



# Community Connection Newsletter

resources for the community

June 10, 2020



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June 4, 2020

Dear Pathlight Community:

In our country we continue to see the tragic results of our country's legacy of racism and oppression of African Americans and people of color. The savage imagery of George Floyd's death is a not an isolated event. There is also Ahmaud Arbery being gunned down while jogging, Breonna Taylor shot by police in her own home and many others - Antwan Rose, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, the list is long and unnerving. This is not something that we can witness and be silent about.

As an organization that got its start in fighting for civil rights of people with disabilities, using our voices to speak out against injustice is at the core of our mission.

I fully believe that Pathlight's staff and care provider diversity is one of our strengths, but also an area where we as an organization need to do significant work to get to where we want to be: an organization where people feel empowered and listened to and can flourish personally and professionally.

I can't tell you that I know exactly how to do that. But I do know that the first step is to reach out to our leaders of color and other staff who are passionate about working for racial equality and justice to inform our next steps. We have talented and committed people to help us move forward.

One of the priorities in our strategic plan is to be the premier employer in our industry. And a primary focus of accomplishing that is to work on our organizational diversity and cultural competency. I am making three commitments to you, personally and on behalf of the Pathlight Leadership to fight racism and support diversity:

- We will listen
- We will educate
- We will act

Bishop Desmond Tutu said, "If you are neutral in the situation of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." We are not neutral. I want you to know that your Pathlight colleagues and I stand with you against oppression.

Thank you,

Ruth Banta  
Executive Director

## IMPORTANT UPDATES THIS WEEK

Springfield Public Schools announce plans for next academic year, June 10 **NEW**

Early Intervention (EI) Services during COVID-19, ENGLISH, ESPAÑOL, June 9 **NEW**

Governor Baker Files COVID-19 Data Collection Bill, June 9 **NEW**

Phase II Reopening Order, June 6 **NEW**

Regulating Gatherings Throughout the Commonwealth Order, June 6 **NEW**

Visitation policies for DDS run residential programs, June 6 **NEW**

Phase II of Reopening Massachusetts Set to Begin on June 8 Press Release, June 6 **NEW**

COVID Publications and Resources from The Institute for Community Inclusion **NEW AND AMAZING!**

Reopening: Higher Education **NEW**

Guidance on Reopening: Sector-specific protocols and best practices **NEW**

## IMPORTANT ONGOING RESOURCES

Western Massachusetts COVID-19 Case Numbers

Mass.gov: state COVID-19 info, updated daily

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH)

Information and resources to help DDS families.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Essential services during Stay at Home Order

Domestic Violence Resources

Call 211: informational and referral hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days. Interpreter services available in multiple languages.

Massachusetts Crisis Hotlines

Look4help, extensive resources in Franklin and Hampshire Counties

Massachusetts Advocates for Children Hotlines: ENGLISH 617-357-8431 x 3224, ESPAÑOL: 617-357-8431 x 3237

## Small Businesses

General business guidance from Mass.gov

## Economic Impact Payments

Social Security Economic Impact Payments to Rep Payees June 1

## Job Loss/Unemployment

COVID-19 and Unemployment Benefits - from MassLegalHelp, update May 29.

Full unemployment information: call (617) 626-6338 to request weekly benefits, daily from 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. File a claim online.

Attend a Virtual town hall this week to learn about how to file for benefits, including Spanish language options.

Pathlight Job Opportunities

## HEALTH SERVICES

### Masshealth Information, 800-841-2900

**PCA services:** MassHealth PCA Consumers who have unfulfilled PCA hours and would like to be connected to a local Home Health Agency that can fill those hours, should call MassOptions at (1-844-422-6277) for live support.

**MassHealth Prescription services:** MassHealth is allowing early refills and 90 day supplies. Contact your pharmacist to order medications.

**Telehealth services:** Telehealth services are covered by MassHealth. Discuss with your provider for more information.

Step-by-Step Guide to Using TeleMedicine

MassHealth Telehealth Services for Behavioral Health

### General Health Related Information

Health Coverage Helpline: 800-272-4232

Disability COVID-19 Healthcare Support Advocacy Hotline 800-626-4959

### Mental Health Resources

Franklin County Crisis Services: 413.774.5411 (CSO)  
Athol/N. Quabbin Crisis Services: 978.249.3141 (CSO)  
Hampshire County Crisis Services: 413.586.5555 (CSO)  
Berkshire County Crisis Hotline: 1-800-252-0227 (Brien Ctr)

Autism Connections, Family Empowerment, Whole Children, Milestones, Whole Selves, Adult Family Care, Shared Living

[Western MA Mental Health Resources](#), Very complete resource organized by Community Action

[Mass General Hospital Mental Health Resources related to COVID19](#)

[NAMI \(National Alliance on Mental Health\) Navigating a Crisis](#): You can find the ESP serving your area, by calling 1-877-382-1609 and entering your zip code.

