

Exploring the common practices that exist within the dynamic approach of virtual and onsite movement-based programming for young people living with autism spectrum disorder (autism)

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to describe, analyze, and understand the common practices that exist within the dynamic approach of virtual and onsite programming across different organizations with a focus on movement-based programming for children and youth living with autism spectrum disorder (autism). Previous research suggested that it would be a missed opportunity for learning, development, and engagement to disregard a hybrid or virtual program delivery model. This study used public domain data sets to investigate and analyze current practices in the methods of program delivery for activity for children living with autism. The researcher examined both manifest and latent content, and discerned common practices of program delivery through application and completion of a prompt-based checklist. The findings were developed through a multi-level content analysis and contribute to insights about current and common practices relating to the impact of the hybridization of movement-based programs for children with autism. This study demonstrated that organizations are primarily transitioning back to on-site programming options as society enters the state of an endemic, and it raises concerns as to why the priority and level of virtual access has been taken away. The findings could lead to further research around program delivery practices and communication as members of the community move away from the pandemic mindset. Further research is necessary to continue investigating how hybrid program delivery should be prioritized in future years increasing pathways of participation.

**Key Words:** common practice(s), movement-programming, children, autism, program delivery

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## Table of Contents

### Abstract

### Acknowledgments

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b> .....	10
Creating Inclusive Spaces .....	10
<i>Universal Design</i> .....	11
Children Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder .....	12
<i>Autism Culture Versus Consumption</i> .....	13
Therapeutic Programming .....	14
<i>Movement-Based Programming</i> .....	14
<i>Social-Based Programming</i> .....	15
<i>Inclusion and Therapeutic Intervention</i> .....	16
<i>Therapeutic Influence and Role of Professionals</i> .....	17
<i>COVID-19, Autism, and Social Malnutrition</i> .....	18
<i>Technology and Transition</i> .....	19
<i>Significance of Therapeutic Programming</i> .....	20
A New Way of Learning.....	20
<i>Digital Literacy</i> .....	21
<i>Hybridization and Program Delivery</i> .....	21
<i>Disadvantages to Remote Facilitation</i> .....	22
<i>Parent/Caregiver Role</i> .....	23
Conclusion.....	24
<b>Chapter 3: Methodological Approach</b> .....	25
Design .....	25
Sample .....	26
Data Collection .....	27
<i>Manifest and Latent Content</i> .....	27
<i>Checklist</i> .....	28
<i>Timeline</i> .....	28
Data Analysis .....	29
<i>Checklist</i> .....	29
<i>Manifest and Latent Content</i> .....	29
Research Question .....	30
<b>Chapter 4: Findings</b> .....	31
Organization Purpose/Mission Statements .....	33
Collective and Individualized Coherences .....	34
<i>Collective Interpretations</i> .....	34
<i>Autism Ontario</i> .....	36
<i>Geneva Centre</i> .....	37

<i>Pathstone</i> .....	38
<i>Variety Village</i> .....	38
<i>Surrey Place</i> .....	39
Common Trends.....	40
<b>Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations</b> .....	42
Commitment to Accessibility .....	42
<i>Universal Design</i> .....	43
<i>Inclusive Spaces</i> .....	44
Program Offerings .....	45
Program Delivery .....	46
Common Practice.....	48
Main Trends Roundup.....	50
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion</b> .....	52
Limitations.....	52
Future Research.....	53
<b>References</b> .....	55
<b>Appendices</b> .....	61
Appendix A Universal Design Criteria.....	61
Appendix B Organization Criteria Prompts Checklist Template.....	63
Appendix C Manifest Content.....	65
Appendix D Manifest Analysis.....	74
Appendix E Plausible Interpretations .....	91

## **List of Tables**

Table 1: Location of Key Elements on Organizations Main Page.....	25
Table 2: Organizations Purpose/Mission Statements .....	28
Table 3: Visual Indicators of Accessibility.....	29
Table 4: Conclusive Summary of Key Elements of Checklist Prompts.....	34

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Through the emergence of and responses to COVID-19, the pandemic presented opportunities for over-coming barriers and developing innovations throughout society. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic in March 2020, which resulted in the cancellation of school, extracurricular activities, and/or programs through the act of the stay-at-home order (Yarimkaya & Esenturk, 2020). The stay-at-home order fueled a transition within all professions, boards, organizations, and facilities to think more broadly about the strategy of online facilitation and program delivery (Yarimkaya & Esenturk, 2020). The hybridization of online and in-person learning presents unique opportunities for participants to engage with content, spaces, and/or mediums in ways they may not have in the past (Norgard, 2021). Feenberg (2019) suggested that the digital element of learning has always been an option for society as it presents the opportunity to be as *natural* and *authentic* as in-person and on-site programming and/or facilitation.

Children living with autism spectrum disorder (autism) and their families experienced considerable distress throughout the disruption of structure and routine as there was an unknown direction to take during this time (Garcia et al., 2021). Not only did this disruption result in learning and attending school remotely for most, but it may have also impacted their access to services, support, and programs that aid their development daily. Leisure and movement-based participation play a role in an individual's health, well-being, and overall quality of life, regardless of their ability, which illustrates value in developing inclusive leisure spaces for children living with disabilities to foster confidence, independence, social skills, and a sense of belonging (Jeanes & Magee, 2010). Movement education programs are deemed beneficial for individuals living with developmental delays and/or *extraordinary behaviour habits* as these

types of programs create space for individuals to show up with their existing behaviour, with no expectation to change (Connolly, 2008).

Evidence suggested that individuals living with autism more frequently live a *sedentary lifestyle* which increases implications for their physical health and further suggested that the COVID -19 pandemic may lead to the long-term effects of an increase of obesity, risk to their mental health, family stress, and a negative impact on their holistic wellbeing (Yarimkaya & Esenturk, 2020). These possible long-term effects reinforce the importance of physical activity and movement for children and youth living with autism to protect their social behaviours, communication skills, and wellbeing (Yarimkaya & Esenturk, 2020). Participation in recreation and movement-based programming presents optimal opportunities for individuals to expand and enhance their level of knowledge, skills, and ability (Wise, 2019). Physical activity and movement are important for the development and wellbeing of all individuals including children and youth living with autism (Garcia et al., 2021). Evidence continues to suggest benefits and advantageous qualities for this population to participate in physical activity including but not limited to, enhancing social skills, increasing positive emotional regulation and mental health, enhanced mind-body connection, balance, coordination, self-awareness, and autonomy (Garcia et al., 2021).

This research project studied the common practices involved with, and the impacts of, the hybridization process of virtual and in-person environments of program delivery within movement-based programming spaces for children with autism. The purpose of this study was to better understand the common practices that exist within the dynamic approach of virtual and onsite programs across different organizations and use the results to gain insight into the inventory of current practices and analyze program delivery methods, with a focus on



movement-based programming for children and youth living with autism. This study used a qualitative approach relying on unobtrusive data sets (public domain material) from five organizations who support and facilitate therapeutic and movement-based programming for school aged children ranging from 7-14 years old living with autism. The following organizations were reviewed, (1) Autism Ontario (2) Geneva Centre (3) Pathstone Mental Health (4) Variety Village and (5) Surrey Place. Each organization's public domain material was analyzed using manifest and latent content analysis and was described and summarized using a prompt-based checklist. Overall, this study aimed to deepen interpretation of the communication and understanding of current practices of program delivery by different organizations within activity spaces and movement-based programming for children living with autism.

Throughout this document I will be using person-first language, I recognize that this is not everyone's preference but for consistency, especially with the organizations I included, this is the nomenclature I will be using. As I present this through a dual perspective of researcher and clinician base lens, person- first language is more preferred and common in my personal practice, but it is important to note that I provide the choice of person-first or identity-first language to all individuals and their families that I support.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of relevant literature to provide support for this research as well as generate further insight on trends, practices, and underlying assumptions. Within this chapter I will present context and background information to highlight the importance of movement-based programming for children with autism, as well as aid in identification of common practices within the selected organizations. Within this chapter I will present four sections including Creating Inclusive Spaces, Children Living with Autism, Therapeutic Programming and A New Way of Learning to generate context prior to exploring the available communication of current offerings and analysis of program delivery for children and youth living with autism.

### Creating Inclusive Spaces

Lewiecki-Wilson et al (2008) suggested that societal views must shift from access being generated through a top-down approach to access from an integrated approach that flows through acknowledgement of respecting and welcoming diversified lifestyles, abilities and/or perspectives. This act of welcoming and positive acknowledgment is significant in roles of supervision, such as a facilitator or health care professional, who may be willing to learn through the perspectives and life experiences of the individuals and families they support. Dolmage presented a metaphor of *steep steps* in relation to the academic climb universities propose with those who make it to the top being successful, worthy, and elite, yet fail to recognize that the environment only reflects well on the very able, creating the map of exclusion of space (Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008). This concept of exclusion is transferable to movement, sport, and therapeutic extracurricular activities where children and youth living with autism (or other exceptionalities) are expected to enter an environment that does not best support their success

(Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008). Often the autism community is only presented with the opportunity to *climb* when they do not have the skill set to do so, ultimately limiting their access to space of active leisure. Spatial and social attitudes are equally comparable as barriers as physical structures are (Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008). Recreational professionals alongside allied health care must work to ensure that there is consideration and purposeful evaluation of both visible and invisible barriers to accessible program spaces.

### ***Universal Design***

Individual models of disability suggest that individuals living with a diagnosis present as inferior to others who are not and portrays a deficit focused lens compared to the Social Model of disability, which acknowledges external barriers and the societal responsibility of removing them (Spiel et al., 2019). Dolmage proposed that in structured environments, disability is often viewed as a set of behaviours that are unnatural, untypical and need to be fixed rather than adapting or shifting the perspectives or social boundaries (Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008). “Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability” (National Disability Authority, 2020a, para. 1). Universal design presents many advantageous qualities as environments that complement all individuals’ behaviours and functions, as well as present a more accessible, inclusive, and pleasurable experience for all members of society (National Disability Authority, 2020a). Seven fundamental principles were developed in 1997 by various professionals and members associated with North Carolina State University as a guide for the design of environments, products, and communications (National Disability Authority, 2020b). The guiding principles stand as follows (1) Equitable Use (2) Flexibility in Use (3) Simple and Intuitive Use (4) Perceptible Information (5) Tolerance for

Effort (6) Low Physical Effort and (7) Size and Space for Approach and Use (National Disability Authority, 2020b). Each principle is presented with a brief description and associated guidelines (see Appendix A). Overall, *Universal Design* is a dynamic process as it propels forward, constantly evolving and being proactive in reconsidering and designing new projects to maximize accessibility of space and design to all members (Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008).

### **Children Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism)**

The word Autism is derived from the Greek word *autos* similarly described as self or inwardly focused. Autism spectrum disorder (autism) is a neurological and developmental disorder that is dynamic and individualized, displaying different pattern(s) of behaviour (Joon et al., 2021). Over decades, autism has transitioned from being unknown, to being an intriguing phenomenon, to now being more commonly accepted within society, through adjusting and readjusting to social and cultural pressures that exist (Straus, 2013). Throughout the transitional periods, research in the field suggested that autism is best managed rather than cured and has continued to progress further into the direction of autism being a form of *desirable human variability*, coming together through a sense of community, culture, and identity (Connolly, 2008; Straus, 2013).

Straus (2013) raised the question of “is autism a medical condition (syndrome, disorder, pathology) or is it a social group (an identity, a shared culture)?” (p.461). Individual medical models of disability portray a focus on cure or eradication, while the Social Model of disability believes that the social environments and constructs are significant as opposed to internal or biological construction (Straus, 2013). We can no longer recognize autism as something that is a deficit from or *excess of normative standard* but rather an invaluable and extraordinary way of thinking, creating and existing (Straus, 2013). Connolly (2008) proposed the concept of focusing

on the authenticity of embodied expression even if it means going against the preconceived notions and norms within society as well as the fact that, individuals living with or without autism can co-exist in a world fully accepting that everyone presents extraordinary or unconventional behaviours from which we can learn from.

While shifting away from biology to culture, there are many strategies and techniques that can be enabled to support an individual living with autism including but not limited to, *consistent routines and schedules, knowledge of expectations, rehearsal strategies, stimulus cues, environmental modifications*, and *peer advocates* (Connolly, 2008; Straus, 2013). Support strategies and techniques that are present in both home and educational environments from a young age tend to yield the most beneficial outcomes (Connolly, 2008). Recreation professionals and allied health care must take on the responsibility of identifying and supporting the source of distress which may display as extreme behaviours externally but may be experienced as urgent unmanageable stimuli internally for an individual living with autism or rather behaviours that are deemed uncommon as a result of social pressures/expectations (Connolly, 2008; Straus, 2013).

### ***Autism Culture versus Consumption***

Alongside autism as culture exists autism as commodity which connects to the Autism Industrial Complex (aic), ultimately highlighting and creating the cultural narratives that intervention is necessary (Broderick & Roscigno, 2021). Autism has been associated with individual models of disability in terms of intervention, intensive therapies (i.e., ABA) and a deficit focused lens for some time generating the complex for consumption (Broderick & Roscigno, 2021; Straus, 2013). Society is co-existing between two worlds, the one constructed by medical professionals and the one created from a sense of culture and identity of people with autism. The one constructed by medical professionals is fueling intervention as the only plausible

outcome where industries and companies are profiting from (Broderick & Roscigno, 2021). Autism has become a thing, making it consumable, failing to shift away from biological and internal cause while simultaneously dismissing peoples' identity, sense of culture and distinctive thought patterns (Broderick & Roscigno, 2021; Straus, 2013). Now is the time to curate culture surrounding the concepts of celebrated differences which supports interrogation and reconsideration of cultural norms that are deemed as appropriate behaviours by society, which then may present the opportunity to shine light on embodied expressions of lived experiences of individuals living with autism through the lens of exploration and acceptance (Connolly, 2008; Straus, 2013).

