COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Department of Developmental Services
Autism Division
40 Broad Street - 4th Floor - Boston - MA 02109

August 2026

Dear Community Provider,

As you may be aware, the Autism Division of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) runs a program for **low-income children with autism** called the **Children's Autism Waiver Program**. This program serves children **under the age of 10** who meet both clinical and financial eligibility, including having or obtaining MassHealth Standard Insurance. At this time the Children's Autism Waiver Program may serve approximately 500 children a year. The Program maintains reserved capacity (55 statewide slots) for children who are age 3 and transitioning out of Early Intervention. All waiver services require that the child continues to meet the financial and clinical eligibility requirements for the Waiver Program throughout their enrollment. There is a high rate of turnover in the program every year, therefore, we pull from this Open Request list to fill open slots.

Today, we are asking for your help in disseminating this information about the upcoming Children's Autism Waiver Program's **Open Request Period**. The Autism Division will **accept new application requests** from families interested in this program between the dates of **October 16, 2026, and October 30, 2026**. Applications must be postmarked or emailed from a parent/guardian no later than October 30, 2026.

This Home and Community Based Services Waiver is a Medicaid Program designed to provide services to help children with autism remain in their homes and actively participate with their families and in their community. This program receives partial funding from the federal government. Waiver services are supplemental to special education services provided under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.) With the assistance of the Program, each family will be required to hire a specialized clinician who creates an individually designed Positive Behavior Support Plan, based on a therapy model chosen by the family, to support their child's assessed needs, and hire direct support staff to provide the one-to-one intensive therapy designated in the Plan. Families in the Program also have an opportunity to choose other waiver services such as community integration activities, family training and respite, which are designed to help their children develop in areas related to behavior, social skills, and communication.

A copy of the Children's Autism Waiver Program Open Request Application and Open Request Family Message is enclosed in English. The application form, family notice, and related materials (in multiple languages*) will also be available on the DDS website at DDS Children's Autism Waiver Service Program Overview | Mass.gov and at the seven regionally based Autism Support Centers (a list of the Centers is available on the DDS website). Additionally, the application is available to complete online with the following link: 2026 Open Interest Request Form Please do not hesitate to contact the Autism Division at DDS-ChildrensAutismWaiverProgram@mass.gov or your local Autism Support Center if you have any questions about this application process. Please note that this is a new email address.

Sincerely,

Mary Kate Haswell
Children's Autism Waiver Program Manager

Stephanie Coburn
Children's Autism Waiver Program Manager