**Samaritans** is continuing operations 24/7, as always. Call or text their 24/7 helpline any time at 877-870-4673.

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-8255

## HEALTH DISABILITY RIGHTS

[Suggested Visitation Policy Statement](#) from the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry

Disability Law Center's recent [letter](#) to the MA Commissioner of Public Health regarding reasonable accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

[Civil Rights, HIPPA, and the Coronavirus Disease](#)

COVID-19 COMMUNICATION RIGHTS [TOOLKIT](#)  
This toolkit: (1) explains your communication rights; (2) provides tips on advocating for them, and (3) has an accommodation request form you can bring to the hospital.

## IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU CARE FOR IS SICK

[Should I be tested?](#) (from Mass.gov)

[Guidance on Interpreting COVID-19 Tests](#)

[CDC Testing Information](#)

[Getting Tested Social Story](#)

[Testing Site Locator](#)

[Caring for someone sick at home](#), from the CDC

[Plain language medical information form](#)

[Healthcare Passport](#)

Critical Care Covid-19 [Communication Chart](#) to help patients communicate in hospital and critical care

Plain language [sample advocacy letter](#) about patients with

intellectual or developmental disabilities having a support person with them when they are in the hospital.

[COVID-19 Disability Form](#) to have ready for the hospital to show that an individual needs 1-1 assistance.

## DOCUMENTS FOR SELF ADVOCATES

[A Self-Advocates Guide to Covid-19: Green Mountain Self-Advocates](#) have created this toolkit about the Coronavirus written in plain language. **UPDATED**

[Plain Language Coronavirus Glossary](#)

[What is the Census?](#) A plain language document.

## SOCIAL STORIES

A wide variety of [Social Stories](#) from *Autism Little Learners*

[This social story, made for children under 7](#) and in many languages, communicates important prevention information about the coronavirus without focusing on fear.

## SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

[Western Mass listing of school lunch programs: note that there may be updates to this information.](#) **UPDATED**

## RESOURCES IN OTHER LANGUAGES

[Una guía paso a paso para usar la telemedicina](#)

[Muestra de Agenda de Reunion Virtual de IEP](#)

[Hacer un plan médico durante el COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Fact Sheets in Multiple Languages](#): These materials are reviewed and vetted by physicians and medical school faculty members at the Harvard hospitals and are created in collaboration with Harvard Health Publishing.

[Guía de Asistencia para Beneficios de Desempleo por Pandemia](#)

[Recursos para familias de niños con necesidades especiales que están confinadas en casa](#)

[Federación para Niños con Necesidades Especiales](#)

[Información de COVID-19 Por y Para Personas con Discapacidades](#)



Mass Advocates for Children: [facebook.com/groups/MACEspanol/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MACEspanol/)

[Special Education Family Resource Toolkit](#) from the Department of Education.

<https://switchboardta.org/blog/a-round-up-of-multilingual-resources-on-covid-19/>

## FOOD PANTRIES & OTHER RELATED SUPPORT

Did you get a P-EBT card in the mail for your DTA funds? Click [HERE](#) for instructions on how to use it.

Find a food bank or food distribution site near you [HERE](#), or contact the Food Bank of Western MA at 413-247-9738.

[Extra SNAP Benefits](#): Additional COVID-19 benefits. Call 877-382-2363.

If you or your family is facing hunger right now, Project Bread wants to help. Call the Food Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333

## DELIVERY SERVICES/PICK UP

[Amherst Food Delivery](#)

[Massachusetts Food Delivery](#): Farm fresh food delivered to your door, SNAP discounts

[Buy Local Food/Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture](#) - all in western Massachusetts. 413.665.7100

[Instacart](#)

## SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS

[Attorney General Advisory on Residential Evictions](#)

[Local Emergency Shelters in Western MA](#) during COVID-19, including options for isolation.

[Community Action](#): Call the Community Resources and Advocacy program at 413-475-1570 or 413-582-4237.

RAFT- [Residential Assistance for Families in Transition](#)

## VETERAN SERVICES

What Veteran's Need to Know about Coronavirus, from the [US Department of Veteran's Affairs](#).

