

- 2019 -  
Parent/Caregiver Resource Directory  
Southeast MA



PROVEN BEHAVIOR SOLUTIONS

*Autism is our expertise.  
Changing lives is our passion.*



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**Disclaimer** - Inclusion of listings in this Resource Directory is not an endorsement of service providers or organizations listed in the directory. When contacting the individuals or organizations listed in the resource directory, you do so at your own risk.

The contents of this directory were compiled based on topics relevant to the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families and are not all-inclusive. Information contained on specific resources was derived from website searches and telephone calls. For complete information on an organization or provider, their website address and phone numbers have been included for your convenience.

Please do your own due diligence as part of your research before deciding to purchase any product or service from an organization, group or individual. Also keep in mind, websites may change routinely and business practices may change.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Letter From The CEO

On behalf of all the staff at Proven Behavior Solutions, I am thrilled to provide you this Resource Directory. This guide is the most comprehensive single resource for families of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder looking for support in Southeast Massachusetts. Even for those families of individuals with other disabilities, I have no doubt that much of this information will still prove very valuable.

Collecting all the information contained inside this guide and troubleshooting contact phone numbers for the listed agencies required months of effort. Our team worked very diligently to identify as many relevant services as possible, but there may be some that we missed. If you know of an agency not listed here that you think should be included, please contact our team at [Info@ProvenABA.com](mailto:Info@ProvenABA.com). This Resource Directory will be reviewed annually, at a minimum, and your feedback is very helpful to ensuring we provide as current and comprehensive of a tool as possible.

Finally, none of this would have been possible without the hard work of Patricia Kiessling, LICSW, and Karolina Krason. Their dedication to this project and the result of their efforts offer a shining example of our Proven Behavior Solutions Team in action as we strive to help change lives every single day.

Sincerely,



Scott Snider  
Chief Executive Officer  
Proven Behavior Solutions, LLC



*Autism is our expertise. Changing lives is our passion.®*

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## ANIMAL ASSISTED ACTIVITIES

### Canines

#### **National Network: Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals**

From <https://adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet>

This section explains service animals and emotional support animals in detail, focusing on where they are allowed, in which conditions, and the legal rights of those who handle service animals.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a “service animal” as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The Act also allows trained miniature horses as alternatives to dogs, subject to certain limitations. Service animals are working animals – NOT PETS.

The ADA requires businesses to allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into their establishment, even if the establishment has a “no pets” policy.

Service animals are not an animal that provides emotional support, crime prevention or comfort/companionship because it does not perform specific tasks associated with a person's disability. Assistance dogs are trained to assist people with specific needs relating to their disability and may perform guide, hearing, seizure alert, scent alert, or physical assistance skills. Assistance dogs may be trained by a program or by a private trainer or disabled handler.

Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II and Title III of the ADA. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals either. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. It does not matter if a person has a note from a doctor that states that the person has a disability and needs to have the animal for emotional support. A doctor's letter does not turn an animal into a service animal.

#### **Assistance Dogs International**

<https://www.assistancedogsinternational.org/>

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) is a coalition of not for profit assistance dog organizations. The purpose of ADI is to improve the areas of training, placement, and utilization of assistance dogs, staff and volunteer education, as well as educating the public about assistance dogs, and advocating for the legal rights of people with disabilities partnered with dogs. ADI does not train or provide assistance dogs. If you are seeking one, you can use the local programs search at the website above.

#### **Assistance Dog United Campaign (ADUC)**

5860 Labath Avenue

Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Email: [info@assistancedogunitedcampaign.org](mailto:info@assistancedogunitedcampaign.org)

The Assistance Dog United Campaign (ADUC) is a health and human welfare organization which provides financial assistance to individuals who have the need for an assistance dog but have difficulty in raising the necessary funds. ADUC also assists and people and programs whose purpose is to provide assistance dogs to people with disabilities.

### **Canine Assistants**

3160 Francis Road  
Milton, Georgia 30004  
Phone: (770) 664-7178  
Toll Free: (1-800) 771-7221  
Email: [info@canineassistants.org](mailto:info@canineassistants.org)

Trains and provides service dogs to enhance and improve the lives of children and adults who have physical disabilities, seizure conditions or other special needs.

### **Canines for Disabled Kids**

255 Park Avenue  
Suite 601  
Worcester, MA 01609  
Phone: (978) 422 5299 ext. 1001  
Email: [Khartness@caninesforkids.org](mailto:Khartness@caninesforkids.org) or [info@caninesforkids.org](mailto:info@caninesforkids.org)  
[www.caninesforkids.org](http://www.caninesforkids.org)

Canines for Disabled Kids (CDK) will travel to you and present an educational program on assistance dogs and the ADA, and will help families raise funds in the community. CDK staff is available to answer questions, and prioritize the needs of the child to help the family select which organization is best for them. CDK can explain the differences between visiting therapy, emotional support animals and service animals.

### **Pet Partners**

875 124th Avenue NE, Suite 101  
Bellevue, WA 98005  
Phone: (425) 679-5500

Pet Partners provides advocacy and education on behalf of people with service animals, information about selecting a service animal, training, stewardship and roles of service animals, and referral to service animal training programs and related resources.

### **4 Paws for Ability**

253 Dayton Avenue  
Xenia, OH 45385  
Phone: (937) 374-0385

Through this program, dogs are trained for children and young adults with epilepsy, autism, diabetes, FASH/DE, and hearing loss. They also have an Assistance Dogs for Veterans program.

**The International Association of Assistance Dog Partners (IAADP)**

38691 Filly Drive  
Sterling Heights, MI 48310  
Phone: (586) 826-3938  
INFO@IAADP.org

IAADP provides information, resources and networking to assistance teams across the country. Members of IAADP are also eligible for financial assistance to pay veterinary bills for serious injury or illness that would otherwise prevent an assistance dog from working. They offer an assistance dog loss support line.

**National Education for Assistance Dog Services (NEADS)**

305 Redemption Rock Trail South  
Princeton, MA 01541  
Phone: (978) 422-9064 (Voice/TTY)  
Email: jvautour@neads.org

NEADS is a non-profit organization that provides canine assistance for people who are deaf or have a disability. Assistance dogs become an extension of their handlers and bring freedom, physical autonomy and relief from social isolation to their human partners who are deaf or have a disability.

**North Star Foundation**

20 Deerfield Lane  
Storrs, CT 06268  
Phone: (860) 423-0664  
Email: pattydobbsgross@gmail.com

Provides assistance dogs for children. Their mission is to help children who face social, emotional or educational challenges with the help of animal assisted therapy, school visits and assistance dog placements.

**Paws With A Cause**

4646 South Division  
Wayland, MI 49348  
Phone: (800) 253-7297

Paws With A Cause® enhances the independence and quality of life for people with disabilities nationally through custom-trained Assistance Dogs. PAWS® increases awareness of the rights and roles of Assistance Dog Teams through education and advocacy.

## Horses

### **Path International Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.)**

More than 880 PATH Intl. Member Centers and more than 5,000 certified professionals (instructors and equine specialists in mental health and learning) are committed to professionalism, safety and ethical practices in the equine-assisted activities and therapies industry. At <https://www.pathintl.org/path-intl-centers/find-center>, enter the criteria you wish to search by and select "Search" to process your search request.

### **PATH Organizations:**

#### **BINA Farm Center**

207 Union Street  
Natick, MA 01760  
Phone: (508) 651-2462  
[www.binafarm.org](http://www.binafarm.org)

*ACTIVITIES:* Camps (summer, day, or other), Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning, Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy, Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Hippotherapy, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding, Veterans Programs, Vocational Training, PATH Intl. Equine Services for Heroes

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Alzheimer's/Dementia, Amputee, At Risk Youth, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, Paralysis, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Substance Abuse, Terminal Illness, Violence, Abuse or Trauma, Visual Impairment, Weight Control Disorders.

#### **Dr. Franklin Perkins School**

971 Main St  
Lancaster, MA 01523-2569  
Phone: (978) 368-4804  
[www.perkinschool.org](http://www.perkinschool.org)

*ACTIVITIES:* 4-H, Animal Assisted Activities with Non-Equines, Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning, Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy, Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Therapeutic Riding, and Vocational Training

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, At Risk Youth, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Paralysis, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Stroke, Substance Abuse, Violence, Abuse or Trauma.

**Friends for Tomorrow, Inc.**

PO Box 213  
Lincoln, MA 01773  
Phone: (781) 259-8909  
[www.friendsfortomorrow.org](http://www.friendsfortomorrow.org)

*ACTIVITIES:* Animal Assisted Activities with Non-Equines, Competition (Special Olympic, Paralympics), Driving, Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning, Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Amputee, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, Paralysis, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Terminal Illness, Violence, Abuse or Trauma, Visual Impairment, Weight Control Disorders.

**Greener Pastures**

124 Proctor Rd  
Chelmsford, MA 01824-4415  
Phone: (978) 244-1144  
[www.flyingchangestables.com](http://www.flyingchangestables.com)

*ACTIVITIES:* Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Violence, Abuse or Trauma, Visual Impairment.

**Greenlock Therapeutic Riding Center**

55 Summer St  
Rehoboth, MA 02769  
Phone: (508) 252-5814  
[www.greenlock.org](http://www.greenlock.org)

*ACTIVITIES:* Hippotherapy, Therapeutic Riding

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Orthopedic Issues, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Visual Impairment.

**Horse SenseAbility at Wildstar Farm**

16 Nason Hill Lane  
Sherborn, MA 01770  
Phone: (508) 744-6774  
www.HorseSenseAbility.com

*ACTIVITIES:* Animal Assisted Activities with Non-Equines, Camps (summer, Day, or Other), Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning, Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy, Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Mobile Community Programs, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding, Vocational Training

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* At Risk Youth, Autism, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Intellectual Disability, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Violence, Abuse or Trauma.

**Lovelane Special Needs Horseback Riding Program**

40 Baker Bridge Rd  
Lincoln, MA 01773-3105  
Phone: (781) 259-1177  
www.lovelane.org

*ACTIVITIES:* Camps (Summer, Day, or Other), Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning, Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Terminal Illness, Visual Impairment

**Rising Tide Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Inc.**

PO Box 606  
Chilmark, MA 02535  
Phone: (508) 338-7198  
www.risingtidetec.org

*ACTIVITIES:* Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning, Grooming & Tacking, Therapeutic Riding, Veterans Programs, Vocational Training

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Alzheimer's/Dementia, Amputee, At Risk Youth, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, Paralysis, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Substance Abuse, Terminal Illness, Violence, Abuse or Trauma, Visual Impairment, Weight Control Disorders.

**Strongwater Farm Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Inc.**

PO Box 754  
Tewksbury, MA 01876  
Phone: (978) 851-5540  
www.strongwaterfarm.org

*ACTIVITIES:* Camps (Summer, Day, or Other), Competition (Special Olympic, Paralympics), Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding, Veterans Programs

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Alzheimer's/Dementia, Amputee, At Risk Youth, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, Paralysis, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Substance Abuse, Terminal Illness, Violence, Abuse or Trauma, Visual Impairment, Weight Control Disorders.

**The Bridge Center**

470 Pine St  
Bridgewater, MA 02324-2112  
Phone: (508) 697-7557  
www.thebridgectr.org

*ACTIVITIES:* Camps (summer, day, or other), Competition (Special Olympic, Paralympics), Driving, Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding, Veterans Programs

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, Amputee, At Risk Youth, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or Mental Health, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, Paralysis, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Substance Abuse, Terminal Illness, Violence, Abuse or Trauma, Visual Impairment.

**Windrush Farm Therapeutic Equitation, Inc.**

479 Lacy St  
North Andover, MA 01845  
Phone: (978) 682-7855  
www.windrushfarm.org

*ACTIVITIES:* Competition (Special Olympic, Paralympics), Drill Team, Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning, Grooming & Tacking, Ground Work, Hippotherapy, Recreational Riding, Therapeutic Riding, Vaulting/Interactive Vaulting, Veterans Programs, Vocational Training

*DISABILITIES SERVED:* ADD or other Hyperactivity Disorder, At Risk Youth, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay or Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional, Behavioral, or



Mental Health, Genetic Conditions/Disorders, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Orthopedic Issues, Paralysis, PTSD, Speech Impairment, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Terminal Illness, Violence, Abuse or Trauma, Visual Impairment.

*For more information:* <https://disabilityinfo.org/fact-sheet-library/home-supports/assistance-animals/>

# APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

## **INDEX: DisabilityInfo.org**

Phone: (800) 642-0249

<https://disabilityinfo.org/>

INDEX is a database maintained by the Shriver Center at UMass Medical School. To locate a provider near you, use the following link and follow the prompts for geographic area, programs-services, and insurance type. For more information about INDEX, refer to “Disability Information/INDEX” under Service Directories – General.

## **“Ask These 10 Questions When Searching For A Quality ABA Provider”**

*By Lindsey Snider, COO of Proven Behavior Solutions, originally for Exceptional Lives*

Trying to find help when your child is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is hard. Trying to find good help? For many families, that is even harder. Since the Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism (ARICA) law passed in Massachusetts in 2010, families have been presented with new options for treating ASD. One of those options is **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)**, a scientifically-backed therapy shown to work very well when treating individuals with ASD.

As a result of ARICA, more agencies are providing ABA therapy. To help you to find a *quality* ABA provider for in-home therapy right from the start, ask an agency **these 10 questions**:

### **1. Do you have Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) on staff?**

*BCBAs are specially trained to develop, implement, and manage ABA cases. ABA is very technical – it is important that the person in charge of your child's treatment is qualified.*

### **2. Will my child's case be managed directly by a BCBA?**

*Watch out for companies that have non-BCBAs managing cases. This is often a sign of a company asking their BCBAs to manage a high number of cases. Because they are so busy, the amount of time that the expert has to work with your child is limited. Additionally, “BCBA Candidate” is not an official title or recognized qualification.*

### **3. What is the maximum number of cases managed by one BCBA?**

*BCBAs that manage more than 10-15 cases may have trouble providing enough staff supervision and parent training.*

### **4. How is parent training provided?**

*Many insurance companies ask parents to get involved with treatment. Look for a BCBA that will provide monthly training in-person and, when needed, will practice with you*

### **5. What training does your direct-level staff (paraprofessionals, ABA therapists, Behavior Technicians, or tutors, etc.) receive prior to working with clients?**

*It's common for people to join this area of work at the direct level with little to no experience. It is very important that they a) receive ABA-specific training prior to working with a client, and b) complete extra workshops and training to build their skills.*

**6. How much on-site training and supervision will direct-level staff receive prior to running sessions independently with my child?**

*EVERY child is different and so every ABA treatment plan is different. No direct-level staff should start working with a new client without some on-the-job training (known as "overlaps"). This is done with either the supervising BCBA or another direct-level staff that has already worked with that specific client.*

**7. How often do staff meet with their supervisors?**

*Your child's BCBA should provide staff supervision at least 2-4 times per month to watch staff working with the client and give direct feedback. This makes sure that the program's goals are being met.*

**8. What is the average number of ABA programs run in a typical 3-hour session?**

*On average, expect staff to get through at least 10 ABA programs within a 3-hour session. Anything less may be a sign of poor training or lack of understanding of the importance of "high-intensity" (repetitive & fast-paced) teaching to take advantage of neuroplasticity in the human brain (the brain's ability to change its structure in response to what it experiences).*

**9. Are parents allowed to join or watch an ABA session?**

*The answer to this should ALWAYS be "YES!" The goal should be for parents to learn as much as possible so that they can do the ABA strategies themselves. The only catch to this rule is if the child is too distracted by having the parent there. Even then the parent should watch from a spot where the child cannot see them.*

**10. How many direct staff will work with my child?**

*Look for companies that will place at least 2 direct-level staff with your child. For children with autism, having more than one staff member teaching your child a skill helps increase the chances your child will learn the skill and keep it.*

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

### **Arc of the South Shore Parent Support Group**

Phone: (781) 335-3023 ext. 2229 (office)

Contact: Diane Wilcox

Email: [dwilcox@arcsouthshore.org](mailto:dwilcox@arcsouthshore.org)

<https://arcsouthshore.org/>

For parents and caretakers of children with Autism to build relationships, share information and resources, and gain emotional support.

Meetings on the fourth Monday of each month, 6:00pm -8:00pm, located at:

First Early Intervention  
874 Main Street  
South Weymouth, MA

Child care can be provided with advance notice.

### **BAMSI Family Support Services – Hanover**

155 Webster St Unit D

Hanover, MA 02339

Phone: (781) 878-4074

Email: [familysupportcenter@bamsi.org](mailto:familysupportcenter@bamsi.org)

<http://www.bamsi.org/program/the-family-support-center/>

BAMSI (Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.) is a private, non-profit human services organization providing services to adults and children with developmental disabilities, mental illness, behavioral health, and public health needs. The BAMSI Family Support Center acts as a hub for a wide range of services for people that have a family member (of any age) with a developmental disability living at home. The goal of the center is to guide families through the vast number of available supports and assistance, and to help each individual family determine the best plan for their unique situation.

Families are eligible for service if they have a family member living at home with a developmental disability and they live in the Greater Brockton area, the Greater Plymouth area, or the Greater South Shore communities. There is no fee for services provided by the Family Support Center. Some of the services available at the Family Support Center include:

- Information and referrals
- Individualized family support plans
- Parent networking
- Community connections
- Youth and parent support groups
- One-to-one support
- Telephone assistance
- School and family meetings

- Workshops and trainings
- Resource library
- Monthly e-newsletter
- Family events and activities (family friendly hours)
- Art, crafts, dance, music, theatre and other activities
- Advocacy
- Annual talent show

The BAMSI Family Support Center operates through both an open and closed referral process, which enables families to walk-in to the Center for support or they may explore services based on a Department of Developmental Services (DDS) referral. The BAMSI website also includes many resources related to family support, behavioral health, educational support, and public health & community. Serving statewide.

### **Cape Cod Family Resource Center**

29 Bassett Lane  
 Hyannis, MA 02601  
 Phone: (508) 815-5100  
<http://capecodfamilyresourcecenter.org/>

The Cape Cod Family Resource Center offers a variety of parenting support groups, as well as evidenced-based parenting classes such as Parenting Journey, Nurturing Parenting, Etc. These classes can help parents learn how to better understand their children's needs and make the difficult job of parenting a little easier for everyone. Additionally, the center provides opportunities for parents to develop supportive networks among themselves and within their own communities.

The Cape Cod Family Resource Center collaborates with the Cape Cod Neighborhood Support Coalition to compile and distribute our region's most comprehensive and widely read listing of workshops, meetings, groups and related programs for parents, grandparents, guardians and other primary caregivers of children. This free monthly newsletter can be downloaded at <https://capecodfamilyresourcecenter.org/parent-education/>

A free, monthly Cape and Islands-wide listing of educational workshops, meetings, groups and related programs for parents, grandparents, guardians, and primary caregivers of children is also available at the same website.

Clinical Support: CCFRC staff includes a Master's level Clinician to assist families in identifying their individual needs and developing a family support plan to help families complete their goals.

### **Cape Cod Family Support Group**

Hyannis, MA  
 Phone: (508) 362-8368  
 Contact Name: Judy Fratus

### **D.A.D.S Group (Statewide) Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome**

Contact: Jeff Roback

Email: [dadsmass@yahoo.com](mailto:dadsmass@yahoo.com)

<http://www.dadsmass.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=49054984200>

Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome, or D.A.D.S., is an organization of fathers of children who have Down syndrome. As quoted from their website, "we hesitate to call our self a 'support group,' even though we do, in many ways, support each other. We prefer to think of D.A.D.S. as an 'action group.' You won't find us in a church basement drinking warm coffee and whining about having children with Down syndrome. Instead, you'll find us out in the community coaching our kid's sports teams, participating in our children's IEPs, volunteering at local Down syndrome fund raising events, and even sponsoring fund raising events of our own." D.A.D.S. hosts a variety of meetings and family events, and is a proud affiliate of the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress.

### **Down Syndrome-Autism Connection**

PO Box 5470

Haverhill, MA

Phone: (720) 753-7007

Email: [charlotte@dsac.org](mailto:charlotte@dsac.org): Charlotte Gray, Executive Director, Boston

Email: [erin@dsac.org](mailto:erin@dsac.org)

Email: [mdsc@mdsc.org](mailto:mdsc@mdsc.org)

<http://www.ds-asd-connection.org/contact-us.html>

DS-Autism Connection (DSAC) is for parents whose children have both Down syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder. DSAC has 30 active families who meet once monthly for an online chat and discuss the issues and challenges unique to the Down Syndrome-Autism community. Experts in the field often present on various topics relating to dual diagnosis. New members are welcome. DSAC is the only nonprofit organization dedicated solely to co-occurring Down syndrome and autism spectrum disorder (DS-ASD) in the United States, and is an affiliate of the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress.

The goal is to ensure that families, teachers, and healthcare providers receive the education and support they need -- with the ultimate goal being that children and adults with DS-ASD will receive the understanding, education, medical care and opportunities they so greatly deserve. If you are a parent wondering if your child (or adult child) may be affected by autism spectrum disorder, they want you to know that you are not alone.

### **Joanna's Place**

Phone: (781) 413-5141

Email: [mary.boyle@joannasplace.org](mailto:mary.boyle@joannasplace.org) or [info@joannasplace.org](mailto:info@joannasplace.org)

[www.joannasplace.org](http://www.joannasplace.org)

Joanna's Place is a non-profit organization serving South Shore families, dedicated to promoting resilience in children who are facing some of life's most stressful events.

Joanna's Place provides the tools, support and resources to heal, to grow and to strengthen families. The purpose of Joanna's Place is to provide free services to children and their families so they have access to the support they need, when they need it most.

Joanna's Place provides support to families in "Circle Support Groups" held locally, for parents or guardians and their children, 6-18 years, each with its focus on resilience. "Talking Points" is a time-sensitive, single-session consultation for parents and/or guardians of children (of any age) facing a stressful life event. The event may vary, from a life-changing diagnosis, military deployment, marital separation, putting the dog "to sleep," or discussing a world event, but the need for support is universal. Call for additional information.

### **Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC)**

20 Burlington Mall Road, Suite 261

Burlington, MA 01803

Phone: (781) 221-0024

Fax: (781) 221-0011

<http://www.mdsc.org/infojustforyou/FindASupportGroup.cfm>

*Informational resources:* <http://www.mdsc.org/infojustforyou/>

Whether you're a new or expectant parent, a family of color, a sibling, father or grandparent of someone with Down syndrome, if you're looking to connect with others in your shoes, the MDSC can help. The MDSC collaborates with more than 20 local support groups around the state, which are listed on its website. Additionally, the MDSC includes extensive informational resources about Down Syndrome. To find support groups, visit their website above.

### **21FrienDS**

Phone: (508) 989-2709

Contact: Kim Legendre

Email: [twentyonefriends@msn.com](mailto:twentyonefriends@msn.com)

21FrienDS is one notable group for families with Down Syndrome-Autism dual-diagnosis children. This group meets monthly through play dates, family activities and parties, educational seminars, mom's nights and informational meetings. Its founder, Kim Legendre, can provide information about related groups and also call these groups on behalf of the family.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Information taken from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/department-of-developmental-services-dds>, and [www.mass.gov/dds](http://www.mass.gov/dds).

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) provides funding for family support programs and services across Massachusetts designed to provide information, assistance, and an array of supportive services to families with children and adults with disabilities who are living at home.

The Department views families as the best natural resource for individuals with disabilities and recognizes the importance of developing strong partnerships with families. Families know their children and their own strengths and needs. The design of the Family Support Services is to supplement and build upon the capacities of families, and should be flexible and respectful of cultural, economic, social, and spiritual differences.

### Types of DDS Services - No Application Required

There are three types of support centers that are free and open to all community members. Families can access these centers without applying for DDS services.

