

PATHWAYS FOR FAMILIES

Support Programs for Children and Families Living with Autism

Our practice is committed to developing strong relationships with our patients and their families. Mary Summers, our NEQCA Resource Specialist, has compiled the following resources for children and families living with autism

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Community Programs

-  **AANE, Asperger/Autism Network** (<https://aane.org>): Community connections for individuals, families and professionals: information about education services, community activities, emotional supports, and advocacy skill-building for parents and individuals with Asperger Syndrome or Autism.
-  **Autism Speaks** (<https://www.autismspeaks.org>): Excellent resources, including 100-Day Kits for newly diagnosed families (<5 and 5-13 yrs.), School Resources (IEP support), *What Next?* for Adults; also loads of community and family events.
-  **Autism Support Centers** (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dds-autism-support-centers>): Mass. Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) Centers help establish eligibility for case management and funding resources, as well as provide information, workshops, and services to children and families.
-  **Family TIES of Massachusetts** (800-905-8437, www.massfamilyties.org): Statewide network providing linkage to community organizations, state agencies, and emotional support from the Parent-to-Parent Program.
-  **Federation for Children with Special Needs** (617-236-7210, <https://fcsn.org>): Staff share information about special education and may provide advocacy for obtaining services in the school; clarify healthcare services and health insurance benefits; advise parents about IEP-based Transition services for ages 14-22 to facilitate transition to adulthood; and community supports. Keep up with the updates and latest events through NEWSLINE: <https://fcsn.org/Newsline>.

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Mass. Department of Public Health (DPH) Community Support Line (800-882-1435): Assessments for state agency and community resources, such as:

- **Mass. Dept. of Transitional Assistance (DTA)** assists with housing supports, childcare vouchers, and SNAP (formerly food stamps) benefits;
- **Family TIES of Massachusetts referral for Early Intervention services**, ages Birth to 3 yrs.;
- **DPH Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund** may help with costs of special needs equipment; and
- **Mass. Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS) Family Support Centers** can help fill out agency applications, offer local activities for your child and family, and assist with the Guardianship process.

Health Insurance Coverage and School Services Advocacy

- **Autism Insurance Resource Center (<https://massairc.org>):** Fact sheets and webinars on insurance coverage and MassHealth enrollment, payment options for Autism-related services; local ABA providers' contacts.
- **Federation for Children with Special Needs (617-236-7210, <http://fcsn.org>):** Its **Parent Training & Information Center (PTI)** provides free services to families, focused on child development and success, federal laws, state regulations, and community cooperation to meet a child's special needs. **Free workshops** build parents' knowledge and advocacy skills. At the **Visions of Community conference**, parents learn to meet children's needs and build self-advocacy skills in young adults.
- **Mass. Advocates for Children (617-357-8431, www.massadvocates.org):** Provides advocacy for children and youth (3 -22 yrs.), aimed at special education, school discipline, and mental health services.

Upcoming Community Events

Spedchildmass (www.spedchildmass.com) is *the* place to learn about upcoming **parent workshops, conferences, and support groups** that introduce parents to information and each other. Examples include special needs financial and legal topics - such as **SSI/SSDI & Other Public Benefits** and **MassHealth's Adult Family Care & PCA programs for Adult Children with Disabilities**; summer camps, activities like sensory-friendly movies and theater, Special Olympics **and more!**

| Family Activity C | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| TUESDAY | | WEDNESDAY | | THURSDAY | |
| April 20 | | | | | |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| Make a family time capsule | Make dinner together | Start a family book club | Research your family history together | Visit your local fire/polic station and thank them for all they do | |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | APRIL 12 | APRIL 13 | |

Massachusetts Sibling Support Network Photo Contest

Through April 30, 2021

In honor of April being National Sibling Month, the Massachusetts Sibling Support Network is holding a photo contest. Winners will receive all kinds of MSSN SWAG.

Please send your most expressive, most Massachusetts, or funniest picture of you and your sibling with a disability.



