



For immediate release

AutismBC expresses concerns about violence towards children on the autism spectrum.

[Vancouver, BC], [Monday, August 31, 2020] - We at AutismBC, would like to express our concern regarding the information provided to the public in relation to two recent incidents involving children on the autism spectrum. In both of these incidents the children engaged in behaviour that could be perceived as aggressive and the adult that the behaviour was directed towards reacted by becoming aggressive toward the child. While we understand that physical contact of any sort is distressing to others, particularly in the time of a global pandemic where physical distancing is being emphasized, in British Columbia 1 in 40 people between the ages of 6 and 18 has a diagnosis of autism and it is important to understand how to respond to these individuals in a caring and empathetic way.

Individuals on the autism spectrum can often display behaviours that appear aggressive in nature, when in fact they are driven by other factors such as anxiety, lack of comprehension of the situation or a lack of awareness of others in their environment. If a member of the public has an unexpected interaction with a child with special/diverse needs, we would hope that they would reach out to the parent or caregiver with that child to ask how best to respond and/or give the child space to allow their parent or caregiver to intervene on their behaviour as appropriate.

Individuals on the autism spectrum need opportunities to be in the community and interact with less familiar people to gain skills and abilities. Aggressive behaviour of any kind, particularly of an adult to a child is unacceptable under any circumstances. It is our sincere hope that the public will continue to educate themselves and learn to approach perceived misbehaviour with calmness and understanding. AutismBC has created information on how to respond to individuals on the autism spectrum. Please follow this [link](#) to our website for further information.

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About AutismBC

We are a parent founded society that has been working to provide information and support to people on the autism spectrum and their families since 1975. AutismBC's programs equip families and communities with essential autism knowledge and offer people on the autism spectrum an opportunity to participate in community activities. AutismBC is a founding member of the Provincial and Territorial Council of Autism Canada (formerly Autism Society Canada and Autism Canada Foundation).