1. **Family Support Centers:** Family Support Centers provide information and referral services, support groups, trainings for families, parent networking and mentoring opportunities, and social events. These centers also help families navigate the service system for children and youth with disabilities. There are 35 Family Support Centers in the state (Refer to Family Support Centers in this section).
2. **Autism Support Centers:** Autism Support Centers provide resources and support for children and young adults with autism spectrum disorders. Like the Family Support Centers, these centers offer information and referrals, support groups, family trainings, parent networking and mentoring opportunities, and social events. Autism Support Centers also provide family clinics. There are eight Autism Support Centers in the state (Refer to Autism Support Center locations in this section).
3. **Cultural/Linguistic Specific Centers:** These centers offer many of the same services as the Family Support Centers, but are designed to address the needs of certain cultural and linguistic family groups in different areas of the state. These centers offer services in Vietnamese, Mandarin, Spanish, Haitian, and Khmer.

Any family can contact one of the Family Support Centers listed in this Directory for information and referral services. However, **to receive other DDS funded family support services, an individual must be found eligible for DDS services and must be living at home with their family.** The Regional Eligibility team intake and eligibility process is conducted by a Regional Eligibility Team located at one of the four DDS regional offices listed in this Directory. The process begins by the submission of an Eligibility Application Form.



More information about the eligibility process can be found on the DDS website, [www.mass.gov/dds](http://www.mass.gov/dds)

## Types of DDS Services - Application Required

Services that require that the child's parent or legal guardian complete an application for DDS services include the following:

1. **Intensive Flexible Family Supports (IFFS)** - IFFS programs help families who are caring for a child in their home and are experiencing serious challenges as a result of the child/youth's disability. These challenges are not only causing severe stress for the family, but also leave the child at risk of needing an out-of-home placement. IFFS provide case management services for families and flexible funding to help families purchase other items or services that the child may need. The goals of IFFS are to ease the level of stress families are experiencing and to help them keep their child/youth in the home.
2. **Medically Complex Programs** - These programs support families who are caring for children or young adults in their home with serious cognitive, physical, and/or complex health care needs. Intensive case management services are provided, and there is flexible funding available to help the family buy other items or services that the child may need. These programs are available for children and youth up to the age of 25.
3. **Planned Facility Based Respite Program for Children** - This program offers planned, out-of-home respite services for children in the Central/West Region of the state. This program provides short-term temporary relief for families, and include overnight, weekend, and/or vacation stays. Children/youth are provided with recreational, social, cultural and/or educational activities during their stay.
4. **Family Leadership Development** - These programs provide education, mentoring and support to families. Families learn information about "best practices" in caring for children and youth with disabilities, and they also learn about policy making at the local and state level. The goal of Family Leadership Development is to prepare family members to take leadership roles in their local community and the disability community. These trainings are developed by family members who have a child or adult family member with a disability.
5. **Community Residential Education Program** - This program is a partnership between DDS and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). It provides additional supports to children and young adults to prevent them from being placed in a more restrictive educational environment or in an out-of-home placement. This program also assists families whose children are coming out of a residential placement as they transition back into the community.

Eligibility Application Forms can be obtained at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/dds-eligibility-forms>, or in person at any of the DDS Area or Regional offices. Please note that

these applications are based off of age groups, and are also provided in Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish.

The contents that follow are predominantly focused on Boston Metro and Southeast Regions of MA. For the full DDS Family Support Directory and Resources across the entire state, go to <https://www.mass.gov/lists/dds-family-support-services-information>.

## Department of Disabilities (DDS) Statewide Regional Intake & Eligibility Contacts

### DDS Southeast Region

Tracey Daigneau  
151 Campanelli Drive, Suite B  
Middleboro, MA 02346  
Intake Line: (508) 866-5000  
Fax number: (617) 727-7822

### DDS Metro Region

Christine Kjellson  
465 Waverley Oaks Road, Suite 120  
Waltham, MA 02452  
Intake Line: (781) 314-7513  
Fax Number: (781) 314-7539

## DDS Southeast Region Area Offices

Brockton Area Office	Cape Cod/Islands Area Office
60 Main Street, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Brockton, MA 02301 (774) 296-6090	181 North Street Hyannis, MA 02601 (508) 771-2595
Beth Moran Liuzzo, Area Director	Rick Cavicchi, Area Director
Area Covered: Abington, E Bridgewater, Stoughton, Avon, Easton, W Bridgewater, Bridgewater, Holbrook, Whitman, Brockton, Rockland	Area Covered: Barnstable, Eastham, Mashpee, Tisbury, Bourne, Edgartown, Nantucket, Truro, Brewster, Falmouth, Oak Bluffs, Wellfleet, Chatham, Gay Head, Orleans, West Tisbury, Chilmark, Harwich, Provincetown, Yarmouth, Dennis, Hyannis, Sandwich

DDS Fall River Area Office	DDS New Bedford Area Office
1 Father DeValles Boulevard, Unit 3 Fall River, MA 02723 (508) 730-1209	1740 Purchase Street New Bedford, MA 02740 (508) 992-1848
Dana Roszkiewicz, Area Director	Elizabeth Duffy, Area Director
Area Covered: Assonet, Freetown, Swansea, Fall River, Somerset, Westport	Area Covered: Acushnet, Gosnold, New Bedford, Dartmouth, Marion, Rochester, Fairhaven, Mattapoisett, Wareham

DDS Plymouth Area Office	South Coastal Office
38 Industrial Park Road Plymouth, MA 02360 (508) 732-5700	220R Forbes Road Braintree, MA 02184 (781) 356-8850
Casey Seaman, Area Director	Colleen Mulligan, Area Director
Area Covered: Carver, Duxbury, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Marshfield, Pembroke, Plimpton, Plymouth	Area Covered: Braintree, Hull, Quincy, Weymouth, Cohasset, Milton, Randolph, Hingham, Norwell, Scituate

DDS Metro Regional Office	DDS Northeast Regional Office
465 Waverley Oaks Road, Suite 120 Waltham, MA 02452 (781) 314-7500	Hogan Regional Center, PO Box A Hathorne, MA 01937 (978) 774-5000
Gail Gillespie, Regional Director	Kelly Lawless, Regional Director
Roberta Lewonis, Community Systems Director	Karen McDonald, Community Systems Director
Kristen O'Melia, Director of Family Support Kristen.omelia@state.ma.us	Amy Nazaire, Director of Family Support

## DDS Central and Regional Offices

DDS Central Office	DDS Central/West Region
<p>500 Harrison Avenue Boston, MA 02118 (617) 727-5608 Toll Free: (888) 367-4435 www.mass.gov/dds</p> <p>Elin M. Howe, Commissioner</p> <p>Jane Ryder, Deputy Commissioner</p> <p>Janet George, Assistant Commissioner, Policy, Planning &amp; Children's Services</p> <p>Margaret Van Gelder, Statewide Director of Family Support: Margaret.van.gelder@state.ma.us</p>	<p>140 High Street Springfield, MA 01105 (413) 205-0800 Toll Free: (800) 328-3123</p> <p>Dan Lunden, Regional Director</p> <p>Sue Banks, Community Systems Director</p> <p>Ingrid Flory, Director of Family Support ingrid.flory@state.ma.us</p>

DDS Metro Regional Office	DDS Northeast Regional Office
<p>465 Waverley Oaks Road, Suite 120 Waltham, MA 02452 (781) 314-7500</p> <p>Gail Gillespie, Regional Director</p> <p>Roberta Lewonis, Community Systems Director</p> <p>Kristen O'Melia, Director of Family Support Kristen.omelia@state.ma.us</p>	<p>Hogan Regional Center, PO Box A Hathorne, MA 01937 (978) 774-5000</p> <p>Kelly Lawless, Regional Director</p> <p>Karen McDonald, Community Systems Director</p> <p>Amy Nazaire, Director of Family Support Amy.naziare@state.ma.us</p>

DDS Southeast Regional Office
<p>151 Campanelli Drive Middleboro, MA 02346 (508)-866-5000</p> <p>Rick O'Meara, Regional Director</p> <p>Lisa Saba, Community Systems Director Lisa.saba@state.ma.us</p>

## DDS Metro Region Area Offices

DDS Greater Boston Area	DDS Charles River West
65 Sprague Street Hyde Park, MA 02136 (617) 363-2900	255 Elm Street Suite 205 Somerville, MA 02144 (617) 623-5950
Liz Sandblom, Area Director	Joan Thompson, Area Director

DDS Middlesex West Area	DDS Newton/South Norfolk Area
300 Howard Street Framingham, MA 01702 (508) 861-2211	125 West Street Walpole, MA 02081 (508) 668-3679
Deborah Johnson, Area Director	Pat Lessard, Area Director

## DDS Family Support Centers

**Family Support Centers** across the state provide a local presence and act as a hub for offering a wide range of general family support services and activities to families of children and adults who are eligible for DDS services. There is at least one Family Support Center in each DDS Area, with some Areas having more than one. The centers provide services to families from diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic communities in the geographic area they are serving, which may involve creating partnerships with community organizations and other resources in order to provide culturally responsive services.

Center staff are expected to be experts in generic resources and services in their respective areas and work with families to maximize natural supports. Centers are expected to encourage active family involvement and consultation to identify interests and needs in developing activities and service options.

Each Family Support Center provides the following array of services and supports for families:

### INFORMATION & REFERRAL

- Assistance to families in identifying resources and service options available in their local communities, as well as learning about other financial and/or state services for which families may be eligible (MassHealth, etc.), and provide guidance on how to navigate the service system. This can occur through phone contacts or 1:1 meetings at a variety of locations.
- Use of technology to provide a variety of ways to share information with families.

- A “library” of resources, such as helpful websites, fact sheets, community resources, information technology resource options, books, videos, etc.

### **FAMILY TRAININGS**

Sponsor educational events and trainings on relevant topics of interest to families of both children and adults which are open for participation to all families.

### **PARENT NETWORKING**

Promote parent networking and mentoring, such as parent support groups, parent connections (1:1 matching), and sibling support opportunities, as well as parental involvement in organizing or leading activities, etc.

### **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & RESOURCES**

Foster community affiliations and connections to explore and maximize the use of natural and generic resources and other potential sources of funding.

### **SERVICE NAVIGATION**

Comprehensive and individualized information, guidance, and support to families to address their needs, connect them to potential resources, assist with problem-solving, and help them navigate the service system. The level of involvement with each family will vary based on the needs of the individual and family. There are two types of Service Navigation:

1. **Short-Term Service Navigation** – This is for families who will benefit from more individualized assistance for a period of time to obtain information, to receive assistance in accessing other services, or to receive guidance in addressing some specific problems. Development of an action plan with families occurs to focus on specific objectives.
2. **Extended Service Navigation** - This provides ongoing support and coordination of services. Each Center has the capacity to provide Extended Service Navigation to an identified number of individuals/families. The Area Office must make referrals for this service, but the family, Family Support Center staff, or the Area Office can initiate the request. This service can also assist families to help plan and organize in-home supports they need for their family member at home. Development of a Family Support Plan is an aid to remain focused on goals.

**ADMINISTRATION OF FLEXIBLE FUNDING:** The Department may provide individual, flexible funding allocations to families based on the priority of need of the family and available budget resources. This funding must be used for allowable supports, services, or goods as defined in the Department's Addendum to the Family Support Guidelines and Procedures, January 2011.

## **Family Support Centers: Southeast Region**

### **Brockton Area**

Center Name: Brockton Area Arc  
Address: 1250 West Chestnut St, Brockton, MA 02301  
Phone: (508) 583-8030 x224  
Contact: Kathy Kerwin  
Email: kkerwin@brocktonarc.net  
Website: www.brocktonareaarc.org

### **Cape Cod and the Islands Area**

Center Name: Kennedy-Donovan Center  
Address: 30 Ansel Hallet Rd, West Yarmouth, MA 02673  
Phone: (774) 352-1305  
Contact: Heather L. Alden  
Email: halden@kdc.org  
Website: www.kdc.org

### **Martha's Vineyard Community Services**

Center Name: Martha's Vineyard Community Services  
Address: 111 Edgartown Rd, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568  
Phone: (508) 693-7900  
Contact: Kathi Hackett, ext. 249  
Email: KHackett@mvcommunityservices.com  
Website: www.mvcommunityservices.com

### **Fall River Area - People Inc.**

Center Name: Family Advocacy & Community Education (FACE)  
Address: 4 South Main St, Fall River, MA 02721  
Phone: (508) 679-5233  
Contact: Marilyn Grubb  
Email: MGrubb@Peopleinc-fr.org  
Website: www.peopleinc-fr.org

### **New Bedford Area**

Center Name: Family Connections Center, Nemasket  
Address: 109 Fairhaven Rd, Mattapoisett, MA 02739  
Phone: (508) 999-4436  
Contact: Sandra Kinney  
Email: sandykinney@nemasketgroup.org  
Website: www.nemasketgroup.org

### **Plymouth Area**

Center Name: The Arc of Greater Plymouth  
Address: 52 Armstrong Rd, Plymouth, MA 02360  
Phone: (508) 732-9292  
Contact: Kristine Marquis/FS Coordinator  
Email: Kristinem@thearcofgp.org  
Website: www.thearcofgp.org

**South Coastal Area - Advocates, Inc.**

Center Name: South Coastal Family Support Center  
Address: 1189 R North Main St, Randolph, MA 02368  
Phone: (781) 767-3048  
Contact: Alicia Cannon  
Email: [acannon@advocates.org](mailto:acannon@advocates.org)  
Contact: Fatima Baptista  
Email: [fbaptista@advocates.org](mailto:fbaptista@advocates.org)  
Website: <http://southcoastalfamilysupport.org/>

**South Shore Support Services**

Center Name: South Shore Support Services  
Address: 435 Columbian St, Weymouth, MA 02190  
Phone: (781) 331-7878  
Contact: Renee McCorkle  
Email: [rmmccorkle@soshoresupport.org](mailto:rmmccorkle@soshoresupport.org)  
Website: [www.soshoresupport.org](http://www.soshoresupport.org)

**Tri-Area (Brockton, Plymouth, South Coastal)**

Center Name: BAMSI Family Support Center  
Address: 155 Webster St – Unit D, Hanover, MA 02339  
Phone: (781) 878-4074 ext. 11  
Contact: Michael Lonergan  
Email: [michaellonergan@bamsi.org](mailto:michaellonergan@bamsi.org)  
Website: [www.bamsi.org](http://www.bamsi.org)

**Family Support Centers Bristol County: Taunton/Attleboro Area****The Arc of Bristol County**

Center Name: The Arc of Bristol County  
Address: 141 Park St, Attleboro, MA 02703  
Phone: (508) 226-1445  
Contact: Joan Badger, Donna Brown  
Email: [jbadger@arcnbc.org](mailto:jbadger@arcnbc.org), [dbrown@arcnbc.org](mailto:dbrown@arcnbc.org)  
Website: [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org)

**Family Support Centers Charles River West Area****Cambridge Family and Children's Service (Cambridge, Somerville, Watertown, Belmont, Waltham)**

Center Name: Cambridge Family & Children's Service  
Address: 60 Gore St, Cambridge, MA 02141  
Phone: (617) 876-4210 ext. 4259  
Contact: Brenda Beaton  
Email: [bbeaton@helpfamilies.org](mailto:bbeaton@helpfamilies.org)  
Website: [www.helpfamilies.org](http://www.helpfamilies.org)



## **Family Support Centers Greater Boston Area**

### **Bay Cove**

Center Name: Bay Cove Family Support Center  
Address: 66 Canal St, Boston, MA 02114  
Phone: (617) 371-3121  
Contact: Teresa Wilson  
Email: twilson@baycove.org  
Website: www.baycove.org

### **Vinfen**

Center Name: Vinfen Corp. DDS Family Support Center  
Address: 260 Milton St, Suite 101, Dedham, MA 02026  
Phone: (617) 562-4094  
Contact: Sethany Griffin  
Email: griffins@vinfen.org  
Website: www.vinfen.org

### **Work Inc.**

Center Name: Work Inc. Family Support Center  
Address: 25 Beach St, Dorchester, MA 02122  
Phone: (617) 691-1601  
Contact: Tuan Le  
Email: tle@workinc.org  
Website: www.workinc.org

### **Advocates (Cultural/Linguistic-Specific Family Support Center)**

Center Name: Project Able  
Address: 888 Washington St Suite 102, Boston, MA 02111  
Mailing Address: 1881 Worcester Rd, Framingham, MA 01701  
Phone: (617) 988-8132  
Contact: Andy Law  
Email: alaw@advocates.org  
Website: www.advocates.org  
Specific Ethnic/Linguistic Group: Chinese and Vietnamese Families

### **HAPHI (Cultural/Linguistic-Specific Family Support Center)**

Center Name: Haitian Family Support Center  
Address: 1603 Blue Hill Ave, Mattapan, MA 02126  
Phone: (617) 298-8076  
Contact: Renald Raphael  
Email: renaldraphael@yahoo.com  
Website: www.haphi.org  
Specific Ethnic/Linguistic Group: Haitian Families

**Dimock Community Service Corp. (Cultural/Linguistic-Specific Family Support Center)**

Center Name: Dimock Family Support Center  
Address: 55 Dimock St, Roxbury, MA 02119  
Phone: (617) 442-8800 ext. 1204  
Contact: Tom Morris  
Email: tmorris@dimock.org  
Website: www.dimockcenter.org  
Specific Ethnic/Linguistic Group: African American/Multicultural Families

**Work Inc. (Cultural/Linguistic-Specific Family Support Center)**

Center Name: Solidaridad  
Address: 25 Beach St, Dorchester, MA 02122  
Phone: (617) 691-1620  
Contact: Rosa Robledo  
Email: rrobledo@workinc.org  
Website: www.workinc.org  
Specific Ethnic/Linguistic Group: Latin American Families

**Family Support Centers Middlesex West Area**

**Charles River Center**

Center Name: Charles River Center  
Address: 4 Strathmore Rd, Natick, MA 01760  
Phone: (508) 651-5914  
Contact: Jill Dec  
Email: jdec@charlesrivercenter.org  
Website: www.charlesrivercenter.org

**Thrive Support & Advocacy**

Center Name: Thrive Support & Advocacy.  
Address: 65 Boston Post Road West, Suite 220  
Marlborough, MA 01752  
Phone: (508) 485-4227 ext. 1004  
Contact: Nanette Goldstein  
Email: ngoldstein@icanthrive.org  
Website: www.icanthrive.org

**Family Support Centers Newton/South Norfolk Area**

**Charles River Center**

Center Name: Charles River Center  
Address: 59 East Militia Heights Rd, Needham, MA 02492  
Phone: (781) 972-1048  
Contact: Ellen Kilicarlan  
Email: ekilicarlan@charlesrivercenter.org  
Website: www.charlesrivercenter.org

### **The ARC of South Norfolk**

Center Name: The Arc of South Norfolk Family Support Center  
Address: 789 Clapboardtree St, Westwood, MA 02090  
Phone: (781) 762-4001  
Contact: Deb Wood  
Email: [dwood@arcsouthnorfolk.org](mailto:dwood@arcsouthnorfolk.org)  
Website: [www.arcsouthnorfolk.org](http://www.arcsouthnorfolk.org)

### **DDS Autism Support Centers**

There are seven Autism Support Centers throughout the state that provide an array of information and referral services, resources, and supports to children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. These Centers conduct broad outreach and provide services to families from diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic communities in the geographic area they are serving and may create partnerships with community organizations and other resources in order to provide culturally responsive services. Applications and fact sheets can be found at the websites listed below.

The array of services and supports to families include:

- Information and Referral
- Family Clinics
- Support Groups
- Access to the latest information on autism
- Family Trainings
- Parent Networking and Mentoring, and
- Social/recreational events, among other activities

### **Southeast Region Autism Support Centers**

#### **Community Autism Resources**

33 James Reynolds Rd, Unit C  
Swansea, MA 02777  
Phone: (508) 379-0371  
Contact: Barbara Domingue  
Email: [Barbaradomingue@community-autism-resources.com](mailto:Barbaradomingue@community-autism-resources.com)  
[www.community-autism-resources.org](http://www.community-autism-resources.org)

#### **Northern Office: Stonehill College**

Downtown Center for Community Enhancement  
68 Legion Parkway (inside Harbor One Bank)  
Brockton, MA 02301  
Phone: (508) 379-0371 or (800) 588-9239  
Contact: Barbara Domingue  
Email: [Barbaradomingue@community-autism-resources.com](mailto:Barbaradomingue@community-autism-resources.com)  
[www.community-autism-resources.com](http://www.community-autism-resources.com)

## **Metro Region Autism Support Centers**

### **Advocates, Inc./Autism Alliance of Metrowest**

Address: 1881 Worcester Rd

Framingham, MA 01701

Phone: (508) 652-9900

Contacts: Pam McKillop and Allison Daigle

Email: pmckillop@advocates.org & adaigle@advocates.org

www.autismalliance.org

Serving: Metrowest

### **TILL/Autism Support Center**

Address: 20 Eastbrook Rd

Dedham, MA 02026

Phone: (781) 302-4835

Contact: Lisa Connors, Autism Services Coordinator

Email: Lisa.connors@tillinc.org

www.tillinc.org

Serving: Greater Boston, including but not limited to: Cambridge, Chelsea, East Boston, Malden, Revere, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, and Winthrop.

### **The Arc of South Norfolk/The Family Autism Center**

Address: 789 Clapboardtree St

Westwood, MA 02090

Phone: (781) 762-4001

Contact: Brian Clark, Director

Email: bclark@arcsouthnorfolk.org

www.arcsouthnorfolk.org

Serving: Norfolk County Area

### **Northeast Arc/The Autism Support Center**

Address: 6 Southside Rd

Danvers, MA 01923

Phone: (978) 777-9135

Contacts: Gloria Ricardi Castillo and Susan Gilroy

Email: asc@ne-arc.org

www.ne-arcautismsupportcenter.org

## **DDS Intensive Flexible Family Support Programs**

The primary goal of Intensive Flexible Family Support (IFFS) programs is to help support families with one or more members with a disability who are experiencing significant challenges, which are causing the child/individual to be at risk of out-of-home placement. This is a time-limited (6 to 12 months) and goal-oriented service providing more focused and intensive supports in response to identified areas of need and difficulty, and to build family capacity to support their child or young adult at home.

There are nineteen regional or area based Intensive Flexible Family Support Programs funded by DDS across the state. Children/families must meet specific eligibility criteria for participation in this Program and referral for services is made by the local DDS Area

Offices. These services are available to children and young adults up to age 22. For more information, contact the local DDS Area Office. An application for DDS services is required, DDS determines eligibility and makes the referrals for this service to contracted providers.

## **DDS Medically Complex Programs**

Medically Complex Programs provide a family-driven model of care which supports families with children and young adults having significant cognitive, physical, and complex health care needs who are living at home. The goal is to provide comprehensive wrap-around supports, which consist of specialized case management activities that help families integrate the variety of resources and supports they are receiving in order to care for their family member at home.

This Program complements and is supplemental to other MassHealth, state plan, and third party insurers, and provides vital assistance to families who need help in coordinating all of the in-home care they receive. This program offers an array of support options to families (parents and siblings) to keep their family member at home and allow for a meaningful quality of life for all, and helps to prevent out-of-home placements in a pediatric nursing home or residential school.

Children must meet specific eligibility criteria for participation in this Program and referral for Program services is made by the local DDS Area Offices. However, Program staff are available to provide information and referral services to families and/or provide consultation to staff working with families who have a child/young adult with significant medical, physical and cognitive challenges.