## HEAT AND ELECTRIC SERVICES

National Grid: call customer service for COVID-19 programs, 1-800-322-3223.

Eversource; Learn more [HERE](#).

Las respuestas a las preguntas frecuentes están disponibles en español.

[Fuel assistance](#): Call 413-552-1548 (press 1 for English, 2 for Spanish and then 4 to speak with a live person).

## INTERNET/PHONE DISCOUNTS

MassHealth Directory of Internet and Phone discount programs.

## THE CENSUS

What is the [Census](#)? A plain language document.

[Complete the Census online](#)

## GENERAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

[Strategies to support teens/young adults with autism during COVID-19](#), from Harvard Health Publishing

[Mass Advocates for Children](#)

[Greater MA Special Needs Events](#)

[COVID-19 Resources for families](#): includes excellent information that may not be included elsewhere.

[Family toolkit](#) from the Department of Education

[Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#): excellent toolkit with specific need relations resources

## LEGAL RESOURCES

[Disability Law Center](#): Know your rights

Mass Legal Help: A variety of [resources](#) about your rights during the COVID-19 breakout.

## TRANSPORTATION

[Registry of Motor Vehicles](#): general information.

PVTA: [Service Update](#). Call 413-781-7882 for more information. **NEW**



## CHILDCARE

[Massachusetts Child Care](#), June 1

[Mass Options](#): MassOptions connects elders, individuals with disabilities and their caregivers with agencies and organizations that can best meet their needs, including connections to respite help.

## EDUCATION RELATED

[Springfield Public Schools announce plans for next academic year](#), June 10 **NEW**

[Early Intervention \(EI\) Services during COVID-19](#) **ENGLISH, ESPAÑOL**, June 9 **NEW**

[Zoom Meeting Presentation for Special Education Directors](#), June 9 **NEW**

[DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update](#), June 8 **NEW**

[Supplemental Guidance on Summer 2020 Special Education Services](#), June 8 **NEW**

[Autism Home School](#), Online Courses for High School. Registration June 14, class starts June 22

[Moving Assessments Forward](#), May 20

[Massachusetts Preschool Remote Learning Guidance & Prerequisite Content Standards](#), May 15

[PBS Learning Media](#)

[Sample Virtual IEP Agenda](#)

[Remote Learning Record](#)

[Remote Learning Plan](#)

[Turning 3 and Transition during COVID-19](#)

[Subscribe to the DESE Commissioner updates](#)

[SEPAC Best Practices During Covid-19](#)

[WGBH - Distance Learning Center Tools](#): Well organized and not overwhelming!

[Family Resource Toolkit from the Department of Education](#): multiple languages

[MatchUs](#), part of MFOFC, is working with families and educators ANYWHERE to support 1:1 conversations on how best to support students at home.

## ADVOCACY/STUDIES

Email [Congress](#) to Include the Disability Community in

COVID-19 Relief Bills - it takes just 5 minutes. The U.S. House of Representatives has passed legislation that includes many of our top asks – and now the Senate must act! **ONGOING & IMPORTANT**

[The Arc](#): legislative priorities related to COVID-19

[Disability Law Center's recent letter to the MA Commissioner of Public Health regarding reasonable accommodations for Persons with Disabilities](#)

Action needed to keep remote services for students with disabilities. (202) 408-9514, National Disability Rights Network, [Link](#)

[UCONN STUDY](#): Understanding Stress and Personal Well-Being Among Primary Caregivers of Children Aged 6 to 18 During COVID-19 Pandemic

[Boston University's The Road Ahead Study](#), focuses on autistic high school students graduating with a regular HS diploma.

## WEBINARS: UPCOMING

June 11, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., [Basic Rights Transition Planning](#), from [FCSN](#) **NEW**

June 11, 8:00 p.m. -8:45 p.m., [MAC Weekly Chat: New state guidance for Summer Special Ed Services: In-person and Remote ESY during COVID-19](#). This is a chance to learn about the safety requirements and options for providing extended school year services. **NEW**

June 16, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., [Children Transitioning from Early Intervention to Special Education During COVID-19, from Family Empowerment](#). If your child is turning 3 between March and December of 2020, this webinar will provide you with updated information on what you might expect from providers and school districts, the most current DESE guidance and resources for Remote Learning for this age group. View the event on the Family Empowerment [Facebook page](#) as the Zoom details are available. **NEW**

June 18, 1:00 p.m., [HomeWorks: A model of independent living for individuals with disabilities](#), from MFOFC

