



Community Connection Newsletter

resources for the community

June 28, 2020



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THE PATHLIGHT COMMUNITY

Whole Children and Milestones Recreation announce summer sessions!

The first summer session for Whole Children and Milestones Rec classes is all set and will run from July 6 to August 8. With our new online membership model, the cost will be \$100/student for the session. Once a member, a student can take as many virtual classes as they like.

We are also offering a separate online Summer Theater class on July 9, 16, 23, and 30, from 4:00 - 4:45pm for \$40, with a tentative plan to hold the last class in person.

Summer Session 2 will run from August 17-September 19. The schedule for that session will be released by late July, and be similar to Session 1.

Learn more about the specific classes offered and find instructions on how to enroll on the [Whole Children website](#). We're looking forward to spending the summer with you! **NEW**

IMPORTANT UPDATES

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to Hold Remote Meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 2020. The public can watch the meeting live-streamed. **NEW**

[Baker-Polito Administration Unveils \\$275M COVID-19 Economic Relief Package to Promote Equity and Economic Growth](#), June 26 **NEW**

[DESE Back to School Guidance](#), June 25 **NEW**

[CDC's Suggestions for youth/summer camps](#), June 25 **NEW**

[#DontCutUsOut: Act Now To Ensure Funding For Services For Adults With I/DD During Re-Opening.](#)

Adults with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, or other intellectual and developmental disabilities served by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will lose services if funding and policies don't meet the requirements of the re-opening period and thereafter. The campaign **#DontCutUsOut** is to ensure that our safety net continues. **YOU CAN HELP!** (from the Arc) **NEW**

[Coronavirus Update for Individuals and Families](#) (letter from DDS Commissioner: DDS Day Program Reopening Efforts, June 24 **NEW**)

[Yale and NBA partner to study efficacy of new COVID-19 test](#), June 22, **NEW**

[DESE weekly update](#), June 22 **NEW**

[Interactive Map of testing sites](#)

Forms to have on hand for hospital admission of someone with a disability:

- [DPH June 6 guidance](#) (includes the following language: "companions for patients with intellectual and/or physical disabilities are not considered visitors")
- [Covid-19 Disability form](#)
- [Communication First form](#)

[COVID Publications and Resources from The Institute for Community Inclusion](#)

IMPORTANT ONGOING RESOURCES

[Western Massachusetts COVID-19 Case Numbers](#)

[Mass.gov: state COVID-19 info](#), updated daily

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

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.

Manufacturing and CNC Machining: Info and Application
Sessions from MassHire: July 13 and August 3, training starts
in September **NEW**

Pathlight Job Opportunities **NEW**

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)

Western MA Mental Health Resources, Very complete
resource organized by Community Action

Mass General Hospital Mental Health Resources related to
COVID 19

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

Forms to have on hand for hospital admission of someone
with a disability **NEW:**

- DPH June 6 guidance (includes the following
language: "companions for patients with intellectual
and/or physical disabilities are not considered visitors")
- Covid-19 Disability form
- Communication First Form

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

Forms to have on hand for hospital admission of someone with a disability **NEW**:

- DPH June 6 guidance (includes the following language: "companions for patients with intellectual and/or physical disabilities are not considered visitors")
- Covid-19 Disability form
- Communication First form

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

Outdoor visitation policy

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

https://www.usa.gov/espanol/coronavirus **NEW**

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index-sp.html **NEW**

Mass Advocates for Children Para familias que hablan español

Preguntas y respuestas sobre el cierre de la escuela COVID-19 Reuniones del equipo del IEP **NEW**

Servicios de intervención temprana durante COVID-19 **NEW**

Reuniones del equipo del IEP 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

Special Education Family Resource Toolkit from the Department of Education.

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



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

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

A comparison of the top grocery delivery services, from The Penny Hoarder

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

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

"When I respond to the census, I count!" YOU COUNT TOO! Video from the Center for New Americans **AMAZING**

What is the Census? A plain language document.

Complete the Census online

GENERAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

Franklin and Hampshire County Resources from Community Action **NEW**

National Geographic Coronavirus Special Edition, June 26 **NEW**

Does Air Conditioning Spread the Coronavirus? from NBC News, June 26 **NEW**

Fighting Viruses: How Do Vaccines Work? from Caltech Matters, June 25 **NEW**

New Voting Resources from The Arc, June 25 **NEW**

Franklin County/North Quabbin COVID-19 Wi-Fi and Personal Care Resources. Includes HotSpot and charging locations, public bathrooms, public hand washing stations, Food/shelter/shower locations, Narcon info, Helplines. June 16

Wheelchair and Assistive Technology Users: Precautions for COVID-19

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.