### **Southeast Region Medically Complex Programs: BAMSI**

Program Name: Family Partnerships of the Southeast  
155 Webster St, Unit D  
Hanover, MA 02339  
Phone: (781) 878-4074  
Contact: Susan Sullivan  
Email: [susansullivan@bamsi.org](mailto:susansullivan@bamsi.org)  
[www.bamsi.org](http://www.bamsi.org)

Contact: Theresa McNulty  
Email: [teresamcnulty@bamsi.org](mailto:teresamcnulty@bamsi.org)  
Phone: (508) 562-9208

### **Metro Region Medically Complex Programs: HMEA**

Horace Mann Educational Associates  
8 Forge Park  
East Franklin, MA 02038  
Phone: (508) 298-1612  
Contact: Shannon Kaiser  
Email: [skaiser@hmea.org](mailto:skaiser@hmea.org)  
[www.hmea.org](http://www.hmea.org)

## Family Leadership Programs – Supported in Part by DDS Funding

The Family Leadership Program is designed to provide education, leadership training and mentoring for families with children and adults with disabilities living in the community. One goal of these activities is to provide information on best practices and opportunities to support individuals and families to fully participate in all aspects of community life. Family leadership training and mentoring is developed and provided by family members who have a child or adult family member with a disability. One vehicle for family leadership development is the sponsorship of a Family Leadership Series, but other opportunities and activities are available in response to local needs.

### Southeast Region Family Leadership Programs: The Nemasket Group

Phone: (508) 999-4436

Contact: Emily Nisenbaum, Regional Coordinator- Southeast

Email: emilynisenbaum@nemasketgroup.org

www.nemasketgroup.org

Information about the Family Leadership Series, including dates and registration information, can also be found at <http://www.mfofc.org/events/leadership-series.html>

Contact: Mande Spittle, MFOFC Statewide Coordinator

Phone: (774) 855-6001

Email: mfofc@mfofc.org

### Metro Region Family Leadership Programs: Riverside Community Care

Phone: (617) 605-7404

Contact: Lauri Medeiros, Regional Coordinator- Metro

Email: rjmede@aol.com

## Other Family Resources Listed By DDS

Advocates for Autism of MA	(781) 891-6270	www.afamaction.org
Arc Massachusetts	(781) 891-6270	www.arcmass.org
Asperger's Association of New England	(617) 393-3824	www.aane.org
Autism Insurance Resource Center	(781) 642-0248	www.disabilityinfo.org/arica/
Best Buddies	(866) 332-8339	www.bestbuddiesma.org
Children & Youth With Special Health Care Needs Program/DPH	(800) 882-1435	www.mass.gov/dph
Community Gateway		www.communitygateway.org
Disability Law Center	(800) 872-9992	www.dlc-ma.org
FAMILY TIES	(800) 905-8437	www.massfamilyties.org
Federation for Children with Special Needs	(800) 236-7210	www.fcsn.org
Institute for Community Inclusion	(617) 287-4300	www.communityinclusion.org
Massachusetts Advocates for Children	(617) 357-8431	www.massadvocates.org

MA Developmental Disabilities Council	(617) 770-7676	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/mddc">www.mass.gov/mddc</a>
MA Down Syndrome Congress	(800) 664-6372	<a href="http://www.mdsc.org">www.mdsc.org</a>
MA Families Organizing for Change	(800) 406-3632	<a href="http://www.mfofc.org">www.mfofc.org</a>
MFOFC Housing Connections	(508) 824-6946	<a href="http://www.mfofc.org">www.mfofc.org</a>
MASS- MA Advocates Standing Strong	(866) 426-2253	<a href="http://www.massadvocatesstandingstrong.org">www.massadvocatesstandingstrong.org</a>
MASS 2-1-1	(877) 211-MASS	<a href="http://www.mass211.org">www.mass211.org</a>
Massachusetts Family Voices	(800) 331-0688 ext. 301	<a href="http://www.massfamilyvoices.org">www.massfamilyvoices.org</a>
Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition	(617) 863-6244	<a href="http://www.massrespite.org">www.massrespite.org</a>
MA Sibling Support Network	(617) 807-0558	<a href="mailto:info@masiblingsupport.org">info@masiblingsupport.org</a>
New England INDEX	(800) 642-0249	<a href="http://www.disabilityinfo.org">www.disabilityinfo.org</a>
Special Olympics	(508) 485-0986	<a href="http://www.specialolympicsma.org">www.specialolympicsma.org</a>
Widening the Circle		<a href="http://www.arcmass.org/ProgramsatTheArc/RealFriends.aspx">www.arcmass.org/ProgramsatTheArc/RealFriends.aspx</a>

# FINANCIAL RESOURCES

## **ABLE Accounts: 10 Things You Should Know**

Information from The ABLE National Resource Center: <http://ablenrc.org/>

### **1. What is an ABLE account?**

ABLE Accounts, which are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families, were created as a result of the passage of the Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 or better known as the ABLE Act. The beneficiary of the account is the account owner, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. Contributions to the account, which can be made by any person (the account beneficiary, family and friends), must be made using post-taxed dollars and will not be tax deductible for purposes of federal taxes, however some states may allow for state income tax deductions for contribution made to an ABLE account.

### **2. Why the need for ABLE accounts?**

Millions of individuals with disabilities and their families depend on a wide variety of public benefits for income, health care and food and housing assistance. Eligibility for these public benefits (SSI, SNAP, Medicaid) require meeting a means or resource test that limits eligibility to individuals to report more than \$2,000 in cash savings, retirement funds and other items of significant value. To remain eligible for these public benefits, an individual must remain poor. For the first time in public policy, the ABLE Act recognizes the extra and significant costs of living with a disability. These include costs, related to raising a child with significant disabilities or a working age adult with disabilities, for accessible housing and transportation, personal assistance services, assistive technology and health care not covered by insurance, Medicaid or Medicare.

For the first time, eligible individuals and their families will be allowed to establish ABLE savings accounts that will largely not affect their eligibility for SSI, Medicaid and other public benefits. The legislation explains further that an ABLE account will, with private savings, "secure funding for disability-related expenses on behalf of designated beneficiaries with disabilities that will supplement, but not supplant, benefits provided through private insurance, Medicaid, SSI, the beneficiary's employment and other sources."

### **3. Am I eligible for an ABLE account?**

The ABLE Act limits eligibility to individuals with significant disabilities with an age of onset of disability before turning 26 years of age. If you meet this age criteria and are also receiving benefits already under SSI and/or SSDI, you are automatically eligible to establish an ABLE account. If you are not a recipient of SSI and/or SSDI, but still meet the age of onset disability requirement, you could still be eligible to open an ABLE account if you meet Social Security's definition and criteria regarding significant functional limitations and receive a letter of certification from a licensed physician. You need not be under the age of 26 to be eligible for an ABLE account. You could be over the age of 26, but must have had an age of onset before the individual's 26 birthday.



#### **4. Are there limits to how much money can be put in an ABLE account?**

The total annual contributions by all participating individuals, including family and friends, for a single tax year is \$15,000. The amount may be adjusted periodically to account for inflation. Under current tax law, \$15,000 is the maximum amount that individuals can make as a gift to someone else and not report the gift to the IRS (gift tax exclusion). The total limit over time that could be made to an ABLE account will be subject to the individual state and their limit for education-related 529 savings accounts. Many states have set this limit at more than \$300,000 per plan. However, for individuals with disabilities who are recipients of SSI, the ABLE Act sets some further limitations. The first \$100,000 in ABLE accounts would be exempted from the SSI \$2,000 individual resource limit. If and when an ABLE account exceeds \$100,000, the beneficiary's SSI cash benefit would be suspended until such time as the account falls back below \$100,000. It is important to note that while the beneficiary's eligibility for the SSI cash benefit is suspended, this has no effect on their ability to receive or be eligible to receive medical assistance through Medicaid.

Additionally, upon the death of the beneficiary the state in which the beneficiary lived may file a claim to all or a portion of the funds in the account equal to the amount in which the state spent on the beneficiary through their state Medicaid program. This is commonly known as the "Medicaid Pay-Back" provision and the claim could recoup Medicaid related expenses from the time the account was open.

#### **5. Which expenses are allowed by ABLE accounts?**

A "qualified disability expense" means any expense related to the designated beneficiary as a result of living a life with disabilities. These may include education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, personal support services, health care expenses, financial management and administrative services and other expenses which help improve health, independence, and/or quality of life.

#### **6. Can I have more than one ABLE account?**

No. The ABLE Act limits the opportunity to one ABLE account per eligible individual.

#### **7. Do I have to wait for my state to establish a program before opening an account?**

No. While the original law passed in 2014 did stipulate that an individual had to open an account in their state of residency, this provision was eliminated by Congress in 2015. This means that regardless of where you might live and whether or not your state has decided to establish an ABLE program, you are free to enroll in any state's program provided that the program is accepting out of state residents.

To determine which state ABLE programs are accepting out of state programs, please refer to the individual state pages. Examples of state ABLE programs accepting enrollment nationwide include: Ohio, Nebraska, and Tennessee. An example of a state ABLE program only accepting in-state residents would include the Florida ABLE United program.

#### **8. Will states offer options to invest the savings contributed to an ABLE account?**

Like state 529 college savings plans, states do offer qualified individuals and families multiple options to establish ABLE accounts with varied investment strategies. Each individual and family will need to project possible future needs and costs over time, and

to assess their risk tolerance for possible future investment strategies to grow their savings. Account contributors or designated beneficiaries are limited, by the ABLE Act, to change the way their money is invested in the account up to two times per year.

### **9. How is an ABLE account different than a special needs or pooled trust?**

An ABLE Account will provide more choice and control for the beneficiary and family. Cost of establishing an account will likely be considerably less than either a Special Needs Trust (SNT) or Pooled Income Trust. With an ABLE account, account owners will have the ability to control their funds and, if circumstances change, still have other options available to them. Determining which option is the most appropriate will depend upon individual circumstances. For many families, the ABLE account will be a significant and viable option in addition to, rather than instead of, a Trust program. For more information, the webinar on ABLE Accounts, Trusts, Financial and Benefits Planning is archived on our website along with its slides and transcript.

### **10. How Will I know Which State ABLE Program is Right for Me?**

As of January 2018 there are over 40 ABLE programs nationwide inviting eligible individuals to open an ABLE account, most of which are enrolling individuals regardless of their state of residence. When comparing State ABLE programs you may want to consider the following questions in order to find a program that best meets your needs:

#### Opening an Account

- What proof will the ABLE program require for you to document in order to open an account or show that your disbursements are qualified expenses?
- Is there a minimum contribution to open an ABLE account?
- Is there a fee to open an account and, if so, how much is that fee?

#### Maintaining the Account and Fees

- Is there a required minimum contribution to your account? If so, what is the amount?
- Are the fees front end loaded or are they reduced if you leave your funds invested for several years?
- Are there restrictions on how often you can withdraw funds from your account?

#### Investment Opportunities

- What are the investment options the state ABLE program offers?
- Are the options likely to meet your needs for limiting risk with the growth of your contributed dollars to the ABLE account?
- Does the program offer any unique or value added program elements to help you save, contribute to your account, grow the account, and manage your invested dollars?
- Does the state program offer any unique or value added program elements (such as a match or rewards program, financial literacy info or program for beneficiaries) to help you save, contribute to your account, grow the account, and manage your invested dollars? If so, what is it?

#### Unique to Your State

- Does your state have a program and, if so, do they offer a state income tax for contributions to their account?

- Is there a “debit card/purchasing card” available with the program? Are there added costs to this?

### **Massachusetts ABLE Program**

Program Name: The Attainable Savings Plan  
 Program Manager: Fidelity Investments  
 Program Investment Institution: Fidelity Investments  
 Program Website: The Attainable Savings Plan  
 [www.fidelity.com/able/attainable/overview]  
 Total Annual Contribution Limit: \$15,000  
 Account Limit: \$400,000

Additional Information: HB 4047 became Chapter 226 of the Acts of 2014. HD 3753 was introduced to revise the pre-federal legislation and as of 1/21/16 is in the House Ways and Means committee.

ABLE Legislation:  
 Ch. 226, Acts of 2014; HD 3753  
 HD 3753 Legislative Summary

Account Disclosure Document: The Attainable Savings Plan Disclosure Statement

### **Program at a Glance**

- **What is the total annual contribution limit?** \$15,000
- **Does this program offer enrollment to out of state residents?** Yes.
- **Is there a state income tax deduction or credit for contributions made into accounts opened in this state by state residents? If so, how much?** No.
- **Who is the program administrator?** Fidelity Investments (MEFA is the state sponsor of the plan)
- **Is there an initial minimum contribution requirement to open an ABLE account? If so, how much?** No.
- **Is there an annual set fee to maintain the account? If so, how much?** No
- **Is there a required minimum contribution to your account? If so, what is the amount?** No.
- **Are there fees or restrictions to the number of disbursement you are allowed? If so, what are they?** No.
- **Can I roll over my ABLE account to another ABLE program? If so, what is the fee to do so?**  
 Yes. There are currently no fees associated with rolling over your ABLE account from one ABLE program to another ABLE program.
- **Is there a “debit card/purchasing card” available with the program? If so, what is the added cost?** Yes. Note that a debit card option is ONLY available to Attainable Plan customers who also open a Fidelity Cash Management Account. Attainable plan customers can open a Fidelity Cash Management Account and transfer money easily from their Attainable account to their Fidelity Cash Management Account. The Fidelity Cash Management Account provides a no annual fee debit card with ATM-fee reimbursement, free check writing, free Fidelity Billpay, the option to open as a joint account, and the option to receive text alerts on Debit Card usage.

- **Who is the investment manager?** Fidelity Investments
- **How many investment options are associated with the program?** 8 options
- **Do those investment options vary in risk?** Yes. The investment options includes a 100% money market option as well as a set of seven portfolios that range from more conservative to more aggressive with varying levels of stock exposure and risk.
- **Is there a fee associated with the investment choices? If so, how much?** Yes. Depending on the investment choices, the total fees range from 0.57% to 0.94%.
- **Are there other characteristics unique to your program?** The Attainable Savings Plan is the national ABLE savings program offered by MEFA as the state sponsor of the program and managed by Fidelity Investments. The Attainable Savings Plan includes strong customer service support from trained ABLE specialists (available 8am-9pm Eastern, Monday through Friday), a range of investment options to meet the needs of most investors, low annual fees, simple to use online money movement, and the option to leverage the Fidelity Cash Management Account for Attainable account withdrawals. The Fidelity Cash Management Account provides a no annual fee debit card with ATM-fee reimbursement, free check writing, free Fidelity Billpay, the option to open as a joint account, and the option to receive text alerts on debit card usage.

## Autism Care Today (ACT)

ACT Today! Grants

Phone: (818)-340-4010

<http://www.act-today.org/>

<http://www.act-today.org/apply-for-grant/apply-for-assistance/>

ACT Today! is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) that provides autism grants for assessments, treatments, and life supports that may not otherwise be covered privately by school districts, county programs, insurance, and/or other grant making entities. Their goal is to introduce and help facilitate early and on-going treatment by providing the necessary resources (including referrals, funding and guidance) to individuals with autism and their families throughout the United States. Applications for grants are open quarterly, as listed at the second link above.

**ACT Today! Grants** are designed to provide access to individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders. Grant payments will be made directly to pre-approved treatment providers, assessors or materials vendors. (To best maximize your chance of being funded, please be aware that we will not fund: transportation requests [cars, car repair, transportation passes, and air travel], Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, or Personal Needs [rent, utilities, family vacations].)

Grants will be allocated based on annual fundraising activities. The Board of Directors will determine the number and amounts of each grant at the beginning of each term. Requests for endowments or multi-year grants will not be accepted. Each application is kept in our system for two consecutive grant cycles after which the applicant must re-apply. Once we determine how much we can give each quarter, we review the following items when considering approval of a grant request:

- The application must be completed in its entirety to be reviewed. Partially completed applications will be kept on file for one year and additional information may be submitted to make the application complete within that timeframe.
- Amount of grant request – typical grants awarded range \$100 – \$5,000.
- Household income – below \$100,000 per year are reviewed first.
- Type of treatment requested – mission is to fund effective treatments, assessments and needed life supports.
- Number of family members with ASD diagnosis – applications from families with multiple children with ASDs are reviewed first.

Should your grant be funded, you will be asked to complete two short questionnaires regarding your experiences as a result of the funding you received. We also encourage families to share photos and stories. Once approved for a grant, families have 12 months to use the funds. Applicant receiving a grant agrees to repay the grant if any services paid for with the grant are reimbursed by another funding source, such as, a school district or insurance company.

**ACT Today! SOS Program** is a program dedicated to supporting the immediate and imperative needs of those impacted with autism throughout the United States. ACT Today! Grant Programs established in 2005 do provide access to vital and effective treatments for autism through our quarterly grant cycles. We recognize that some individuals diagnosed with autism who are in immediate personal danger or harm are unable to wait up to 12 weeks for a response to their request. The ACT Today! SOS Program is designed to provide immediate support for these families based upon need and the program funds available.

Applicant Criteria for the ACT Today! SOS Program:

- Applicant must have an immediate need for treatment/support and if treatment is not found, the applicant's physical safety is in jeopardy
- ACT Today! SOS Program will fund effective treatments and services to treat autism spectrum disorders and cannot fund living expenses, travel, utilities or clothing
- Income level of the applicant's family must be below \$45,000/year
- Applicant may not have received support from ACT Today! within the past 12 months of applying

Application: <http://www.act-today.org/apply-for-grant/apply-for-act-today-sos/>

**ACT Today! for Military Families** is a dedicated fund to assist active military families impacted by autism. Grants will be allocated based on annual fundraising activities. The Board of Directors will determine the number and amounts of each grant at the beginning of each term. Requests for endowments or multi-year grants will not be accepted. Each application is kept in our system for two consecutive grant cycles after which the applicant must re-apply.

Once we determine how much we can give each quarter, we review the following items when considering approval of a grant request:

- Completion of grant application – The application must be completed in its entirety to be reviewed. Partially completed applications will be kept on file for one year and additional information may be submitted to make the application complete within that timeframe.
- Amount of grant request – Typical grants awarded range \$100 – \$5,000.
- Household income – While we have not set an income level cap, incomes below \$100,000 per year are reviewed first.
- Type of treatment requested – Our mission is to fund effective treatments, assessments and needed life supports.
- Number of family members with ASD diagnosis – Applications from families with multiple children with ASDs are reviewed first.

Should your grant be funded, you will be asked to complete two short questionnaires regarding your experiences as a result of the funding you received. We also encourage families to share photos and stories. Once approved for a grant, families have 12 months to use the funds. Applicant receiving a grant agrees to repay the grant if any services paid for with the grant are reimbursed by another funding source, such as, a school district or insurance company.

*Application:* <http://www.act-today.org/apply-for-grant/>

## **Flutie Foundation**

<http://www.flutiefoundation.org/how-we-support-families-and-caregivers>

The Flutie Foundation helps families by:

- Funding organizations that provide opportunities to individuals and families living with autism to get access to services, lead active lifestyles and grow toward adult independence.
- Providing direct family support both financially and as a resource for local service providers.
- Advocating for greater acceptance and awareness of autism spectrum disorder.

Programs include Direct Family Support and Wandering Prevention technology grants.

## **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission – Home Modification Loan Program**

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/about-the-hmlp>

The state-funded Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) provides loans to make modifications to the primary, permanent residence of elders, adults with disabilities, and families with children with disabilities. Such modifications allow people to remain in their homes and live more independently in their communities.

There are six agencies throughout the state that administer the program for MRC. The program lends money to homeowners who wish to start new modification projects.

Based on the household size and income limits, from \$1,000 up to \$50,000 (inclusive of all costs) may be borrowed by property owners, which is secured by a promissory note and a mortgage lien. Owners of manufactured or mobile homes may borrow from \$1,000 up to \$30,000. An HMLP loan may be obtained only one time per property.

All borrowers are eligible for a 0% interest, deferred payment loan. The loan will not require monthly payment and payment is required when the property is sold or has its title transferred. A landlord may be eligible for 3% amortizing loans. The loan requires monthly payments with full repayment required in 5 to 15 years, depending on the amount of the loan.

### **Local HMLP Provider Agencies**

#### **Metropolitan Boston**

Metro Boston Housing (MBH)

Phone: (617) 425-6637

Fax: (617) 532-7539

Contact: Jennifer Shaw

Email: [jennifer.shaw@metrohousingboston.org](mailto:jennifer.shaw@metrohousingboston.org)

[www.metrohousingboston.org/](http://www.metrohousingboston.org/)

#### **Southeastern MA/Cape/Islands**

South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.

Phone: (508) 202-5919

Fax: (508) 749-7900

Contact: Amy Allen

Email: [aallen@smoc.org](mailto:aallen@smoc.org)

<https://www.smoc.org/>

### **Medicaid Waiver Program**

<http://www.medicaidwaiver.org/state/massachusetts.html>

The Children's Autism Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Program at the Department of Developmental Services Autism Division serves children, birth through age 8, with an autism spectrum disorder who meet the eligibility criteria: Only 157 children may participate in the Autism Waiver Program at any one time. The Autism Waiver allows children to receive Expanded Habilitation, Education, in-home services and supports, such as Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and Floor Time, for a total of 3 years. At the conclusion of the 3 years of the intensive in-home services, a child may access ongoing Supplemental Services (for example respite and goods and services, etc.) that meet the child's needs and help with the transition out of the intensive Autism Waiver Program—until the child's 9th Birthday. All waiver services require that the child (and the child's family) continues to meet the financial and clinical eligibility requirements for the Waiver Program, 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

**NOTE:** Expensive therapies like ABA can use up the majority of a family's Waiver funding very quickly. Families are encouraged to seek out ABA services through a MassHealth contracted ABA provider, rather than the Waiver program, so that the Waiver funds can be used more effectively for other needs (e.g., respite care).

## **Spectrum For Hope**

Spectrum For Hope, Inc.  
7 Essex Green Drive, Suite 62  
Peabody, MA 01960  
<https://spectrumforhope.org/>

Spectrum For Hope is dedicated to improving the quality of life for families with multiple children with special needs. SFH is committed to supporting these families by providing funding or financial assistance for various therapeutic, educational, medical or recreational opportunities. In addition, SFH will continue to fund research for Rett Syndrome and Autism, and has partnered with like organizations dedicated to the same mission.

## **SPED Child Mass.: Greater MA Special Needs Events**

Financial and Legal Events in Mass – Calendar  
<http://www.spedchildmass.com/special-needs-disability-financial-legal-massachusetts/>

Sign up for newsletters to stay in the loop with most current information about events and resources!



## INSURANCE RELATED

### **AIRC - Autism Insurance Resource Center**

E.K. Shriver Center  
University of Massachusetts Medical School  
55 Lake Avenue North, Suite S3-301  
Worcester, MA 01655  
Phone: (774) 455-4056  
Phone: (800) 642-0249 (will direct to both Index and AIRC)  
[www.massairc.org/](http://www.massairc.org/)

The website includes comprehensive resources related to medical insurance for autism treatment, encompassing the following information:

- FAQs about the ARICA, insurance denials and appeals, and information about self-funded (ERISA) plans.
- Fact sheets regarding insurance coverage for autism treatment. Some available in Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Information about upcoming trainings, events, and presentations by AIRC staff. Past webinars are also posted online.
- Individual technical assistance if help is needed find answers about coverage or treatment.
- Directory of ABA Providers in Massachusetts
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Resources
- Education
- Financial Resources
- Autism Treatment Providers
- Search for additional resources

*Further resources are included at:*

<http://www.autismresourcecentral.org/resources/autism/support-centers/>

<https://massairc.org/information-about-the-massachusetts-insurance-law/information-for-employers-and-individuals-covered-by-self-funded-erisa-plans/>

### **ARICA: Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism**

[massairc.org/information-about-the-massachusetts-insurance-law/arica-faq](http://massairc.org/information-about-the-massachusetts-insurance-law/arica-faq)

#### **What is ARICA and what does it do?**

ARICA (An Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism), is a law passed in 2010, requiring private health insurers in Massachusetts to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

#### **What types of policies does ARICA cover?**

The legislation affects only certain types of health care policies, so coverage under ARICA depends on the type of policy you have. Private insurers, employees and retirees

under the state plan, hospital service plans and HMOs are all required to comply with the mandate. Many employers have “self-funded” plans, which are regulated under a federal law and not subject to ARICA. However, a majority of “self-funded” plans in Massachusetts are covering autism treatments.