## **Therapeutic Programming**

### ***Movement-Based Programming***

Movement education presents the opportunity to combine social, emotional, cognitive, and physical based programming which supports individuals living with exceptionalities through adaptation, flexibility, and purposeful interventions (Connolly, 2008). Sports and movement can foster the growth, development, and the ability to maintain independence, self-image, collaboration and leadership skills, physical and mental performance, social connections and overall desire, motivation, and drive to pursue future goals (Aytur et al., 2018). Connolly (2008) discussed the foundational aspects of movement education through thematic characteristics of the moving body being *body, space, quality, effort* and *relationship*, suggesting that this is an active process that individuals all experience differently through principles of understanding, contextualizing, developing, and refining various movement patterns.

Although physical activity and movement present as a positive reinforcement or outlet for children living with autism, there are limited and delayed structured opportunities to do so

increasing barriers as a society (Garcia et al., 2021). Obesity continues to grow within the population and has become a common health concern of individuals living with autism. Evidence shows there is a correlation between children, youth and adults living with autism and the limited access and/or opportunities for physical activity and/or movement-based programs (Obrusnikova & Cavalier, 2011). Research suggested that individuals living with autism are frequently experiencing one or more of the following behaviours such as: sound sensitivity, sensory processing, constrained attention span and/or focus, limited social skills, lack of coping strategies and/or other limitations that prevent or decrease the likeliness of participating in structured physical activity and/or movement-based experiences (Obrusnikova & Cavalier, 2011). Without further navigation and support of these behaviours, there is an increased tendency of both physical and mental health concerns within the individual's life (Obrusnikova & Cavalier, 2011).

### ***Social-Based Programming***

Literature suggested there is a positive relationship between movement and social interaction specifically for the autism population as it promotes children and youth to often show up as they are, and provides the opportunity for expression throughout participation, which increases the frequency of peer interactions and the building of interpersonal relationships (Zhao & Shihui, 2018). Therapeutic programming including play-based, or movement-based programming, presents the opportunity for communication and social based skill development in a natural and unforced manner which increases the tendencies and frequencies of engagement (Narzisi et al., 2021; Zhao & Shihui, 2018). Individuals living with autism often experience things differently through their exceptional abilities including social interactions and communication (Narzisi et al., 2021). A focus on fostering the development of social skills for children and youth living with autism is crucial, as it also contributes to their holistic

development in being able to relate and engage with others physically, emotionally, and spiritually (Zhao & Shihui, 2018).

Children living with autism often must navigate establishing friendships, playing cooperative games, engaging in group conversations and/or activities differently, which implements acts of exclusion and isolation (Narzisi et al., 2021). Social exclusion and isolation often contribute to increased mental health concerns for these individuals such as depression, anxiety, lack of autonomy and low self-image (Narzisi et al., 2021). Social-based therapeutic programs facilitate the development of interacting with peers, engaging in conversation or discussions, as well as problem solving skills while simultaneously providing space for structure and routine outside home and school rituals (Narzisi et al., 2021).

### ***Inclusion and Therapeutic Intervention***

Movement education is seen to have many therapeutic qualities that foster one's wellbeing through enhancing aspects of one's mental and physical health (Connolly, 2008). Organizations, facilities, communities and/or programs are often designed with the intention for good or positives outcomes. There are numerous factors that which beneficial and purposeful actions result in within a leisure and movement community including but not limited to, supportive networks, guidance, increased level of strategic skill sets alike reasoning, striding for growth and progress, adversity, inclusion and/or flourishing (Wise, 2019). Inclusion is a term that is often misinterpreted and/or used incorrectly. Penney et al. (2017) proposed the concept of inclusive education which values and supports all forms of diversity and pursues inclusion as a human right. They suggested that there is literature and research that supports physical education curriculum in relation to inclusion, but biases and social norms remain in the forefront (Penney et al., 2017). Many leisure environments do not present as inclusive spaces for children living with



exceptionalities, ultimately creating barriers (i.e., lack of access or financial resources) to overcome but on the contrary even non-inclusive movement and sport-based environments still contribute to growth for active individuals living with different abilities (Aytur et al., 2018; Jeanes & Magee, 2010).

These barriers continue within attitudes and stereotypical connotations that accompany individuals living with a disability into the leisure and movement community presented by their peers and families (Jeanes & Magee, 2010). This type of behaviour results in individuals living with exceptionalities lacking social acceptance leading to social isolation, loneliness, and neglect (Jeanes & Magee, 2010). Stigma and societal influence heavily impact daily activities for individuals and their families living with autism. Not only is it shown to negatively impact their psychological and emotional wellbeing, but also their social behaviours and level of participation and/or involvement (Ng et al., 2020). Participation is recognized as a significant contributing factor to the positive development of skills and well-being for individuals of all abilities, as it provides learning opportunities for daily activities and engagement including, interpersonal relationships, building self-identity and overall growth as humans (Ng et al., 2020). Not only do stigmatizing and biased social structures hold negative consequences for the individual living with autism themselves, but also for family members and caregivers who experience exclusionary behaviours at large (Ng et al., 2020). It is, therefore, critical to consider exploring alternative activity-based movement for physical education that presents more inclusive opportunity for all abilities (Penney et al., 2017).

### ***Therapeutic Influences and Role of Professionals***

Therapeutic professionals and allied health care hold the responsibility to construct a vision and goal-focused perspective that reflects leisure pursuits as a primary contributor to

growth and development (Wise, 2019). Individuals working with and supporting participants living with autism or alternative diagnoses should present a strength-based approach rather than a deficit focused framework to ultimately foster empowerment and value (Jeanes & Magee, 2010). According to Anderson and Heyne (2012), purposeful facilitation involves personalized recreation and leisure programming that meets and/or exceeds an individual's needs, wants and aspirations through engagement and participation. When the participant can exercise both their skills and abilities to overcome challenges while engaging in a leisure pursuit that presents meaning and enjoyment, it is referred to as quality leisure experiences (Anderson & Heyne, 2012).

### ***COVID-19, Autism, and Social Malnutrition***

Children and youth of all abilities are encouraged to engage with leisure pursuits such as play, hobbies and interests, physical activity, or social based activities to aid their development and interpersonal connections with others (Memari et al., 2015). It is common that children living with autism mainly engage in passive play and are less likely to register or participate in structured leisure, recreation and/or therapeutic programming (Memari et al., 2015). A panel of medical professionals and experts, part of the Ontario Medical Association, suggest the concept of *social malnutrition*, as potential long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in children but more specifically children with different neurodevelopment, including children living with autism (Britnell, 2021). Hospital for Sick Children reporting suggested that approximately 40% of children are reporting experiencing anxiety as well as a 25% increase in suicide attempts (Britnell, 2021). Research has suggested that the lengthened periods of remote facilitation and isolation as contributing to the decline of all aspects of development including social and cognitive development, communication, and mental health (Britnell, 2021). Lack of access to

therapeutic programming both structured and unstructured for children living with autism often leads to inactivity, social isolation and higher risk for sedentariness which primarily stems from financial and resource barriers as well as capacity for opportunities (Memari et al., 2015).

### ***Technology and Transition***

Even through the COVID-19 pandemic, therapeutic activity and movement-based programs were an essential aspect for children and youth living with autism to best support their physical and emotional wellbeing (Esenturk & Yarimkaya, 2021). Children living with autism and their families experience an assortment of benefits and barriers in relation to program delivery and access to resources (Ashburner et al., 2015). Evidence suggested that online program delivery presents an opportunity to maximize access for children living with autism and their families and has the potential to foster the development of knowledge and skill (Ashburner et al., 2015).

There is raised concern that virtual learning and/or facilitation is inferior compared to on-site or in-person participation as collectively as a society, there was the dynamic shift to using virtual platforms as a result of emergency rather than strictly productivity (Norgard, 2021). The concept of space is a broad term that can suggest many different perspectives alike *geographical, sociological, psychological*, etc. but raises questions about if it should constrain an environment as to whether it is a learning space or not (Hilli et al., 2019). It has been proposed that space is correlated and associated with meaningful experience through interaction, connection and/or participation (Hilli et al., 2019). Although the initial major push of the hybridized program delivery was reflective of an emergent cause, it should not be dismissed as a possible long-term program delivery pathway once weighing the advantages and disadvantages to a given population, community and/or organization (Norgard, 2021). It is important to use technology as

a tool where it can be supportive in various environments such as educational daily activities, recreation, and leisure pursuits as well to promote independence, decision making, and problem solving where appropriate (Kellems et al., 2015).

### ***Significance of Therapeutic Programming***

Therapeutic programming combines physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development supporting various aspects of skill building and growth. It plays a critical role in the lives of children and families living with autism, heightening the significance for inclusive and therapeutic spaces for them to explore and engage with. It is important to re-establish the meaning of inclusion through advocacy and action while questioning and identifying solutions for barriers to maximize the opportunity for individuals to *show up as they are* (Penney et al., 2017). Therapeutic professionals and allied health care professionals need to pursue activity and movement based-programming options for all abilities presenting the opportunity for participants to balance the feelings of challenge and success (Jeanes & Magee, 2010). Possible lack of access to inclusive and safe activity and movement spaces (virtual or on-site) holds the potential for long term effects of social malnutrition and decreased participation (Memari et al., 2015). Given the shift to hybrid and/or remote facilitation during COVID-19, it is significant to consider the diversity of program offerings and delivery methods when supporting a more vulnerable population like individuals living with autism. Therapeutic programming and influence are crucial if young people living with autism are to have access to inclusive spaces and a supportive network.

### **A New Way of Learning**

Typical societal perspectives of learning and facilitation may be challenged by remote and hybrid program delivery as it has not previously been the most used delivery model. That

said, it presents many unique features and skill development opportunities through a different lens (Hilli et al., 2019; Norgard, 2021). Online program delivery presents opportunities for children, families, and professionals to begin and/or continue the development of their digital literacy, scheduling adaptability, reduction in cost, time, and travel, fostering of connection and support as well as encouraging innovation, progress, and growth of all members (Ashburner et al., 2015). Within this section I will discuss digital literacy and identify both advantageous and disadvantageous characteristics of remote and hybrid delivery models as well as the involvement from parents/caregivers to maximize children's and youth's success. Heightened dependence on the virtual world may present as unfamiliar but holds the possibility for syntheses through innovation.

### ***Digital Literacy***

Engagement with virtual environments and learning offer enhanced opportunities to interact with diversified materials, spaces, tools, mediums, and skills through the variations of virtual and non-virtual components (Hilli et al., 2019). As this transition emerges, it is crucial to acknowledge that facilities and organizations have had to and/or will have to adapt and reflect on new policies, procedures, program delivery and practices of engagement (Norgard, 2021). Digital learning provides the opportunity for individuals to interact with new mediums and materials including but not limited to virtual games and resources, videos and social media platforms while simultaneously building and practicing the navigation of virtual platforms (Hilli et al., 2019).

### ***Hybridization and Program Delivery***

Hybridity may not have been a comfortable, *safe* nor *familiar* process but rather may have felt heavily entangled with innovation and possibility (Stommel & Rorabaugh, 2012).

Hybridization is not the act of mending two pre-existing elements to fill in the missing pieces but rather developing and creating *synthesis* to optimally innovate something much greater, breaking down pre-existing boundaries and generating a new sense of opportunity (Stommel & Rorabaugh, 2012). Essentially, hybridization allows synthesis of two concepts that may have not always interacted in a cohesive way to provide an act, service and/or support to effectively facilitate programming while eliminating barriers (Pedersen et al., 2018). Norgard (2021) proposed that it would be a significant movement to proceed with hybrid approaches combining both virtual and in-person learning and facilitation to maximize opportunities for students, participants, facilitators, etc. and move away from synchronous vs. asynchronous or online vs. in person mindsets. Moving into the new dependence on the virtual world as a society, there are various components to gain further understanding of, including but not limited to, technical support or solutions, technological training and setup, complex virtual platforms and navigating the upkeep of virtual trends (Norgard, 2021).

Not all positive learning experiences need to be directly correlated with a physical classroom, and transition beyond traditional learning spaces allows for exploration of the benefits and/or risks associated with non-traditional learning spaces (Hilli et al., 2019). Hybridized approaches not only identify learning and participation online and/or offline but also suggest a dynamic shift that challenges the balance of informal versus formal settings, roles and expectations of staff or participants, and digital literacy maintenance of all individuals involved (Hilli et al., 2019).

### ***Disadvantages of Remote Facilitation***

Through the process of remote facilitation and hybridization, learning environments often merge professional and personal lifestyles which could create tension and/or be problematic for participants who would benefit best from clear and concise personal and professional boundaries

(Norgard, 2021). A disadvantageous quality associated with virtual and hybrid program delivery approaches results in not allowing the area for escape or change of environment for the participants who succeed best while not at home (Norgard, 2021). Although on the contrary, having the opportunity to remain in an individuals' known space also resulted in being an advantage through the balance of a hybrid/remote approach offering participants and/or family relief from social commitment, transportation, accessibility, adaptable locations (work, school, travel) while remaining open and connected (Norgard, 2021). Ashburner et al. (2015) reported that the two main findings in relation to drawbacks of virtual program delivery fall on the concepts of technical difficulties and/or errors and the need for initial in-person evaluation or assessment. Although, conclusively the study reports that there were more benefits to virtual program delivery than barriers with the ratio of 5:2 (Ashburner et al., 2015). Overall, it remains significant to acknowledge that not all participants and families may have the resources, ability and/or accessibility to utilize an online platform or it may be difficult to find a functional learning and/or participating environment that works for each participant and/or family (Norgard, 2021).

### ***Parent/ Caregiver Role***

The significance in the parent and/or caregiver role cannot be underestimated but rather supported as they play an even more crucial role in the child's development during remote programming and hybridized program delivery (Esenturk & Yarimkaya, 2021). Parents and/or caregivers should be given the adequate support and access needed to uphold a sustainable expectation of the child's level of development and participation. This support could include videos, images, diagrams, equipment, activity suggestions and/or live virtual programming (Esenturk & Yarimkaya, 2021). Further, if parental or caregiver involvement is not secure

during remote movement-based programming, it will limit the chances of success of meeting goals for a child living with autism (Yarimkaya & Esenturk, 2020).

