you being a part of 2022 along with us.

We have some great projects in the works for you and our students that we cannot wait to tell you all about, so please follow us and reach out anytime you have any questions or suggestions.

**PIC Co-Chair**  
*Jim Van Allen*

### Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants 2022

We have received 30 applications so far, including 60 schools and 3 affinity groups.

The Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant is a contribution from the Ministry of Education with the goal of engaging parents in school communities. Parents, staff members, and community members gathered virtually on the evening of January 19th to share stories of past successes and brainstorm ways to create projects to engage parents in their child's education.

The PRO Grant sub-committee of the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) collaborated with **Amanda Chapman** from the Oshawa schools region, **Camille Prince** from the Ajax region, and **Patrisha Johnson** and **Novia Bolton** from the Pickering region to present to hundreds of parents in Durham Region. Their stories inspired a submission of **30 PRO Grant applications. A total of 60 schools** and **three affinity groups** have applied for the grant fund with the ultimate goal of eliminating barriers to engage parents in their child's education.

The PRO Grant projects review meeting took place on March 2nd. At this meeting, members of the committee reviewed project applications and decide where the grant funds will be allocated. The PRO Grant committee looks forward to seeing selected projects successfully brought to completion before the end of the school year.

# FIGHTING RACISM ACTIVELY

Here are a few steps to take on your actively anti-racist journey. Let's be better today than we were yesterday, so we can do better for the racialized siblings in our human family.

## ADMIT

A racist person denies but an actively anti-racist person admits. I admit that I have said racist things, committed racist acts, believed racist ideas, supported racist policies, and may continue to do so occasionally while on this journey. It doesn't matter if it is conscious or unintentional because it still caused harm. I'm not going to deny it. Let's start there.

## LIVE LIKE WE ARE FAMILY

If you are a human, then we are a part of the same human family. Since we are in the same human family, I ultimately want good for you and not harm, because that is what family members want for each other - even if sometimes we disagree with one another!

## FOLLOW THE LEAD OF OUR RACIALIZED FAMILY

As a person who is not typically racialized, I acknowledge that so much of my understanding of anti-racism has come from the leadership and contributions of our racialized family. It is crucial that we all follow the lead of Black and Indigenous scholars, authors, leaders, educators, YouTubers, podcasters, etc.

## HAVE RADICAL HUMILITY

Imagine your biological family was the target of interpersonal and institutional racism for generations. What a horrifying picture. When we open our eyes to see that history has in reality been hateful, hurtful, and harmful to the Black and Indigenous members of this human family of ours it will prompt us to take many more steps on our actively anti-racist journey.

I have hope that we can make this happen.

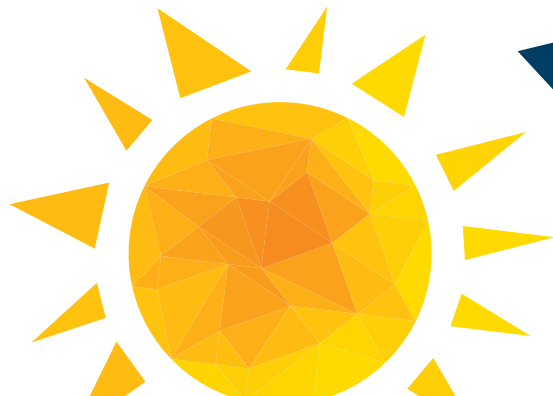
Aubrey Noronha

[www.hellohope.ca](http://www.hellohope.ca)



### **About the Author**

Aubrey Noronha from HelloHope.ca is a recognized Safe Schools, Mental Health and Anti-Racism Speaker who is making his way across Canada with his "2022 Make Hope Viral Tour". Amid 400+ bookings in the last 13 months he has been presenting his talk "Colour Blind? Why Being 'Not Racist' Is Not Enough Anymore" programs to many DDSB students and families all over as well as to professionals, public servants and municipalities. He and his family live in Ajax, Ontario.



# Supporting Your Child's Mental Health

It makes sense that as parents and caregivers you are concerned about how your children are managing. Here are some ideas, tips, and strategies to consider as you continue to nurture your child's mental health.

▶ **A present and responsive relationship** between adults and children is one of the most powerful tools for supporting mental health in children and youth. Children's mental health and well-being is supported when they have consistent, caring adults in their life both at home and in school. Children benefit greatly when they know they are loved and valued for who they are and have a trusted person they can turn to when a problem arises, and successes can be celebrated.

▶ **Listen and validate feelings.** Encourage children to talk about their thoughts and feelings, listen, validate, and show love and acceptance as they work through their feelings. Keep the conversation flowing by asking open-ended questions and spending quality time together by participating together in activities your child enjoys. Validating statements include things like "that sounds like it was a tough situation", and "I can understand why you were frustrated". As hard as this might be, it is important to try to resist the urge to fix their feelings.

▶ **Model and teach healthy ways to manage stress.** Give your child the tools they need to cope with stress and big feelings by modelling these coping skills yourself. Together, establish healthy habits including exercise, getting enough sleep and proper nutrition, and talking with a trusted adult. Take care of your own mental health and model good self-care.

▶ **Notice changes and reach out for help.** If you notice signs that your child feels sad or overly anxious about everyday situations like going to school or meeting new people and it is starting to interfere with their day to day routines, take note. A change in mood or behaviour that lasts more than two weeks could be a sign of something more. Keep the lines of communication open with your child's teacher and other caring adults in their life to discuss observations.



# Ten Activities to Try When Isolating at Home

Whether staying home due to the sniffles or isolating as a result of COVID-19 here are a few fun activities and resources families can try while at home:



1. The [Ontario Science Centre](#) provides a variety of ideas for at home science fun. Many of the activities can be completed with little supervision and with items that can easily be found at home.
2. Here's a different spin on painting: Draw a design with white glue on construction paper, sprinkle the page with salt and let it dry. When it's dry, paint over the salted glue with your choice of colours and the finished product will be a beautiful crystalized art piece.
3. The [Art Gallery of Ontario](#) has a list of activities and resources for families to utilize at home. The lists cater to many styles and interests and some activities can be completed as a group or by oneself.
4. Dancing is a great way to lift spirits on a cold winter day. Pick a few of your favourite songs from back in the day, turn down the lights, use glow sticks and have a dance party!
5. If you have an animal lover in your home, resources from [the Toronto Zoo](#) will lead you to activities and videos covering a variety of topics that will allow your little one to learn about various animals and their habitats.
6. No need to spend money on expensive educational games when you have a deck of cards or dice at home. Check out Scholastic's [list of math games](#) using dice for children age 8 to 13 or these [seven simple math card games](#).
7. Movie night is an easy activity, especially with so many streaming services available. Why not introduce your children to some of your childhood favourites?
8. All you need is a library card to access movies from **Kanopy** or **Kanopy Kids** on your computer, tablet, phone or TV. Kanopy Kids provides a selection of movies with parental controls and common-sense media ratings to ensure children are safe while watching. Check the [Ajax Public Library](#) or [Pickering Public Library](#) websites to get connected.
9. An indoor scavenger hunt is an activity that can be played with kids of all ages. You can make them as easy or hard as desired, and prizes for the winner are optional.
10. [Tumble Books](#) is a great resource for your little reader who may want to be read to all day while you have your hands full. Ajax Public Library allows free access via their website and readers can enjoy a wide variety of audio books and games.



# March Break

## Fun Across the Region

### Drop-In Activities

**The Town of Ajax** provides drop-in activities for all ages and all skill levels. Parent and child basketball sessions are available each Saturday as well as basketball and badminton drop-in sessions for teens. Friday Night Fun Club is ongoing for children 2.5-5 years of age where they can enjoy a variety of arts and crafts. You can also find drop-in activities on the [City of Oshawa](#) and [Town of Whitby](#) websites.

### Snowshoeing Adventures

Snowshoeing is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and ensure both children and adults are getting in their daily physical activity. Check out the [Town of Ajax Snowshoe Loan Program](#) or [Pingle's Farm](#).

### Identifying Animal Tracks in Altona Forest

Hike the many trails located within the 53-hectare Altona Forest which provides a habitat for native plants and animals. Take the time to hike the many trails with your children and complete a wildlife spotting [scavenger hunt](#) at the same time. The forest is located at 1883 Altona Road, Pickering and there are numerous points of entry.

### Birdwatching

While out for a hike why not keep an eye out for the wildlife that is also enjoying the weather. Bowmanville Westside Marshes Conservation Area, located at 191 W Beach Road, Bowmanville, is a great place to enjoy bird watching during winter. The trail is 1.6 km long which makes for an ideal walk with young children.

### Outdoor Ice Skating

Ice skating rinks across the region allow skaters to enjoy the crisp weather and to also be physically active. Helmets are recommended and the rinks are not supervised but those who attend are asked to maintain social distancing. See a list of municipalities and rinks below.

#### Pickering

- Rick Hull Memorial Park
- Claremont Memorial Park

#### Ajax

- Pat Bayly Square
- McLean Community Centre
- Audley Recreation Center

#### Whitby

- Peel Park

- Brooklin Memorial Park

#### Oshawa

- Delpark Homes Centre

#### Clarington

- Rosswell Park, Courtice
- Guildwood Park, Bowmanville

#### Scugog

- Willowtree Farm, Port Perry





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