### **How can I find out if I have coverage for autism therapies?**

Contact your employer or insurer to ask if your policy is self-funded or not. Even if your plan is self-funded, your company may provide coverage under ARICA, and/or cover autism therapies.

### **What if my employer’s self-funded plan won’t cover the autism therapies I need?**

If your plan doesn’t provide coverage for therapies, there are options for obtaining insurance through MassHealth and/or the Health Connector to access coverage.

**Important:** If a child is transitioning out of Early Intervention and will need alternate coverage, it’s important to plan this well before the child turns 3, as some of the alternatives can be accessed only during specific enrollment periods.

If your employer doesn’t provide coverage for autism treatment, our Center can help you advocate with your employer and advise you on alternative ways to access coverage.

### **Is MassHealth subject to ARICA?**

ARICA applies only to state regulated private insurance, but MassHealth covers many of the same treatments:

- MassHealth covers Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy for children under age 21 with MassHealth Standard and MassHealth CommonHealth; and under age 19 with MassHealth Family Assistance. Prior authorization is required.
- MassHealth may cover co-pays and deductibles for ARICA mandated treatments covered by private insurance.
- The Premium Assistance Program can help subsidize purchase of private insurance policies and policies through the Connector that will cover ARICA.
- Families covered by MassHealth with children under age 9 can also apply for the Massachusetts Children’s Autism Medicaid Waiver through the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Note – this is a limited program with specific application windows, check with DDS for more information.
- Consumers can access other services for emotional and behavioral issues through the Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) program.

### **Are there age, service, or dollar limitations to the amount of the coverage under ARICA?**

No. There are no age limits. Per ARICA *“The diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders is not subject to any annual or lifetime dollar or unit of service limitation on coverage which is less than any annual or lifetime dollar or unit of service limitation imposed on coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of physical conditions.”*

### **What treatments are covered under ARICA?**

The law covers the following care prescribed, provided, or ordered for an individual diagnosed with one of the Autism Spectrum Disorders by a licensed physician or a licensed psychologist who determines the care to be medically necessary:

- **Habilitative or Rehabilitative Care** - this includes professional, counseling and guidance services and treatment programs, including but not limited to, applied behavior analysis supervised by a board certified behavior analyst, that are necessary to develop, maintain and restore, to the maximum extent practicable, the functioning of an individual.
- **Pharmacy care** - medications prescribed by a licensed physician and health-related services deemed medically necessary to determine the need or effectiveness of the medications, to the same extent that pharmacy care is provided by the insurance policy for other medical conditions.
- **Psychiatric care** - direct or consultative services provided by a psychiatrist licensed in the state in which the psychiatrist practices.
- **Psychological care** - direct or consultative services provided by a psychologist licensed in the state in which the psychologist practices.
- **Therapeutic care** - services provided by licensed or certified speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists or social workers.

### **Are Social Skills Groups covered?**

Yes, subject to medical necessity criteria.

### **How are education services affected?**

ARICA does not affect educational services provided under an IFSP, IEP or ISP. Insurers are not required to pay for in-school services. Conversely, schools may not require parents to access private insurance for services that a child is entitled to receive through school. For further information, contact an information specialist at (774) 455-4056 or e-mail [info@disabilityinfo.org](mailto:info@disabilityinfo.org).

## **MassHealth**

MassHealth pays for health care for certain low- and medium-income people living in Massachusetts, including a program for individuals who are HIV positive. MassHealth also manages the Insurance Partnership for small businesses, the Children's Medical Security Plan, Healthy Start, and the Special Kids/Special Care Pilot Program, cosponsored with the Department of Social Services.

### **Applying for MassHealth**

Phone: (800) 841-2900

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/masshealth/>

- Go to the MassHealth website, print and fill out a form called the "Massachusetts Application for Health and Dental Coverage and Help Paying Costs "(ACA-3), or,
- Call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY (800) 496-4648) to receive an ACA-3 by mail.
- If you have questions or need help filling out the ACA-3, call MassHealth Customer Service at (800) 841-2900 (TTY: 1-800-497-4648).

### **Health Care for All (HCFA)**

HCFA is a free Service and can assist with completing the application online and

assisting with follow-up and resolution of problems. Many families find it is more convenient to rely on the expertise of HCFA to manage this process for them.

Health Care for All (HCFA)  
One Federal Street  
Boston, MA 02110  
Phone: (617) 350-7279 or (800) 272-4232  
[www.hcfama.org](http://www.hcfama.org)

### CommonHealth Plan

<https://massairc.org/factsheets/masshealth-commonhealth-fact-sheet/>

#### **What is MassHealth CommonHealth and how can it help people with Autism?**

MassHealth CommonHealth is a MassHealth program available to individuals with disabilities who are not eligible for MassHealth Standard. Unlike MassHealth Standard, MassHealth CommonHealth participants are not subject to income or asset limitations. MassHealth CommonHealth is an option for people with disabilities who have income that exceeds 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL). It allows individuals with disabilities to purchase health coverage through a sliding- scale monthly premium that is based on total household income. There are no income or asset limits associated with MassHealth CommonHealth.

For people who have private insurance coverage through their employer MassHealth CommonHealth will provide any necessary Medicaid-covered services that the employer health plan does not include. In addition, people with MassHealth CommonHealth are eligible to apply for Premium Assistance, which will cover some, or all, of the cost of the premium/payroll deduction for the private insurance.

Currently, MassHealth CommonHealth is not subject to ARICA, the law requiring state-regulated private insurance policies to cover medically necessary treatments. However, people under 21 with MassHealth CommonHealth may be eligible for a range of home-based services through the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). For more info: [www.masspartnership.com](http://www.masspartnership.com) or [www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth).

The out-of-pocket expenses for MassHealth CommonHealth are monthly premiums and prescription co-pays. Monthly premiums vary based on monthly income, family size, whether the recipient has other insurance and premium assistance benefits. The premium gradually increases with income, which includes wages, SSI/SSDI, and other cash benefits. The cost/benefit decision of obtaining MassHealth CommonHealth for people with autism is an individual decision, and should be based on many factors including the MassHealth CommonHealth Premium, the amount of Premium Assistance that will be covered, and the anticipated utilization of MassHealth CommonHealth. The MassHealth Customer Service Center can provide more detailed information on the exact premiums applicants have to pay. Contact the center at 800-841-2900.

#### **What services are available under MassHealth CommonHealth?**

- Inpatient and outpatient hospital services
- Medical services including lab work, X-rays, therapies, and some dental services
- Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)

- Medical equipment, hearing aids, and prescription drug coverage
- Personal care assistant services
- Mental health and substance abuse services
- Medical-related transportation services

### **How does one apply for MassHealth CommonHealth?**

The application for MassHealth CommonHealth is the same application as the general application for MassHealth. Detailed instructions are below. If your income is above a certain amount, you will receive a letter stating your child is denied because your income is too high. Don't worry. All this means is that your child does not qualify for MassHealth Standard. If you have completed all the forms in the instructions below, including the Supplement A noting your child's disability, your application will be forwarded for a disability review, to determine eligibility for MassHealth CommonHealth. There are two ways to apply for MassHealth and MassHealth CommonHealth. One can follow the detailed steps below, or utilize the services of "Health Care for All" to complete the process.

### Customer Service

Call the MassHealth Customer Service Center for information about eligibility, enrollment into a health plan, and benefits, including dental benefits.

MassHealth Customer Service Center

*Main Office:*

55 Summer Street

Boston, MA 02110

Phone: (800) 841-2900

TTY: (800) 497-4648

### MassHealth - Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs)

Information from <https://www.hcfama.org/blog/what-you-need-know-about-masshealth-accountable-care-organization-changes>

### **What are MassHealth Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs)?**

ACOs are provider-led organizations that coordinate care and are accountable for the quality and total cost of care of its members. Primary Care Providers (PCPs) work together with members and their team of network providers to coordinate care and connect members with available services and supports. MassHealth ACOs are a new kind of managed care option.

### **Who is eligible to enroll in an ACO?**

People who are required to enroll in some kind of MassHealth managed care plan are eligible to enroll in an ACO. This only affects people who have MassHealth as their only health insurance coverage.

### **Who is not eligible to enroll in an ACO?**

- People who are enrolled in MassHealth and other health insurance coverage (for example Medicare or employer-sponsored health insurance).

- People who are eligible for or enrolled in One Care, Senior Care Options (SCO), or PACE.
- Seniors who are eligible for MassHealth based on their age.
- People who are only eligible for or enrolled in MassHealth Limited.

### **Will an ACO be my only option for coverage through MassHealth?**

In most areas of Massachusetts, MassHealth members required to enroll in managed care will have the following health plan options:

- One or more ACO
- Two Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) – Tufts Health Together and BMC HealthNet
- Primary Care Clinician (PCC) Plan with the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership

### **Can I keep all my current doctors?**

MassHealth assigned members to plans that their primary care provider (PCP) participates in. You should check your doctors and/or your health plan to make sure your other providers, including specialists, are included in the new plan's network. If they are not, you can work with you provider and plan to see if they can join the network, or you may consider switching plans.

### **What happens to prior authorizations or upcoming medical care?**

Even if your current providers are not in your new plan or your new plan has not authorized your services, you will be able to keep scheduled appointments with your current providers and use previously authorized services through at least May 31st. You should work with you plan and providers to figure out your options after March 31st.

### **Where can I get more information about my enrollment options?**

Call MassHealth at 1-800-841-2900.

Visit the new MassHealth website at [www.masshealthchoices.com](http://www.masshealthchoices.com).

Go to <https://my.mahealthconnector.org/enrollment-assisters> to find an enrollment assister in your community.

## **MassHealth - Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)**

### **BMC HealthNet Member Services**

Phone: (855) 833-8120

[MemberQuestions@bmchp.org](mailto:MemberQuestions@bmchp.org)

Qualify for MassHealth and you can:

- See a doctor who will help coordinate all of your healthcare
- See specialists (doctors with extra training in an area of medicine, such as cardiology, dermatology, or pediatrics)
- Have 24/7 access to speak with a nurse about your health questions
- Go to the hospital for treatment
- Fill a prescription at your local pharmacy
- Get access to behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder) services
- Get a routine eye exam

- Get extra help for special conditions like asthma and diabetes

BMC HealthNet Plan MassHealth members get extra benefits:

- FREE child car seats and booster seats
- FREE bike helmets for kids
- FREE dental kits, including a tooth brush, toothpaste and floss for adult and child members age 4 and up
- Up to \$100 back for participating in Weight Watchers® and \$200 back for membership at a qualifying health club

BMC HealthNet Plan CarePlus members get:

- FREE dental kits, including a tooth brush, toothpaste and floss
- Up to \$200 back to help pay for qualifying gym memberships
- Up to \$100 back to help pay for Weight Watchers®, each year

### **Tufts Health Together Customer Service**

Phone: (888) 257-1985

<https://tuftshealthplan.com/explore-our-plans/tufts-health-together/tufts-health-together-2018>

With Tufts Health Together, a MassHealth plan, you get all the benefits of MassHealth, including:

- Visits to doctors and specialists
- Prescription drugs for kids (\$1 to \$3.65 co-payment for ages 21 and over)
- Over-the-counter drugs for kids with a doctor's prescription (\$1 to \$3.65 co-payment for ages 21 and over)
- Eye exams and eyeglasses

### **Other MassHealth Behavioral Support**

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)

MBHP Member Engagement Center

Phone: (800) 495-0086

The Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) manages behavioral health care for more than 500,000 MassHealth Members statewide. Working with its network of providers, MBHP offers high quality, accessible, culturally sensitive health care to Members of the MassHealth Primary Care Clinician (PCC) Plan, Community Care Cooperative (C3), Partners HealthCare Choice, Steward Health Choice, and the BeHealthy Partnership.

The MBHP Member Engagement Center is the place to learn about various MassHealth services available to you, depending on the type of plan you have. When you call, the team will:

- Help you understand the services available to you as a Member of MBHP
- Work with you to complete a Health Needs Assessment
- Connect you to other services with your health needs in mind; and
- Help you join support groups, if you're interested

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

### **The Disability Law Center (DLC)**

*Boston (Main) Office:*

11 Beacon Street, Suite 925

Boston, Massachusetts, 02108

Phone: (617) 723-8455 or (800) 872-9992

Fax: (617) 723-9125

<https://www.dlc-ma.org>

The Disability Law Center (DLC) is the Protection and Advocacy agency for Massachusetts. DLC is a private, non-profit organization responsible for providing protection and advocacy for the rights of Massachusetts residents with disabilities. DLC receives federal, state and private funding but is not part of the state or federal government. DLC has experienced staff who provide services in the following issue areas. Please see our priorities for each of the issue areas listed below.

- Access to Community Services
- Special Education
- Health Care
- Disability Benefits
- Rights and Conditions in Facilities

### **Committee for Public Counsel Services: Children and Family Law Division**

#### **Cape and Islands**

973 Iyannough Road, 1st Floor

Hyannis, MA 02601

Phone: (508) 815-5710

Fax: (508) 775-1781

<https://www.publiccounsel.net/dir/capeandislands-cafl/>

#### **Brockton**

221 Main Street

Brockton, MA 02301

Phone: (508) 580-5635

Fax: (508) 580-5638

<https://www.publiccounsel.net/dir/brockton-cafl/>

#### **Boston**

44 Bromfield Street

Boston, MA 02108

Phone: (617) 482-6212

Fax: (617) 988-8455

<https://www.publiccounsel.net/train/offices/>



## **Ed Law Project**

Phone: (617) 910-5829

Email: [edlawproject@publiccounsel.net](mailto:edlawproject@publiccounsel.net)

<http://www.edlawproject.org/>

Since January 2000, EdLaw Project attorneys have directly advocated for the educational rights of over 1,800 low-income youth in Massachusetts. The project's interventions help kids, improve public safety, and save taxpayers millions of dollars. The Edlaw Project is an initiative between the Youth Advocacy Foundation and the Committee for Public Counsel Services, Children & Family Law and Youth Advocacy Divisions. The team offers direct advocacy for students in many difficult situations (as advocacy in these areas is not government funded) including: school exclusion, having trouble reintegrating after detention or incarceration, receiving inadequate education while in state custody, or struggling with undetected and underserved special needs. Ed Law Project also may provide workshops in special education law.

## **Legal Resource Finder**

<https://www.masslegalservices.org/findlegalaid>

The Legal Resource Finder search results will give you contact information for legal aid programs, nonprofits, government agencies and court programs that may be able to help you with your legal issue for free or at a low cost. It will also give you links to legal information and self-help materials.

## **South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc.**

South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. (SCCLS) is a nonprofit corporation that provides free civil legal services to low income families, elders, victims of crime, and people with disabilities in our communities. Our service area is Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, and Plymouth Counties and the Towns of Avon and Stoughton in Norfolk County. With your support, SCCLS works toward our mission to achieve equal justice for the poor and disadvantaged through community based legal advocacy.

SCCLS provides free civil legal services in the areas of housing law, family law, government benefits including Social Security disability, elder law, education law, and consumer law. SCCLS has staff who speak Portuguese, Spanish, Cape Verdean Creole, French, and Arabic. SCCLS provides other interpretation services when needed to assist clients that speak other languages.

### **Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts LLC**

231 Main St., Suite 201

Brockton, MA 02301

Phone: (508) 586-2110 or (800) 244-8393

<http://www.sccls.org/default.asp>

**Legal Aid Fall River Law Office**

22 Bedford St., 1st Floor  
Fall River, MA 02720  
Phone: (508) 676-6265 or (800) 287-3777

**Legal Aid Hyannis Office**

460 West Main St.  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
Phone: (508) 775-7020 or (800) 742-4107

**SPED Child Mass.: Greater MA Special Needs Events—Financial & Legal**

<http://www.spedchildmass.com/special-needs-disability-financial-legal-massachusetts/>

This website includes monthly events related to financial and legal resources for families with children with ASD.

**Wrightslaw**

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Wrightslaw provides information and training about special education law, education law and advocacy for children with disabilities. They have a free weekly newsletter called The Special Ed Advocate that one can sign up to receive. Their website contains training, a law library, a store, and a compilation of resources in their yellow pages for kids (link on website).

## MENTAL HEALTH (A.K.A. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES)

### **Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) – A System of MassHealth Services**

CBHI was created to implement the remedy in a class action law suit filed on behalf of MassHealth-enrolled children under the age of 21 with serious emotional disturbance (SED). Through CBHI, MassHealth requires primary care providers to offer standardized behavioral health screenings at well child visits, mental health clinicians to use a standardized behavioral health assessment tool, and provides new or enhanced home and community-based behavioral health services. CBHI also includes a larger interagency effort to develop an integrated system of state-funded behavioral health services for children, youth and their families. Six services were developed to meet the mission of CBHI.

*Only MassHealth Standard and MassHealth CommonHealth cover CBHI services. Private insurances sometimes will pay for “family stabilization” by negotiating with a provider to prevent psychiatric re-hospitalization of a child or youth. Ideally, the psychiatric hospital would request the service from the insurance or managed care organization, then refer to a provider who would need to secure authorization from the insurance/managed care organization.*

#### **Intensive Care Coordination (ICC)**

ICC is a care coordination service for children and youths with serious emotional disturbances. In Wraparound Care Planning, families and youth work together with professionals, talk about their strengths and needs, and actively guide their own care. A care coordinator works with the youth, family/caregiver, and others involved in a youth's life to create an Individualized Care Plan to meet the youth's needs and help meet the goals identified by the family/caregiver. The service is designed for youth who need or receive services from multiple providers, schools, or state agencies.

#### **In-Home Therapy (IHT)**

In-Home Therapy provides intensive family therapy for a child in the home and in community settings. This service helps the family support the child's well-being. In-Home Therapy providers work with the family to understand family functioning and how relationships can be strengthened to benefit the child. In this service, a clinician and a trained paraprofessional work with the family to develop and implement a treatment plan, identify community resources, set limits, establish helpful routines, resolve difficult situations, or change problematic patterns that interfere with the child's development. In-Home Therapy is a flexible service that allows providers to deliver services to the child or youth in the home, school, or other community settings.

#### **Family Support and Training (FS&T, or “Family Partner”)**

Family Partners help parents and caregivers to help their children reach their treatment goals. They are parents or caregivers of children with special needs themselves—they've “been there,” understand what families go through, and can share their experiences. Family Partners are not behavioral health professionals, but work closely with parents to make sure that children and youth receive services that are

needed. Family Partners work with a "clinical hub," of either an outpatient clinician, ICC, or IHT.

### **In-Home Behavioral Services (IHBS)**

In-Home Behavioral Services offer support to a child or youth who has a challenging behavior that interferes with everyday life. Services are provided by a behavioral health provider, such as a therapist, who is skilled in understanding and treating difficult behaviors in children and youth. The provider works closely with the child and family to create a specific behavior plan to improve the child's functioning. The provider may also work as a team with a skilled paraprofessional called a "behavior management monitor." The monitor works with the child and family to implement the child's behavior plan. IHBS teams work with a "clinical hub" of either an outpatient clinician, ICC, or IHT.

### **Therapeutic Mentoring (TM)**

A therapeutic mentor works one-on-one with a youth to support and coach him or her to learn social skills, including better ways to communicate with other youth and adults, how to deal with different opinions, and how to get along with others. *The therapeutic mentor works with the child to achieve goals in the plan written by an outpatient therapist, In-Home Therapy provider, or an Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) team.* Therapeutic Mentoring Services can be delivered in the home, school, or community, including social and recreational settings. Must have an ICC, or IHT or outpatient services to be eligible. This is not a "stand alone" service.

### **Mobile Crisis Intervention**

State wide emergency service provider phone: 877-382-1609

Mobile Crisis Intervention (MCI) is provided by regionally based emergency services providers. MCI is a short-term service that is a mobile, face-to-face, therapeutic response to a youth experiencing a behavioral health crisis to reduce the risk of danger to the youth or others. The service is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You may call the statewide ESP number, you will be prompted to enter your zip code, then be directed to the MCI closest to your residence/location.

## **Find a Provider of Behavioral Health services covered by MassHealth**

### **Massachusetts Behavioral Health Access (MABHA)**

Go to: <https://mabhaccess.com>

Steps:

1. Disregard username and password – you do not need either
2. Select Youth and Family tab (to right of Home tab)
3. Select Find Openings
4. Select Service (drops down)
5. Enter Age of child
6. Enter Location by zip or town
7. Enter Miles from home of the child
8. Select SEARCH

A list of providers fitting criteria will pop up, including referral phone number and current openings, and comments such as language capacity and other insurances accepted for other behavioral health services.

If you click on a specific provider, a box opens up specific to that provider with additional information.

**NOTE: Many CBHI providers also provide outpatient services for children and adults. Many providers also accept private insurance.**

It is not uncommon to find that providers have wait lists, thus you may want to refer your child to more than one provider. Parents can make their own referrals, with the exception of Therapeutic Mentoring as it is not a stand-alone service. At times, In Home Behavioral Services can be a stand-alone service, though usually a referral from a pediatrician or other provider is necessary.

**For more information about Children's Behavioral Health Initiative services, visit:**

<https://www.mass.gov/mashealth-childrens-behavioral-health-initiative> or  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/cbhi-for-families>.

You may also call the MBHP Member Engagement Center at **1-800-495-0086** Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., and on Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For questions about coverage and eligibility, call the MassHealth Customer Service Center at **1-800-841-2900**.

**Find information about a specific provider:**

<https://masspartnership.com/member/FindBHProvider.aspx>

**NOTE: If you have private insurance,** you may contact your insurance company for a list of providers they contract with for behavioral health services. Many providers of CBHI services listed below also outpatient services for children and adults and accept private insurance.

## **National Alliance on Mental Illness**

NAMI Massachusetts  
The Schrafft Center  
529 Main St, Suite 1M17  
Phone: (617) 580-8541  
Phone: (800) 950-NAMI (National)  
Email: [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org)  
Fax: (617) 580-8673

NAMI assists persons struggling with mental health issues. The website provides information and resources, such as: family support groups, family members and caregivers of persons with mental illness, LGBT, veterans, law enforcement. Information about mental health conditions and finding providers is included in the website.

## **The Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)**

15 Court Sq, Suite 600  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: (866) 815-8122  
Fax: (617) 542-7832  
Email: info@ppal.net

The Parent/Professional Advocacy League is a statewide, grassroots family organization that advocates for improved access to mental health services for children, youth and their families. PPAL's goals are to support families, nurture parent leaders and work for systems change. PPAL is the only Massachusetts organization whose work focuses solely on the interests of families whose children have mental health needs. Founded in 1991, PPAL continues to work on behalf of children, youth and families as a critical voice shaping policy and practice.

## OTHER STATE AGENCY RESOURCES AND ASSISTANCE

### **Child at Risk Hotline**

Phone: (800) 792-5200

Anonymous hotline for reporting suspected abuse or neglect of children up to age 18.

### **Department of Children & Families (DCF)**

*Central Office:*

600 Washington Street

Boston, MA 02111

Phone: (617) 748-2000

The Department of Children and Families is charged with protecting children from abuse and neglect and strengthening families. The Department's mission is to ensure that children are able to grow and thrive in a nurturing home environment.

### **Department of Mental Health (DMH)**

*Central Office:*

25 Staniford Street

Boston, MA 02114

Phone: (617) 626-8000

TTY (for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled): 617-727-9842

The Department of Mental Health, as the State Mental Health Authority, assures and provides access to services and supports to meet the mental health needs of individuals of all ages, enabling them to live, work and participate in their communities. The Department establishes standards to ensure effective and culturally competent care to promote recovery. The Department sets policy, promotes self-determination, protects human rights and supports mental health training and research. This critical mission is accomplished by working in partnership with other state agencies, individuals, families, providers and communities.