June 24, 2:00 p.m., [COVID's Impact on Person-Centered](#)



Autism Connections, Family Empowerment, Whole Children, Milestones, Whole Selves, Adult Family Care, Shared Living

Arrangements: Parent Panel Discussion; How have person-centered living arrangements fared during the COVID-19 crisis? from MFOFC and partners. **NEW**

## WEBINARS-PREVIOUS: RECORDINGS/PRESENTATIONS

Turning 18, What you need to know in a nutshell, from Family Empowerment with Frederick Misilo Esq., Fletcher Tilton PC. English Powerpoint, Spanish Powerpoint, English Recording, use password 2z?n8dS7. **NEW**

Charting the LifeCourse for Transition, Laurel Peltier, May 12, Family Empowerment

Becoming Person Centered with Cheryl Ryan Chan, May 6, Family Empowerment

Special Education and Remote Learning, May 5, Pathlight's Nancy Farnsworth

## SUPPORT GROUPS/CONTACT A SPECIALIST

▶ Pathlight Open Office Hours: Meet virtually with a specialist to discuss the topics of your choice, including transitioning out of high school during Covid-19, virtual IEP meetings, remote learning, behavioral challenges, and managing isolation. Hours available: Sunday mornings Facebook event, Register, 9:30-11:00 a.m.; Thursday mornings Facebook event, Register, 9:30-11:00 a.m.; Thursday evenings Facebook event, Register, 8:30-10p.m.

Autism Support Group, hosted by A Spectrum of Difference (Athol). This Group is held via Zoom on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each Month.

Parent Life Coaching available from Jewish Family & Children's Service. Set up a free phone call or video meeting for advice on creating a schedule for your loved one or troubleshoot challenging behaviors during school and day program closures.

## CONFERENCE

International Fragile X Conference. The fully virtual conference takes place over four days across three months: May 29-30, June 27, and July 22.

Massachusetts Down Syndrome Virtual Conference: Recorded presentations available starting in mid-June.

## YOUNG ADULT ACTIVITIES

AANE events for June **UPDATED**

Youthworks, MassHire Franklin/Hampshire

Whole Children/Milestones Rec activities **NEW CLASSES**

## RECREATION

The new rules of visiting a pool this summer with coronavirus in mind, from the *Washington Post*. **NEW**

From Camping To Dining Out: Here's How Experts Rate The Risks Of 14 Summer Activities, from *NPR*. **NEW**

Disney World Is Going to Be Different When It Reopens – Here Are the Major Changes, from *Travel + Leisure*. **NEW**

With trails opening, is it safe—or ethical—to go hiking this summer? from *National Geographic*. **NEW**

## FUN THINGS!

Boston Symphony Orchestra: Introductions to instruments and instrument investigations from BSO musicians.

Screening of the international award-winning film *Kelly's Hollywood*, with Mass Families Organizing for Change, June 12. **NEW**

NY Times events: Opening Night, THURSDAY, JUNE 11 - Celebrate the Broadway season that was (and will be).

Cosmic Kids Yoga

Ludlow Zoo Opens with Restrictions

Boston Museums: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts

The Bridge Family Center, June Calendar of virtual activities

Valuing our Children in Athol, June Calendar of virtual activities

## PARENT/CAREGIVER SELF-CARE

Virtual Calm Room, Created by Mia J. Gray, School Adjustment Counselor at Patrick E. Bowe Elementary School Chicopee, MA

June 30, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., Let's Get Away, Together! (A six-part armchair travel series for caregivers (and up to one guest). Each week "virtual" travelers will visit a new part of the world, incorporating storytelling, music, poetry writing, and/or a simple craft.



**Our team is using a variety of technology to stay connected to you - email is our first choice. If we return your phone call our calls may show as restricted in some cases, so please check your messages if you are expecting to hear from us.**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## How can we help you?

Contact any of us at the Pathlight programs and we will do our best to direct you to resources and help you with your request and needs. Email [info@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:info@pathlightgroup.org), [familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org) or [autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org). If you don't have email, call the program managers listed on our team directory on page 7.

Please share this newsletter with families and other individuals you think may need help.

 Life can be tough,  
but so are you,  
and we can help.

Please note that all resource information is subject to change as the situation and supports or activities evolve. If you have questions, want to help, or need help, email us at the above addresses and we will be glad to assist and guide you.



### Do's and Don'ts of wearing a mask

As the state reopens and masks continue to be worn to protect us all, here is a reminder about the Do's and Don'ts of wearing a fabric, non-medical mask from the World Health Organization.