

**Informational Online Resources For Families** - please click the blue link to be taken to the website for the organization listed. Resources are listed alphabetically.

## **Autism**

**Autism Society-** National organization with information, support, and resources. They provide advocacy, education, information and referral, support, and community at national, state and local levels.

**Autism Speaks** National organization with supports for families.

**Big Red Safety Box** is a free-of-charge toolkit for autism families to educate, raise awareness and provide simple tools that may assist in preventing, and responding to, wandering-related emergencies for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

### **Chicagoland Autism Connection**

**Easterseals in Joliet** has a **Parent's Raising Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Support Group** that meets via Zoom, email [erojas@joliet.easterseals.com](mailto:erojas@joliet.easterseals.com) for the ZOOM link invitation. They also offer a support group for Spanish speaking parents. Please email Alicia Hann at [alicia.hann@joliet.easterseals.com](mailto:alicia.hann@joliet.easterseals.com) for the link to join the zoom meeting.

**Northwestern University Reduce the Wait Project,** offers Autism Evaluations for children enrolled in Early Intervention. To learn more see their [program flyer](#) or text ENROLL to 847-750-3440.

**SPARK** Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research - has [information and webinars for parents](#) of children on the Autism Spectrum.

**The Autism Program of Illinois** is a statewide network of Autism services and support programs.

**TACA- The Autism Community in Action** National organization that offers support and resources for families including information on local chapters, info for newly diagnosed, conferences, therapies, and information on Autism. Has information in English and other languages. The Illinois chapter of TACA has a facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TACAIllinois/>

## **Child Development & Early Intervention**

**CDC Learn the Signs Act Early** has a free online milestone tracker for ages 0-5, as well as resources and information on children's development from age birth to 5.

**The Early Intervention Clearinghouse** has information to support all children and families in EI. They also have a [facebook page](#), a [newsletter for families](#), and a [blog](#) with resources & information on the EI system.

**The Early Intervention Research Group (EIRG)** offers many research studies on child development topics for young children and families. Click here to [view all of their current research studies](#).

[First Words Project](#) is an online resource for parents with downloadable resources, videos, & information to support their child's development from birth-24 months.

[Healthy Steps Early Learning Resources](#) for parent and caregivers

[The Northwestern Infant and Child Development Center](#) invites parents and children from newborn to age 6 to participate in research studies on how babies learn so much so fast! Click [here to sign up](#) to participate in the study.

[The Illinois Department of Early Childhood](#) Illinois state agency to unite all early childhood services.

[Zero to three https://www.zerotothree.org/](https://www.zerotothree.org/) has a [Baby Steps newsletter](#) for parents and caregivers that delivers interesting articles and resources to your inbox. Also check out the [Zero to Three facebook page](#).

[Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#) is an informational resource for families with young children. They cover topics such as Early Childhood Development, Brain Development, Self-Regulation, and Stress.

## **Child Care and Preschool:**

[IL Cares for Kids website](#) was created to support all IL families with children from birth through school age. On this site you can search for preschool programs in your area.

[Child Care Resource and Referral](#) is a local resource located in Joliet to help families in Will, Grundy, Kendall and Kankakee counties find child care and apply for child care assistance.

[Catholic Charities in Joliet](#) has a [Head Start & Early Headstart](#) program for children in Will County

[Caregiver Connections](#) statewide organization that supports child care providers, families and communities to build capacity in nurturing positive relationships and support healthy social-emotional development.

## **Disability Resources & Support**

[The Arc of Illinois](#) offers resources and information, supports families in their individual advocacy efforts, and trains and educates people with disabilities, families and professionals. They also offer:

- [Assistive technology funds](#) - toward the purchase of assistive technology for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities
- [Advocacy programs](#)
- [webinars and workshops for families & professionals](#)
- [a newsletter with the latest information on disability events, policy, & programs](#)

[The Division of Specialized Care for Children, DSCC](#), supports families and children with special healthcare needs such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, hearing loss and technology-dependent children

requiring in-home nursing care, as well as other conditions. They now have an [online referral system](#) families can complete to learn more.

[Family Resource Center on Disabilities](#) is Chicago's Metropolitan Area Parent Training and Information Center and supports families in 8 IL counties including Will & Grundy Counties. FRCD offers IEP resources and guidance to parents navigating the landscape of special education. Call 312-939-3513, email: [info@frcd.org](mailto:info@frcd.org), or go to the [FRCD facebook page](#)

[Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center](#) supports families in 94 IL counties including LaSalle and Kankakee Counties to provide education, support, resources, IEP coaching, and community linkages for families navigating the Special Education system. They can be contacted toll-free: 1-866-4FMPTIC (1-866-436-7842), or [FMPTIC facebook page](#).