### **Department of Public Health (DPH)**

*Main Office:*

250 Washington Street

Boston, MA 02108-4619

Phone: (617) 210-5000

The mission of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is to prevent illness, injury, and premature death, to assure access to high quality public health and health care services, and to promote wellness and health equity for all people in the Commonwealth.

## **Massachusetts Office on Disability**

### *Main Office:*

1 Ashburton Place, Room 1305

Boston, MA 02108

Phone: (617) 727-7440 or (800) 322-2020

Fax: (617) 727-0965

Contact: Naomi Goldberg, Assistant Director

Email: Naomi.Goldberg@massmail.state.ma.us

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-office-on-disability>

The MOD provides information and advocacy. Offer a hotline Information and Referral service. Individual advocacy is provided for disability based denial of service & discrimination issues. The purpose of the office is to bring about full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. All services confidential. Client Assistance Program advocates on behalf of clients and consumers of the federally funded vocational rehabilitation programs and independent living centers. MOD is the ADA coordinating agency for the executive branch of government. Provides technical assistance on architectural access issues.

### *Service Types:*

- Disability Awareness
- Discrimination
- Emergency Preparedness

### *Program Types:*

- Advocacy
- Assistive Technology and Equipment
- Communication
- Counseling
- Education
- Information/Referral
- Jobs
- Legal

*Populations Served:* All Disabilities

*Ages Served:* Birth – 60 +

*Fees:* Free Service

### *Accessibility Features:*

- Accessible Restrooms
- Braille/audio
- Elevators
- Near Public Transportation
- Wheelchair Ramps

## **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

600 Washington St

Boston, MA 02111

Phone: (617) 204-3600

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-rehabilitation-commission>



The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) helps individuals with disabilities to live and work independently. MRC is responsible for Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Living and eligibility determination for the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefits programs.

Services provided include:

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Transition Services for Students and Youth, age 14 and older
- Community Based Services
- Home Modification Loan Program
- Home Care Assistance Program
- Independent Living Centers
- Employer and Business Services
- Assistive Technology Services

## PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANCE & RESPITE

### **Autism Support Centers**

Autism Support Centers are regional agencies funded by DDS (Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services) for people who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. Services include help with the eligibility process for DDS, information and referral resources, support groups, and training and programs. There are seven Autism Support Centers, divided by regions:

- Western Massachusetts: <http://pathlightgroup.org/programs-and-services/autism-connections/>
- Central Massachusetts: <http://www.autismresourcecentral.org/>
- NorthEast ARC: <https://ne-arc.org/>
- MetroWest: <https://www.autismalliance.org/>
- Boston: <http://www.fillinc.org/index.html>
- Norfolk County: <http://www.arcsouthnorfolk.org/>
- South: <http://www.community-autism-resources.com/>

*Cross reference: See section on Department of Development Disabilities, Autism Support Centers for specific locations and phone numbers.*

### **Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Program**

Contact: Amy Korstvedt Nazaire, Director of Family Support & Children's Services, DDS-NE Region

Phone: (978) 774-5000 ext. 386

Email: [amy.nazaire@state.ma.us](mailto:amy.nazaire@state.ma.us)

### **Mass Options**

Phone: (844) 422-MASS (6277)

<http://www.massrespitecoalition.org/mass-options/>

MassOptions is a free resource through the Massachusetts Respite Coalition that links you to state agencies in your area to locate services that help you or a loved one live independently. MassOptions is a referral network which bills services through your insurance. The "find resources" search engine can be used to explore respite resources based on keywords, events, or organizations.

MassOptions can help if you are:

- An elder looking for help, such as in-home care,
- An individual with a disability seeking help to live independently, or
- A family member or caregiver trying to locate services.

### **Mass Options – Independence Associates**

100 Laurel Street, Suite 122

East Bridgewater MA 02333

Phone: (800) 649-5568

PCA Department FAX: (508) 583-2165

<https://www.iacil.org>

Since 1980, IA has worked with people with disabilities providing the resources which

enable them to live as independently as they wish in the setting that they choose. The center serves 31 communities south east of Boston, and promotes independent living for those under age 21. The center works with consumers both individually and in groups to provide the five core services of independent living: Information and Referral, Advocacy, Independent Living Skills Training, Peer Counseling and Transition.

### **Mass Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Directory**

Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council

600 Washington Street, 7th Floor

Boston, MA 02111

Phone: (888) 627-7722 (MASSPCA)

Email: [info@masspcadirectory.org](mailto:info@masspcadirectory.org)

[www.mass.gov/orgs/personal-care-attendant-workforce-council](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/personal-care-attendant-workforce-council)

[www.mass.gov/pca](http://www.mass.gov/pca)

The online Massachusetts PCA Directory can be used to hire a PCA through the following process:

- Apply for PCA services through MassHealth.
- Once approved, set up an account on the website: [www.masspcadirectory.org](http://www.masspcadirectory.org)
- Post a job listing for a PCA and the type of work you are seeking: registered PCA's are listed on this site.
- As the employer, you would need to complete the CORI (Criminal Offender Record Inquiry) if you would like a criminal background check for the PCA. The CORI can be done online at [www.mass.gov/criminal-record-check-services](http://www.mass.gov/criminal-record-check-services)

The directory offers meet and greet events between PCA candidates and consumers seeking PCA's. The website provides access to relevant updates through the PCA "The Bridge" Newsletter. Register to post a PCA job as a consumer, or to become a PCA.

### **Massachusetts State Respite Coalition**

Lifespan Respite Grant Project Coordinator

464 Common St, Suite 226

Belmont, MA 02478

Phone: (617) 863-6244

Email: [info@massrespit.org](mailto:info@massrespit.org)

<http://www.massrespitcoalition.org/>

### **Medicaid Waiver Program**

See "Medicaid Waiver Program" under Financial Resources section.

### **The ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center**

Phone: (703) 256-2084

Fax: (703) 256-0541

Contact: Jill Kagan, MPH, Program Director

Email: [jkagan@archrespit.org](mailto:jkagan@archrespit.org)

<https://archrespit.org/>

The ARCH Respite's database offers a "Search for Respite" feature to find the programs in your state and city that provide the services you are requesting. For more information about the services offered by each agency, call the agency. For those living in

Massachusetts, this database (and other informational resources about respite) can be found at <https://archrespite.org/respitelocator>.

Funded by the Administration for Community Living, US Department of Health and Human Services, State Lifespan Respite Programs or Projects are run by a designated state government lead agency, which works in collaboration with a state respite coalition and an Aging and Disability Resource Center Program/No Wrong Door System. Their purpose is to implement statewide systems of coordinated, community-based respite for family caregivers caring for individuals with special needs of all ages. Since 2009, thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia have received Lifespan Respite grants from ACL. Those states that currently have federal grants or have sustained Lifespan Respite grant activities initiated with earlier grants or are supported by state funding are identified below with state agency contact information.

**The Autism Resource Center of The Arc of the South Shore—Respite Care**

574 Main St

South Weymouth, MA 02190

Contact: Dianne Wilcox

Phone: (781) 335-3023 ext. 2229

<https://arcsouthshore.org/autism-resource-center/weekend-respite-programming.html>

The Autism Resource Center provides supports and services to families of children and adults with autism on the South Shore and offers a monthly support group for parents and caregivers. Saturday respite services are available twice monthly for children age 8-12. The staff-to-child ratio is 1:1 to 1:2. The goal of the respite program is to help fine & gross motor development, enhance communication, and build play & social skills. The program serves the following areas: Braintree, Cohasset, Hingham, Hull, Norwell, Quincy, Randolph, Scituate, and Weymouth. This is not a DDS funded program at this time, but DDS funds may be used to support costs of programming.

## RECREATION AND SPORTS

### **Accessible Cape Cod – Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce**

The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce provides a list of accessible beaches, trails, playgrounds, attractions, and accommodations for visitors.  
<https://www.capecodchamber.org/accessible-cape-cod>

### **ACEing Autism Tennis Program - Scituate High School (Scituate)**

606 Chief Justice Cushing Hwy  
Scituate, MA 02066  
Phone: (508) 292-6395  
<http://aceingautism.org/locations/scituate-ma>

Inclusive tennis program for children and young adults with autism spectrum disorders. Program is made up of six 45 minute sessions. Participants work on the fundamentals of tennis, as well as social skills. Racquets and equipment are provided. Parents should plan to remain onsite during the program. As of 12/29/17, program cost is \$120. Scholarships may be available.

### **American Camp Association, New England**

80 Westview Street  
Lexington, MA 02421  
Phone: (781) 541-6080  
Fax: (781) 541-6084  
Email: [camp@acanewengland.org](mailto:camp@acanewengland.org)

Visit <https://www.acacamps.org/> to search for camps nationwide.  
Visit <http://www.acanewengland.org/> to search for camps in New England.

This online directory allows you to search for camps depending on type, location, disability, gender, activity type, etc.

### **Boy Scouts of America - Spirit of Adventure Council**

600 West Cummings Park, Suite 2750  
Woburn, MA 01801  
Phone: (617) 615-0004  
[SpiritOfAdventureCouncil@scouting.org](mailto:SpiritOfAdventureCouncil@scouting.org)

<http://www.scoutspirit.org>  
<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf>

Inclusive recreational opportunities through local scout packs in the greater Boston area. Open to children with cognitive, behavioral and physical disabilities.

### **Cape Cod Challenger Club**

418 Bumps River Rd., Osterville, MA 02655  
508-420-6950  
[info@capecodchallenger.org](mailto:info@capecodchallenger.org)

The mission of the Cape Cod Challenger Club is to enrich the quality of life for children and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities by providing them with the opportunity to participate in a variety of athletic, recreational and social activities that are most often not available to them under typical circumstances.

The program provides year-round athletic, recreational and social activities for children and young adults with disabilities.

### **CORSE Foundation (Scituate)**

P.O. Box 512

North Scituate, MA 02060

Phone: (781) 545-7736

Email: [corsefoundation@comcast.net](mailto:corsefoundation@comcast.net)

<http://www.corsefoundation.org>

The CORSE Foundation (*Community of Resources for Special Education*) is a 501 (c)(3) which was established by a group of dedicated parents and educators to raise funds to provide the highest quality educational, social and recreational community experiences so children with special needs can reach their full potential. CORSE designs programming for children with special needs within a blended framework of integrated or specialized social, educational and recreational activities. Their programs are staffed appropriately through customized staffing ratios and special education expertise so ALL children, those with and without special needs, can successfully participate together within their community. These programs include social & academic programs, sports/recreation, Best Buddies/peer mentor support, music therapy & yoga, sibling workshops, parent and educator workshops, and community events.

### **Girl Scouts of America**

Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts

Boston, Massachusetts 02116-4018

Phone: (617) 482-1078

Email: [customercare@gsema.org](mailto:customercare@gsema.org)

<http://www.gsema.org>

National: <https://www.girlscouts.org/>

### **South Shore YMCA – Special Needs Inclusion**

The South Shore YMCA is a supportive community that helps you become a better version of yourself – spirit, mind and body.

The YMCA is a not-for-profit association dedicated to improving the quality of life for all through programs that support youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Rooted in Christian tradition and values, the YMCA seeks to serve all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, religion, or economic circumstances – so that we all truly belong.

The Y offers support and funds programming for individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities to engage in enrichment and wellness activities while fostering individual growth. These programs include social skills and development; participation in unified sports teams, swim instruction, summer camp and arts educational programs.

Quincy Branch

79 Coddington Street  
Quincy, MA 02169  
Phone: (617) 479-8500

Hanover YMCA

75 Mill St  
Hanover, MA 02339  
Phone: 781 829-8585 ext. 8349  
Phone: 781 264-9400 ext. 3119

**SPED Child and Teen**

<http://www.spedchildmass.com/>

Camps: <http://www.spedchildmass.com/camps-special-needs-massachusetts-autism-aspergers/>

Events: <http://www.spedchildmass.com/special-needs-disability-events-calendar-massachusetts-autism-aspergers/>

Recreation: <http://www.spedchildmass.com/special-needs-recreation-disability-autism-aspergers-massachusetts/>

Events (Down Syndrome & Intellectual): <http://www.spedchildmass.com/downs-intellectual-disability-events-massachusetts/>

SPED Child and Teen's calendar of events includes directories of many recreational activities, events and camps for children and teens with ADHD/learning disabilities, Autism/Aspergers, and Down Syndrome/intellectual disabilities. The website also includes information on transition programs, assistive technologies, financial and legal assistance, and more.

***Cross-References in this Resource Directory:***

To explore more inclusive activities within the resources of this book, please refer to The Autism Resource Center ([www.massairc.org](http://www.massairc.org)) under Insurance section for event newsletters including seasonal sport and camp programs, specific to town or region. See table of contents for more information.

*For sports related to animals, such as with horses, please refer to the Animal Activities section.*

*Also see the SENSORY-FRIENDLY RECREATION: ARTS, THEATERS, AND PLAYGROUNDS section.*

## SAFETY-RELATED AND LOCATION DEVICES

### **AngelSense**

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

AngelSense provides a GPS and voice monitoring solution to keep children with special needs safe and well cared-for. The solution includes a wearable GPS device - designed to address sensory issues and a friendly app based on smart analytics. Parents use this product to get alerts for location changes and locate lost child with live updates.

### **Autism Speaks—Safety Resources**

Autism Safety Project:

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/autism-safety-project>

Information about wandering behaviors (how to prevent, etc.):

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/wandering-resources>

Safety products for wandering behaviors:

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/resource-library/safety-products>

### **AWAARE - Autism Wandering Resources**

<http://awaare.nationalautismassociation.org>

Three digital safety toolkits can be downloaded here in order to be provided to law enforcement in the event of wandering behaviors.

### **Care Trak**

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

The Original Law Enforcement Rescue Program that electronically tracks people with Alzheimer's who wander and special needs kids. Sheriffs, Police, Fire Departments, SAR Teams, etc. use Care Trak to quickly locate at risk individuals.

### **EZ100 Personal Emergency Notifier and GPS Tracker**

[www-eye-zon.com](http://www-eye-zon.com)

The EZ-100 from EYEZ gives families of wandering special needs children added peace of mind and the confidence to engage in activities and adventures with the whole family.

### **Freedom Watch**

[lok8u.com](http://lok8u.com)

The Freedom Watch from LOK8U is an innovative monitoring device that incorporates both radio frequency and GPS monitoring. The locating device is a wrist or ankle watch that includes a powerful rechargeable battery and a receiver base that communicates regularly with the watch. The monitoring system that works both at home and at the child's school, to create a unified prevention plan.



**GPS Tracking**

<https://projectlifesaver.org/>

**LoJack SafetyNet**

[www.lojack.com/safetynet](http://www.lojack.com/safetynet)

Personal locator bracelets for individuals with autism with a tendency to wander. After contacting authorities when your loved one goes missing, law enforcement and public safety officials use LoJack Search and Rescue Receivers to track the radio signal being emitted from the Personal Locator Bracelet on your loved one's wrist or ankle.

**Loved One Locator from Mobile Health Technologies LLC**

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

Mobile Health Technologies provides the ultimate solution for Mobile Personal Safety - Anytime, Anywhere. ASD children at risk for bolting should not be without our products! Our service combines on-demand GPS location, automatic alerts when a user leaves a pre-defined "safe zone", and Automatic Fall Detection. Our devices also feature 2-way voice, and 24/7 monitoring by EMTs.

**Medical ID Wear**

<https://www.roadid.com/> and <http://www.identifyyourself.com/> provide information about purchasing medical identification wear for children.

**National Child Identification Program**

<http://www.childidprogram.com/>

The National Child Identification Program's ID Kit allows parents to collect specific information by easily recording the physical characteristics and fingerprints of their children on identification cards that are then kept at home by the parent or guardian. If ever needed, this ID Kit will give authorities vital information to assist their efforts to locate a missing child.

**Project Lifesaver International**

[www.projectlifesaver.org](http://www.projectlifesaver.org)

Project Lifesaver International helps provide rapid response to save lives and reduce potential for serious injury for adults and children who wander due to Alzheimer's, autism, Down syndrome, dementia and other related cognitive conditions. Project Lifesaver provides equipment, training, certification and support to law enforcement, public safety organizations and community groups throughout the country and nation.

**SafetyLINK**

[www.safetylink.org](http://www.safetylink.org)

A SafetyLINK anchor device is a simple device which self-connects when turned ON at home. SafetyLINK wearable devices are available as wristband, key fob, clip-on also self-connect to the anchor device. When a kid leaves home without permission the device sounds an alarm and send notifications to parents. When kids reach school their device automatically connects with the anchor device in school. Parents and staff are

notified when the link is broken at an incorrect time. Any person with a mobile smart phone with our software becomes a receiver and automatically looks for a child.

### **SafetyNet Program**

<http://safetynetbylojack.com>

Ralph Poland, Law Enforcement Liaison

Mobile: (508) 530-1595

Email: [rpoland@safetynetbylojack.com](mailto:rpoland@safetynetbylojack.com)

SafetyNet is a division of LoJack that utilizes proven Radio Frequency technology and works directly with law enforcement and other public safety agencies to help rescue individuals with autism, Alzheimer's, dementia and other similar cognitive conditions who have wandered and become lost. The cost of the program is \$99.00 for the initial enrollment and \$30.00 a month after that. Please contact Ralph Poland for those interested in receiving further information and information regarding financial assistance.

### **Emergency Services Programs (ESP) Behavioral Health Crisis**

Phone: (877) 382-1609

#### **Who Can Receive ESP Services for behavioral health crisis?**

People of ALL AGES with the following insurance coverage:

- Uninsured
- All MassHealth (Medicaid) plans
- Medicare
- Many ESPs also contract with commercial insurance companies.

Operating Hours: Every ESP provider answers its toll-free 800 number and provides services 24 hours per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. There are alternatives to hospital emergency departments! ESP's are mobile.

More information is available at <https://www.masspartnership.com/member/ESP.aspx>, with a related electronic flyer.

## SELF HELP

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

Phone: 866-671-0594

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

### **Mass 2-1-1: 12 Step Meeting Locator**

Please visit <http://www.theagapecenter.com/> to locate twelve-step support meetings for individuals with alcohol problems.

### **Massachusetts Al-Anon/Alateen**

57 East Main Street, Suite 109,

Westborough, MA 01581-1457

Phone: (508) 366-0556

Email: [LDCOFMA@aol.com](mailto:LDCOFMA@aol.com)

<http://ma-al-anon-alateen.org/>

This online directory provides extensive information about Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups in Massachusetts cities and towns.

If you are bothered by someone's drinking, Al-Anon and Alateen may be able to help. Al-Anon/Alateen are a fellowship of men, women, and children who share our experience, strength and hope in order to solve our common problems. Alateen is part of Al-Anon and is for young people affected by another's drinking. Al-Anon's program of recovery is based on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). The primary purpose of Al-Anon/Alateen is to help families and friends of alcoholics.

### **New England Region of Narcotics Anonymous**

Phone: (866) 624-3578

E-mail: [info@newenglandna.org](mailto:info@newenglandna.org)

<https://nera.org/>

NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. As quoted from their website, "we are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. Ours is a program of total abstinence from all drugs. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. We know that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel, and it is our wish to be of help to you. If you are an addict and have chanced across these pages, give yourself a break and call our helpline 1-866-NA-HELP-U (1-866-624-3578) or, better yet, come to one of our meetings! You will always be welcome."

#### NA - Local Areas directory:

- Central Mass – <http://www.centralmassna.org/>
- Greater Providence – <http://www.gpana.org/>
- Martha's Vineyard – 1-866-MVNA-NOW (866-686-2669) – <http://www.mvana.org/>
- Western Mass – <http://www.wmacna.org/area-information>
  - Berkshire County – <http://www.berkshirena.org/Pages/default.aspx>

#### NA - Northern New England Areas:

- Granite State Area and Seacoast Area (NH Areas) – (888) 624-3578 | <http://gsana.org/>
- Maine and Eastern Maine Areas (all of Maine) – (800) 974-0062 | <http://www.namaine.org/>
- Green Mountain Area (VT) – <http://www.gmana.org/>
- Champlain Valley Area of NA (VT) – <http://www.cvana.org/>

#### **National Suicide Prevention Hotline**

Phone: (800) 273-8255

Twenty-four hour telephone support for people who are suicidal or despairing. Free service.

#### **Self Help Inc. Coordinated Family and Community Engagement**

Phone: (508) 559-1666

Fax: (508) 583-3808

Email: [cpc@selfhelpinc.org](mailto:cpc@selfhelpinc.org)

<http://selfhelpcpc.org/>

<http://selfhelpcpc.org/calendar/>

Self Help Inc.'s Coordinated Family and Community Engagement CFCE program is a community resource that is available to all early childhood programs, providers and educators. One of their goals is to assist childcare programs with accessing information/resources/services for their program, teachers or for the families they serve. These services are funded through the Department of Early Education and Care's Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant. They strive to be the place to call when a program is in need!

Towns served by CFCE are Abington, Avon, Canton, Dedham, East Bridgewater, Easton, Foxboro, Franklin, Hanson, Holbrook, Mansfield, Middleboro, Norfolk, North Attleboro, Norton, Plainville, Randolph, Rockland, Sharon, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, Whitman and Wrentham.

CFCE services offered to programs, providers, teachers and the families they serve:

- Bi-Monthly Provider Newsletter providing information on community resources, transition activities and professional development opportunities.
- Monthly Professional Development email Update.
- Information to programs to enhance/develop strategies that build on The Strengthening Families protective factors.
- Networking through Council meetings.
- Connecting programs with comprehensive services to meet the needs of their program and families.
- Social Skills Story Times for parents and children.
- Music and Movement program for parents and children.
- Parent Workshops.
- Yoga Program for parents and children.
- Information and Referral.

## **Smart Recovery**

Phone: (866) 951-5357

<https://www.smartrecovery.org/treatment-programs-and-providers/>

<https://www.smartrecovery.org/get-started/>

General help: <https://www.smartrecovery.org/contact-us/>

SMART Recovery's purpose is to support individuals who have chosen to abstain, or are considering abstinence from any type of addictive behaviors (substances or activities), by teaching how to change self-defeating thinking, emotions, and actions; and to work towards long-term satisfactions and quality of life.

SMART Recovery offers face-to-face meetings around the world, and daily online meetings. In addition, their online message board and 24/7 chat room are excellent forums to learn about SMART Recovery and obtain addiction recovery support. Lastly, the organization provides an online directory to search for treatment providers and programs in your area.

## **South Shore Community Action Council – South Shore Family Network**

71 Obery St.

Plymouth, MA 02360

Phone: 508-747-7575, ext. 6247

Email: [dmwightman@sscac.org](mailto:dmwightman@sscac.org)

<http://sscac.org/cfce/>

The Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Program, otherwise known as South Shore Family, hosts a wide range of local workshops for parents, childhood fairs, toddler playgroups, and events in the towns of: Carver, Cohasset, Duxbury, Halifax, Hanover, Hingham, Kingston, Norwell, Pembroke, Plympton and Scituate.

The Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) Program is supported by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. There are five main goals of the CFCE Program:

1. Increase knowledge of and access to high-quality early education and care programs and services for families with children age 0 - 8.
2. Promote parent education, family engagement and early literacy.
3. Facilitate collaboration and community planning among parents, local early education and care providers, public/private schools, and other community members.
4. Provide support and information to families with children transitioning from home to school, within the preschool environment, and from preschool to Kindergarten.
5. Support early education and care programs across the public and private sectors in delivering high-quality services.

The South Shore Community Action Council also provides Food & Fuel Assistance to needy families in the South Shore community, as well as Early Education & Care through the Head Start program. For more information, visit: <http://sscac.org/>.