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

[DESE Back to School Guidance, June 25](#) **NEW**

[New COvid-19 and School Closure Resources from MAC,](#)
NEW

[COVID-19 School Closure Q&A: IEP Team Meetings,](#) from Mass Advocates for Children. **NEW**

[DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update, June 15](#) **NEW**

[Zoom Meeting Presentation for Special Education Directors,](#) June 12 **NEW**

Early Intervention (EI) Services during COVID-19 [ENGLISH,](#)
[ESPAÑOL,](#)

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

[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](#)

[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

WEBINARS: UPCOMING

June 30, 7:30 p.m., [Emergency Care Planning During COVID-19 for Parents and Caregivers.](#) The Massachusetts DPH Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs is pleased to sponsor this informative live event for parents & caregivers. This free webinar will provide practical, easy-to-follow strategies to help families be ready if a parent or caregiver should become hospitalized and someone else needs to care for their loved one in this time of COVID-19. **NEW**

June 30, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., ["Why Culture Matters" Family Support Group Facilitators Summit on Race & Family Values,](#) with the Parent Professional Advocacy League of Massachusetts. In our era of "Black Lives Matter," this special PPAL Summit will examine the roles and responsibilities of support group facilitators when addressing culturally specific issues. **NEW**

June 30, 12:00 p.m., [Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Autism Spectrum Disorder.](#) Eileen Crehan, Ph.D., will orient listeners to concepts and terms, and the state of science relating to sexual orientation and gender identity in autism. Resources on sexuality and relationship education programs will be shared for self-advocates, parents, and clinicians to aid in better supporting autistic individuals. **NEW**



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

July 1, 1:00 p.m., ASD Support: The Ins and Outs of Dating, from Autism Research Institute. Tune in to learn strategies for individuals on the autism spectrum interested in the ins and outs of dating. **NEW**

July 1, 6:00 p.m. English; 7:00 p.m. Spanish, Understanding & Addressing Children's Well-being During COVID-19, from Community Care Alliance. Flyer **NEW**

WEBINARS-PREVIOUS: RECORDINGS/PRESENTATIONS

Early Intervention and Turning Three During COVID-19, June 16, Family Empowerment, Autism Connections, Pathlight's Nancy Farnsworth, and Deirdre Morrissey - Program Director at Criterion-Heritage Early Intervention. Recording (Password: 3j?#6^W&), PowerPoint

The Intersection of Race and Disability, June 15, from the Arc of Massachusetts.

Supporting Students with a History of Trauma & Anxiety During COVID-19, June 9, from Neuropsychology & Education Services for Children and Adults, featuring Pediatric Neuropsychologists Stephanie Monaghan-Blout and Renee Marchant.

Turning 18, What you need to know in a nutshell, from Family Empowerment with Frederick Misilo Esq., Fletcher Tilton PC, June 9. English Powerpoint, Spanish Powerpoint, English Recording, use password 2z?n8dS7.

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, Education Advocate 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, 9:30-11:00 a.m.;
Thursday mornings Facebook event, 9:30-11:00 a.m.;
Thursday evenings Facebook event, 8:30-10 p.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

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

AANE events for JULY **NEW**

Cafe Creations: Café Creations, from the Mental Health Association (MHA) in Springfield, will provide opportunities for creativity, friendship and increasing independence for 15 adults ages 18-22 with Autism or developmental disabilities. The Cafe will take place on July 8, 15 and 22. Download flyer here. **NEW**

AANE events for JULY **NEW**

RECREATION

Berkshire 4th of July Virtual 5K Race: The race is virtual but the run is real. Our virtual race course is amazing and beautiful and flat with the opportunity for some great inaugural Berkshires 4th of July Virtual Race times. You can choose to do the designated course to be eligible for prizes. As with all virtual races, you can choose to run anywhere, on any terrain if you choose to improvise your own 5k route, in any city or town anywhere. **NEW**

Summer camp info-local (virtual and traditional) **NEW**

Masks And The Outdoor Exerciser: Advice For Runners, Bikers, Walkers, Hikers, from NPR. June 27 **NEW**



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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WHOLE CHILDREN & MILESTONES RECREATION

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A Pathlight Program
116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

How can we help you?

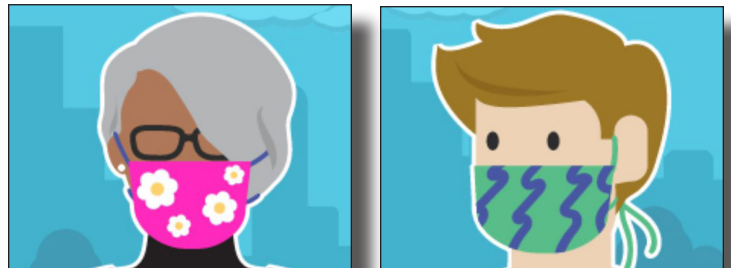
Contact any of us at the Pathlight programs and we will do our best to help you with your requests and needs. Email info@pathlightgroup.org, familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org or autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org. If you don't have email, call the program managers listed on our team directory on 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.

Your cloth face covering may protect them.



Their cloth face covering may protect you.

- The CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.
- Cloth face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when widely used by people in public settings.
- Cloth face coverings should NOT be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Learn more about *Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings* from the CDC [here](#).