

Statement from MacART on World Autism Day 2025

April 2nd is World Autism Day, a day for recommitting to continued efforts to support inclusion and acceptance for more than 75 million Autistic people across the world. In Canada, 1 in 50 children and youth between ages 1 to 17 are Autistic ([PHAC, 2022](#)), which highlights the importance of fostering an inclusive world.

The McMaster Autism Research Team (MacART; www.macautism.ca) always looks forward to acknowledging World Autism Month. MacART is a partnership between McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences, and McMaster University dedicated to closing the gap between autism research and practice. MacART encourages collaboration among Autistic people, families, researchers, clinicians, educators, and policymakers whose lives and work are touched by autism.

The theme this year is *Advancing Neurodiversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals*, which underlines how neurodiversity and global sustainability efforts intersect, showcasing how inclusive policy and practice can drive positive change for Autistic individuals around the world and contribute to the achievement of the United Nations' overall [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). By supporting new infrastructure for collaboration across disciplines, we aim to generate innovative strategies aimed at eliminating barriers that lead to inequalities and inequities, uplifting inclusive policies, and working in tandem with Autistic people toward creating a world where they can thrive.

Dr. Jonathan Lai, Executive Director of Autism Alliance of Canada, is a collaborator on a number of MacART projects, including the Pediatric Autism Research Cohort (PARC) Study, which will generate evidence to inform policy and practice changes for Autistic children. Dr. Lai and the rest of the leadership team at Autism Alliance of Canada is spearheading the recently founded [National Centre for Autism Collaboration](#) (NCAC), which brings together a network of Autistic people, researchers, policymakers, and other collaborators to find intersections between research, policy, and practice that address needs communicated by the Autistic community and can be implemented across Canada. The Alliance also recently announced their partnership with the Sinneave Family Foundation in developing the new [National Autism Network](#), an initiative that will inform the implementation of Canada's federal Autism Strategy. MacART is thrilled to support the NCAC and NAN with its group of leading researchers, clinicians, clinician-scientists, and other experts, including those with lived experience.

"The autism community has always advocated for a comprehensive strategy that yields concrete results," says Dr. Lai. "With the development of the National Autism Network, the Alliance will work with government and community leaders and collaborators to champion and implement realistic solutions that will help all Autistic people thrive."

Accordingly, MacART has recently taken stock of our work and accomplishments, and as a result has shifted its mission statement to one that is more fitting of its place within the rolling landscape in autism. MacART's new tagline is "advancing autism **policy and practice** through meaningful research", which can now be seen in our updated logo image. Together with our partner organizations, collaborators, and members, we renew our commitment toward this mission!

MacART is proud to be supported by our partners:

- McMaster University
- McMaster Children's Hospital
- Hamilton Health Sciences & Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation