

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS

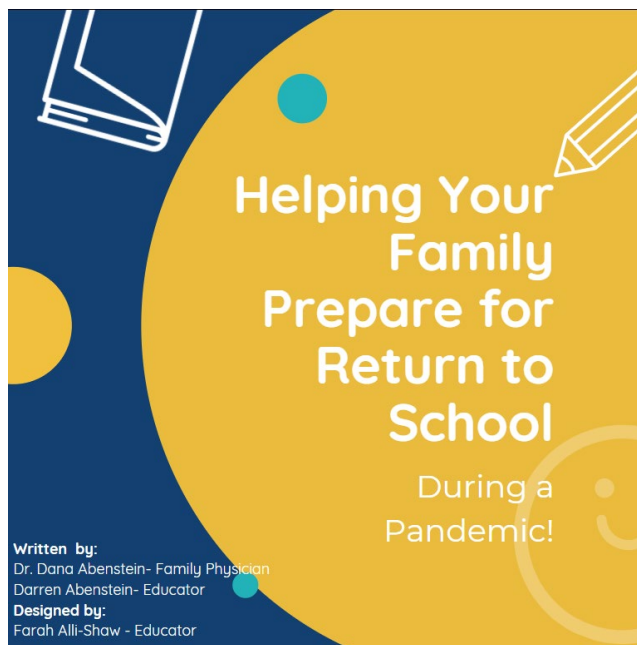


2020

Board Award

Darren Abenstein

Achievement: Preparing Families for a Return to School During a Pandemic



Darren Abenstein is the father of two young children, a high school teacher for the York Region District School Board and the husband of a family physician with Markham Family Health Team, Dr. Dana Abenstein.

When the Province of Ontario announced its back-to-school plan this summer, Darren and Dana began discussing how best to prepare their boys to return to the classroom in the age of COVID-19. When they began getting questions from other concerned parents about sending their children back to school, they realized that there was a widespread need for some practical, factual guidance. Working together, they created [Helping Your Family Prepare for Return to School](#) and posted it online.

The goal was to give parents practical tips on how to prepare families for back to school. His perspective as a parent and a teacher provided the real-life examples included in the document, speaking to parents as a parent, in comparison to other resources that focused on logistics (e.g., scheduling) or clinical guidance such as infection control measures.

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The resource is applicable to primary care and the community and has had a robust reception at the local, regional, and provincial levels. Because of Darren's work as an educator and the broad reach of social media, the Abensteins posted the resource to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, where it was shared more than 1,100 times.

Within the medical community, it was shared by the Pandemic Pregnancy Guide at University of Toronto, AFHTO, the Ontario College of Family Physicians, UofT Family Medicine, and many physicians and family health teams across the country. Local school boards also have it as a resource for parents. It has been translated into French, Spanish and Hebrew.

Darren's resource sets the "bright light" example for ways primary care teams can assist their patients, not only by providing accurate information, but also by reassuring parents that they can prepare their children for a safe return to school.

Key Facts:

- Darren created and published a free, practical guide for the return to school during COVID-19 times.
- Created for parents, by a parent/educator with assistance from a parent/family physician.
- Lays groundwork for family discussions.
- Already translated into French, Hebrew, and Spanish.

Contact Information:

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