Interacting with virtual mediums is not to be shied away from, but rather engaged with more frequently in meaningful ways. Hybridity and virtual offerings present adaptable and accessible functions which may increase numbers in participation and present opportunity to develop and practice new skills. Although a different level of support is needed from a caregiver in remote locations, it nevertheless presents an opportunity to parents to engage in a different way which could be more accommodating to their lifestyle and/or schedule.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the literature discussed presents context and background regarding inclusive spaces, children living with autism, therapeutic programming, and digital learning which support insights and interpretations relative to the present study. This literature contributes to understanding common practices within the inventory of communication of current program offerings and program delivery methods.



### **Chapter 3: Methodological Approach**

Within this chapter, I present a description of the methodological approach over four sections. Within the first section, I describe the design employed for the study. In the second section I include context regarding the sample used, followed by an overview of how the data sets were collected through unobtrusive means. Within section three and lastly within section four, I discuss the data analyses that contributed to insights on common and current practices of organizations within activity and movement-based spaces for children living with autism.

#### **Design**

The purpose of this study was threefold: 1) to better understand the common practices that exist within the dynamic approach of virtual and onsite programs across different organizations, 2) to use the results to gain insight about the inventory of current practices and 3) to analyze program delivery methods of movement-based programming for young people living with autism. This study considered and analyzed five organizations between Niagara and Toronto, Ontario, that focus on supporting the development of children aged 7-14 living with autism through purposeful programming and movement-based participation. Through the exploration of public domain material and other mediums associated with the selected organizations, in-depth analyses and interpretation were conducted, reflecting the levels of access and open communication each organization has with their community about their offerings.

This study was conducted using unobtrusive methods and the support of a researcher curated and designed checklist to interpret the selected samples' common practices and program delivery. Unobtrusive research can be identified as a research method that proposes insightful analysis of pre-existing sets of data without the interaction with or disruption of materials and/or

participants (van den Hoonaard, 2015). This analysis was further broken down using both manifest and latent analysis. Manifest content is information that can be identified quickly and easily while latent content requires deeper interaction with the material, to uncover the purpose and underlying meaning (van den Hoonaard, 2015). The designed checklist was developed through careful consideration of literature, and the criteria of universal design, keeping equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in mind. Overall, this study was designed to use public domain material to describe, analyze, and interpret methods of common practice for activity and movement spaces for children living with autism, through identification of both manifest and latent content as well as determining the current and common inventory of practices and communication of program delivery through completion of the checklist.

### **Sample**

The sample for this study was deemed appropriate as the listed organizations have been purposefully selected based on the following criteria. The selected organizations contribute to serving and supporting the autism community between the ages 7-14, have provided both virtual and on-site programming and have the potential to consider new methods of program delivery based on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following organizations' offerings were reviewed (1) Autism Ontario (2) Geneva Centre (3) Pathstone Mental Health (4) Variety Village and (5) Surrey Place.

These organizations are deemed appropriate for the sample based on the following information. *Autism Ontario* is Ontario's leading source of advocacy, support, referrals, and information for the autism community (Autism Ontario, n.d.). *Geneva Centre* is a premiere centre that supports children and youth living with autism through service and program offerings developed through evidence-based practice (Geneva Centre, n.d.). *Pathstone Mental Health* is

the lead agency for providing accessible, consistent, and high-quality mental health services for children, youth, and their families within the Niagara region (Pathstone Mental Health, 2019).

*Variety Village* is known as the most inclusive and welcoming fitness, sports, and life skills facility in Toronto for any ability (Variety Village, 2021). *Surrey Place* is a leading agency supporting individuals living with developmental disabilities within Ontario, to best navigate their future pathways through services and programs (Surrey Place, 2022).

### **Data Collection**

For this study, data were collected through two different methods. Firstly, the criteria for the checklist were developed through in-depth review of literature primarily focusing on the domains of universal design, use of common practices, program delivery, EDI, and purposeful programming. Secondly, data were collected through access of public domain accessing pre-existing resources interconnected to the organizations listed in the sample, to collect and determine data to be interpreted through the process of manifest and latent analysis. Data collection materials primarily included organizational websites, as well as virtual brochures, flyers, and event calendars.

### ***Manifest and Latent Content***

The manifest analysis was completed in two separate parts. Part one of engaging with the manifest content (see Appendix C) collected data pertaining to what could be observed upon visiting the main page of each organizational website as well as locating and identifying each organization's mission, vision, and values. All observations were recorded and broken into sections according to location on the page such as top, middle, bottom, and drop-down menus. Sections were further broken down (i.e., main page: middle 1/3) when deemed necessary in terms length and amount of content within each section for organizational purposes. The second

part of the manifest analyses (see Appendix D) investigates and identifies four different items including the appearance of the organizational main page (colours, fonts, and sizes), number of clicks to locate movement-based programming, listed program offerings for children aged 7-14 and each organizations webpage highlights. All items were recorded based on observation and included all content that was visibly available. The data collected for the latent content was conducted simultaneously as the manifest content as the latent content, that is, the plausible interpretations, were pulled from the manifest content collected. This process was conducted for each organization and produced 33 pages of data to be reviewed and interpreted between both the manifest and latent content.

### ***Checklist***

The checklist was utilized as a tool of guidance and reference point to interpret each organization's commitment to supporting their stated population and ensure the selected organization met the criteria of the study. The checklist includes prompts in reference to program relevance, method of delivery, universal design, and program accessibility. The data collected for content of the checklist is presented over approximately 11 pages (see Appendix D).

### ***Timeline***

The data for this project was collected over approximately two six-month periods, the first being May-October of 2020 and the second being September 2021-February of 2022. The pandemic presented unusual circumstances in the sense that websites were everything during COVID-19, as they served as the primary form of communication to the public and each organization's users. It was important to track using highly detailed notes along with capturing screen shots over the two six-month periods specifically when primarily analyzing organizations' websites, as they are active and live data set that could change frequently and quickly. The

purpose of analyzing and comparing the data sets over the two periods of time was intended to capture what was available initially, close to the beginning of the pandemic, as well as what was available when transitioning back in an endemic state.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected for this study were analyzed in a multi-step process. The data were interpreted through application of the checklist of criteria prompts (see Appendix B) to each organization's offerings, identifying and comparing common practices and communication within the sample. The data were further analyzed through identifying both manifest and latent content of the offerings collected through public domain resources. Collectively, both methods presented valuable information in drawing conclusive trends and patterns that are reflective of organizations supporting the children and families living with autism in relation to program delivery and common practices.

### ***Checklist***

The data from each of the checklists were analyzed and contributed to identifying both collective and individual coherences to report interpretations. These interpretations aided in determining the three main findings/trends within the study along with the assimilation, analysis, and interpretation of the manifest and latent content.

### ***Manifest and Latent Content***

The data collected for the manifest content was analyzed based on what was easily observable and identified quickly to produce content to be further interpreted to identify underlying meaning and purpose within the data set, eventually contributing to developing latent content analyses. The latent analyses were concluded by making plausible interpretations based on the manifest analyses primarily comparing how the manifest content contributes to each

organization's stated purpose. Plausible interpretations were reported based on each individual organization as well as addressing commonalities across organization's purposes and practices.

The analyses and interpretations allowed the researcher to respond effectively to the

**Research Question** animating this project:

What are the common practices between the relationship of remote and on-site environments associated with the current inventory of communication and program delivery within movement-based programming for children living with autism?

## Chapter 4: Findings

Through the exploration of public domains and mediums associated with the selected organizations, notable findings have been identified reflecting the level of access and open communication each organization has with their community about their current and future offerings. The data contributing to these findings were collected through exploration of each organization's website. These findings were developed from a multi-level content analysis and contribute to insights about common practices relating to the impact of the hybridization of movement-based programs for children with autism in terms of their program offerings and public communication. In this section I present conclusive trends and interpretations summarized across the five organizations, specifically relating to the concepts of the accessibility of website navigation, number of clicks to seek information, program offerings, webpage highlights, dropdown menu options and making the hidden obvious. I created a summary table which captured the locations of key elements on each organization's main page (see Table 1) as well as the completed manifest analyses data set, which have been included (see Appendix C). The applied criteria prompt and charts presenting each of the items in detail have been broken down by organization (see Appendix D).

**Table 1**

*Location of Key Elements on Organizations Main Page*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Top</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Bottom</b>
<b>Autism Ontario</b>	-Organization logo -9 drop down tabs: About Us, About Autism, Programs and Services, Find a Provider, Find a Region, Events, News,	-15 clickable icons: Adult Resources, Autism Career Connections, Autism Matters Magazine, Awards and Funding, Caregiver Programs, Children, family & Youth Programs, Donate, Events and Workshops,	-Organization logo -9 tabs: About Us, Contact Us, Careers, Login, Newsletter Signup, Media, Privacy and Accessibility, Charitable #

	Donate and Membership	French Language Services, Learning Resources, OAP Provider List, Positive Advocacy, Regional Programs, Research and Webinars -News and Event columns	-Social Media icons/links
<b>Geneva Centre</b>	-Organization logo -Donate and Search Functions -Drop down menu tab	-Images and Quotes -Program Registration Tab -4 graphic tabs: Programs, Intake, Resources, and Training -News, Events and Resource columns	-Organization logo -Social media icons/links -6 clickable links: Privacy Policy, Terms of Use, Accessibility, Accessibility Plan, Gifting Policy, and Finance Policy
<b>Pathstone Mental Health</b>	-Crisis Services Hotline banner -Walk-in clinic information -Organization logo 8 drop-down tabs: For Families, About, Services, Immediate Services, Volunteers, Contact, Donate, and Search	-Large images with testimonials -3 icons and numbered resources: Referral, Information Sessions, and Pathstone Treatment Plan -Crisis Services Hotline banner	-Crisis Services Hotline banner -4 resource columns: Pathstone contact information and social media links, Mountianview Centre for Innovative Learning contact information, Pathstone Newsletter and Crisis Services Hotline
<b>Variety Village</b>	-Summer registration banner -Organization logo -Donate and search functions -Operation hours -Link to program guide (2023) -6 drop down tabs: What We Offer, Get Involved, Who We Are, Quick Links, Fund Us and Latest News! -Video preview and image	-What's New? & Events columns -Active map view: find programs in your area function	-Newsletter sign up -Talk to us function -Variety Village address/contact information -Social media icons/links



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<b>Surrey Place</b>	-Organization logo -3 drop down menus: About Us, Get Involved and Connect with Us -6 drop down tabs: Services, Resources, Education, Research, News & Events, and I AM -3 rotating images with text	-5 clickable icons: Autism Services, Wellness Events, FAQ, Infant Hearing Screening and Careers -News and Stories -3 columns: 60 years of service, Person-Centered Approach and Support Across the Lifespan -Testimonials	-Subscribe to newsletter -Social media icons/links -3 columns: About Us, Get in Touch and For Staff
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### Organization Purpose/Mission Statements

Through thorough data analyses on each organization's website, I discerned that each provides a purpose or mission statement describing their intentions guiding their services and offerings (see Table 2). The five organizations place significance on supporting, empowering, and strengthening an individual's network in fostering enriched quality of life through interdisciplinary skills and inclusive and accessible spaces. For example, the words *collaboration* and *accountability* figure prominently in all the organizations' mission or vision statements. All five organizations' purpose/mission statements are portrayed through a positive and growth focused lens including words such as *supportive*, *inclusive*, *strengthen*, and *empowered* to guide the type of support they provide to each child and family. It can be interpreted that family-centered care is significant within most of these organizations as three of the five acknowledge the importance of connectivity and involvement of family in their purpose/mission statement. Each statement aims to contribute to attaining maximum access and support for individuals living with autism and other complexities. However, it should also be noted that in three of the five organizations, there are also undercurrents of fitting in and appropriate functioning, even though these organizations ostensibly accept difference and variability in abilities. This underscores the helpfulness of carrying out both manifest and latent analyses.

**Table 2***Organizations Purpose/Mission Statements*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Purpose/Mission Statement</b>
Autism Ontario	Creating a supportive and inclusive Ontario for autism
Geneva Centre	To empower individuals with autism spectrum disorder, and their families, to fully participate in their communities. We do this by providing direct support for families as well as professional training to share best practices around the world.
Pathstone Mental Health	We strengthen the quality of life for children, youth and families who are dealing with mental health challenges.
Variety Village	Variety programming empowers children with disabilities to be seen, participate and feel included. We bring accessible facilities to life with sports, fitness, activities, summer camps, skills training and coaching for competitive and Paralympic athletes.
Surrey Place	We help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism spectrum disorder (AUTISM) to lead healthy and socially inclusive lives using our exemplary skills in interdisciplinary clinical services, education, and research. We provide many of our clinical services in both official languages, and where we do not, we refer to a French language service provider.

**Collective and Individualized Coherences**

Collective and individualized trends, approaches, and purposes have been identified for all organizations, generating notable findings worth reporting (see Appendix E). Within this section, I discuss the coherence of the plausible interpretations in relation to the organization's purpose/mission and over-arching theme of creating and supporting positive developmental experiences for young people living with autism.

***Collective Interpretations***

All organizations present as being committed to their websites being accessible to most individuals as all use various visual indicators of accessibility (see Table 3). These include significant colour contrast of light and dark schemes, and the size of font used as it does not go below size 12 font (aside from one outlier using 10.5 sized font for their main text) creating an

accessible page for individuals to engage with. The organizations continue their commitment to access based on the number of clicks to access information for movement or social based programming for children. Overall, the pages present as easy to manipulate with approximately 2-3 clicks, aside from one organization which is still relatively easy to navigate given the number of clicks being 9.

