

CREiA

Centre for Research, Evaluation and Intervention in Autism of [Montreal](#)



And CREIA was born!

By ALEXIS LUPIEN-MEILLEUR and MÉGANE PLOURDE

Over the past year, researchers and clinicians deeply committed to autism took the initiative of joining forces to form the **Centre of Research, Evaluation et Intervention in Autism of Montreal**, known by its acronym **CREIA**.

The creation of this clinical-research group is the natural, but essential, culmination of numerous collaborations that have taken place for over the last 30 years now. Under the aegis of CREIA, six researchers affiliated with four Quebec universities have come together: Anne-Marie Nader, Laurent Mottron, and Valérie Courchesne from Université de Montréal, Armando Bertone from McGill University, Claudine Jacques from Université du Québec en Outaouais, and Isabelle Soulières from Université du Québec à Montréal. These researchers are united by their commitment to improving the quality of life of people with autism through their pursuit of unique and varied lines of research in their respective laboratories. But that's not all: CREIA also includes 4 clinics, located at the Hôpital en santé mentale de Rivière-des-Prairies (HSMRDP) which offers specialized autism services. At the heart of the Clinique d'Évaluation des Troubles du Spectre de l'Autisme (CETSA), the Clinique d'Intervention des Troubles du Spectre de l'Autisme (CITSA), the Hôpital de jour Pas à Pas, and the Unité d'hospitalisation pour jeunes autistes, these clinicians, healthcare professionals, and managers put their expertise to work for young autistic people and their families.

By bringing together these 6 laboratories and 4 clinics, CREIA aims to achieve a key objective: to foster close

collaboration and ongoing exchanges between clinical practice and research.

Since the group's inception, several joint events have been organized to bring CREIA members together, including journal clubs, initiated by clinical teams to discuss issues around clinical practice, and bi-monthly scientific presentations where students and researchers translate their research findings and receive feedback from other group members. These initiatives have culminated in the creation of an annual day dedicated to CREIA. The event took place on October 4th, 2024, at the Hôpital en santé mentale de Rivière-des-Prairies, and brought together nearly 80 people, including students, researchers, healthcare professionals, clinicians, and research professionals. Nearly a dozen presentations were given providing an overview of the research programs of the various laboratories featuring a glimpse into the diverse current and future projects happening at CREIA. The dynamic exchanges that followed each presentation sparked rich discussions paving the way for potential interdisciplinary collaborations and the establishment of new clinical-research collaborations.

By merging research and clinical practice, CREIA marks a promising turning point in the improvement of interventions and practices for people with autism. The success of CREIA's first annual day is testimony to a promising future where scientific advances and clinical practice complement each other to help improve the lives of people with autism and their families. 🌸

By bringing together these 6 laboratories and 4 clinics, CREIA aims to achieve a key objective: to foster close collaboration and ongoing exchanges between clinical practice and research.

A look at this year's annual program

- Precursor of cognitive development in autistic children – **Isabelle Soulières**, [Laboratoire IDEA](#)
- Better understanding the behaviors and interests of children with autism using better stimulating contexts – **Claudine Jacques**, **Catherina Lacelle**, **Allyson Bastien**, [Laboratoire LUDICA](#)
- Mental health and autism: at the crossroads of expertise - **Valérie Courchesne**, **Pascale Grégoire**
- Nabilone as adjuvant treatment for severe aggression in young people with intellectual disabilities associated or not with autism spectrum disorder: clinical case series – **Drigissa Illiès**
- Development of laboratory tools for cognitive assessment and intervention for neurodivergent learners – **Armando Bertone**, **PNLab**, <https://www.pnlab.ca/>
- On the Prototype – **Laurent Mottron**
- Screen use in the preschool ASD population with high prototypicality: Function of screen use in the developmental pathway of language acquisition and diversification of interests – **Laura Masi**
- Living environments and learning contexts that respond to the preferences of people with autism – **Anne-Marie Nader**