

## Autism Resources in Massachusetts

### The Basics for Parents/Guardians

If your child has received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), learning all you can about the disorder and where to get support, can help you gain the tools necessary to support your child, family and yourself. While the types and availability of services may vary depending on where a family lives, a combination of parent and professional interventions can improve your child's development.

#### Where to Start?

- Children should be referred to an appropriate program as soon as a delay is suspected. You should not wait for a definite diagnosis of ASD because this may take some time. Please talk to your child's pediatrician to determine an appropriate referral based on your child's age and where you live.

Key/main programs:

1. Birth – age 3 Early Intervention programs provide family-centered services to help children who qualify to develop the skills they will need to continue to grow into happy and healthy members of the community.
  - Call 1-800-905-8437 and ask for a listing of Early Intervention programs serving a particular city or town.
2. Age 3 – 22 Special Education/Individualized Education Program (IEP) school programs designed to meet the unique needs of a child that result from a disability, and to assure that students with disabilities receive the services and assistance that may be necessary to make effective progress.
  - Contact your local public school and ask to speak with the special education department for more information about having your child evaluated for special education services.

#### Next Steps

- **Identify health insurance programs to help your family.** As a parent or guardian of a child with special health care needs, you can apply for MassHealth, our state's Medicaid program, which may pay for a broad range of health-related services. Even if a family earns a higher income, they are encouraged to apply due to their child's disability. Covered services may include inpatient and outpatient services, testing, medications, therapies, medical equipment and supplies, and home-based nursing and personal care services. If you have private

health insurance you may want to ask what ASD services are covered and if you are eligible to have MassHealth as a “secondary insurance.”

To learn about services or how to qualify, contact:

- Community Support Line at Mass. Department of Public Health 800-882-1435
- Massachusetts Family Voices 800-331-0688, Ext. 210
- MassHealth 800-862-4840 or visit [www.mass.gov/masshealth](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth)

- **Department of Developmental Services (DDS)** Provides specialized services and supports to children with developmental disabilities including ASD and also adults with intellectual disabilities. The types of specialized services and supports include day and residential programs, employment programs, family supports, respite, and transportation.

To apply:

1. Download, complete and send an application form along with all required documentation, to the Regional Eligibility Coordinator.  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dds/>

OR

2. Contact the Regional Eligibility Team directly at the Intake Referral Number:
  - **Central/West Region** Intake Referral Number: 413-205-0940
  - **Metro Region** Intake Referral Number: 781-314-7513
  - **Northeast Region** Intake Referral Number: 978-774-5000 x850
  - **Southeast Region** Intake Referral Number: 508-866-5000

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – Cash Payments** Children from birth up to age 18 may get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The child must have a physical or mental condition that very seriously limits his or her activities and the family must have low or no income and limited resources. A state agency makes the disability decision. They review the information you provide them. They will also ask for information from medical and school sources and other people who know about your child. If the state agency needs more information, they will arrange an examination or test for the child, which they will pay for. It typically takes 3 to 5 months to decide a child’s SSI disability claim.

To apply:

1. Call the Social Security Administration (SSA) at 1-800-772-1213, to make an appointment to file a disability claim at your local Social Security office.

2. Bring the necessary documentation with you to your appointment. You can find a list of information you will need to gather here: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/>. Look for “Apply for Benefits” and the “SSI Child Disability Starter Kit”.
- **Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program** a MassHealth program that helps people with disabilities (children starting at age 3) live at home by providing funds to hire PCAs. PCAs can help with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as mobility/transfers, medications, bathing or grooming, dressing or undressing, range of motion exercises, eating, and toileting.
- To apply:
1. You must contact a Personal Care Management (PCM) agency. The agency will evaluate your child’s need for PCA services and submit a prior-authorization request to MassHealth for you after approval by your child’s pediatrician or nurse practitioner. If MassHealth approves PCA services for your child, you are responsible for recruiting, hiring, training and scheduling your own PCA(s).
  2. Call MassHealth Customer Service at 1-800-841-2900 to get the most up-to-date list of PCM Agencies.

## **Family Support and Advocacy**

- **Autism Support Centers** Each community-based Autism Support Center offers families exciting events and opportunities that promote empowerment, training and networking opportunities. They offer information on community resources and services in the areas of social skill development, sensory integration, vacation programs and more. Ask them about the availability of the Autism Waiver Program which offers additional services when available.
- **Metrowest Region - Advocates, Inc./Autism Alliance of Metrowest**  
14 East Central St., Natick, MA 01760 | (508) 652-9900 | [www.autismalliance.org](http://www.autismalliance.org)
  - **Central Region - Autism Resource Center**  
(508) 835-4278 | [www.arccm.org](http://www.arccm.org)
  - **Southeast Region - Community Autism Resources**  
508-379-0371 | [www.community-autism-resources.com](http://www.community-autism-resources.com)
  - **Western Region - Community Resources for People with Autism**  
(413) 529-2428 | [www.communityresourcesforautism.org](http://www.communityresourcesforautism.org)

- **Northeast Region - Northeast ARC**  
(978) 777-9135 x2301 or 2302 | [www.ne-arcautismsupportcenter.org](http://www.ne-arcautismsupportcenter.org)
  - **Norfolk Co. & Surrounding Areas - The Family Autism Center**  
(781) 762-4001 x310 | [www.arcsouthnorfolk.org/family-autism-center.html](http://www.arcsouthnorfolk.org/family-autism-center.html)
  - **Boston Metro Region – TILL, Inc.**  
(781) 302-4600 | [www.tillinc.org/autism\\_training.html](http://www.tillinc.org/autism_training.html)
- **Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)** The Federation provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities through such services as its website, publications, phone consultation, conferences, workshops, and many others. Programs include the Special Education Parent Center, Family Support Center, Health Advocacy Center, Family and Community Engagement Center, and Parent-Professional Leadership Center. (617) 236-7210 | (800) 331-0688 | [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org)
  - **Family Ties of Massachusetts** A network for families and professionals which provides information and referral services, emotional support, and trainings to parents of children with youth and special needs.  
1-800-905-TIES (8437) | <http://www.massfamilyties.org/>