**Table 3**

*Visual Indicators of Accessibility*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Colours</b>	<b>Fonts</b>	<b>Sizes</b>	<b>Number of clicks to movement-based programming</b>
<b>Autism Ontario</b>	Background: White  Headings: Bolded or underlined black text Main text: Black  Accent Colours: Primarily light green, also red, blue, pink, and yellow	Headings, Subheadings & Text:  Gill Sans	Headings: 16-18.5  Subheadings: 15-16  Text: 12	9
<b>Geneva Centre</b>	Background: Primarily white, some red  Headings: Bolded black or red  Main text: Primarily black  Accent Colours: Primarily red, also purple, blue, green, and grey	Headings, Subheadings & Text:  Roboto	Headings: 22.5  Subheadings: 16.5  Text: 10.5	2
<b>Pathstone Mental Health</b>	Background: Primarily white, some light grey and dark purple  Headings: Dark purple	Headings & Subheadings: Roboto  Text: Raleway	Headings: 27  Subheadings: 18  Text: 12/16	3

	Main text: Primarily black, some white			
	Accent Colours: primarily dark purple, also light blue, green and red			
<b>Variety Village</b>	Background: Primarily white, some black and tan	Headings: Poppins	Headings: 23.5  Subheadings: 13  Text: 11.5-13	2
	Headings: Bolded black, subheadings red	Subheadings: Inhert		
	Main text: Primarily black, some white	Text: Roboto		
	Accent Colours: Primarily red, also yellow, green, and blue			
<b>Surrey Place</b>	Background: Primarily white with light blue, green, yellow, and purple	Headings & Subheadings: Arial	Headings: 16/18  Subheadings: 12  Text: 12/14.5/17	3
	Headings: Primarily in dark purple	Text: Lato		
	Main text: Primarily dark purple and white			
	Accent Colours: Primarily light green also light yellow, blue, and purple			

### ***Autism Ontario Interpretations***

Autism Ontario presents as being committed to offering an assortment of programs and events within various communities across Ontario specifically in collaboration with community partners. Data analyses suggest that Autism Ontario prioritizes the socialization of children, youth, and families over other types of programming and offers solely community-based programing although it is not explicitly stated. Autism Ontario's webpage provides options to filter through based on theme or categories of their events and services available for future

offerings such as fundraising, recreation, health and fitness, workshops and more. The presence of categorical options suggests that there is prominence for families and users navigating their website in a more efficient manner to locate their most desired information on events they are seeking and/or interested in. As an organization, Autism Ontario frequently provides in-person and virtual programming and/or events but does not demonstrate any commitment to hybridization of programs working cohesively together. The programs and events that are offered in collaboration with Autism Ontario and their community partners seem to be low to no cost in most circumstances, often asking families solely to cover the cost of materials rather than facility space, support, and/or facilitation. The low cost of programming indicates an acknowledgement of the importance to maximize program opportunities and access for children and families living with and managing disabilities.

### ***Geneva Centre Interpretations***

Geneva Centre provides various programs and group opportunities to participate in and engage with, and data analyses indicate that they strongly prioritize socialization and social skill development for children, youth and families living with autism. Geneva Centre provides in-person and virtual programming and/or events but does not demonstrate any commitment to hybridization of programs working cohesively or purposely together. Although it is not explicitly stated, Geneva Centre does not rely on nor encourage the support of parents and caregivers for participation but rather provides skilled support during programming through their 3:1 ratio of participants to staff. Geneva Centre's cost for access to available programming is not connected to accessibility of the population who may benefit from the support but rather those who can afford it with some programs costing upward of \$1000 (Geneva Centre, n.d.). The cost of their programs also indicates their stronger desire to deliver intervention-based programming as

opposed to recreation and movement-based programming for children, youth, and families with autism.

### ***Pathstone Mental Health Interpretations***

Pathstone refers to various program opportunities, workshops, and means of support available to children, youth and families who would benefit primarily from support on their mental health journey, although the website information presents as extremely difficult to find. Their limited information regarding access and details about their programming, workshops, and events could represent several priorities including but not limited to their dedication and respect to the confidentiality and privacy of the individuals they support, their health care team creating and implementing individualized care and program plans for each client's needs and interests, and/or their significant limitations within their offerings and communication with the public. Further analysis of the data indicates that an individual must be directly connected with a health care member and/or be a client at Pathstone to access detailed information about program and service offerings. Through careful interpretation of the Pathstone website, a cost associated with service is not noted. Unclear descriptions of what an individual can expect at Pathstone could serve as a barrier for children and youth who are hesitant to explore the unknown and thus further inhibit an individual from seeking skilled support.

### ***Variety Village Interpretations***

Variety Village offers the most movement-based programming opportunities of the five organizations for children living with autism and other complexities through specialized supports for all abilities in an inclusive environment, indicating that they prioritize movement and physical activity over other types of programming. Variety Village offers a minimum of 14 structured movement-based programs for children aged 7-14 living with exceptionalities within

one season (Variety Village, 2021). The data analysis indicates that as an organization, Variety Village has converted back to fully in-person programming, not offering either hybrid or virtual participatory options although they have not explicitly stated that to the public. Variety Village's communications acknowledge the importance of accessibly priced programs to maximize participation of all children, youth, and their families.

### ***Surrey Place Interpretations***

Surrey Place offers various programming options but has identified that there is significant importance placed on social, communication and emotional regulation focused programming for children living with autism. From the analyses, I interpreted that Surrey Place prioritizes therapy and/or intense intervention as they list all activity or therapy-based programs with heightened costs ranging between \$1320-\$3960 per program (Surrey Place, 2022), which does not contribute to accessibility from a financial perspective. Again, like Geneva Centre, their cost of programming raises question(s) about whether Surrey Place is more committed to therapy delivery compared to recreation, leisure and movement-based programming opportunities for children and families living with autism. Surrey Place provides in-person and virtual options but does not demonstrate any commitment to hybridization or working cohesively together. It also seems that although Surrey Place does not currently offer recreation, movement and play based programming options, within their resource library of past virtual events, programs and features, there was a demand and priority for that type of programming in the past. Programs that were highlighted include but are not limited to, staying healthy: the new normal, sensory activities, and mind, body, and soul workshops, leading to questions regarding previous programming in terms of, if it was purposeful and beneficial to children, youth, and their families then, what has changed and why is it being overlooked now.

I also created a conclusive summary of the key elements of each organization based on checklist prompts (see Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Conclusive Summary of Key Elements of Checklist Prompts*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Program Description</b>	<b>Identified Age Group</b>	<b>Program Delivery Method</b>
<b>Autism Ontario</b>	Visibly clear to viewer	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>program offerings identify an age where ages are applicable</i>	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>location listed, otherwise indicated if offered virtual</i>
<b>Geneva Centre</b>	Visibly clear to viewer	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>program offerings broken into age groups</i>	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>listed under location whether virtual or in-person</i>
<b>Pathstone Mental Health</b>	Unavailable to viewer	Unclear to viewer: <i>some offerings identify minimum age for program offering with minimal details</i>	Unclear to viewer: <i>minimal information available</i>
<b>Variety Village</b>	Visibly clear to viewer	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>clearly identified in bolded program heading</i>	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>Only offering on-site programming</i>
<b>Surrey Place</b>	Visibly clear to viewer	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>within main heading and within eligibility</i>	Visibly clear to viewer: <i>only identified if virtual</i>

***Common Trends***

Through in-depth review of the five organizations, three main trends emerged from the data analysis, these being, their level of commitment to accessibility, type of program offerings, and gaps in delivery methods. All five organizations present as committed to accessibility from the perspective of the presentation of their websites, although they lack accessible options for those who would benefit from virtual and hybrid options due to various internal and/or external barriers. Four of the five most reputable organizations (between Niagara and Toronto) are lacking in contributing to movement-based program opportunities for young people living with



autism between the ages of 7-14. Findings conclude that all organizations were offering and facilitating virtual options including programs and events that focused on wellbeing and physical activity during the pandemic, yet none of the five organizations is currently offering any movement-based virtual or hybrid opportunities. There is raised concern post pandemic, of the clear lack of priority and/or capacity to offer virtual and hybrid programming in general but more specifically movement-based opportunities. These key findings will be discussed within the next chapter.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Through consequences of the pandemic, the shift in societal thinking, facilitation and engagement emerged in immediacy; this now raises questions about *the now*; that is, in the endemic state what should stay and what should go? This study analyzed the common practices associated with the index of communication of current program offerings and program delivery methods for young people living with autism. This study further focused on movement-based programming for children and youth living with autism (and other complexities) and the discourses associated with offering in-person, remote and/or hybrid programming. Three main trends emerged through detailed data analyses of public domains associated with the five designated organizations, being their level of commitment to accessibility, type of program offerings, and gaps in delivery methods. For the remainder of this chapter I unpack the key findings and engage in answering; *What are the common practices between the relationship of remote and on-site environments associated with the current inventory of communication and program delivery within movement-based programming for children living with autism?*

### Commitment to Accessibility

Healthcare professionals and organizations are critically designing mediums of access and programs with an integrated approach and diversified lens to maximize the number of individuals who can engage well with the virtual or physical space (Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008). It is society's responsibility to adapt and shift perspectives, level of understanding and social boundaries to optimize the level of inclusion for individuals of all abilities (Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008). All five organizations seem to display their commitment to accessibility in terms of navigating their virtual environment in considering various visual indicators of

accessibility. However, each organization fails to offer any activity or movement-based programming options through hybrid or virtual delivery method which ultimately generates opportunity for disservice and may present as inaccessible to some, as this option, or choice does not even exist.

### ***Universal Design***

Universal design promotes optimal engagement and interaction with an environment, product and/or space for individuals of all abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020a). Each organization seems competent at designing a website that is useful and marketable to people of most abilities including consideration of colour contrast, font size, number of clicks to seek relevant information and fairly easy navigation of the page. Each online space presents their information effectively for most users, regardless of user's experience, knowledge, and current concentration level. Although Surrey Place's page is easy to navigate, their information presents as difficult to interpret if you do not know what you are looking for. Autism Ontario and Surrey Place present sliding images on their main page which could serve as a distraction or cause focus to be shifted for some individuals navigating their page. Geneva Centre, Pathstone Mental Health, and Variety Village have a presentation that seems committed to keeping their supporting population at the forefront in this aspect. These organizations are not offering virtual and/or hybrid delivery methods for activity or movement-based participation, and this might suggest a lack of interest in promoting the environment for optimal engagement or interaction, which in turn could present as inaccessible for some individuals, resulting in other barriers alike transportation, scheduling, or sensory management.

### *Inclusive Spaces*

Although each organization contributes to the development of children and youth living with different abilities, their respective visions and missions influence the front facing perspectives of the organizations. As stated in the previous chapter, the five organizations place significance on supporting and strengthening an individual's network while aiming to contribute to maximizing access to foster enriched quality of life through interdisciplinary skill as well as inclusive and accessible spaces. Each organization's statement varies but coalesces around similar purposes and intentions, despite each coming from varying perspectives. Autism Ontario projects the message of a supportive and inclusive space, coming from a holistic lens, wanting to contribute to all aspects of development, and creating safe spaces while supporting all members associated with individuals living with and experiencing autism. Whereas Geneva Centre and Surrey Place project the message of coming from a place of fostering the development of skills for children and youth to integrate well into society with a more therapy-focused lens prioritizing the development of social and communicative skills. Pathstone Mental Health promotes strengthening one's quality of life while experiencing challenges with their mental health as well as supporting families in management strategies. Variety Village promotes providing access to facilities for all individuals to feel seen, participate in, and feel included in the sport, recreation, and movement community at both competitive and non-competitive levels. Overall, each organization remains devoted to access for children, youth, and their families through diversified approaches, but it is important to acknowledge that, with the same end goal, these organizations still perform differently, addressing and aiding different aspects of development.

## Program Offerings

Literature represented and identified various beneficial aspects that purposeful and therapeutic programming has to offer to all individuals but specifically children and youth living with autism. Movement-based programming prioritizes an individual's growth as it provides opportunities to develop and practice peoples' social, emotional, cognitive, and physical resilience through adaption and flexibility (Connolly, 2008). Increased levels of independence, self-image, collaboration, leadership skills, mental performance, social connections, and level of determination are all results of participating in social and movement-based programming (Aytur et al., 2018). It is important to acknowledge that only Variety Village publicly prioritizes physical activity and movement-based programming within this sample. Autism Ontario publicly prioritizes social based recreational programming, while Geneva Centre and Surrey Place publicly prioritize social and communicative skill development through intervention therapy. Pathstone does not publicly prioritize any type of programming through limited to no information available through public domain. The clear lack of movement options presents a significant gap in supporting and fostering the development of children, youth and their families living with autism and other abilities, as literature demonstrated the crucial and positive impacts that movement, sport, and recreational environments play in contributing to the growth of numerous skills and abilities not only for this population, but all individuals.

Movement and social interaction hold great capacity for children and youth living with autism, allowing them to show up as their true selves and be granted the freedom of expression through-participation, thus enabling them to immerse themselves in social environments and build life skills (Zhao & Shihui, 2018). It is important to acknowledge that out of five highly

reputable organizations (between Niagara and Toronto, Ontario) supporting children, youth, and their families in navigating their development while living with disability, the majority are lacking in and not contributing to the access to and opportunity for movement-based programming. As children and youth with different abilities often navigate social environments in their own way, collectively it would seem to be a disservice not to provide holistic development nor foster the social skills that aid an individual in engaging with others by providing limited safe and comfortable therapeutic play and movement-based program offerings specifically for children and youth living with autism (Zhao & Shihui, 2018; Narzisi et al., 2021).

### **Program Delivery**

Participation is recognized as a significant contributing factor to the positive development of skills and well-being for individuals of all abilities, as it provides learning opportunities for daily activities and engagement and can be connected to program delivery methods. (Ng et al., 2020). An organization's program delivery method reflects on its level of engagement and contributes to how they prioritize their level of access and support to their community. As a result of the pandemic, there was a major shift in program delivery that challenged organizations, professionals, and members of the community to engage with programming in an alternative way and propose strategic methods of delivery, including virtual and hybrid options as opposed to only on-site and/or in-person. As a result of the mandatory pause of in-person programming (for most), societal institutions were compelled to rethink the concept of space being a room, facility or location and remove constraints around a specific environment and its association with productivity, development, and participation (Hilli et al., 2019).

Over the course of the pandemic, awareness and understanding grew regarding the opportunities that online program delivery presents in maximizing access for children living with autism and their families and the added potential to foster development of knowledge and skills in an external environment (Ashburner et al., 2015). As children and youth living with autism more commonly engage in passive play and recreation compared to structured or registered leisure and recreation program offerings, it is even more significant that these organizations continued to support their families and provide opportunities for engagement to reinforce some level of routine during unprecedented times (Memari et al., 2015). Following manifest and latent data analyses, the generated findings suggest that during the period of the pandemic, all 5 organizations offered and prioritized virtual program offerings (including movement-based options) through programs, events, workshops and at home activities to support children and youth living with autism and other complexities. These findings are crucial as these organizations still served as an outlet for these families while at home and maximized levels of engagement with virtual environments in an interactive means, increasing interaction with diversified materials, spaces, tools, and skills through the variations of virtual and non-virtual components (Hilli et al., 2019).

All the organizations studied offered virtual facilitation and programming during the pandemic. As we have entered the endemic state, it is important to acknowledge that most organizations have chosen to prioritize mainly in-person programming, workshops, and events. Although none of the organizations report explicitly that they prefer in-person program delivery, the percentage of in-person offerings compared to virtual indicates that this is indeed the case. Out of the five selected organizations, Variety Village is the only organization that offers no virtual options and has transitioned back completely to in-person programming while the other

four organizations have some virtual offerings but have reaffirmed their focus on in-person services. Ultimately, the swift transition back to in-person raises concern that the skills learned during the period where virtual and remote programming was prioritized by all organization may be left behind, disregarding the positive impacts and qualities they had to offer.

This transition raises questions about why organizations have consciously or subconsciously deemed virtual and hybrid program delivery as irrelevant or inconsequential, specifically within the movement domain, as all organizations prioritized it and maximized participation pathways throughout the pandemic. Through a dual perspective of researcher and clinician-based lenses, staffing capacity and resources come to the forefront of mind as to why there has been a strong pivotal transition back to primarily on-site/in-person program delivery. In having the opportunity to transition back to in-person programming, most professionals saw the demand to welcome individuals back on-site as there was a clear level of fatigue and exhaustion around participation and resources for online delivery and a higher percentage of individuals eager to engage and connect in-person again. Thus, if professionals and/or clinicians had to choose which type of program delivery to offer with no capacity to offer both, they would select the program option with higher engagement even if committing to in-person programming only, which resulted in lack of access or participation for some. Ultimately, unfortunately, and ironically, the mind and body did better online than in-person.

### **Common Practice**

This study's intentions were to better understand and identify the common practices associated with the relationship of remote and on-site environments within movement-based programming for children living with autism. Following data analyses, findings indicated that



only three of the five organizations within the sample have continued the use of some type of virtual programming but lack attention and focus within the movement domains. Autism Ontario presents to offer workshops and a music program virtually, Geneva Centre and Surrey Place present to offer some workshops and social based programming online, Pathstone remains unknown due to lack of available information while Variety Village presents no virtual programming. This study has generated both conclusive and inconclusive findings associated with common practices regarding the relationship between virtual and in-person participation in movement-based programming for children living with and experiencing autism.

The data analyses indicate that none of the organizations reviewed noted any content or offerings regarding hybridized program opportunities of any means. Although three of the five organizations publicly indicate that they offer some virtual programs, they appear not to work cohesively together or suggest connectivity. Equally important to note, none of the virtual offerings are connected to the recreation, sport, or movement realm. The lack of movement based opportunities raises the question that if virtual program offerings were prioritized during the pandemic including activity, movement, and sport, what benefits could still exist and/or co-exist through a hybrid concept working cohesively together offering both in-person and virtual sessions or at minimum access to virtual sessions with a movement-based purpose.

The data analyses increase the level of doubt regarding the organizations' priority or capacity, as there was a demand for access to virtual and remote programming during the period of the pandemic which resulted in a heightened focus on physical activity and overall wellbeing. Data analyses suggest that virtual programs and workshops relate to concepts and themes of wellbeing and physical activity, which is not surprising since maximizing the support to children,

youth and their families living with autism (and other complexities) while primarily at home, was deemed a priority over the course of the pandemic (Garcia et al., 2021). As we enter the state of an endemic, it raises concern as to why the priority and level of access has been taken away specifically as literature suggested multiple beneficial repercussions; including but not limited to; development of their digital literacy, scheduling adaptability, reduction in cost, time, and travel, fostering of connection and support as well as encouraging innovation, progress, and growth of all members (Ashburner et al., 2015; Norgard, 2021). Norgard (2021) proposed that it would be a significant movement to proceed with hybrid approaches combining both virtual and in-person learning and facilitation to maximize opportunities and not dismiss the benefits that come from both types of program delivery. Systematically, it is prudent to consider hybridized program delivery if not solely virtual program delivery as a long-term program delivery option for movement-based programming, even though it was reflective of an emergent cause and a shift of demand because of the pandemic and stay-at-home orders.

### **Main Trends Roundup**

Conclusively, through in-depth review of the five organizations, three main trends emerged within the data being, their level of commitment to accessibility, type of program offerings, and gaps in delivery methods. Data analysis yielded the findings that five of the most reputable organizations in supporting children and youth living with autism (between Niagara and Toronto, Ontario) have missed an opportunity for creating the most accessible and optimal environment for diverse lifestyles to engage with by offering zero opportunities to participate in facilitated movement-based programs, in cohesion with virtual or hybrid delivery models. These organizations present as not prioritizing movement and digital literacy by not offering programs

promoting physical activity for young people living with autism to engage with virtually. Literature supports concepts surrounding online program delivery and the correlation of maximum access to participants, increasing the opportunity for children and youth living with a disability to engage in quality leisure experiences. In the final analysis it is essential that organizations and professionals are prioritizing the evaluation of both visible and invisible barriers for the individuals they support to strive to offer optimal environments to engage and interact with at all levels.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This research study was heavily influenced by my own life experiences and the presence of COVID-19 that was consuming our society. In previous work, I primarily supported children and youth living with autism and observed the immense benefits movement played in their lives. Through the exploration of the unobtrusive data sets, notable wins and areas of improvement have been recognized within various layers of program delivery and individual development. This chapter describes possible limitations to the study as well and insights on best hopes for future research.

### **Limitations**

This study presents three main limitations, which could present as a challenge to its transferability. These are: the timeframe associated with data availability, gaps in program delivery, and indirect engagement. The study was commenced within the first quarter of 2020, when we thought there would be the opportunity to conduct a strong comparison and analysis of on-site/ virtual/ hybrid program delivery. As the content that was analyzed and interpreted was pulled from a virtual platform, there was the chance this data could change frequently or remain the same over the course of the study. The manifest content was accumulated during one point of the study, all organizations were reported on in a relatively closed timeframe. The second limitation is that virtual and remote programming filled a gap throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, that apparently no longer exists. Thirdly, there was no direct engagement with participants or families throughout the study to gather data regarding lived experiences, thoughts, or opinions. Additionally, data were not always collected or interpreted in the same physical and social surroundings which could lead to some variability in the interpretation of

content. While these limitations may present as a potential weakness, they are also reflective of the nature of unobtrusive research while using online data sets, and the nature of working full time while engaging in data analysis.

### **Future Research**

This study provided insight into understanding the common practices that (do not) exist within the dynamic approach of virtual and onsite programs across different organizations and used the results to gain insight about the inventory of current practices and analyze program delivery methods, with a focus on movement-based programming for children and youth living with autism. This study can serve as the baseline for various directions of future research that could be deemed advantageous to the field. I encourage academics to further investigate program delivery methods and practices with a focus on the engagement of hybrid and virtual environments. Further investigation and interpretation could aid the identification of positive elements that are being left behind during the endemic state and re-establish the significance of the skills and platforms utilized during the pandemic that were deemed essential at the time.

This study concludes that there is a lack of available movement-based program opportunities for school-aged children living with autism, which prompts the possibility for future research to contribute to how and why these opportunities are being missed for a significant population who could benefit from participation. Through the lack of access and opportunities to engage and/or participate in a structured movement-based program, organizations are subconsciously and likely, unintentionally, creating a barrier for this population, preventing them from developing their fine and gross motor and physical literacy skills and inhibiting a natural environment for children and youth to navigate social contexts while fostering their independence and confidence and improving their mental health (Jeanes &

Magee, 2010). A possible follow up study could include direct engagement with participants and families to gain insights on lived experiences and reflective thoughts on virtual/remote programming opportunities and if they are missed. If I were to expand my search to additional organizations supporting children with autism, I would explore and analyze the following: Kerry's Place, Bethesda, Ability Online, and Footprints 4 Autism. I would also consider including the programs operating within Holland Bloorview, Niagara Children's Centre, and Brock University: Supporting Neurodiversity through Adaptive Programming (SNAP) if I did not have direct relationships with each of the first four organizations. Further inquiry could also explore the capacity of these-and other- organizations to seek feedback from participants and provide educated insight on how to create and sustain optimal environments for individuals of all abilities. Ultimately, future research in optimizing inclusive practices would be helpful for the field of therapeutic recreation and movement education in gaining increased levels of awareness on overall program delivery practices, effective communication practices, and meaningful and relevant program offerings.

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**Appendix A**  
Universal Design Criteria

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Guidelines</b>
Equitable Use	The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities	1a. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not 1b. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users 1c. Provisions for privacy security, and safety should be equally available to all users 1d. Make the design appealing to all users
Flexibility in Use	The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities	2a. Provide choice in methods of use 2b. Accommodate right-or-left-handed access and use 2c. Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision 2d. Provide adaptability to the user's pace
Simple and Intuitive Use	Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level	3a. Eliminate unnecessary complexity 3b. Be consistent with user expectations and intuition 3c. Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills 3d. Arrange information consistent with its importance 3e. Provide effective promoting and feedback during and after task completion
Perceptible Information	The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities	4a. Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information 4b. Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings 4c. Maximizing "legibility" of essential information 4d. Differentiate elements in ways that can be described 4e. Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations
Tolerance for Error	The design minimizes hazards and the adverse	5a. Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used

	consequences of accidental or unintended actions	elements, most accessible; hazardous element eliminated, isolated, or shielded 5b. Provide warnings of hazards or errors 5c. Provide fail safe features 5d. Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance
Low Physical Effort	The design can be used efficiently and comfortable and within a minimum of fatigue	6a. Allow user to maintain neutral body position 6b. Use reasonable operating forces 6c. Minimize repetitive actions 6d. Minimize sustained physical effort
Size and Space for Approach and Use	Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture or mobility	7a. Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user 7b. Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user 7c. Accommodate variations in hand and grip size 7d. Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance

National Disability Authority. (2020b). *The 7 principles*. Centre for Excellence in Universal

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**Appendix B**  
Organization Criteria Prompts Checklist Template

1. The program offerings are for children living with autism spectrum disorder

Comments

2. The program offerings are for children within the age range of 7-14

Comments

**Program Relevance**

3. The program offerings are clearly outlined on the organizational website

Comments

4. The program presents a clear purpose or planned outcomes for their participants (individualized or group goals)

Comments

**Method of Delivery**

5. The program runs an appropriate length of time for the designated population and activity

Comments

6. The program offerings are appropriate over a virtual platform

Comments

7. The program offering is appropriate for an on-site program

Comments

8. The program presents to offer an adequate level of support for the given population throughout the activity and/or program

Comments

### Universal Design: Organizational Website

9. The website is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments

10. The website accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments

11. The website easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, ability, or current concentration level (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments

12. The website communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the users' sensory abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments

### Program Accessibility

13. The cost of the program(s) is relatively accessible to children and their families

Comments

14. Presented awareness on AODA and EDI criteria:

Comments



## Appendix C Manifest Content

### Autism Ontario

#### Main Page: Top

- Autism Ontario logo in top left corner, 3 flower like symbols, 1 red, 1 blue, 1 green → autism bolded, Ontario capitalized
- Facebook, twitter, YouTube Instagram and linked in icons in top right corner before English/French translation options followed by a search bar with a magnified glass icon
- 9 tabs across the top, starting at approximate middle of the screen towards the right side (1) about us (2) about autism (3) programs and services (4) find a provider (5) find a region (6) events (7) News (8) donate → in a red font and box (9) membership → in a blue font and box
- Large still pictures that take up majority of the screen → cycle through 4 slides continuously- colouring picture, white font on black backdrop area
  - caring for the caregiver
  - French Facebook page
  - OAP provider list
  - free online learning modules for autistic job seekers and employers
- Primarily in black font

#### Main Page: Middle 1/2

- 15 clickable squares with colourful icons and black headings placed below → 5 across and 3 down → colourful icons with black font
  1. Adult resources- 3 individuals
  2. Autism career connections -geometrical shape
  3. Autism matters magazine- open 2-page magazine spread
  4. Awards & funding- certificate and bag of money
  5. Caregiver programs- two hands and arms holding a dark pink heart
  6. Children, family & youth programs- yellow house with black roof, pink heart inside, 3 individuals inside the heart
  7. Donate- a hand holding a pink heart
  8. Events and workshops- blue calendar with white check mark and circle around
  9. French Language services -2 typing speech bubbles
  10. Learning Resources -blue sheet of paper with white sheet of paper overlapping with lines on it, yellow circle with white 'I' inside
  11. OAP provider list-papers on clip board, 3 individuals silhouette on left side of paper and filled lines on the right side of the paper
  12. Positive Advocacy-hand holding megaphone upwards
  13. Regional Programs- orange location bubble
  14. Research-green sheet of paper with lines and colourful circle and bar graphs, magnified glass hovering over circle graph
  15. Webinars- 4 individuals in a grid like manner of a virtual call on a desk top monitor

#### Main Page: Middle 2/2

- 2 columns below:
  - (1) our news- our underlined by a green line, news bolded, both words capitalized
  - (2) our Events- our underlined by a green line, events bolded, both words capitalized
- Both columns have their own “view all” black box in line with each title
- Our News lists three clickable articles listing the title, brief description and read more box
- Our Events presents the date in a large size font for each event to the left of the column and three clickable events listing the date in smaller font above the region and title of the event (bolded), description when registration opens and a read more box
- All black font

### **Main Page: Bottom**

- The very bottom of the page is closed with a black bar with small font written in white.
- The bottom left corner presents the Autism Ontario logo (autism bolded, Ontario capitalized)
- 9 tabs across the top, starting at approximate middle of the screen towards the right side
  - (1) about us
  - (2) contact us
  - (3) careers
  - (4) login
  - (5) newsletter signup
  - (6) media
  - (7) privacy & accessibility
  - (8) charitable# ||9248789RR000|
- Far right bottom corner presents Facebook, twitter, YouTube, Instagram and linked in icons
- White font on black backdrop