[IL ABLE "Achieving a Better Life Experience" Accounts](#) give people with disabilities and their families greater financial independence while preserving benefits.

[Morgans Wonderland](#) located in San Antonio, Texas is the only Ultra Accessible theme park designed with individuals with special needs in mind. Children 2 & under and guests with special needs are free. Their [Project Angel Fare](#) program was created to help financially support families to attend, they also have a [facebook page](#).

[Service Inc of Illinois](#) supports families and individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities or delays in more than 22 counties in Northern Illinois. Services provided include service coordination and advocacy services, which are free of charge.

- They work with children age [0-3 through the IL Early Intervention Program](#)
- Provide [service coordination for those age 3 through the lifespan](#).
- They help families register for the [PUNS \(Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services\)](#) list for children diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, or Traumatic Brain Injury.

[SIBS - Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters](#) is an organization supporting siblings of a person with a disability. Learn more about [sibshops for young siblings](#).

[Special Needs Mom Squad](#) is an organization in Lombard that offers resources and supports for families with Special Needs.

## **Domestic Violence**

[Groundwork Domestic Violence Program](#) (Will County) 24-Hour Hotline Number: (815) 729-1228, For services in Spanish, call 815-729-0930 ex 1439. If in immediate danger call 911. All services are free and confidential, no income or insurance necessary, and services are available regardless of immigration status. They offer emergency shelter, individual & group counseling for adults & children (in English & Spanish), Legal Advocacy at Will & Grundy Courthouses, Medical Advocacy at Will & Grundy area hospitals.

**Breaking Away** – Domestic violence support (Grundy County) 815-942-0336. This number calls the Grundy County Sheriff's Department. Choose option 7 to be connected to a dispatcher and let them know you would like to be contacted by Breaking Away, leave your name and number and they will contact you. Provides Free and confidential services such as short term, temporary shelter, counseling, and advocacy programs.

**Harbor House** - 815-932-5800 24-Hour Hotline (Kankakee County) Harbor House supports survivors of domestic violence and their families through free and confidential services including legal advocacy, counseling, emergency shelter and more.

**Safe Journeys** - 815-673-1555 (LaSalle County) Free and confidential support line, safe shelter, court advocacy, counseling & case management.

**Clove Alliance** - 24-Hour Hotline - 815-932-3322 locations in Kankakee & Watseka. They provide victims of sexual assault and abuse with crisis and counseling services, legal advocacy, and support.

**Love is respect National Domestic Violence hotline** 1-866-331-9474/tty: 1-866-331-8453 (24/7) Text: LOVEIS to 22522 Live Chat (7 days/week, 5pm-3am EST)

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** - 1-800-799-7233 (24/7) text START to 1-800-799-7233

## **Food Support & Feeding Concerns:**

**Chicago Feeding Group** is dedicated to supporting families with children who struggle to eat. They offer workshops for parents and have several **Free on-demand webinars**.

**The Northern Illinois Food Bank** has a list online of upcoming Mobil Food Pantries and Pop-up Markets listed monthly by county. Everyone is welcome – no ID or referral is needed.

**My Pantry Express** is an online food pantry that gives those in need of food assistance the opportunity to shop once a week for a variety of free grocery items. Items can be picked up locations in Will, Boone, DeKalb, DuPage, Lake and Winnebago Counties. No income or residency restrictions.

**Find Food IL Community Food map** allows you to search by zip code for Food pantries, School meal sites, grocery stores, and SNAP & WIC offices.

## **Hearing Loss/Vision Loss**

**Illinois Hands and Voices**, <https://www.ilhandsandvoices.org/> supports families with children who have a hearing loss. Check out their website to receive updates and new blog posts.

**Illinois School for the Visually Impaired has a listing of recorded zoom webinars**. These webinars are free for families and professionals who are interested in learning more about children's eye conditions. Also check out their **facebook page** for info.

## **Housing and Primary Needs:**

[2-1-1 is a 24/7 crisis resource line](#) that families can call to get connected to local support services and crisis intervention resources in their area.

[Community Clothing Closet](#) at Faith Bible Church in Joliet has FREE gently used clothing for infants, children, and adults. By appointment only call 815-723-3212

[Joliet Township](#) offers supportive services such as transportation and general assistance to township residents. [Click here to learn about their car repair assistance program.](#)

[Diaper Depot](#) is a program of United Way of Will County. Families in need can pick up FREE pre-packaged diaper packets once a month from one of three locations in Will County.

[Will County Center for Community Concerns](#) in Joliet has many supports for low income families. See below for information on some of their programs or call 815-722-0722:

- [LIHEAP](#)
- [Tax Preparation](#)
- [Case Management services](#)
- [Scholarship Program for low income students](#)

## **Mental Health/Social Emotional Development**

[9-8-8 is a mental health and suicide/crisis hotline](#) that is free, confidential and available 24/7 to anyone experiencing mental health related distress.