# SENSORY FRIENDLY ARTS, THEATERS, AND PLAYGROUNDS

## Sensory-Friendly Arts & Performances

### **South Shore Conservatory Community Voices**

An inclusive chorus designed for singers of all abilities, age 16 and up. Groups meet Wednesday evenings, 7 pm, at both our Duxbury and Hingham campuses. Repertoire includes master works, folk and traditional, seasonal, and popular tunes. These groups perform 2-8 times per year.

Contact: Eve Montague, Music Therapy Department Chair

E-mail: [e.montague@sscmusic.org](mailto:e.montague@sscmusic.org)

Phone: (781) 934-2731, x20

<https://sscmusic.org/ssc-community-voices/>

#### Duxbury

The Ellison Center for the Arts

64 St. George Street

Duxbury, MA 02331-1523

Phone: (781) 934-2731

#### Hanover

135 Webster Street

Hanover, MA 02339-1200

Phone: (781) 421-6162

#### Hingham

One Conservatory Drive

Hingham, MA 02043-2647

Phone: (781) 749-7565

### **VSA Massachusetts**

89 South Street, Suite 101

Boston, MA 02111

617-350-7713

<https://vsamass.org/>

VSA Massachusetts became an Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation in November 2014 with the intent of making the arts accessible to a broader audience. VSA Massachusetts is also part of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts international affiliate network of VSA organizations serving 35 states and over 50 other countries. Originally known as the National Committee Arts for the Handicapped and formerly named Very Special Arts, VSA arts changed its name in 1999, eliminating the use of the word "special" to honor the progress made by members of the disability community since the organization's inception. The letters VSA now reflect the Vision of an inclusive community, Strength in shared resources and Artistic expression that unite us all.

## Sensory-Friendly Film & Theater

### **AMC Theatres**

<https://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films>

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/a19562019/sensory-friendly-movie-theaters/>

<http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/other-ways-to-get-involved/sensory-friendly-films/>

AMC is proud to partner with the Autism Society to offer unique movie showings where we turn the lights up, and turn the sound down, so you can get up, dance, walk, shout or sing! Our Sensory Friendly Film program is available on the second and fourth Saturday (family-friendly) and Tuesday evenings (mature audiences) of every month. Please check your local theatre listings for specific show times at the link above, and share your family fun with #AMCSensoryFriendly.

### **Regal Cinemas**

<https://www.regmovies.com/promotions/my-way-matinee>

Regal's My Way Matinee is sensory-friendly, with brighter lights and lower sounds during select show times.

### **SPED Child Mass.: Special-Needs Sensory Friendly & Inclusive Movies/Museums**

<http://www.spedchildmass.com/special-needs-recreation-disability-autism-aspergers-massachusetts/special-needs-massachusetts-sensory-friendly-inclusive-movies/>

Sped Child Mass has regular listings of events, as well as many other resources.

## Sensory-Friendly Playgrounds

For a list of disability-friendly and accessible playgrounds, visit:

<https://www.accessibleplayground.net/united-states/massachusetts/>

For a full list of playgrounds in Massachusetts:

<https://www.accessibleplayground.net/playground-directory/?cn-s=&cn-cat=37&cn-pg=1>

For a full list of additional resources:

<http://www.spedchildmass.com/disability-autism-aspergers-events-programs-massachusetts/>

Also, see "Accessible Cape Cod" listed under the Recreation And Sports section.

## SERVICE DIRECTORIES - GENERAL

### **Autism Society**

Phone: (800) 328-8476 ext. 9620

[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

National website and network. No direct services, but provides information and referral, public policy, legislation, and legal information.

### **Community Autism Resources**

Phone: (508) 379-0371 ext. 16

Janneane Randall (Information/Resource Specialist)

[janrandall@community-autism-resources.com](mailto:janrandall@community-autism-resources.com)

<http://www.community-autism-resources.com/>

#### Swansea Office

33 James Reynolds Rd Unit C

Swansea, MA 02777

Phone: (508) 379 0371 or (800) 588 9239

#### Northern Office

Stonehill College Downtown Center for Community Engagement

68 Legion Parkway (inside Harbor One Bank)

Brockton, MA 02301

Phone: (774) 381-7919

Community Autism Resources is a family created and oriented community services organization committed to providing free and valuable services to individuals on the autism spectrum.

#### Central values:

- Interventions that are as individualized as the person requesting assistance. Persons with ASD have the right to strategies which are holistic in approach and respectful of the persons' dignity and value.
- Working collaboratively with families, professionals, and members of the community to enhance the quality of life for the person with ASD.
- Providing individuals with a broad spectrum of quality resources, rooted in current research and eclectic in their approach.

#### Approach:

- Acknowledge shared expertise amongst family members, school personnel, adult service providers and our staff.
- Utilizes a "Mentoring Model"
- Offers short term, yet intensive support.

#### The following lists of professionals are available:

- Advocates
- Art Therapists
- Asperger's Syndrome Specialists and School Programs



- Assistive Technology Consultants
- Attorneys (Special Ed Law)
- ASD Consultants
- Collaborative Education Programs
- Communication Evaluations
- Counselors (Family)
- DAN Protocol Doctors (MA and CT)
- Diagnostic Evaluation Centers
- Home Health Care/Home Therapy
- Music Therapists
- Neurologists
- Neuropsychologists
- Occupational Therapy/Sensory Integration Evaluations and Services
- Pediatric Specialty Care Clinics/Hospitals
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Social Skills Groups
- Specialty Providers
- Support Groups
- Visual Perceptual Testing

### **Disability Information/INDEX**

55 Lake North Avenue

Worcester, MA

Phone: (800) 642-0249, Press 0 or 1

<https://disabilityinfo.org/>

<https://disabilityinfo.org/fact-sheet-library/>

INDEX is a database maintained by the Shriver Center at UMass Medical School. They collect and keep up-to-date information on programs, providers and services in Massachusetts that assist individuals with disabilities. INDEX can be used to search for various health services by type, location, and payment options. The website also includes an extensive resource library, listing the following information:

- Advocacy
- Self-advocacy, reasonable accommodation, and contact information for government officials
- Assistive Technology
- Basic Needs
- Disabilities/Illnesses Descriptions
- Education Information on early intervention, transition resources and post-secondary links
- Emergency Resources
- Financial Resources
- Health and Mental health links
- Home Modification, Links to ADA accessibility guidelines and solutions
- Home Supports: Personal attendant program, volunteer resources, and Long Term Care Options Counseling
- Housing Resource Information
- Information & Referral on services and programs for people with disabilities
- Job Resources Support Services and Benefits

- Laws & Legislation Information on Americans with Disabilities Act to Section 50
- Legal Information on legal resources
- MNIP Agency Publications
- Multicultural Resources: Immigrant assistance, translation, interpreting services
- Parent/Sibling Resources
- Recreation: Camps and other social/leisure activities for people with disabilities
- Relationships/Friendships: mentoring and peer supports
- Public transportation disability-plates/placards, and travel tips
- Veterans links to services and organizations serving veterans

### **Exceptional Lives Massachusetts**

Phone: (844) 354-1212

info@exceptionallives.org

<https://ma.exceptionallives.org/>

Free online directory that lists *more than 1,500 disability support programs, providers and services for children and adults with developmental disabilities* based on zip code, age, disability, service type, and MassHealth (Medicaid) coverage. The website includes guides on how to apply for benefits, services and support.

### **Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities**

[www.yellowpagesforkids.com/help/ma.htm](http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com/help/ma.htm)

This online directory includes educational advocates, legal resources and more.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY

## **Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC)**

25 Kingston Street, 2nd Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
Helpline Phone: (617) 357-8431 ext. 3224  
Fax: (617) 357-8438

<https://massadvocates.org/>  
<https://massadvocates.org/autism/>

Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC) provides education advocacy state wide for vulnerable children 3 -22, focusing on children with special needs. Through our helpline, we offer information and advice on special education and school discipline issues to all parents, professionals and students regardless of income. For low-income children with autism, children ages 14 - 22 in Boston, children affected by trauma or those facing school exclusion, we may be able to provide comprehensive guidance or legal representation. We may be able to refer to volunteer lawyers for a very limited number of other low-income children with disabilities.

MAC also conducts legislative and administrative advocacy on special education concerns, as well as on children's mental health in relation to schools and on the impact of trauma on learning. It also has a project to improve education in Boston by working with community, parent and church groups in the city.

MAC intake is done through the helpline (above). Please leave a message or complete the online intake form, and an advocate or attorney from Massachusetts Advocates for Children will call you back.

The Center's online directory includes information about major bills and legislations related to ASD, online and in-person trainings, and various legal resources for families who have children with ASD.

### **Special Education Massachusetts Advocates for Children: Resources & FAQ**

<https://massadvocates.org/specialeducation/resources/>

#### **School Records**

*How do I obtain copies of my child's records?*

You are entitled to your son or daughter's entire student record as soon as practicable and within 10 days of request. Copies of the record must be provided upon request; however, a reasonable fee (not to exceed cost of reproduction) may be charged. A fee may not be charged if such fee effectively prevents you from exercising your right to access your son or daughter's record. (603 CMR 23.07). See the form letter to request records at the above link.

#### **Evaluation**

*What can I do if I am concerned about my child's academic, social, emotional, and/or physical development and think that he/she needs more supports in school?*

If you are concerned about your child's development you can send a letter to your son

or daughter's school district requesting evaluations to determine whether your son or daughter is entitled to special education services. Upon receipt of your request, the school district must provide a consent form within five school days. The consent form must propose assessments in all areas of suspected need and an educational assessment. You may also request additional evaluations, such as a health assessment, psychological assessment, and/or home assessment. The initial evaluation and/or re-evaluations must be completed within thirty school days after receipt of your consent to the evaluation. A Team meeting must be held within forty-five school days after receipt of your consent to the evaluation. Written reports of the evaluations must be made available to you at least two days in advance of the Team meeting, but only if the school district receives a written request for copies of the reports. (603 CMR 28.04, 603 CMR 28.05). See form letter requesting evaluation below.

### **Independent Evaluation**

*What do I do if I disagree with the school district's evaluation?*

Upon receipt of evaluation results, if you disagree with an initial evaluation or re-evaluation completed by the school district, then you may request an independent education evaluation conducted by qualified persons of your choosing. Your request for an independent evaluation should be in writing. The evaluation is free for students receiving reduced cost lunch and may be free or partially paid for by the school district depending on your family's income. The right to a publicly funded independent evaluation continues for 16 months from the date of the evaluation with which the parent disagrees. Within five school days, the school district must respond by either agreeing to pay for the evaluation or proceeding to the Bureau of Special Education Appeals. You may seek an independent evaluation at any time if you pay for the evaluation on your own or with insurance. (603 CMR 28.04(5)). (Call our Helpline for suggestions on evaluators specializing in your son or daughter's particular needs).

### **Individual Education Program (IEP)**

*What is an IEP?*

The IEP is a legally enforceable written document signed by you and developed by your son or daughters special education Team (you are a part of the Team). The IEP lists services designed to meet the unique needs of eligible students in order for them to make effective and meaningful progress. The IEP may also contain related services to help the student access the general education curriculum. Review all the services listed on the IEP service delivery grid. School districts are responsible for implementing the services that are accepted by you in the IEP.

### **Reviews and Re-evaluations**

*My child has an IEP, but his/her needs have changed, what can I do?*

Each eligible student's IEP must be reviewed at least once a year and a full re-evaluation must be conducted by the school district at least every three years. If appropriate, you may request an earlier re-evaluation. (603 CMR 28.04)

### **Responding to the IEP**

*What can I do if the school district refuses my son or daughter services that I believe he/she needs?*

The school district must provide special education and related services that are necessary for the student to make meaningful progress. You can partially reject the IEP if you believe the proposed services do not meet your son or daughter's unique needs.

You should clarify the specific issues you have with the IEP in writing. For instance, you might write that you want the school district to provide your son or daughter with all of the services outlined in the IEP but you do not agree that the proposed services are sufficient to meet your son or daughter's needs. If you do not want your son or daughter to receive any special education services, you can reject the IEP outright. If a school district does not find that your son or daughter is eligible for special education, and you disagree, you should write a letter to the school district stating that you disagree.

### **Due Process rights**

*How do I appeal a school district's proposed IEP?*

The school district has extensive notice requirements and procedural obligations throughout the special education process. In addition, you may appeal to the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) if you disagree with the school district's proposal. The BSEA conducts mediations and due process hearings to resolve disputes between parents and school districts. You may further appeal a decision by a BSEA hearing officer to state or federal court. MAC strongly encourages you to arrange for an independent evaluation and obtain legal advice before filing for a hearing or attending mediation.

### **Stay Put**

*What services does my son or daughter receive if I partially reject an IEP?*

If you partially reject an IEP, reject a proposed IEP outright, or a BSEA appeal is ongoing, your son or daughter stays in the last agreed-upon placement and receives the last agreed upon services, except in very specific circumstances. For instance, if during the 2009-2010 school year the school district provided Speech Therapy services to your son or daughter, and the service is removed in the 2010-2011 IEP, you can reject the removal of services, and assert your right to stay-put. Your son or daughter will continue to receive Speech Therapy until an IEP is accepted, or the school district files for a hearing at the BSEA and a hearing officer issues a decision that your son or daughter no longer requires the services. If your son or daughter has been placed out of school, is not receiving the last agreed-upon services, or a district files for hearing, seek legal advice.

### **Rights for Students with Autism**

*What additional rights are afforded to students on the autism spectrum?*

If an evaluation indicates your son or daughter has a disability on the autism spectrum, the Team must specifically address needs related to the student's verbal and nonverbal communication, development of social interaction, avoiding and responding to bullying, unusual responses to sensory experiences, resistance to environmental or routine changes, engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, positive behavioral interventions, and any other needs resulting from the student's disability that impact progress in the general curriculum, including social and emotional development. (M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3).

### **Program Observation**

*I want an evaluator to observe my son or daughter in school, what are my rights?*

You (or an independent evaluator you have designated) have the right to observe your son or daughter's current or proposed program. The school must grant access in a timely manner to enable you or your designated independent evaluator to evaluate your son or daughter's progress and determine whether the current program or

proposed program enables your son or daughter to make meaningful progress. A school district should not impose restrictions on your visit unless your visit would negatively affect the program or students. (M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3).

### **Bullying, Harassment, Teasing**

*I'm concerned that my son or daughter is the target of bullying, what are my rights?*

If your son or daughter's evaluation indicates a disability of autism or any other disability that affects social interaction or has a disability that makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP should address the skills necessary to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, and teasing.

(M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3).

### **If English is not your primary language**

*What are my options if I prefer to communicate in a language other than English?*

All communications must be made in your primary language. The school district must have fluent interpreters available for all communications and meetings. Further, if you are unable to read or you are blind or deaf, communications must be made in a manner that ensures you understand them. (603 CMR 28.07(8)).

## **Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)**

529 Main Street, Suite 1M3 Boston, MA 02129

Phone: (617) 236-7210

Phone: (800) 331-0688 (in MA)

Fax: (617) 241-0330

Email: [fcsninfo@fcsn.org](mailto:fcsninfo@fcsn.org)

<https://fcsn.org/about-us/our-mission/>

The Federation for Children with Special Need provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities. We are committed to listening to and learning from families, and encouraging full participation in community life by all people, especially those with disabilities.

Refer to <https://fcsn.org/about-us/our-mission/> for additional information on mission and assistance, including free workshops for parents in special education rights, advocacy and collaboration.

FCSN has a call center and can help with questions about:

- eligibility for special education
- application procedures
- steps to obtain independent educational evaluations
- determining whether the child is making progress
- what to do if the child is *not* making progress
- the school's responsibilities in the special education process
- the parent's role as a member of the team
- maintaining a collaborative relationship with the school
- options for resolving differences with the school
- when to involve a parent consultant or advocate
- when to involve an attorney

Refer also to <http://massfamilies.org/index.php>

### **Special Needs Advocates in Massachusetts (SPaN, Inc.)**

Special Needs Advocacy Network  
Special Needs Advocacy Network, Inc. (SPaN, Inc.)  
P.O. Box 463  
Lexington, MA 02420  
Phone: (508) 655-7999  
Email: [info@spanmass.org](mailto:info@spanmass.org)  
[www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org)

This website includes a professional directory of advocates that includes advocates' contact information, website, and biographical sketch, and experience.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION LAWS AND REGULATIONS

## The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

From <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a Federal law that makes available a *free appropriate public education* to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Infants and toddlers, birth through age two, with disabilities and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth ages three through 21 receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

Additionally, the IDEA authorizes:

- Formula grants to states to support special education and related services and early intervention services.
- Discretionary grants to state educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other nonprofit organizations to support research, demonstrations, technical assistance and dissemination, technology development, personnel preparation and development, and parent-training and -information centers.

Congress reauthorized the IDEA in 2004 and most recently amended the IDEA through Public Law 114-95, the Every Student Succeeds Act, in December 2015.

In the law, Congress states: "Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."

### IDEA Purpose

The stated purpose of the IDEA is: "to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living; to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and parents of such children are protected; to assist States, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; to assist States in the implementation of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; to ensure that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results for children with disabilities by supporting system improvement activities; coordinated research and personnel preparation; coordinated technical assistance, dissemination,



and support; and technology development and media services; to assess, and ensure the effectiveness of, efforts to educate children with disabilities.”

### **History of IDEA**

On November 29, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In adopting this landmark civil rights measure, Congress opened public school doors for millions of children with disabilities and laid the foundation of the country's commitment to ensuring that children with disabilities have opportunities to develop their talents, share their gifts, and contribute to their communities.

The law guaranteed access to a *free appropriate public education* (commonly referred to as “FAPE”) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to every child with a disability. Subsequent amendments, as reflected in the IDEA, have led to an increased emphasis on access to the general education curriculum, the provision of services for young children from birth through five, transition planning, and accountability for the achievement of students with disabilities. The IDEA upholds and protects the rights of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families.

In the last 40+ years, we have advanced our expectations for all children, including children with disabilities. Classrooms have become more inclusive and the future of children with disabilities is brighter. Significant progress has been made toward protecting the rights of, meeting the individual needs of, and improving educational results and outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youths with disabilities.

Since 1975, we have progressed from excluding nearly 1.8 million children with disabilities from public schools to providing more than 6.9 million children with disabilities special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs.

Today, more than 62 percent of children with disabilities are in general education classrooms 80 percent or more of their school day, and early intervention services are being provided to more than 340,000 infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

### **Other Laws for Children with Disabilities**

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) provides additional resources of interest for individuals with disabilities and their families (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>).

OCR does not enforce the IDEA; however, OCR does enforce the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title II rights of IDEA-eligible students with disabilities Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 addresses protections for students with disabilities. Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the department.

OCR enforces section 504 in public elementary and secondary schools.

Section 504 states: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...."

### **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title II**

OCR also enforces Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which extends protection against discrimination to the full range of state and local government services, programs, and activities including public schools regardless of whether they receive any Federal financial assistance.

OCR shares in enforcement of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act with the U.S. Department of Justice [For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)].

To learn more, visit the OCR's Frequently Asked Questions about Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities. Visit OCR's website for additional resources, including Disability Discrimination FAQs.

U.S. Department of Education: Protecting Students with Disabilities  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

\*This information is from a revised version of a document originally developed by the Chicago Office of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to clarify the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 504) in the area of public elementary and secondary education. The primary purpose of these revisions is to incorporate information about the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (Amendments Act), effective January 1, 2009, which amended the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and included a conforming amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that affects the meaning of disability in Section 504. The Amendments Act broadens the interpretation of disability. The Amendments Act does not require ED to U.S. Department of Education: Protecting Students with Disabilities amend its Section 504 regulations. ED's Section 504 regulations as currently written are valid and OCR is enforcing them consistent with the Amendments Act. In addition, OCR is currently evaluating the impact of the Amendments Act on OCR's enforcement responsibilities under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA, including whether any changes in regulations, guidance, or other publications are appropriate. The revisions to this Frequently Asked Questions document do not address the effects, if any, on Section 504 and Title II of the amendments to the regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that were published in the Federal Register at 73 Fed. Reg. 73006 (December 1, 2008).

### **Introduction to the Office for Civil Rights**

An important responsibility of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability against students with disabilities. OCR receives numerous complaints and inquiries in the area of elementary and secondary education involving Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794 (Section 504). Most of these concern identification of students who are protected by Section 504 and the means to obtain an appropriate education for such students.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...."

OCR enforces Section 504 in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from ED. Recipients of this Federal financial assistance include public school districts, institutions of higher education, and other state and local education agencies. The regulations implementing Section 504 in the context of educational institutions appear at 34 C.F.R. Part 104.

The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.

This resource clarifies pertinent requirements of Section 504. For additional information, please contact the Office for Civil Rights.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### IDEA and Section 504

#### ***What is the jurisdiction of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and state departments of education/instruction regarding educational services to students with disabilities?***

OCR, a component of the U.S. Department of Education, enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (Section 504) a civil rights statute which prohibits discrimination against Individuals with disabilities. OCR also enforces Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which extends this prohibition against discrimination to the full range of state and local government services, programs, and activities (including public schools) regardless of whether they receive any Federal financial assistance. The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (Amendments Act), effective January 1, 2009, amended the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and included a conforming amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act) that affects the meaning of disability in Section 504. The standards adopted by the ADA were designed not to restrict the rights or remedies available under Section 504. The Title II regulations applicable to free appropriate public education issues do not provide greater protection than applicable Section 504 regulations. This guidance focuses primarily on Section 504.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by state and local governments. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), also a component of the U.S. Department of Education, administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a statute which funds special education programs. Each state educational agency is responsible for administering IDEA within the state and distributing the funds for special education programs. IDEA is a grant statute and attaches many specific

conditions to the receipt of Federal IDEA funds. Section 504 and the ADA are antidiscrimination laws and do not provide any type of funding.

***How does OCR get involved in disability issues within a school district?***

OCR receives complaints from parents, students or advocates, conducts agency initiated compliance reviews, and provides technical assistance to school districts, parents or advocates.

***Where can a school district, parent, or student get information on Section 504 or find out information about OCR's interpretation of Section 504 and Title II?***

OCR provides technical assistance to school districts, parents, and students upon request. Additionally, regulations and publicly issued policy guidance is available on OCR's website, at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disability.html>.

***What services are available for students with disabilities under Section 504?***

Section 504 requires recipients to provide to students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. An appropriate education for a student with a disability under the Section 504 regulations could consist of education in regular classrooms, education in regular classes with supplementary services, and/or special education and related services.

***Does OCR examine individual placement or other educational decisions for students with disabilities?***

Except in extraordinary circumstances, OCR does not review the result of individual placement or other educational decisions so long as the school district complies with the procedural requirements of Section 504 relating to identification and location of students with disabilities, evaluation of such students, and due process. Accordingly, OCR generally will not evaluate the content of a Section 504 plan or of an individualized education program (IEP); rather, any disagreement can be resolved through a due process hearing. The hearing would be conducted under Section 504 or the IDEA, whichever is applicable.

OCR will examine procedures by which school districts identify and evaluate students with disabilities and the procedural safeguards which those school districts provide students. OCR will also examine incidents in which students with disabilities are allegedly subjected to treatment which is different from the treatment to which similarly situated students without disabilities are subjected. Such incidents may involve the unwarranted exclusion of disabled students from educational programs and services.

***What protections does OCR provide against retaliation?***

Retaliatory acts are prohibited. A recipient is prohibited from intimidating, threatening, coercing, or discriminating against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Section 504.

***Does OCR mediate complaints?***

OCR does not engage in formal mediation. However, OCR may offer to facilitate mediation, referred to as "Early Complaint Resolution," to resolve a complaint filed under Section 504. This approach brings the parties together so that they may discuss

possible resolution of the complaint immediately. If both parties are willing to utilize this approach, OCR will work with the parties to facilitate resolution by providing each an understanding of pertinent legal standards and possible remedies. An agreement reached between the parties is not monitored by OCR.