### **About Us: Drop Down**

-drop down menu on black background with white font

- About us
- Mission/Vision/Values
- Our history
- Our team
- Annual reports
- Awards
- Our partners
- Get involved
- Newsletter signup
- Privacy/accessibility/social media terms of use
- Membership opportunities
- Contact us

### **About Autism: Drop Down**

-drop down menu on black background with white font

- What is Autism?
- Getting a diagnosis
- Research
- Autistic Creativity

### **Programs & Services: Drop Down**

-drop down menu on black background with white font

- Adults
- Autisms career connections
- Children and Youth

- French Language Services
- Learning resources
- Autism matters magazine
- Positive advocacy resources
- World Autism Day
- Webinars

### **Find a Provider: Drop Down**

-drop down menu on black background with white font

- OAP provider list
- CommunityConnect
- Service providers- add listing

### **Find a Region**

- Clickable option

### **Events**

- Clickable option

### **News**

- Clickable option

### **Donate**

- Clickable option

### **Membership**

- Clickable option

---

<b>Mission</b>	Creating a supportive and inclusive Ontario for autism
<b>Vision</b>	Best Life, Better World, Making Autism Matter!
<b>Values</b>	<p><b>Collaboration:</b> We believe in the power of working side by side with individuals, families, and communities to make informed choices about autism.</p> <p><b>Accountability:</b> We hold ourselves and others responsible for achieving successful outcomes through high standards of integrity and fiscal responsibility.</p> <p><b>Respect:</b> We value equity, diversity, and inclusion, and we listen to understand.</p> <p><b>Evidence-Informed:</b> We use and create knowledge to guide our decisions and work.</p>

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## Geneva Centre

### Main Page: Top

- Geneva Centre logo in the top right corner- red font on white background → broken lower case ‘g’ with ‘geneva centre for autism’ presented over 3 lines
- ‘Donate today’ tab highlighted in red elongated cylinder background with white font located in the approximate top middle
- ‘Search Site’ bar with red magnified glass second closest to the top right corner
- 3 red lines located in the top far right corner prompting menu options upon being clicked

### Main Page: Middle 1/3

- Large rectangular red and white faded graphic
- *Left Side:*
  - “we support individuals with autism in navigating each step of their journey, with a team of truly dedicated people” → written in black
  - “no matter where you are, we’ll meet you there” → written in red smaller font below
  - clickable red tab labelled “programs open for registration” below
- *Right side:*
  - large Geneva Centre logo in bright red with shadow graphics in faded red behind and below on the right top to middle
  - small child from shoulders up wearing over ear headphones looking towards the top left corner

### Main Page: Middle 2/3

- 4 square graphics evenly spread across the screen with corresponding clickable subheadings
  - (1) *Programs*- written in white font on red background with individual reading a book icon → a boy with black short hair, smiling, not looking at the camera, wearing plaid shirt from the chest up pictured above
  - (2) *Intake*-written in white font on purple background with a pencil in a speech bubble icon → a women with long black braided hair, smiling to the camera wearing a patterned shirt and grey cardigan pictured form the chest up
  - (3) *Resources*- written in white font on blue background with 2 books standing up straight and 1 leaning icon → a younger boy with short brown hair, wearing a green plaid shirt holding and looking down at a blue book, women with long brown hair wearing a blue shirt and a red lanyard also holding the same book as the boy and pointing to a page, both pictured from roughly the waist up
  - (4) *Training*- written in white font on black background with a question mark in a circle icon → a women with long dirty blonde hair, wearing a red shirt, smiling at the camera is positioned left to another women with black hair tied back, wearing a red shirt, smiling at the camera on the right, both pictured approximate form the waist up

### Main Page: Middle 3/3

- 2 columns below:
  - (1) *Recent News*-black font, partial red underline → ‘view all post>’ clickable tab in line with subheading on the top right of the column – ‘equity, diversity, inclusions and accessibility survey’ heading in black bolded font with the date below. Clickable survey tab below, written in white with red background followed with more detailed description and ‘read more>’ option.

(2) *Featured Event*- black font, partial red underline → ‘view all post>’ clickable tab in line with subheading on the top right of the column, no events listed in the rest on the column

- **Helpful Resources** (black font with partial red underline)- 4 columns
  - (1) *Newsletter*-black font with white background, red envelop with paper coming out icon. Brief description below. ‘Click here to sign up’ link written in black, underlined in red
  - (2) *Respite Services*-respiteservices.com with grey icon (respite written in blue, the rest grey). Brief description below. ‘Find services’ link written in black, underlined in dark blue
  - (3) *COVID-19 SAFETY*-black font, capitalized, red mask icon. Brief description below. ‘View information’ link below written in black, underlined in red.
  - (4) *SONDERLY*-black font, capitalized, green and blue ‘S’ logo. Brief description below. ‘Find training for professionals’ written in black, underlined in dark blue.

### **Main Page: Bottom**

- Black bar with primarily white font aside from Geneva Centre logo written in grey in the upper left corner of bottom bar → broken lower case ‘g’ with ‘Geneva Centre for autism’ presented over 3 lines
- Heart, twitter, Facebook, linked in, Instagram, YouTube and newsletter subscription icons aligned with center logo on the upper right corner of the bottom bar
- *Bottom left corner*: “2022-Geneva Centre for Autism” written in line one, “charitable registration number: 86866 4640 RR0001” written in line two (written in white on black background)
- *Middle to right corner*: 6 clickable links- (1) privacy policy (2) terms of use (3) accessibility (4) accessibility plan (5) gifting policy (6) finance policy (written in white on black background)

### **Menu Options**

- COVID-19 Safety Information
- Programs
- Training
- Foundations
- Careers
- Events
- Resources
- About Us
- Intake
- News
- Contact Us
- Search

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**Mission** To empower individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and their families, to fully participate in their communities. We do this by providing direct support for families as well as professional training to share best practices around the world.

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**Vision** Successful Community Inclusion - Creating a World of Possibilities!

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<b>Values</b>	Our actions and relationships will demonstrate our core values of: Accountability, Collaboration, Trust and Compassion
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## Pathstone Mental Health

### Main page: Top

- “Need help NOW? CALL CRISIS SERVICES (with phone icon) 1-800-263-4944” in a light grey zone at the very top left of the page
- Clickable “walk-in Clinic Hours & Locations” tab in the right upper corner of the grey zone located at the top off the page
- To the right, is a “Francais” clickable link
- White silhouette of a person surrounded by a solid dark blue circle and a think dark blue unfilled circle, over lapping a light grey and white background located in the upper right corner—accessibility menu
- Pathstone mental health logo in top left corner- Pathstone written in dark blue bigger font compared to mental health written in light blue and smaller font, off centred. 3 different sized dark blue ovals going upwards on a diagonal and light blue lines that resemble water to the right of Pathstone presented on white background
- 8 tabs located across the top of the page to the left of Pathstone logo- (1) For Families (2) About (3) Service (4) Immediate Services (5) Volunteer (6) Contact (7) Donate (8) Search (pictured as a magnified glass icon)

### Main Page Middle: 1/4

- Large horizontal image in colour-five children leaning in towards each other with arms interchanged behind others back and/or over the others shoulders, all smiling towards the camera. – “Mental health care for your child today prepares them for tomorrow” written in white larger font over top of image. Providing quality health care for children in Niagara for over 50 years.” Written in white and smaller font over top of the imagine under the text listed above
- Parent comment presented in navy font over a white background across the page horizontally over 4 lines

### Main Page Middle: 2/4

#### Left Side:

- Dark blue subheading bolded in larger font on white background with dark blue smaller font text over 13 lines
- Navy blue clickable box with white font, below the text toward the center of the page

#### Right Side:

- An image of a child with long dark brown hair in a ponytail is hugging an adult with long brown hair in a ponytail over her shoulders. Both individuals are wearing white t-shirts and smiling towards the camera

### Main Page Middle: 3/4

- Navy subheading centred on the page “ How we help you get the help your child needs”
- 3 icons and numbered resource options listed across the page
  - (1) navy smart phone icon with red phone icon centred on the screen → listed as number 1 “ Call contact Niagara to be referred to Pathstone 905-684-3407” listed in navy font on the left side of the page
  - (2) light blue desktop outline with a silhouette of a person from the chest up on the center

of the screen → listed as number 2 “ You’re invited to Pathstone for an information session” listed in navy font in the center of the page

(3) white silhouette of a person from chest up inside a red solid circle centered inside of 6 light blue silhouettes of a person from the chest up with lines connecting to the center circle → listed as number 3 “Your child is connected with the right Pathstone treatment plan” on the right side of the page

- Upper horizontal bar- “for immediate assistance go to our walk-in clinic or call crisis services 1-800-263-4944 available 24 hours (walk in clinic, underlined and clickable link) → white font on a dark purple background

•

#### **Main Page Middle: 4/4**

*Left side:*

- Colourful image → 6 adults of mixed genders, standing shoulder to shoulder, reaching one arm each forward and stacking their hands over top of one another in the center, all individuals smiling and looking upwards of the camera

*Right side:*

- Dark blue subheading bolded in larger font on white background with dark blue smaller font text over 10 lines
- Blue clickable box with white font, below the text toward the far right of the page

#### **Main Page: Bottom**

- Upper horizontal bar- “for immediate assistance go to our walk-in clinic or call crisis services 1-800-263-4944 available 24 hours (walk in clinic, underlined and clickable link) → white font on a dark purple background
- 4 columns with white writing on grey background
  - (1) *Pathstone Mental Health*-address and telephone and fax information listed below presented over 4 lines → Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube square icons presented horizontally below
  - (2) *Mountainview Center for Innovative Learning*- address and telephone and fax information listed below presented over 4 lines
  - (3) *Pathstone Newsletter*
  - (4) *NEED HELP NOW?*- ‘Call CRISIS SERVICES 1-800-263-2944-24/7’ presented over 2 lines, ‘walk-in clinic hours & locations’ listed below

#### **For Families: Drop down**

- What to expect when visiting
- What is an I-session
- Brief intervention program and services
- Family engagement
- Family advisory committee for engagement (FACE)
- Frequently asked questions
- Resources
- COVID-19
  - your COVID-19 mental health toolkit

#### **About: Drop Down**

- History

- Tour out sites virtually
- Lead agency
- How Pathstone measures up
- Research and education institute
- Board of directors- 2022-2023
- Partners
- Accessibility
- News

#### **Services: Drop Down**

- Counseling and therapy
- Supervised parenting time Niagara
- High risk services
- Intensive services
- CRISIS
- Workshops
- Frequently asked questions
- PHIPA-privacy security policy
- Fair notice statement (word doc)
- Resources
  - Pathstone TV
  - HOPE-Helping others parent effectively
  - Wellness stalls

#### **Immediate Services**

- No drop down, clickable link

#### **Volunteers: Drop Down**

- Youth Advisory Committee
- Get involved
- Join our board
- Family advisory committee for engagement (FACE)

#### **Contact: Drop Down**

- Complaint form
- Treatment re-evaluation request form
- Job opportunities
- Request for presentation or information booth

#### **Donate: Drop Down**

- Foundation

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<b>Mission</b>	We strengthen the quality of life for children, youth and families who are dealing with mental health challenges.
<b>Vision</b>	Mental wellness for all children, youth and families.
<b>Values</b>	Respect, Communication, Trust, Commitment to Quality, Integrity, Teamwork, Innovation

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## Variety Village

### Main page: top

- Yellow bar horizontal across the very top of the page with black font in capital letters – summer registration reminder
- Variety village logo in the upper left corner → variety (written in black in larger font) the children’s charity (written in red in smaller font) of Ontario (written in black in smaller font, outline of a top hat icon over top a solid red heart
- Magnified glass icon to the middle left of the page presented in black
- Daily opening hours to the right middle of the page presented in red
- Clickable box on white background and black outline and font-“2023 winter program guide”
- Upper far right corner clickable donate link presented as a red rectangle with an open hand facing upwards open with a small heart above presented in white as well as the word donate in white capitalized
- Six drop down/clickable tabs across the top (1) what we offer (2) get involved (3) who we are (4) quick links (5) find us (6) Latest news!
- Large image presented horizontally across the page

#### *Right side:*

-text written in white and red font “ At Variety, there is a place for children with disabilities to be themselves and to be better than ever.” Presented on a dark background

- red solid clickable box with a solid white video camera icon and “watch video” text, capitalized in white

#### *Left side:*

-a young child pictured from the shoulders up, wearing a helmet and glasses, the individual is smiling and pointing towards the camera

### What We Offer: Drop Down

- Programming
  - program guide
  - program registration
  - after-school program
  - camps
  - sports teams
  - ability in action
  - CIM virtual adventure
  - leadership courses
- Get Involved
  - become a member
  - volunteers
  - corporate support
  - events
  - work with us
- Events & Rentals
  - events

- Recreational
  - swimming
  - pool schedule
  - leadership course
- Services
  - memberships
  - sensory backpacks
  - personal training
  - physiotherapy
  - variety care

#### **Who We Are: Drop Down**

- The facility
- Variety Village Ontario- the charity
- Blog
- Staff contacts

#### **Quick Links: Drop Down**

- Program guides
- Camps
- Summer camp guide
- Pool schedule
- Sensory backpacks
- Newsletter signup
- Facility restrictions and alerts
- Helpful links

#### **Find Us-no drop down**

#### **Latest News: Drop Down**

- Program guide
- Summer camp guide
- Facility restrictions and alerts
- Blog

#### **Main Page: Middle 1/3**

- Divided into two columns: “What’s New?” & “Events” →both bolded in black bigger font

*Left side:*

-2 boxes prompting information, image on the left side of each box with text on the right side of the box

-*top box* → colourful, vertical image with 5 individuals with masks on standing and sitting looking towards the camera. Two individuals in wheelchairs, two standing and one sitting on the ground. Subheading written in red, bolded font on the right side of the box with black descriptive text underneath on white background. Read more with arrow in red, capitalized at the bottom middle of the box