[Big Heart World](#) <https://www.bigheartworld.org/big-heart-family-guide/> helps families to learn about social emotional learning. They share content each month, which will empower you to teach your children about themselves, others & relationships.

The Child Mind Institute has created a short [video series on helping young children manage anxiety](#) <https://childmind.org/nixieandnimbo/>. Kids can go on a Journey with Nixie and Nimbo to see how thoughts and actions affect how we feel. The [Child Mind Institute](#) <https://childmind.org/> is an online resource for children's mental health information.

[Easterseals in Joliet](#) offers Free children's mental health screenings by for children age 1-17 years. Contact Michele Poskanka at 815-927-5482 or [mposkanka@joliet.easterseals.com](mailto:mposkanka@joliet.easterseals.com).

[Lurie Children's Little Lessons App](#), found on the apple app store, offers parents and caregivers information about behavioral concerns in toddlers and preschoolers, what the symptoms are and ways to manage them. Created by the [Lurie Children's Little Ones Program](#).

**NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness** **1-800-950-NAMI (6264)** or [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org) This helpline is available M-F, 10 am–8 pm, ET for peer-support providing information, resource referrals and support to people living with a mental health condition, their family members and caregivers, mental health providers and the public.

**NAMI Will-Grundy** is a local Chapter with resources and support related to mental health.

**Thriveworks and the City of Joliet** are working together to support the mental health of all Joliet residents by providing **No Cost Mental health counseling and Psychiatric services**. Call 855-511-0149 to set up an in person or virtual appointment or [click here](#) for info.

**The Living Room Project** provides a safe, inviting, home-like atmosphere where individuals can process crisis events, and learn and apply wellness strategies which may prevent future crisis events. Individuals seeking services at LRP's are screened for safety by Qualified Mental Health Professionals upon entry and exit. Trinity Services offered a Living Room in Joliet and Orland Park. To access a list of locations statewide, go to <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=126349>

## **Parenting Support:**

**Be Strong Families** offers webinars for parents to help them stay strong and positive for themselves and their children. Past webinars are also available to view. Click the link for more information or to register.

**The Jump Start Home visiting Parental Training Program** is a parenting enrichment program offered in Will, Grundy, Kankakee and LaSalle counties. It is a free program that offers parent education and family support services throughout pregnancy until your child is 3 years old. **Families can enroll online**. For more information check out their [facebook page](#). See their [program flyer](#).

**Aunt Martha's Healthy Families Program** in Cook, Will, & Kankakee Counties has a home visiting Program to support new and expectant parents. Click the link for more information.

**The Will County AOK (All Our Kids) Network** hosts monthly meetings for professionals working with children & families, community members, and parents. They have a [resource guide](#) with information on many local resources for families.

**Maryville Crisis Nursery 24 hr helpline - (773) 205-3637**. A temporary emergency shelter for newborns through age six for up to a 72 hour stay. Provides free short-term care for parents in distress and experiencing a crisis. Located at 6650 W. Irving Park in Chicago.

**Safe Families for Children** is a network of families who volunteer to care for your children so you can get back on your feet with the goal to keep families together.

## **Pregnancy and Postpartum Support for parents:**

**Catholic Charities in Joliet** has a [Doula Program](#) for birthing support and an [Expectant Mother's Initiative](#)

[Postpartum Support International](#) - **1-800-944-4773. Call or text.** Text en Español: 971-203-7773. A non-emergency helpline to assist with support and resources.

[National Maternal Mental Health Hotline](#) – **call or text 1-833-TLC - MAMA (1-833-852-6262)** provides 24/7, free, confidential support for pregnant and new moms in English & Spanish.

[NorthShore's Perinatal Depression Program](#) **Crisis line - 1-866-364-MOMS (6667)** Free, confidential hotline is available 24 hours a day for information and support.

[Post-Partum Support Group](#) at Silver Oaks Hospital in Joliet. Call 844-580-5000 for more info

[Pregnancy Resource Centers](#) locations in **Morris, Joliet, Kankakee, and throughout the state.** They offer diapers, wipes, clothing up to age 2, formula, and more for any family in need. Go to the website to get contact information and hours for their locations. The Grundy County location has a facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/GrundyCountyPRC>

[Mother's Milk Drop-off Depot](#) is now open at Will County Health Department. For more information, please contact the Will County Health Department's WIC program at 815-727-8524.

[Beyond the Baby Blues](#) hosts 6 week therapeutic virtual support group for women who are experiencing anxiety or depression during pregnancy or after giving birth. For more information see their [flyer](#).

## **Respite:**

[The Illinois Respite Coalition](#) has a Free statewide respite hotline. If you are in need of respite services to support you with the care of your child with special needs please call 866-455-7377.