



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toronto, Ontario, May 30, 2019

# The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services announces Autism Advisory Panel

**Autism Ontario is committed to supporting families through this province-wide program change and will work with the Autistic community to find solutions to this process.**

Today's announcement from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services represents a valuable step towards developing needs-based children's programming across our province and echoes parent's calls for more meaningful support.

Announced today are the 20 expert members who will make up the Advisory Panel, each of whom bring a diverse set of skills and perspectives. Co-chairing the panel is our Executive Director, Marg Spoelstra, and Autism Ontario is looking forward to contributing to this advisory process.

*"I'm encouraged to be part of a diverse group of panelists who will bring a wealth of professional and lived experience to the table of our discussions. We have our work cut out for us and I hope that panel's recommendations will positively impact Ontario's Autism Program and the lives of people on the autism spectrum and their families."*

Marg Spoelstra, Executive Director, Autism Ontario

Local representation through our 25 Chapters has allowed for a unique understanding of the challenges and opportunities families are facing across our province. We trust that this process will allow for the development of meaningful program outcomes for autistic children, youth and their families. While the time frame for the Advisory Panel is short, we know that together, the autistic community will take all steps needed to make the Ontario Autism Program a success.

**About Autism Ontario:** Autism Ontario has a 46 year history of representing thousands of families and people with ASD across Ontario. We are the only organization in Ontario that has formal parent representation in all areas of the province through our 25 Chapters. We advocate on behalf of all people with ASD and their families – at all ages and stages of life, reflecting a wide range of expression and abilities. To connect with us, visit

[www.autismontario.com](http://www.autismontario.com)

**Vision:** Acceptance and Opportunities for all people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

**Mission:** To ensure that each individual with ASD is provided the means to achieve quality of life as a respected member of society.

**CONTACT:**

Katharine Buchan, Manager of Development and Communications

416-246-9592 x 226

katharine at autismontario dot com

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