*-bottom box*→ colourful, vertical comic picture with red large writing with a cartoon heart, dog and character in the bottom middle. Subheading written in red, bolded font on the right side of the box with black descriptive text underneath on white background. Read more with arrow in red, capitalized at the bottom middle of the box

*Right side:*

- 4 event listings on white background with red bolded subheadings with black text including date/time/location/links, red arrow to the far right of each event listing to redirect to more information

### **Main Page: Middle 2/3**

- Tan background with smaller black font, 4 lines long
- White background on top of tan background on the center left of the page with an image of two individuals outside on the center right
- Red vertical line connected by red circle bullet points
- Six items listed in smaller black text beside each bullet, 1 line each
- Learn more about use with arrow written in white in a red box at the bottom of the bullet points on the left side
- Outdoor image in a forest like background with an adult standing behind a child on a red circular swing with black ropes on the right side

### **Main Page: Middle 3/3**

- Active map background with red box with white text on the left of the page→ subheading in white bolder, slightly bigger font with white smaller text following over 3 lines, a white box with red capitalized writing underneath to the left
- White background with black text covering 2/3 of the page→ subheading in black bolded font with black smaller text over 2 lines below. Underneath is two type-able text boxes for name and email with a clickable sign up button in the middle right of the page
- Black background with white font over 2 lines on the 3/3 parts of the page, below is a red clickable box with a smiling speech bubble and white capitalized font
- Coloured image of a pool with various pool deck equipment→ white box centred on the picture with black font, subheading bolded and capitalized, followed by 4 lines of text. Above white box is a smaller centered red box with white bolded and capitalized font “we’re open”. Below white box with small gap, red small clickable box with white capitalized writing and small arrow

### **Main page: Bottom**

- 3 columns across the bottom of the page on a white background
- Columns 1 & 2 with red capitalized headings and black bolded subheadings with black font listed underneath
- Column 3 with red bolded and capitalized heading with primarily black smaller font underneath with address and contact information and email (in red) with active map underneath. Red box with white writing underneath the map. Search bar with magnified glass icon. 3 large black headings in black writing
- *Bottom bar:* Red heading with black small font on the left side. Twitter, facebook, Instagram and youtube icons in red on the bottom right corner all on white background with solid black bar with grey text in both corners

<b>Mission</b>	Variety programming empowers children with disabilities to be seen, participate and feel included. We bring accessible facilities to life with sports, fitness, activities, summer camps, skills training and coaching for competitive and paralympic athletes. → not actually stated as their mission
<b>Vision</b>	Not found
<b>Values</b>	Not found

## Surrey Place

### Main Page: Top

- Dark purple bar with white font → three drop down tabs in the left top corner and four clickable tabs from the middle to the right corner, magnified glass icon beside the fourth tab to the right
- White background with dark purple font and light green accents → surrey place, capitalized and bolded to the left with green tree like icon in the middle of the two words. 5 drop down tabs across the middle to the right. Last tab is a drop down with green like tab background (1) services (2) resources (3) education (4) research (5) news & events (6) I AM:
- 3 rotating slides-automatic, purple clickable arrows to direct to the next slide and a purple pause button and 3 clickable purple dots under the slides
  - (1) mainly light blue background with white towards the bottom right corner. Dark purple, larger subheading with smaller font written underneath and green clickable tab with dark purple capitalized font underneath on the left side- “LEARN MORE”. Colourful oval shaped image with a women and a boy standing together with the women leaning over with her hand around his sides, both their bodies facing the wall. Little boy has black curly hair, plaid button up shirt and cream pants, women has shoulder length hair wearing a pink cardigan and jeans, both pictured from the knees up, smiling and facing the camera. Red and yellow abstract colours shaping the oval image
  - (2) mainly light blue background with white towards the bottom right corner. Dark purple, larger subheading with smaller font written underneath and green clickable tab with dark purple capitalized font underneath on the left side- “LEARN MORE”. Colourful oval shaped image with a woman with long hair wearing a green long-sleeve and a blue lanyard typing on a laptop, facing towards the right. Red, orange and yellow abstract colours shaping the oval image.
  - (3) mainly light blue background with white towards the bottom right corner. Dark purple, larger subheading with smaller font written underneath and green clickable tab with dark purple capitalized font underneath on the left side- “GET STARTED”. Colourful oval shaped image with 3 kids sitting next to one another, pictured from the waist up with neither of them looking towards the camera. Girl with dark, long curly hair wearing a denim short sleeve shirt and grey pants presents to be whispering in a boys ear with short curly hair wearing a red and blue striped shirt and jeans, who is sitting beside a boy with dark curly hair wearing a blue sweater and jeans. Red and blue abstract colours shaping the oval image.

**About Us: Drop Down**

- who we are
- leadership and governance
- awards and designation
- publications and statistics
- policies and disclosures
- inclusion and accessibility

**Get Involved: Drop Down**

- self-advocacy council
- family advisory council
- community outreach
- share your story
- feedback
- volunteer
- careers

**Connect with Us: Drop Down**

- contact us
- visit us

**Services**

- service directory
- autism services
- DSO Toronto Region
- Infant hearing screening
- Partners and organizations
- Wellness services

**Resources: Drop Down**

- Resource library
- COVID-19 Resources

**Education: Drop Down**

- Education department
- Clinical and student placements
- Medical placements
- Psychology internships
- Psychology practicum

**Research: Drop Down**

- Research department
- Current projects and opportunities
- Ethics board
- Publications and reports

**News & Events: Drop Down**

- News and stories
- Events
- Newsletter

**I AM: Drop Down**

- A person with disability
- A family member or caregiver
- A professional
- A partner or organization

**Main page: Middle 1/4**

- 5 clickable icons on dark purple on a white background: text capitalized
  - (1) Autism Services- palm of a hand facing upwards with heart floating above
  - (2) Wellness Events- calendar page with large check mark in the middle
  - (3) Frequently Asked Questions- circle with question mark in the middle
  - (4) Infant Hearing Screening- ear with three lines coming off the right
  - (5) Careers- ID badge with clip

**Main Page: Middle 2/4**

- Featured Pages- 2 columns with features side by side, colourful image with a bolded subheading with smaller text underneath, written in dark purple on a white background. Learn more clickable link, capitalized in purple with light green underline to the bottom left of each column
- News & Stories- View all clickable link below heading written in dark purple, capitalized and underlined in light green. 3 columns listed side by side, colourful image with a bolded subheading with smaller text underneath (including date and more details), written in dark purple on a white background. Read more clickable link, capitalized in purple with light green underline to the bottom left of each column

**Main Page: Middle 3/4**

- Heading in dark purple to the left of the page- Why choose us?
- 3 columns with images about a subheading written in dark purple:
  - (1) 60 years of service- double orange circles with 60 years written in white inside (far left)
  - (2) Person-Centred Approach- double teal circles with 3 outline person figures shoulders up, in a v formation in white (center)
  - (3) Support across the lifespan- double blue circles with 3 outline person figures standing in a diagonal (far right)
- underneath is accreditation- accreditation Canada red logo on the far left of the page followed by accreditation Canada- accreditation written in black, Canada written in red, both capitalized. Middle to the right of the page is a 2-line statement writing in dark purple. All on a white to light blue background

**Main Page: Middle 4/4**

- Heading written in dark purple, larger font on a white background

- Testimonial written in dark purple font, over 6 lines, centred, large green quotation marks to the upper right of the statement- unfinished statement, followed by “...” and READ MORE underlined in light green, followed by writer/speakers name in new line
- ALL TESTIMONIALS-capitalized in dark purple, underlined by light green

### Main Page: Bottom

- Dark purple banner with white text-large and bolded subheading “Stay Connected!” smaller white text over 2 lines from the left to middle of the page, green rounded clickable box to center right of the page with dark purple font- “Subscribe to Our Newsletter”
- White banner- surrey place, capitalized and bolded to the left with green tree like icon in the middle of the two words. Directly below to the far left is the facebook, twitter, Instagram, linked in and youtube’s clickable icons in light grey
- 3 columns from the middle to the right- three bolded subheadings in dark purple with clickable links listed below each, underlined in light green (1) About Us (2) Get in Touch (3) For Staff
- 3 clickable links across the bottom left in dark purple font and underlined in light green

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**Mission** We help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism spectrum disorder (AUTISM) to lead healthy and socially inclusive lives using our exemplary skills in interdisciplinary clinical services, education and research. We provide many of our clinical services in both official languages, and where we do not, we refer to a French language service provider.

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**Vision** Living your potential – all your life!

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**Values** With a passionate commitment to improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorder and their families, we believe in:

Collaboration – Working together with our clients, families and community and government partners

Accountability – We do what we say we will do and deliver the best possible results

Innovation – We develop new ideas and approaches to share with the world

Respect – We seek to understand before being understood and accept differences

Responsiveness – We respond to the needs of our clients and partners promptly and with excellence

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## Appendix D Manifest Analyses

### Autism Ontario

Colours	Font(s)	Size(s)
Background: White	Gill Sans	Headings: 16-18.5
Headings: Bolded or underlined black text		Subheadings: 15-16
Main text: Black		Text: 12
Accent Colours: Primarily light green, also red, blue, pink, and yellow		

#### # of clicks for movement based programming for children aged 7-9

9 clicks

Programs and Service>Children and Youth>Community Events>Autism Ontario Region>South>Event Type>Health and Fitness> Language Type> English> Search

\*no events or programs found- note none found in Toronto either\*

#### Program Offerings: Ages 7-14

- Drop in Play
- Art with heart
- Sugar and spice kids' spa
- Sensory friendly Ice dogs' game
- Adapted gym program
- Virtual teen music program
- Niagara swim night

#### Webpage Highlights

-organization logo  
 -social media icons  
 -French/English translation  
 -search bar  
 -our news/our events  
 -donate

#### Drop down offerings

- About Us
- About Autism
- Programs and Services
- Find a Provider
- Find a Region



- Events
- News
- Donate
- Membership

### Organization Criteria Prompts-Autism Ontario

15. The program offerings are for children living with autism spectrum disorder

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul>

16. The program offerings are for children within the age range of 7-14

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul>

### Program Relevance

17. The program offerings are clearly outlined on the organizational website

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somewhat unclear</li> <li>• The webpage provides categories to filter programs and events being offered but not all filters are affiliated with corresponding programs and events i.e. health and fitness → no programs or events come up but in general search movement based program offerings exist</li> <li>• Limited movement based programming, various social programs available</li> </ul>

18. The program presents a clear purpose or planned outcomes for their participants (individualized or group goals)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, brief description of what to expect and intended aim of each group or program</li> </ul>

### Method of Delivery

19. The program runs an appropriate length of time for the designated population and activity

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, most programs range from 30-60 minutes in length</li> </ul>

20. The program offerings are appropriate over a virtual platform

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, mainly offering workshops and virtual music programs → other offerings are out in the community</li> </ul>

21.

The program offering is appropriate for an on-site program

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, offers many events and programs out in the community through partnerships</li> </ul>

22. The program presents to offer an adequate level of support for the given population throughout the activity and/or program

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on information given, it presents that most programming parents and caregivers are asked to stay</li> </ul>

### Universal Design: Organizational Website

23. The website is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, designed with accessibility in mind (colour schemes and contracts, font size, number of clicks to access information and easy navigation)</li> </ul>

24. The website accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the autism community → children, youth, young adults, adults and caregivers.</li> <li>• Workshops, events, programs, activities</li> </ul>

25. The website easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, ability, or current concentration level (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairly easy to navigate</li> <li>• Website redirection could be improved → have to scroll down to find information that is expected</li> </ul>

26. The website communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the users' sensory abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• Sliding images across the main screen could cause distraction.</li> </ul>

- Easy access point to a variety of information → icons and headings

### Program Accessibility

27. The cost of the program(s) is relatively accessible to children and their families

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, programs vary from no cost to minimal registration fee of \$5 or to cover some cost of materials used</li> </ul>

28. Presented awareness on AODA and EDI criteria:

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the website was designed with accessibility in mind for most users</li> </ul>

### Geneva Centre

Colours	Font(s)	Size(s)
Background: Primarily white, some red	Roboto	Headings: 22.5
Headings: Bolded black or red		Subheadings: 16.5
Main text: Primarily black		Text: 10.5
Accent Colours: Primarily red, also purple, blue, green, and grey		

### # of clicks for movement based programming for children aged 7-9

2 clicks
Programs> Children
-Bridges summer camp, virtual social and onsite social groups

### Program Offerings: Ages 7-14

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridges summer camp</li> <li>• Virtual social clubs</li> <li>• Respite</li> <li>• We thinkers-social</li> <li>• Unstuck and on target-behaviour and social</li> <li>• Children friendship training</li> </ul>
--

### Webpage Highlights

-organization logo  
 -search  
 -news and events  
 -social media  
 -donate

#### Menu offerings (no drop down)

- COVID-19 Safety Information
- Programs
- Training
- Foundations
- Careers
- Events
- Resources
- About Us
- Intake
- News
- Contact Us

### Organization Criteria Prompts-Geneva Centre

1. The program offerings are for children living with autism spectrum disorder

Comments

- Yes

2. The program offerings are for children within the age range of 7-14

Comments

- Yes

### Program Relevance

3. The program offerings are clearly outlined on the organizational website

Comments

- Yes, offerings are categorized by age with a brief description of what to expect under each program

4. The program presents a clear purpose or planned outcomes for their participants (individualized or group goals)

Comments

- Yes, there is a brief description of the intended aim of the group or program and what is to be expected

**Method of Delivery**

5. The program runs an appropriate length of time for the designated population and activity

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes programs range from 1-1 ½ hours in length aside from respite and summer camp programming</li> </ul>

6. The program offerings are appropriate over a virtual platform

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, offers a combination of virtual and in-person programming</li> </ul>

7. The program offering is appropriate for an on-site program

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, offers a combination of virtual and in-person programming</li> </ul>

8. The program presents to offer an adequate level of support for the given population throughout the activity and/or program

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, all programs present to offer at least a 3:1 participant to staff ratio</li> </ul>

**Universal Design: Organizational Website**

9. The website is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, designed with accessibility in mind (colour schemes and contrasts, font size, number of clicks to access information and easy navigation)</li> </ul>