- Entries will be featured over the course of the month on social media.
- *New photo categories for 2021:* ****Savviest Social Distant Visit ** Furriest Friend **Proudest PPE Moment**

For more info, [click here](#) or contact info@masiblingsupport.org.

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Neuropsychological Evaluations: What Are They & What To Look For In an Evaluator?

April 28, 2021 ~ Webinar @ 10:30 am NESCA, a Newton-based support organization

This workshop will explain what a neuropsychological evaluation is, how it can be a vehicle to getting the appropriate supports for a child or adolescent who is struggling academically, psychologically, socially or developmentally.

*Speaker Dr. Ann Helmus will also discuss what you should look for in a neuropsychological evaluator and what should be in the resulting report, and a philosophy that it is the people evaluating a child who make a diagnosis, not the tests administered in a neuropsychological evaluation. To register/for information, [click here](#) or contact: jhauser@nesca-newton.com, 617-517-9862.

Are Sensory Sensitivities Interfering with Learning? Strategies for Evaluation & Treatment

May 11, 2021 ~ Webinar @ 7:00-8:30 pm Karen Moore, OTR/L ~ Therapro

Sensory sensitivities can interfere with education in many ways – from having difficulty getting dressed, to standing in lines, to tolerating noise lunchrooms, to trying to concentrate in a busy classroom.



In more serious cases, sensory issues can cause anxiety and emotional outbursts. Students who have experience trauma often have additional challenges of disturbed sensory responses. This webinar will explore various tools and screenings to identify sensory issues, and also will offer suggestions to help students deal with their sensitivities.

For more information visit www.therapro.com/Information-Items/Webinars/ or contact (800) 257-5376 or info@therapro.com.

Free Faith & Mental Health (Virtual) Conference

May 21, 2021, with the International OCD Foundation in Boston, MA

Navigating Anxiety in Diverse Faith-Based Communities is the first Faith and Mental Health conference. This event started out of a recognition that many individuals living with a mental health condition first seek assistance from their faith leaders, prior to a mental health provider.

Individuals and families will hear about how to build a supportive network for treatment and recovery.

Faith leaders, hearing about the lived experience of anxiety and OCD, will learn to recognize symptoms.

Mental Health professionals will come to understand how anxiety and OCD intersect with faith practices.

Some talks will also be interpreted in Spanish. Languages used are marked next to the session title.

To register or for more information, [click here](#) or contact conference@iocdf.org.

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Anti-Bullying Training Massachusetts Families with Special Needs (Webinar)

May 25, 2021

6:00 pm

Provided by Massachusetts Families and the Arc of Greater Haverhill – Newburyport as part of the free Special Education Webinar Series for Massachusetts Families.

This workshop will address the significant changes in special education practice that are a result of the state's anti-bullying prevention law. The training focuses on both school-wide efforts to create safe and supportive school environments for students with disabilities and laws that require IEP Teams to address bullying of students with disabilities during the pandemic.

Register today: <https://massfamilies.org/training/working-together-series/>.

For more information, contact: andrea.morris@thearcofghn.org or sophia@massfamilies.org.

Visit Parent/Professional Advocacy League for more family support information: www.ppal.net.

UAB Online Magic Camp

June 1, 2021 @ 12:00 pm to July 30, 2021 @ 12:00 pm

This is a FREE & VIRTUAL Summer Camp open to children ages 9-18 with a disability.



Autism Speaks is hosting a three-week magic camp. Children will spend approximately two hours a week learning tricks developed by illusionist, Kevin Spencer, & his HEALING OF MAGIC program. Each camper will have two UAB Occupational Therapy students assigned to them for the entire camp and they will meet virtually to learn magic tricks. The end of each camp will end in a streamed performance for friends and family. [Click here](#) for more information.

PPAL 10th Annual (Virtual) Conference

June 4, 2021



This year's conference will be offered virtually, with morning and afternoon workshops. Topics will be confirmed in mid-April. Visit the website for this and other community events. **Early Bird registration:** \$15/parents and \$25/professionals. For more information, email: conference@ppal.net. Visit Parent/Professional Advocacy League for family support and services: www.ppal.net.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is May 3-9. 