***What does noncompliance with Section 504 mean?***

A school district is out of compliance when it is violating any provision of the Section 504 statute or regulations.

***What sanctions can OCR impose on a school district that is out of compliance?***

OCR initially attempts to bring the school district into voluntary compliance through negotiation of a corrective action agreement. If OCR is unable to achieve voluntary compliance, OCR will initiate enforcement action. OCR may: (1) initiate administrative proceedings to terminate Department of Education financial assistance to the recipient; or (2) refer the case to the Department of Justice for judicial proceedings.

***Who has ultimate authority to enforce Section 504?***

In the educational context, OCR has been given administrative authority to enforce Section 504. Section 504 is a Federal statute that may be enforced through the Department's administrative process or through the Federal court system. In addition, a person may at any time file a private lawsuit against a school district. The Section 504 regulations do not contain a requirement that a person file a complaint with OCR and exhaust his or her administrative remedies before filing a private lawsuit.

**STUDENTS PROTECTED UNDER SECTION 504**

Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

***What is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity?***

The determination of whether a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity must be made on the basis of an individual inquiry. The Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. 104.3(j)(2)(i) defines a physical or mental impairment as any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The regulatory provision does not set forth an exhaustive list of specific diseases and conditions that may constitute physical or mental impairments because of the difficulty of ensuring the comprehensiveness of such a list.

Major life activities, as defined in the Section 504 regulations at 34 C.F.R. 104.3(j)(2)(ii), include functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing,

hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. This list is not exhaustive. Other functions can be major life activities for purposes of Section 504. In the Amendments Act (see FAQ 1), Congress provided additional examples of general activities that are major life activities, including eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating. Congress also provided a non-exhaustive list of examples of "major bodily functions" that are major life activities, such as the functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions. The Section 504 regulatory provision, though not as comprehensive as the Amendments Act, is still valid – the Section 504 regulatory provision's list of examples of major life activities is not exclusive, and an activity or function not specifically listed in the Section 504 regulatory provision can nonetheless be a major life activity.

***Does the meaning of the phrase "qualified student with a disability" differ on the basis of a student's educational level, i.e., elementary and secondary versus postsecondary?***

Yes. At the elementary and secondary educational level, a "qualified student with a disability" is a student with a disability who is: of an age at which students without disabilities are provided elementary and secondary educational services; of an age at which it is mandatory under state law to provide elementary and secondary educational services to students with disabilities; or a student to whom a state is required to provide a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

At the postsecondary educational level, a qualified student with a disability is a student with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards requisite for admission or participation in the institution's educational program or activity.

***Does the nature of services to which a student is entitled under Section 504 differ by educational level?***

Yes. Public elementary and secondary recipients are required to provide a free appropriate public education to qualified students with disabilities. Such an education consists of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met.

At the postsecondary level, the recipient is required to provide students with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school's program. Recipients are not required to make adjustments or provide aids or services that would result in a fundamental alteration of a recipient's program or impose an undue burden.

***Once a student is identified as eligible for services under Section 504, is that student always entitled to such services?***

Yes, as long as the student remains eligible. The protections of Section 504 extend only to individuals who meet the regulatory definition of a person with a disability. If a recipient school district re-evaluates a student in accordance with the Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. 104.35 and determines that the student's mental or physical impairment no longer substantially limits his/her ability to learn or any other major life activity, the student is no longer eligible for services under Section 504.

***Are current illegal users of drugs excluded from protection under Section 504?***

Generally, yes. Section 504 excludes from the definition of a student with a disability, and from Section 504 protection, any student who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs when a covered entity acts on the basis of such use. (There are exceptions for persons in rehabilitation programs who are no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs).

***Are current users of alcohol excluded from protection under Section 504?***

No. Section 504's definition of a student with a disability does not exclude users of alcohol. However, Section 504 allows schools to take disciplinary action against students with disabilities using drugs or alcohol to the same extent as students without disabilities.

**EVALUATION**

At the elementary and secondary school level, determining whether a child is a qualified disabled student under Section 504 begins with the evaluation process. Section 504 requires the use of evaluation procedures that ensure that children are not misclassified, unnecessarily labeled as having a disability, or incorrectly placed, based on inappropriate selection, administration, or interpretation of evaluation materials.

***What is an appropriate evaluation under Section 504?***

Recipient school districts must establish standards and procedures for initial evaluations and periodic re-evaluations of students who need or are believed to need special education and/or related services because of disability. The Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. 104.35(b) requires school districts to individually evaluate a student before classifying the student as having a disability or providing the student with special education. Tests used for this purpose must be selected and administered so as best to ensure that the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement or other factor being measured rather than reflect the student's disability, except where those are the factors being measured. Section 504 also requires that tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to evaluate the specific areas of educational need and not merely those designed to provide a single intelligence quotient. The tests and other evaluation materials must be validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and appropriately administered by trained personnel.

***How much is enough information to document that a student has a disability?***

At the elementary and secondary education level, the amount of information required is determined by the multi-disciplinary committee gathered to evaluate the student. The committee should include persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options. The committee members must determine if they have enough information to make a knowledgeable decision as to whether or not the student has a disability. The Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. 104.35(c) requires that school districts draw from a variety of sources in the evaluation process so that the possibility of error is minimized. The information obtained from all such sources must be documented and all significant factors related to the student's learning process must be considered. These sources and factors may include aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, and adaptive behavior. In evaluating a student suspected of having a disability, it is unacceptable to rely on presumptions and stereotypes

regarding persons with disabilities or classes of such persons. Compliance with the IDEA regarding the group of persons present when an evaluation or placement decision is made is satisfactory under Section 504.

***What process should a school district use to identify students eligible for services under Section 504? Is it the same process as that employed in identifying students eligible for services under the IDEA?***

School districts may use the same process to evaluate the needs of students under Section 504 as they use to evaluate the needs of students under the IDEA. If school districts choose to adopt a separate process for evaluating the needs of students under Section 504, they must follow the requirements for evaluation specified in the Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. 104.35.20.

***May school districts consider "mitigating measures" used by a student in determining whether the student has a disability under Section 504?***

No. As of January 1, 2009, school districts, in determining whether a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that student in a major life activity, must not consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using. This is a change from prior law. Before January 1, 2009, school districts had to consider a student's use of mitigating measures in determining whether that student had a physical or mental impairment that substantially limited that student in a major life activity. In the Amendments Act (see FAQ 1), however, Congress specified that the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures must not be considered in determining if a person is an individual with a disability.

Congress did not define the term "mitigating measures" but rather provided a non-exhaustive list of "mitigating measures." The mitigating measures are as follows: medication; medical supplies, equipment or appliances; low-vision devices (which do not include ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses); prosthetics (including limbs and devices); hearing aids and cochlear implants or other implantable hearing devices; mobility devices; oxygen therapy equipment and supplies; use of assistive technology; reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids or services; and learned behavioral or adaptive neurological modifications.

Congress created one exception to the mitigating measures analysis. The ameliorative effects of the mitigating measures of ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses shall be considered in determining if an impairment substantially limits a major life activity. "Ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses" are lenses that are intended to fully correct visual acuity or eliminate refractive error, whereas "low-vision devices" (listed above) are devices that magnify, enhance, or otherwise augment a visual image.

***Does OCR endorse a single formula or scale that measures substantial limitation?***

No. The determination of substantial limitation must be made on a case-by-case basis with respect to each individual student. The Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. 104.35 (c) requires that a group of knowledgeable persons draw upon information from a variety of sources in making this determination.

***Are there any impairments which automatically mean that a student has a disability under Section 504?***

No. An impairment in and of itself is not a disability. The impairment must substantially



limit one or more major life activities in order to be considered a disability under Section 504.

***Can a medical diagnosis suffice as an evaluation for the purpose of providing FAPE?***

No. A physician's medical diagnosis may be considered among other sources in evaluating a student with an impairment or believed to have an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity. Other sources to be considered, along with the medical diagnosis, include aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, and adaptive behavior. As noted in FAQ 22, the Section 504 regulations require school districts to draw upon a variety of sources in interpreting evaluation data and making placement decisions.

***Does a medical diagnosis of an illness automatically mean a student can receive services under Section 504?***

No. A medical diagnosis of an illness does not automatically mean a student can receive services under Section 504. The illness must cause a substantial limitation on the student's ability to learn or another major life activity. For example, a student who has a physical or mental impairment would not be considered a student in need of services under Section 504 if the impairment does not in any way limit the student's ability to learn or other major life activity, or only results in some minor limitation in that regard.

***How should a recipient school district handle an outside independent evaluation? Do all data brought to a multi-disciplinary committee need to be considered and given equal weight?***

The results of an outside independent evaluation may be one of many sources to consider. Multi-disciplinary committees must draw from a variety of sources in the evaluation process so that the possibility of error is minimized. All significant factors related to the subject student's learning process must be considered. These sources and factors include aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, and adaptive behavior, among others. Information from all sources must be documented and considered by knowledgeable committee members. The weight of the information is determined by the committee given the student's individual circumstances.

***What should a recipient school district do if a parent refuses to consent to an initial evaluation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but demands a Section 504 plan for a student without further evaluation?***

A school district must evaluate a student prior to providing services under Section 504. Section 504 requires informed parental permission for initial evaluations. If a parent refuses consent for an initial evaluation and a recipient school district suspects a student has a disability, the IDEA and Section 504 provide that school districts may use due process hearing procedures to seek to override the parents' denial of consent.

***Who in the evaluation process makes the ultimate decision regarding a student's eligibility for services under Section 504?***

The Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R.104.35 (c) (3) requires that school districts ensure that the determination that a student is eligible for special education and/or related aids and services be made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about the meaning of the evaluation data and knowledgeable about

the placement options. If a parent disagrees with the determination, he or she may request a due process hearing.

***Once a student is identified as eligible for services under Section 504, is there an annual or triennial review requirement? If so, what is the appropriate process to be used? Or is it appropriate to keep the same Section 504 plan in place indefinitely after a student has been identified?***

Periodic re-evaluation is required. This may be conducted in accordance with the IDEA regulations, which require re-evaluation at three-year intervals (unless the parent and public agency agree that re-evaluation is unnecessary) or more frequently if conditions warrant, or if the child's parent or teacher requests a re-evaluation, but not more than once a year (unless the parent and public agency agree otherwise).

***Is a Section 504 re-evaluation similar to an IDEA re-evaluation? How often should it be done?***

Yes. Section 504 specifies that re-evaluations in accordance with the IDEA is one means of compliance with Section 504. The Section 504 regulations require that re-evaluations be conducted periodically. Section 504 also requires a school district to conduct a re-evaluation prior to a significant change of placement. OCR considers an exclusion from the educational program of more than 10 school days a significant change of placement. OCR would also consider transferring a student from one type of program to another or terminating or significantly reducing a related service a significant change in placement.

***What is reasonable justification for referring a student for evaluation for services under Section 504?***

School districts may always use regular education intervention strategies to assist students with difficulties in school. Section 504 requires recipient school districts to refer a student for an evaluation for possible special education or related aids and services or modification to regular education if the student, because of disability, needs or is believed to need such services.

***A student is receiving services that the school district maintains are necessary under Section 504 in order to provide the student with an appropriate education. The student's parent no longer wants the student to receive those services. If the parent wishes to withdraw the student from a Section 504 plan, what can the school district do to ensure continuation of services?***

The school district may initiate a Section 504 due process hearing to resolve the dispute if the district believes the student needs the services in order to receive an appropriate education.

***A student has a disability referenced in the IDEA, but does not require special education services. Is such a student eligible for services under Section 504?***

The student may be eligible for services under Section 504. The school district must determine whether the student has an impairment which substantially limits his or her ability to learn or another major life activity and, if so, make an individualized determination of the child's educational needs for regular or special education or related aids or services. For example, such a student may receive adjustments in the regular classroom.

***How should a recipient school district view a temporary impairment?***

A temporary impairment does not constitute a disability for purposes of Section 504 unless its severity is such that it results in a substantial limitation of one or more major life activities for an extended period of time. The issue of whether a temporary impairment is substantial enough to be a disability must be resolved on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration both the duration (or expected duration) of the impairment and the extent to which it actually limits a major life activity of the affected individual.

In the Amendments Act (see FAQ 1), Congress clarified that an individual is not “regarded as” an individual with a disability if the impairment is transitory and minor. A transitory impairment is an impairment with an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less.

***Is an impairment that is episodic or in remission a disability under Section 504?***

Yes, under certain circumstances. In the Amendments Act (see FAQ 1), Congress clarified that an impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active. A student with such an impairment is entitled to a free appropriate public education under Section 504.

**PLACEMENT**

Once a student is identified as being eligible for regular or special education and related aids or services, a decision must be made regarding the type of services the student needs.

***If a student is eligible for services under both the IDEA and Section 504, must a school district develop both an individualized education program (IEP) under the IDEA and a Section 504 plan under Section 504?***

No. If a student is eligible under IDEA, he or she must have an IEP. Under the Section 504 regulations, one way to meet Section 504 requirements for a free appropriate public education is to implement an IEP.

***Must a school district develop a Section 504 plan for a student who either "has a record of disability" or is "regarded as disabled"?***

No. In public elementary and secondary schools, unless a student actually has an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, the mere fact that a student has a "record of" or is "regarded as" disabled is insufficient, in itself, to trigger those Section 504 protections that require the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This is consistent with the Amendments Act (see FAQ 1), in which Congress clarified that an individual who meets the definition of disability solely by virtue of being “regarded as” disabled is not entitled to reasonable accommodations or the reasonable modification of policies, practices or procedures. The phrases "has a record of disability" and "is regarded as disabled" are meant to reach the situation in which a student either does not currently have or never had a disability, but is treated by others as such.

As noted in FAQ 34, in the Amendments Act (see FAQ 1), Congress clarified that an individual is not “regarded as” an individual with a disability if the impairment is transitory and minor. A transitory impairment is an impairment with an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less.

***What is the receiving school district's responsibility under Section 504 toward a student with a Section 504 plan who transfers from another district?***

If a student with a disability transfers to a district from another school district with a Section 504 plan, the receiving district should review the plan and supporting documentation. If a group of persons at the receiving school district, including persons knowledgeable about the meaning of the evaluation data and knowledgeable about the placement options determines that the plan is appropriate, the district is required to implement the plan.

If the district determines that the plan is inappropriate, the district is to evaluate the student consistent with the Section 504 procedures at 34 C.F.R. 104.35 and determine which educational program is appropriate for the student. There is no Section 504 bar to the receiving school district honoring the previous IEP during the interim period. Information about IDEA requirements when a student transfers is available from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at:

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C3%2Chttp://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C3%2C>

***What are the responsibilities of regular education teachers with respect to implementation of Section 504 plans? What are the consequences if the district fails to implement the plans?***

Regular education teachers must implement the provisions of Section 504 plans when those plans govern the teachers' treatment of students for whom they are responsible. If the teachers fail to implement the plans, such failure can cause the school district to be in noncompliance with Section 504.

***What is the difference between a regular education intervention plan and a Section 504 plan?***

A regular education intervention plan is appropriate for a student who does not have a disability or is not suspected of having a disability but may be facing challenges in school. School districts vary in how they address performance problems of regular education students. Some districts employ teams at individual schools, commonly referred to as "building teams." These teams are designed to provide regular education classroom teachers with instructional support and strategies for helping students in need of assistance. These teams are typically composed of regular and special education teachers who provide ideas to classroom teachers on methods for helping students experiencing academic or behavioral problems. The team usually records its ideas in a written regular education intervention plan. The team meets with an affected student's classroom teacher(s) and recommends strategies to address the student's problems within the regular education environment. The team then follows the responsible teacher(s) to determine whether the student's performance or behavior has improved. In addition to building teams, districts may utilize other regular education intervention methods, including before-school and after-school programs, tutoring programs, and mentoring programs.

**PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

Public elementary and secondary schools must employ procedural safeguards regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of persons who, because of disability, need or are believed to need special instruction or related services.

***Must a recipient school district obtain parental consent prior to conducting an initial evaluation?***

Yes. OCR has interpreted Section 504 to require districts to obtain parental permission for initial evaluations. If a district suspects a student needs or is believed to need special instruction or related services and parental consent is withheld, the IDEA and Section 504 provide that districts may use due process hearing procedures to seek to override the parents' denial of consent for an initial evaluation.

***If so, in what form is consent required?***

Section 504 is silent on the form of parental consent required. OCR has accepted written consent as compliance. IDEA as well as many state laws also require written consent prior to initiating an evaluation.

***What can a recipient school district do if a parent withholds consent for a student to secure services under Section 504 after a student is determined eligible for services?***

Section 504 neither prohibits nor requires a school district to initiate a due process hearing to override a parental refusal to consent with respect to the initial provision of special education and related services. Nonetheless, school districts should consider that IDEA no longer permits school districts to initiate a due process hearing to override a parental refusal to consent to the initial provision of services.

***What procedural safeguards are required under Section 504?***

Recipient school districts are required to establish and implement procedural safeguards that include notice, an opportunity for parents to review relevant records, an impartial hearing with opportunity for participation by the student's parents or guardian, representation by counsel and a review procedure.

***What is a recipient school district's responsibility under Section 504 to provide information to parents and students about its evaluation and placement process?***

Section 504 requires districts to provide notice to parents explaining any evaluation and placement decisions affecting their children and explaining the parents' right to review educational records and appeal any decision regarding evaluation and placement through an impartial hearing.

***Is there a mediation requirement under Section 504?***

No.

**TERMINOLOGY**

The following terms may be confusing and/or are frequently used incorrectly in the elementary and secondary school context.

- Equal access: equal opportunity of a qualified person with a disability to participate in or benefit from educational aid, benefits, or services
- Free appropriate public education (FAPE): a term used in the elementary and secondary school context; for purposes of Section 504, refers to the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met and is based upon adherence

to procedures that satisfy the Section 504 requirements pertaining to educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards

- **Placement:** a term used in the elementary and secondary school context; refers to regular and/or special educational program in which a student receives educational and/or related services
- **Reasonable accommodation:** a term used in the employment context to refer to modifications or adjustments employers make to a job application process, the work environment, the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed, or that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment; this term is sometimes used incorrectly to refer to related aids and services in the elementary and secondary school context or to refer to academic adjustments, reasonable modifications, and auxiliary aids and services in the postsecondary school context
- **Reasonable modifications:** under a regulatory provision implementing Title II of the ADA, public entities are required to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity
- **Related services:** a term used in the elementary and secondary school context to refer to developmental, corrective, and other supportive services, including psychological, counseling and medical diagnostic services and transportation

For more information about IDEA, please visit <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>.

## About Disability – General

### **What are Section 504 and Title II?**

Section 504 is a federal law that prohibits any entity that receives federal financial assistance (such as grants or student loans) from discriminating against persons with disabilities. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law that prohibits state and local governments (such as public school districts, public colleges and universities, and public libraries) from discriminating against persons with disabilities.

In general, Section 504 and Title II nondiscrimination standards are the same, and in general, actions that violate Section 504 also violate Title II. However, where Title II requirements exceed Section 504 requirements, public school districts, colleges and universities, and libraries must also comply with the Title II requirements.

### **What does "person with a disability" mean within the context of Section 504 and Title II?**

Person with a disability means a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. The determination of whether a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (and therefore

has a disability) must be made on a case by case basis. In addition, when determining if someone meets the definition of a disability, the definition must be viewed to provide broad coverage of individuals.

***Are all school districts, colleges, and universities covered by Section 504 and Title II?***

Generally yes. All public school districts are covered by Section 504 and/or Title II – this includes public charter schools and magnet schools. All public colleges and universities are covered by Section 504 and Title II. Virtually all private colleges and universities are also covered by Section 504 because they receive federal financial assistance by participating in federal student aid programs. There are some private schools that do not receive any federal assistance, and Section 504 and Title II do not apply to them.

***Are all programs in a school, college, or university covered by Section 504 if any part of it receives federal financial assistance?***

Yes. All programs in a school or college are covered by Section 504 if the school district, college, or university receives federal financial assistance. Section 504 covers all the operations of a school or college that receives financial assistance including academics, extracurricular activities, athletics, and other programs. Section 504 applies to actions of a school or college regardless of where they occur, including those that take place in the facilities of the school, on a school bus, at a class or training program sponsored by the school at another location, or elsewhere off campus.

***Do Section 504 and Title II protect only students?***

No. Section 504 and Title II protect all persons with disabilities from discrimination, including parents and guardians, students, and employees.

***What types of Section 504 and Title II cases does OCR handle?***

OCR handles cases of disability discrimination involving a range of issues, such as inaccessible facilities; unequal access to advanced academic programs, extracurricular athletics, and accessible technology; the failure to provide elementary and secondary students a free appropriate public education (FAPE), discriminatory discipline, the denial to college students of appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services, disability harassment.

***Is there someone at my school who can help answer my Section 504 questions?***

Generally, yes. All school districts, colleges, and universities receiving federal financial assistance and employing 15 or more persons must designate at least one employee to coordinate their efforts to comply with and carry out their responsibilities under Section 504. This person is often, though not always, referred to as a Section 504 coordinator.

Your school is required to publish your Section 504 coordinator's contact information in your school's notice of nondiscrimination, typically found in any bulletins, announcements, publications, catalogs, application forms, or other recruitment materials. The Section 504 coordinator's contact information should also be prominently posted on your school's website. Section 504 coordinators for public school districts can also be found on OCR's coordinators website at <http://www.ed.gov/civ-rt-coordinators>.

## About Disability – Accessibility and Services

### **What is the responsibility of school districts, colleges, and universities under Section 504 or Title II to ensure its program and activities are physically accessible to individuals with disabilities?**

School districts, colleges, and universities are required to ensure that students and others with disabilities, including parents, are not denied access to programs or activities because of inaccessible facilities, including academic buildings, walkways, restrooms, athletic facilities, and parking spaces.

The precise requirements schools, colleges, and universities must meet to ensure physical accessibility depends on the date a building (or facility) was initially built (constructed) or altered. For more information about accessibility requirements, please visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

Even if a building does not have to be made fully physically accessible because of its age, Section 504 and Title II require that every program or activity of the school district, college, or university be made accessible. A common way this is done is to relocate the program to an accessible portion of the building or to another building that is accessible.

### **What types of services are required by Section 504 and Title II for students with disabilities in public elementary and secondary schools?**

School districts are required to provide each student with a disability any special education and/or related aids and services necessary to ensure the student is receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Examples of aids and services a school district may be required to provide include physical therapy or speech language therapy.

In addition, a school district may need to modify the regular education program in order to provide FAPE. Examples of such modifications include additional time to take tests or a modification to a policy regarding the permitted number of absences in a school year when a student's absences are due to a disability.

More information is available on OCR's webpage addressing Frequently Asked Questions about FAPE.

### **What types of disability-related services are required by Section 504 and Title II for students with disabilities in colleges and universities?**

Colleges and universities are required by Section 504 and Title II to provide students with disabilities with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the school's program. An example of an academic adjustment is extra time to take a test. Examples of auxiliary aids include note takers, interpreters, readers, and specialized computer equipment.



## About Disability – Disability Harassment

### **What is disability harassment?**

Disability harassment is unwelcome conduct based on a student's actual or perceived disability. Harassers can be students, school staff, or even someone visiting the school, such as a student or employee from another school. Disability harassment can take many forms, including slurs, taunts, stereotypes, or name-calling, as well as disability-motivated physical threats, attacks, or other hateful conduct.

In addition, at the elementary and secondary school level, bullying or harassment of a student with a disability on any basis can result in the denial of FAPE that must be remedied under Section 504.

### **What are the responsibilities of school districts, colleges, and universities under Section 504 and Title II to address disability harassment?**

Section 504 and Title II require an educational institution to respond to disability-based harassment that is sufficiently serious to deny or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient's education programs and activities (i.e., creates a hostile environment).