10. The website accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, they offer both virtual and in-person programs based on preference.</li> <li>• Strong focus on social based programing and social skill development</li> </ul>

11. The website easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, ability, or current concentration level (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul>

12. The website communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the users' sensory abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, website is designed with no movement on the main page that could cause distraction and clearly labels and organized to find what you are looking for</li> </ul>

### Program Accessibility

13. The cost of the program(s) is relatively accessible to children and their families

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No → programs range from \$50 (virtual) to \$1200 for in person weekly programs</li> </ul>

14. Presented awareness on AODA and EDI criteria:

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the website was designed with accessibility in mind for most users</li> </ul>

### Pathstone Mental Health

Colours	Font(s)	Size(s)
Background: Primarily white, some light grey and dark purple	Headings & Subheadings: Roboto	Headings: 27 Subheadings: 18
Headings: Dark purple	Text: Raleway	Text: 12/16
Main text: Primarily black, some white		
Accent Colours: primarily dark purple, also light blue, green and red		

# of clicks for movement based programming for children aged 7-9
3 clicks Services> Counselling and Therapy> Groups and Clinics OR Intensive Services
*no mention of movement based programming, limited information of what is available*

Program Offerings: Ages 7-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little to no information as to what to expect, must be an insider to gain access to program options</li> </ul>

### Webpage Highlights

-organization logo  
 -search  
 -accessibility feature menu  
 -French option  
 -social media  
 -donate

#### Drop down offerings

- For families
- About
- Services
- Immediate service
- Volunteers
- Contact
- Donate

### Organization Criteria Prompts-Pathstone

1. The program offerings are for children living with autism spectrum disorder

Comments
----------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul> |
|---|

2. The program offerings are for children within the age range of 7-14

Comments
----------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul> |
|---|

### Program Relevance

3. The program offerings are clearly outlined on the organizational website

Comments
----------

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, the information provided on program offerings is limited and suggest you have to be an insider or directly connected with a staff member</li> </ul> |
|--|

4. The program presents a clear purpose or planned outcomes for their participants (individualized or group goals)

Comments
----------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear as to what is offered aside from support and guidance for children, youth and families experiencing difficulties with their mental health</li> </ul> |
|---|

**Method of Delivery**

5. The program runs an appropriate length of time for the designated population and activity

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>

6. The program offerings are appropriate over a virtual platform

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>

7.

- The program offering is appropriate for an on-site program

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assuming so as it presents most would be internal programs to maximize confidentiality and privacy of children, youth and their families</li> </ul>

8. The program presents to offer an adequate level of support for the given population throughout the activity and/or program

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>

**Universal Design: Organizational Website**

9. The website is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, designed with accessibility in mind (colour schemes and contracts, font size, number of clicks to access information and easy navigation)</li> </ul>

10. The website accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is suggested they support all children, youth and caregivers through the process of any mental health concerns</li> </ul>

11. The website easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, ability, or current concentration level (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aside from the lack of public information, the site and pages are easy to navigate and understand</li> </ul>



12. The website communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the users' sensory abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, website is designed with no movement on the main page that could cause distraction and uses headings and subheadings to help with navigation</li> </ul>

### Program Accessibility

13. The cost of the program(s) is relatively accessible to children and their families

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>

14. Presented awareness on AODA and EDI criteria:

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the website was designed with accessibility in mind for most users although could present as discouraging to someone who is hesitant to explore the unknown</li> </ul>

### Variety Village

Colours	Font(s)	Size(s)
Background: Primarily white, some black and tan	Headings: Poppins	Headings: 23.5
Headings: Bolded black, subheadings red	Subheadings: Inherit	Subheadings: 13
Main text: Primarily black, some white	Text: Roboto	Text: 11.5-13
Accent Colours: Primarily red, also yellow, green, and blue		

# of clicks for movement based programming for children aged 7-9
2 clicks What We Offer > Program Guide  Cardio kids, building blocks, all sport, multi-sport level 1-3, swimming lessons levels 1-10, taekwondo, volt hockey, weightlifting, track, pre-competitive swimming, summer camps

<b>Program Offerings: Ages 7-14</b>
-------------------------------------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cardio kids</li> <li>• Building blocks</li> <li>• All sport</li> <li>• Multi-sport level 1-3</li> <li>• Swimming lessons levels 1-10</li> <li>• Taekwondo</li> <li>• Volt hockey</li> <li>• Weightlifting</li> <li>• Track</li> <li>• Pre-competitive swimming</li> <li>• Sport and social</li> <li>• Lifeguard training</li> <li>• Wheelchair basketball</li> <li>• Summer camps</li> </ul> |
|---|

<b>Webpage Highlights</b>
---------------------------

-organizational logo -search bar -what's new/events -donate -social media
---

<u>Drop down offerings</u>
----------------------------

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What we offer</li> <li>• Who we are</li> <li>• Quick links</li> <li>• Find us</li> <li>• Latest news</li> </ul> |
|--|

### Organization Criteria Prompts-Variety Village

1. The program offerings are for children living with autism spectrum disorder

Comments
----------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul> |
|---|

2. The program offerings are for children within the age range of 7-14

Comments
----------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul> |
|---|

### Program Relevance

3. The program offerings are clearly outlined on the organizational website

Comments
----------

- Yes, the site directs you to the program guide immediately where you can find all program offerings for the current/upcoming season

4. The program presents a clear purpose or planned outcomes for their participants (individualized or group goals)

Comments
----------

- The program guide provides a brief description under each program offering of the directed aim along with the date, time, age range and cost

### Method of Delivery

5. The program runs an appropriate length of time for the designated population and activity

Comments
----------

- Yes, programs range from 30-150 minutes in length based on the activity but primarily are 60-90 minutes in length

6. The program offerings are appropriate over a virtual platform

Comments
----------

- No current virtual options

7.

The program offering is appropriate for an on-site program

Comments
----------

- Yes, the facility has plenty of space, equipment and resources to offer various on-site programs

8. The program presents to offer an adequate level of support for the given population throughout the activity and/or program

Comments
----------

- There are some programs that request the presence of a parent or caregiver, but assumed those that do not, have the designated support in place

### Universal Design: Organizational Website

9. The website is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
----------

- Yes, designed with accessibility in mind (colour schemes and contrasts, font size, number of clicks to access information and easy navigation)

10. The website accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, program state that they are designed for all abilities with the given age range</li> <li>• Some programs state that a parent or caregiver is required</li> </ul>

11. The website easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, ability, or current concentration level (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul>

12. The website communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the users' sensory abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, website is designed with no movement on the main page that could cause distraction and uses headings and subheadings to help with navigation</li> </ul>

### Program Accessibility

13. The cost of the program(s) is relatively accessible to children and their families.

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, programs range from no cost to \$185 for a multiple week session</li> </ul>

14. Presented awareness on AODA and EDI criteria:

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the website was designed with accessibility in mind for most users</li> </ul>

### Surrey Place

Colours	Font(s)	Size(s)
Background: Primarily white with light blue, green, yellow, and purple	Headings & Subheadings: Arial	Headings: 16/18 Subheadings: 12
Headings: Primarily in dark purple	Text: Lato	Text: 12/14.5/17
Main text: Primarily dark purple and white		

Accent Colours: Primarily  
light green also light yellow,  
blue, and purple

#### # of clicks for movement based programming for children aged 7-9

3 clicks

Services> Service Directory > Focus on Skill Building Programs for Autism

\*no movement based programs offered\*

#### Program Offerings: Ages 7-14

- Social Skills
  - children friendship training
  - social stars
  - social teens
- Emotional Regulation Skills
  - take a deep breath
- Communication Skills
  - conversation club
  - early communication
  - intermediate communication

#### Webpage Highlights

-organizational logo  
-search  
-accessibility feature menu  
-language selection  
-social media  
-news and stories

#### Drop down offerings

- About us
- Get involved
- Connect with us
- Foundation
- Services
- Resources
- Education
- Research
- News & events
- I AM:

#### Organization Criteria Prompts-Surrey Place

1. The program offerings are for children living with autism spectrum disorder

Comments

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul> |
|---|

2. The program offerings are for children within the age range of 7-14

Comments
----------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul> |
|---|

### Program Relevance

3. The program offerings are clearly outlined on the organizational website

Comments
----------

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, services are easy to find but distinguishing which programs are more recreational and/or movement based is difficult. There is a significant focus on social, communication and emotional regulation skill development programs.</li> </ul> |
|--|

4. The program presents a clear purpose or planned outcomes for their participants (individualized or group goals)

Comments
----------

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, there is a brief description of the intended aim of the group or program and what is to be expected</li> </ul> |
|--|

### Method of Delivery

5. The program runs an appropriate length of time for the designated population and activity

Comments
----------

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More intensive based programming, 120 minute sessions 1-2 times per week</li> </ul> |
|--|

6. The program offerings are appropriate over a virtual platform

Comments
----------

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes but very limited virtual programming</li> </ul> |
|--|

7.

The program offering is appropriate for an on-site program

Comments
----------

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, social based programming is often most appropriate or beneficial in person</li> </ul> |
|---|

8. The program presents to offer an adequate level of support for the given population throughout the activity and/or program

Comments
----------

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It does not state whether caregivers are needed to stay or not, nor does it state the staff to participant ratio</li> </ul> |
|--|

### Universal Design: Organizational Website

9. The website is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, designed with accessibility in mind (colour schemes and contrasts, font size, number of clicks to access information and easy navigation)</li> </ul>

10. The website accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes but not super well → does not support a wide variety of interest</li> </ul>

11. The website easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, ability, or current concentration level (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairly easy to navigate but difficult to interpret if you do not have the exact name of program or service you are looking for.</li> </ul>

12. The website communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the users' sensory abilities (National Disability Authority, 2020b)

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, but sliding images across main screen could be distracting</li> </ul>

### Program Accessibility

13. The cost of the program(s) is relatively accessible to children and their families

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, programs range from \$1320-\$3960</li> </ul>

14. Presented awareness on AODA and EDI criteria:

Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the website was designed with accessibility in mind for most users</li> </ul>

## Drop Down Menu Overview

<b>Menu Options</b>	<b>Autism Ontario</b>	<b>Geneva Centre</b>	<b>Pathstone</b>	<b>Variety Village</b>	<b>Surrey Place</b>	<b>Total</b>
About Us/About/Who We Are	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
About Autism	✓					1
Careers		✓				1
Contact Us/Contact/Connect with Us		✓	✓		✓	3
COVID-19 Safety		✓				1
Donate	✓	✓	✓	✓		2
Education					✓	1
Events/(Latest) News/ News and Events	✓	✓		✓	✓	4
Find a Provider	✓					1
Find a Region	✓					1
Find Us				✓		1
For Families			✓			1
Foundations		✓			✓	2
Get Involved					✓	1
I AM:					✓	1
Immediate Services			✓			1
Intake		✓				1
Membership	✓					1
Programs and Services/ Services/ What We Offer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Quick Links				✓		1
Research					✓	1
Resources		✓			✓	2
Training		✓				1
Volunteers			✓			1



**Appendix E**  
Plausible Interpretations

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Plausible Interpretations</b>
<b>Autism Ontario</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be interpreted that Autism Ontario offers solely community-based programming although it is not explicitly stated.</li> <li>• Data suggest that Autism Ontario prioritizes the socialization of children, youth, and families over other types of programming.</li> <li>• Autism Ontario frequently provides in-person and virtual programming by does not demonstrate any commitment to hybridization of programs working cohesively together.</li> <li>• The low cost of programming indicates the acknowledgement of the importance to maximize program opportunities for children and families living with disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Geneva Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data regarding the cost of the programs indicates there is a stronger desire to deliver more intense intervention than recreational or play based programming for children and families living with autism.</li> <li>• Geneva Centre provides in-person and virtual programming by does not demonstrate any commitment to hybridization of programs working cohesively together.</li> <li>• Data indicates that they strongly prioritize socialization and social skill development.</li> <li>• Geneva Centre demonstrates a commitment to not rely on parents and caregivers for support during programming through their 3:1 ratio of participants to staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Pathstone Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data suggests that you must be directly connected with a health care member or a client at Pathstone to gained detailed information of program and service offerings.</li> <li>• Limited information regarding possible programming at Pathstone could represent their dedication and respect to confidentiality and privacy of the individuals they support.</li> <li>• Limited information regarding possible programming at Pathstone could be interpreted as their health care team creating and implementing individualized care and program plans for each client's needs and interests.</li> <li>• Limited information regarding possible programming at Pathstone could represent significant limitations within their offerings and communication with the public.</li> <li>• Unclear descriptions of what an individual can expect at Pathstone could suggest as a barrier for children and youth who are hesitant to explore the unknown</li> </ul>

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<b>Variety Village</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Variety Village present the most movement-based programming for children living with autism out of the five organizations indicating that they prioritize movement and physical activity over other types of programming.</li><li>• The data indicates that as an organization, Variety Village has converted back to fully in person programming although they have not necessarily stated that to the public.</li></ul>
<b>Surrey Place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surrey Place presents to place significant importance on social, communication and emotional regulation focused programming for children living with autism.</li><li>• Is Surrey Place more committed to therapy delivery compared to programming opportunities for children and families living with Autism?</li><li>• Data regarding the cost of the programs indicates there is a stronger desire to deliver more intense intervention than recreational or play based programming for children and families living with autism.</li><li>• It can be interpreted Surrey Place prioritizes therapy as a whole as they list all therapy and programing options together and leave it to the public to navigate it</li><li>• Surrey Place provides in-person and virtual programming by does not demonstrate any commitment to hybridization of programs working cohesively together.</li></ul>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The five organizations present significant colour contrast of light and dark schemes that tend to contribute to an accessible page.</li><li>• Overall, the size of font used by all organizations does not go below size 12 font aside from one outlier using 10.5 sized font for their main text creating an accessible page for individuals to engage with.</li><li>• Based on the number of clicks to access information for movement or social based programming for children, overall, the pages present as easy to manipulate with approximately 2-3 clicks aside from one organization which is still easy to navigate given the number of clicks being 9.</li></ul>

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