When an educational institution knows or reasonably should know of possible disability harassment, it must take immediate and appropriate steps to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If an investigation reveals that the harassment created a hostile environment, the educational institution must take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent its recurrence, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

Note that school districts must also assess the effect of bullying and harassment on a student with a disability even if it was not disability-based harassment and even if it did not create a hostile environment. More information about the intersection of bullying and FAPE is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/pro-students/issues/dis-issue08.html>.

### **How do educational institutions balance their Section 504 and Title II obligations with individuals' First Amendment rights?**

OCR has consistently reaffirmed that the Federal civil rights laws it enforces protect students from prohibited discrimination, and are not intended to restrict expressive activities or speech protected under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

The fact that discriminatory harassment involves speech, however, does not relieve the school of its obligation to respond if the speech contributes to a hostile environment. Schools can protect students from such harassment without running afoul of students' and staff First Amendment rights. For instance, in a situation where the First Amendment prohibits a public university from restricting the right of students to express persistent and pervasive derogatory opinions about students with a particular type of disability, the university can instead meet its obligation by, among other steps, communicating a rejection of stereotypical, derogatory opinions and ensuring that competing views are heard. Similarly, educational institutions can establish a campus culture that is welcoming and respectful of the diversity all students and institute campus climate

checks to assess the effectiveness of the school's efforts to ensure that it is free from harassment. Schools can also encourage students on all sides of an issue to express disagreement over ideas or beliefs in a respectful manner. Schools should be alert to take more targeted responsive action when speech crosses over into direct threats or actionable speech or conduct.

***How does OCR address disability harassment against students?***

OCR investigates and resolves allegations that educational institutions that are recipients of federal funds or that are public entities have failed to protect students from harassment based on disability. Where OCR identifies concerns or violations, educational institutions often resolve them with agreements requiring educational institutions to adopt effective anti-harassment policies and procedures, train staff and students, address the incidents in question, and take other steps to restore a nondiscriminatory environment. In addition to resolving investigations, OCR takes steps to inform schools of their obligation to provide a nondiscriminatory environment.

OCR's field offices also engage in a variety of technical assistance activities in collaboration with state and local education and law enforcement agencies to encourage educational institutions to improve their anti-harassment policies and procedures and to assist students and their parents to work with schools to enhance the schools' anti-harassment capability.

*For more information, please visit:*

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/disability.html>

**603 CMR 49.00 Notification of Bullying or Retaliation Regulations**

From <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr49.html>

Section:

49.01: Authority

49.02: Scope and Purpose

49.03: Definitions and Terms

49.04: Bullying and Retaliation Prohibited

49.05: Notice to Parents

49.06: Notice to Law Enforcement Agency

49.07: Confidentiality of Records

Background:

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, was signed into law on May 3, 2010 and took effect immediately. The law requires each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, and collaborative school to develop and implement a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention. The statute directs the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to promulgate regulations addressing a principal's duties under one of the ten required elements of the bullying prevention and intervention plan, namely, notification to parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of bullying or retaliation and the action taken to prevent further bullying, and notification to law enforcement of bullying or retaliation, when the aggressor's conduct

may result in criminal charges. The law further provides that the regulations must be promulgated by September 30, 2010.

Adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: September 21, 2010

Regulatory Authority:

603 CMR 49.00: M.G.L. 71, §370, as added by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010

## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources**

From <http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/considerations-bully.html>

Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities in the IEP and in School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Efforts.

Issued: February 11, 2011

I. Leadership

II. Training and Professional Development

III. Access to Resources and Services

IV. Academic and Non-academic Activities

V. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding To Bullying

VI. Collaboration with Families

This resource document contains tools to assist schools and IEP Teams to prevent bullying of students with disabilities and to enable Teams to comply with special education-related provisions of the law. The document is organized according to the Behavioral Health and Public Schools Framework. The Framework sections are used in the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and in this document so that whole school approaches and individual supports for particular students can be aligned with each other. This will help to include students with disabilities in the school- and district-wide bullying prevention and intervention initiatives from which all students should benefit. These Framework sections are leadership, training and professional development, access to resources and services, academic and non-academic activities, policies and procedures for reporting and responding to bullying, and collaboration with families.

The Department [of Education] is making this document available to all educators - general and special education teachers, administrators and student support staff - in recognition of the collaboration between special education and general education that is necessary to address proactively and effectively the needs of students with disabilities relative to bullying. By bridging whole-school efforts with those taking place on behalf of individual students with disabilities, we can begin to eliminate the threat of bullying for this vulnerable population and continue to make progress toward the long-term goal of safely and effectively including all students in their school communities.

First, the document provides assistance in the form of questions to help Teams determine which students are covered by the new law and what their needs may be. Second, the document provides questions for schools to consider in order to enable the broader bullying prevention and intervention initiatives taking place at the school and district level to support the efforts of IEP Teams to help individual students develop necessary skills and proficiencies. These questions, organized by each Framework section, are titled Whole School Considerations, to help educators begin a planning process about the role of the entire school community in supporting students with

disabilities. A third set of guiding questions in each Framework section, titled Questions for IEP Teams, is written primarily for those who are directly involved in the IEP development process - special education directors, Team chairpersons, general and special educators, parents, service providers, and others. They provide guidance for Team members as they develop IEPs that will help individual students build the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid and respond to bullying, teasing, and harassment as required by the new bullying prevention and intervention law. The Framework informs the IEP development process as it helps Teams to holistically address all of a student's needs.

Determining whether a student is covered by Sections 7 and 8 of the bullying prevention and intervention law and identifying his or her needs IEP Teams must determine whether the sections 7 and 8 provisions of the Massachusetts bullying prevention and intervention law apply to eligible students. The provisions apply if the student's disability (a) is on the autism spectrum, or (b) affects social skills development, or (c) makes the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

*For students on the autism spectrum, protection under the law will be automatic.* For students in the other two categories, the Team must make a determination as to whether the student's disability affects social skills development or renders the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. Teams should be aware that students with emotional impairments, developmental delays, health impairments, communication disorders, and neurological impairments are likely to have a disability that affects their social skills development. However, Teams should carefully evaluate whether students with any type of impairment have delays in social skills development or are otherwise vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of their disability.

The questions below are designed to help the Team to determine whether the student has a disability that renders him/her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. In addition, the questions will help to identify a student's specific needs and inform the process of developing specific goals and objectives for the student. In preparation for consideration of these questions at the Team meeting, it may be helpful to provide the student and parent with a bullying prevention and intervention survey, consisting of these questions, which should be modified to the student's developmental level. In addition, the school could conduct an individual interview about the student's social experiences at school.

Questions to Consider:

- Does the student feel safe at school? If not, why not?
- Is the school aware of the student being a target of bullying? Do educators believe the student could potentially become a target? Why?
- Are parents aware of any incidents of bullying against the student? When? Where? What was the nature of the bullying? Did the bullying occur in school (if so, where? e.g., hallway, cafeteria), out of school, on a transportation vehicle, or was it cyberbullying? When the parent addressed the question with the student, did the student understand that bullying had taken place?
- Does the student have a clear understanding of what bullying is and is he or she able to identify bullying attempts (as well as teasing and harassment)?

- Does the student display particular verbal or nonverbal behavior that makes him/her more vulnerable to bullying?
- Does the student engage in behavior that might be identified as bullying? Is there concern that any new or emerging behavior might be identified in this way?
- Given the specific nature and extent of the student's disability, is the student able to conform to the school's code of conduct relative to bullying prevention and intervention?
- Is the student able to access the general education curriculum, including the bullying prevention and intervention curriculum?
- Does the student have sufficient self-advocacy skills to obtain help/know what to do if he/she is bullied?
- What particular skills does the student need to develop to guard against becoming a target or to stop aggressive behaviors directed toward him/her?
- Does the student have friends at school/in the community who would report bullying or defend the student if the student is subjected to bullying?
- Is the student socially isolated? Does the student spend time physically removed from his or her peers? What has been done to integrate the student into the social life of the school during the school day and during extracurricular activities?
- Does the student have someone she/he trusts at school to whom she/he may report bullying?
- Does the student have an aide? If so, is this aide present during high-risk time periods (e.g., recess, lunch)?
- Are there times of day with less adult supervision and less structure where bullying is more likely to occur? Are there places in the building where bullying is more likely to occur?
- Is there a Behavioral Intervention Plan for the student and, if so, is it being followed? Does it need to be amended to include new information regarding bullying prevention and intervention strategies?

### **Using the Framework to Develop the IEP**

After the IEP Team has identified a student's needs, the Team could use the Framework outlined below to guide a discussion of what goals, objectives services, supports, instruction, and accommodations should be included in the student's IEP. Using the Framework to guide the IEP development process is a helpful way of ensuring that all of a student's needs are taken into account and that the IEP, with appropriate accommodations, is aligned with the school's and district's broader efforts to prevent and intervene in incidents of bullying. In addition, using the Framework helps to ensure that the necessary adjustments to the school environment needed to support and reinforce the student are addressed.

In considering what goals may be appropriate for an individual student, the Department's Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2011-2: Bullying Prevention and Intervention referred to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) for current research on specific skills and proficiencies needed to avoid bullying, harassment, and teasing. As the IEP Team moves through the process outlined below, it may wish to consider overarching goals from the core categories identified by CASEL: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-making.

The approaches in this document are informed by current research on bullying prevention and intervention as well as by research and practice from those who work with students with disabilities, including students with autism and other disabilities that affect social skills development. By no means are these lists exhaustive; rather, they are illustrative of the types of matters Teams should be considering.

## **I. Leadership**

### **Whole School Considerations**

- Does leadership convey to the school community that an inclusive school-wide culture and the explicit teaching of civility and tolerance are essential to prevent bullying, particularly bullying of students with disabilities?
- Does leadership ensure that all educators - general and special education - have a sense of shared responsibility to help students with disabilities feel connected to and part of the school community, and ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for communication between general and special education staff to allow for coordinated implementation of IEP goals relative to bullying prevention and intervention?
- Do all educators - general and special education - share responsibility for: 1) helping students with disabilities feel connected to and part of the school community; and 2) assisting with the implementation of IEP goals relative to bullying prevention and intervention?
- Are staff, parents, and other experts knowledgeable about the particular needs of students with disabilities, including the students themselves, involved in ongoing planning and discussions about the needs of this population relative to bullying prevention and intervention?
- Do the school's bullying prevention and intervention protocols reflect the needs of students with disabilities, including assisting them to make reports about bullying?
- Do incident reports track numbers of involved students with disabilities along with other data suggested by the Model Plan?
- Are parents and their students with disabilities surveyed to assess services and information that might be useful and concerns that might not be known to staff?
- Are educators and staff surveyed to determine professional development needs and particular concerns about bullying prevention and intervention for students with disabilities?

### **Considerations for IEP Teams**

Does the school leadership need to:

- approve staffing arrangements necessary to monitor the student throughout the day?
- inform members of the staff to be vigilant about the student's safety?
- create opportunities for general and special education staff to consult together about the student?

Sample IEP Provisions to Consider - These provisions might be included in the Additional Information section of the IEP or in the Accommodations section of Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP) A or PLEP B.

- Provide instructional personnel or supplementary aides and services during identified periods of the school day (lunch, recess, study hall, bus, and free times) when the student requires additional support or instruction in order to respond to or avoid bullying.
- Inform leadership, particularly those with disciplinary responsibilities, of disability-related IEP accommodations to the student code of conduct for a particular student.
- Identify any and all staff within the building (guidance counselor, nurse, cafeteria workers, bus drivers) whom leadership should inform to pay particular attention to the student with regard to bullying prevention and intervention.

## **II. Training and Professional Development**

### Whole School Considerations

- Does training for all staff in the school include the following points of understanding?
- Students with disabilities can form successful relationships with other students and participate fully in school activities when provided with sufficient supports and opportunities for interactions.
- Students with autism spectrum disorder and students with other disabilities affecting communication and social skills are vulnerable targets for bullying because they often lack the skills necessary to understand social cues. Sometimes these students are viewed as atypical or "odd" when they engage in "quirky" behaviors. Unable to understand when they are in a bullying situation, they can have difficulty protecting themselves and require specialized teaching, supports, and services to help deal with the problem.
- Students with emotional impairments, such as attachment, post-traumatic stress, and impulse control disorders, can be at risk for being both targets and aggressors. Some are easily persuaded to participate in bullying behavior. Others may adopt a "strike first" posture due to having been bullied or excluded in ways that have not been evident to adults. It is important to be alert to signs of stress and communicate openly with parents to identify underlying causes of behavior for these students.
- Disability awareness among staff and students will increase understanding and empathy for students with social, emotional, communication, and behavioral differences and motivate them to intervene if a student with a disability is involved in bullying. This includes helping staff and students understand that unusual and disruptive behaviors, including noises, rocking, and pacing, may be meeting a student's internal needs and are not addressable by behavioral interventions.
- Students with disabilities must be taught to avoid and respond to teasing and harassment as well as bullying. Staff may need to be trained on the differences among these three categories so they can teach students how to respond accordingly.
- Is there a need for specialized training or consultation for staff who will be working with the student?

Sample IEP Provisions to Consider - These provisions might be included in the Additional Information section or Section A of the Service Delivery Grid.

- Provide training to staff (either the entire staff or selected staff members involved with the particular student) on strategies or approaches necessary to avoid and/or respond to bullying.
- Provide ongoing consultation to the student's classroom teachers, or other direct service providers, from a professional (either in- or out-of-district) with expertise in avoiding and/or responding to bullying in the context of the student's particular needs and disabilities.
- Provide specific training and consultation to staff related to the student's particular disability.

### **III. Access to Resources and Services**

#### Whole School Considerations

- Does the school offer a range of flexible individualized supports and services (including individual and group counseling, social skill building, pragmatics groups, friendship groups, etc.) that are specifically designed to address issues related to bullying and to help students with disabilities participate in the school community?
- Are educators, specialists, and providers who interact with a student given time and opportunity to communicate regularly with each other so they can collaborate effectively and ensure that each knows and can reinforce in the classroom and throughout the day the specific skills the student is working on, adjust the school environment to meet the student's needs, and be alerted in a timely way should a bullying incident occur?
- Do specialists and providers require particular skills in order to provide consultation to educators and to help students avoid becoming targets and/or aggressors?
- Do group and individual services supporting students' safety plans teach the steps of safety planning?
- Are individual and small group interventions used in order to balance skill acquisition with opportunities for generalization?
- Do services use a range of approaches, adapted to a particular student's needs and known to be effective with this population, including repetition, role play, providing an array of scenarios to enhance generalization, and videotaping appropriate responses?
- Is there a need for additional counseling or skill-building?
- What supports and services outside of the classroom are necessary to build the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid bullying?
- Do referrals need to be made to outside agencies with particular expertise?

Sample IEP Provisions to Consider - These provisions might be included in the Additional Information section, the Transportation section, or Section C of the Service Delivery Grid.

- Provide a social skills group to help the student develop social competencies and gain skills necessary to identify a potential bullying situation and to respond appropriately. There are multiple types of social skills groups, and Teams should consider which of the following options are needed for the individual student:
  - Specifically designed social skills group
  - Social lunch group
  - Social recreation group
- Provide a communication skills/social pragmatics skills group. This group might serve several purposes:



- Help the student understand who to go to with a problem related to bullying, how to say what the problem is, and when to tell someone.
- Help the student develop the ability to express what she/he wants and needs, using both verbal and non-verbal expressions, as a way to avoid becoming a target when interacting with peers and to report bullying incidents to an adult.
- Provide direct one-to-one instruction using the specific techniques of a Social Story, role play, and/or other strategies identified by the IEP Team to teach the student how to respond in bullying situations. (Note that these techniques require specialized training and a small group setting with students of similar abilities and needs.)
- Provide direct one-to-one instruction by a school psychologist, speech and language pathologist, or other appropriate professional to help the student learn how to increase pragmatic skills (instruction in the social use of language) to reduce his/her vulnerability to bullying; such skills can include distinguishing between friendly overtures and attempts to bully, learning to read the nonverbal aspects of communication, and learning to discern and respond appropriately to bullying situations.
- Provide school-based counseling with the school psychologist, guidance counselor, or other appropriate professional, that uses cognitive-behavioral approaches that have shown promising success in addressing all domains of social functioning.
- Provide a Functional Behavioral Analysis and develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan that identifies target or aggressor behaviors and antecedents to these behaviors, and proposes interventions for teaching the student to reduce and/or avoid these behaviors.
- To the extent that the student is receiving Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services, consider having the student's target or aggressor behaviors addressed by these services.
- Provide assertiveness and/or self-advocacy training.
- Provide a bus monitor if a student is routinely a target or aggressor on the school bus.

#### **IV. Academic and Non-academic Activities**

##### Whole School Considerations

- Is the bullying prevention and intervention curriculum designed with the needs of students with disabilities in mind? (Refer below to discussion of the specialized instruction, modifications, and accommodations that IEP Teams should use to ensure students with disabilities can access the bullying prevention and intervention curriculum.)
- Is the emotional impact of the bullying prevention and intervention curriculum recognized? For many students with disabilities, discussing bullying may feel highly personal and uncomfortable. Educators should consider the potential emotional response to this material and collaborate with IEP Teams to consider accommodations that go beyond those listed in the IEP.
- Does instruction focus on understanding of and tolerance for disabilities? Instruction in each grade should teach about all types of disabilities, including those that are hidden or affect communication, social and behavioral skills, in

order to focus on respect and acceptance for differences and promote the development of empathy for students with all disabilities.

- Are educators prepared to help students report? Educators should be mindful that many students with disabilities will need special assistance in recognizing and reporting when they are in a bullying situation. In addition, monitoring and check-ins with students may be necessary in order to ensure that bullying incidents are addressed.
- Are students adequately supported during unstructured times? Opportunities for bullying increase during unstructured times, such as nonacademic and recreational activities, and in specialty classes, such as art and gym. Communication and collaboration among staff is critical for ensuring that students with disabilities are supported during these times.

#### Considerations for IEP Teams

- Have all of the student's needs for modifications and accommodations to access the general education bullying prevention and intervention curriculum been addressed?
- Is the student being provided with opportunities to build social skills and self-advocacy skills in the classroom and during unstructured parts of the day (e.g., lunch, recess, etc.)?
- Are the student's non-academic strengths (music, art, sports, etc.) being used as ways to bolster the student's self-esteem and social skills?
- What supports does the student need, and what corresponding changes need to take place in the activity the student is joining, for the student to participate successfully, without fear of bullying?
- Sample IEP Provisions to Consider - These provisions might be included in PLEP A, in the Testing Accommodations section, in Section B or Section C of the Service Delivery Grid, or in the Additional Information section.
- Modify the school's bullying prevention and intervention curriculum so that it is in a form that the student can understand. Review the curriculum with the student and ensure that the student understands the bullying prevention and intervention program that is in place in the school. Choose a setting and format that will be comfortable for the student, establish goals and ideas to reinforce concepts (and communicate these to parents), and re-teach each school year. Build the plan according to the student's strengths, teaching one concept at a time and using visual strategies/social stories/role-plays. Create a basic curriculum for the student that pulls the main concepts out of the school's bullying prevention and intervention curriculum and uses a vocabulary appropriate to the student's level.
- Provide supported and monitored opportunities for the students to practice developing social skills in a larger group setting within the general school population. This helps to reinforce the skills introduced and practiced in the small group setting.
- Instruct the student on how to use relaxation techniques to maintain self-control. In particular, teach strategies to remain relaxed and focused on the known facts of the incident despite feeling upset about the words and actions of the aggressor.
- Reinforce strategies to teach the student how to address bullying in a safe way, including walking away after they have responded to a bullying situation and accessing their "home base" or their "safe person."

- Provide specialized instruction to the student that includes the following components:
  - practice
  - reinforcement
  - extra practice
  - explicit instructions
  - generalization
- Develop a specific Behavioral Intervention Plan and ensure that classroom teachers are aware of specific strategies that they are to use.
- Construct assignments creatively based on a student's strengths and how she/he learns best; allow him/her to use his/her strengths to aid other students, thereby forming the basis for friendship and developing self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Allow extra time/consideration when completing communication-based assignments that encourage the student to express himself/herself.
- Provide non-academic and extracurricular opportunities for the student to demonstrate his/her strengths, practice social skills, and develop self-esteem.

## **V. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding To Bullying**

### Whole School Considerations

- Does school policy address the need for students with disabilities to experience the school as safe and supportive, have a clear understanding of what bullying is, know how to respond when incidents of bullying occur, and feel comfortable making reports of bullying?
- Is there a policy that adults check-in with students with disabilities to gather accurate information regarding safety issues?
- Does the policy direct adults identified as a student's "safe person" by the Team to be responsible for communicating the student's needs to the Team and/or school staff?
- Are general education staff responsible for collaborating with IEP Teams when a bullying incident occurs so that they understand any special considerations for the student(s) involved?
- Does the policy direct the principal or designee to consult with the IEP Team and/or "safe person" so that bullying investigations involving a student with disabilities consider specific supports that students may need to communicate effectively?
- Does the policy direct school personnel to consult with the IEP Team to consider the role a student's disability may have played in the behavior before disciplining or reporting an incident to the police?
- Is there a policy in place to consider with the IEP team any adjustments to the school environment that may be necessary (including increased adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying occurred) to enhance a student's sense of safety after being the target of a bullying incident?

### Considerations for IEP Teams

- Has the student received specialized instruction on the relevant policies and procedures contained in the school's bullying prevention and intervention plan?
- Have the necessary modifications been made for the student to be able to report bullying in a way that is consistent with his/her communication skills?

- Has a safety plan been developed for the student, if needed?

Sample IEP Provisions to Consider - These provisions might be included in the Additional Information section or in the Accommodations section of PLEP A or PLEP B.

- Provide direct instruction in all of the relevant policies and procedures contained in the school's bullying prevention and intervention plan.
- Modify the form that is used to report bullying to address communication, cognitive, or other barriers resulting from the student's disability.
- Identify specific individuals to whom the student knows she/he can immediately report incidents of bullying. Also, ensure that the student knows that every adult is an available reporter.
- Identify a "home base" (a place in the school where the student feels safe) with the student's input.
- Appoint a "safe person" chosen by the student and parents to perform several related functions.
- Develop a "safety plan" that includes the following:
  - "Checking in" with the student on a regular basis to determine if the student is feeling safe from bullying, has witnessed any episodes of bullying that are troubling him/her, or has engaged in any behaviors that might be seen as bullying.
  - Ensuring that necessary adjustments to the school environment, as determined by the Team, are made. Specific places, situations, and students identified by the student as potentially high-risk or vulnerable will be shared as well. Increased supervision, accompanied by an aide or a fellow student, or other such plans will be considered.
  - Communicating with all staff who have contact with the student the specifics of the IEP as they relate to bullying prevention and intervention, including the skills the student is working on, the special considerations when a bullying incident occurs, and the specific scripts the student is to use when confronted by bullying incidents.
- Identify issues to be considered in the event a student with a disability is involved in a bullying incident, including:
  - Concern about further exclusion from the social group.
  - Changing the seat of the aggressor rather than the target.
  - Concern about stigma, arising from unique needs related to their disability.
  - Difficulty with self-advocacy.
  - Other issues reflecting the social, communication, and other needs.
- Identify any necessary modifications to the code of student conduct that are appropriate based on the student's disabilities.

*Links to additional Education Law and Regulations in Massachusetts can be found:*

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-special-education#massachusetts-laws->

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71B>

Special Ed Regulations: <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/603-CMR-2800-special-education>

Department of Elementary and Education:  
<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/04/25/603cmr28.pdf>  
Many Topics: [www.wrightlaw.com](http://www.wrightlaw.com)  
*The summary of relevant laws or websites is not all inclusive*

**\*\*For more information, see “A Parent’s Guide to Special Education” found at:  
<https://fcsn.org/parents-guide>.**

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