



Autism Commission

A Resource Guide for Individuals and Families of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (3–14 years of age)

About the Autism Commission

In August 2014, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts enacted landmark legislation Ch. 226 of the Acts of 2014, the "Autism Omnibus Law" that established the Autism Commission as a permanent entity. The Commission is charged with making recommendations on policies impacting individuals with ASD across their lifespan, and to file an annual report with the Governor and the Legislature. The Commission is comprised of 35 members, including representatives from state agencies, advocacy organizations, parents and a self-advocate. The first Executive Director of the Autism Commission was appointed by Governor Baker in March 2016. For more information about the Autism Commission please visit our website at www.mass.gov/autism

Please note: State agencies and public school districts have interpreters and translation services available, when needed to assist families and individuals with ASD.

The information set forth in this pamphlet has been compiled to help families and individuals better understand the types of resources that exist in the Commonwealth, and which may be available to an individual with ASD. A brief description of these resources and direct links to helpful websites for the state agencies and to other additional resources was gathered to support families and individuals with accessing these resources.

This pamphlet is intended to inform families and individuals about resources that MAY BE available to an individual with ASD, IN ADDITION, to special education services that are provided by school districts under an individualized education program (IEP).

State Agencies

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) provides funding for family support programs and services across the state designed to provide information, assistance, and an array of supportive services to families with children and adults with disabilities who are living at home.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dds/>

The Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver

The children's autism Medicaid waiver is a program that provides intensive in-home and other services to children with autism. Families must apply for these services. Eligible children must be:

1) Medicaid eligible; 2) ages 0–8; and 3) at risk of institutionalization now or at some point in the future. The program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS). At certain dates, DDS opens the application process for the program. There are a limited number of program slots. For more information on the Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver:

- You can link to information on the DDS Autism Services Waiver at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/provider/licensing/programs/autism-waiver/>
- Mass. Advocates for Children, Autism Center,
• <http://massadvocates.org/autism/>
- Masslegalhelp.org, Children's Autism Medical Waiver,
• <http://www.masslegalhelp.org/school/childrens-autism-medicaid-waiver-alert>

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education & Department of Developmental Services (DESE/DDS) Program

The DESE/DDS program helps provide in-home and community based therapeutic supports and services to students ages 6–17. Eligible participants must show a need for services that prevent a restrictive, out of home residential placement. This program also helps support families with a child who attended a residential school and has returned to the home. www.mass.gov/dds-dese-program

State Agencies

Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Family Support Centers

Family Support Centers across the state provide a local presence and act as a hub for offering a wide range of general family support services and activities to families of children and adults who are eligible for DDS services.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dmr/reports/family-support/family-support-directory.pdf>

Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Seven Autism Support Centers

The Mission of the Autism support centers, which are funded by DDS, is to provide support for children, and adults with ASD, and their families throughout Massachusetts. The Autism support centers offer trainings, workshops, and activities to help connect families and empower them to enable their children and adults with ASD to be full and integrated members of their communities. The link and the list below will guide you to the support center closest to your community.

www.mass.gov/service-details/autism-support-centers-list

Autism Support Centers

Advocates, Inc./Autism Alliance of Metrowest

(508) 652-9900

www.autismalliance.org

Autism Resource Center: Central MA

(508) 835-4278

www.autismresourcecentral.org

Northeast ARC

(978) 777-9135 x2301 or 2302

www.ne-arcautismsupportcenter.org

TILL: Autism Support Center

(781) 302-4600

www.tillinc.org/autism_training.html

Autism Connections:

Western MA

(413) 529-2428

<https://pathlightgroup.org/programs-and-services/autism-connections>

The Family Autism Center:

Norfolk Co. & Surrounding Areas

(781) 762-4001 x310

www.arcsouthnorfolk.org/family-autism-center.html

Community Autism Resources:

Southeastern, MA

508-379-0371

www.community-autism-resources.com

Health Insurance

The Massachusetts Autism Insurance Law (ARICA)

ARICA requires some health insurance companies in Massachusetts to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Not all private insurance plans are required to cover autism treatment. Ask your insurance company what coverage exists in your policy for autism treatment, including coverage for ABA services and AAC devices.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/eohhs/autism/arica-factsheet.pdf>

The Autism Insurance Resource Center, part of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center at UMass Medical School

The Autism Insurance Resource Center provides free information, assistance, trainings, webinars, and other resources on issues related to medical insurance for autism treatment.

www.massairc.org

MassHealth Services: MassHealth or Mass CommonHealth

MassHealth (as a primary insurance) or Mass CommonHealth (as a supplemental insurance) provides comprehensive health insurance - or help in paying for private health insurance—to more than one million Massachusetts children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/masshealth/> or

<http://www.mass.gov/service-details/masshealth-coverage-types-for-individuals-and-families-including-people-with>

MassHealth Customer Service: 1-800-841-2900

If your child has been diagnosed with ASD, they may be eligible for Applied Behavior Analysis Services (ABA), alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices, personal care attendant (PCA) services, or the children's behavioral health initiative (CBHI) through MassHealth.

Health Insurance

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Children under the age of 21 who have been diagnosed with autism and are covered by MassHealth Standard, CommonHealth and Family Assistance are entitled to medically necessary ABA services. Coverage is also available to members who have MassHealth as secondary

insurance. [://massairc.org/masshealth-autism-insurance-fags/information-about-masshealth-aba-coverage-frequently-asked-questions/](http://massairc.org/masshealth-autism-insurance-fags/information-about-masshealth-aba-coverage-frequently-asked-questions/)

(note: these services would be in addition to the services provided in your child's school)

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC) Devices

In addition to insurance coverage for ABA services, coverage includes Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. MassHealth expanded coverage for electronic tablets for individuals with ASD for communication.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/guidelines/mng-aac.pdf>

Personal Care Attendant (PCA) from MassHealth

The PCA Program helps people with permanent or chronic disabilities keep their independence, stay in the community, and manage their own personal care by providing funds to hire personal care attendants (PCAs). The PCA consumer (the person receiving PCA services) is the employer of the PCA, and is fully responsible for recruiting, hiring, scheduling, training, and, if necessary, firing PCAs.

<http://www.mass.gov/masshealth-personal-care-attendant-pca-program>

Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI)

CBHI ensures that children with MassHealth, 21 years or younger, who have significant behavioral, emotional and mental health needs and their families get the services they need for success in home, school, community, and throughout life. www.mass.gov/masshealth/cbhi

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is committed to preparing all students for success in the world that awaits them after high school.

Technical Assistance Advisory

Represents “best practice” guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to address a change to the special education law enacted in the spring of 2006 that affects special education programming for students with disabilities on the autism spectrum. The purpose of this advisory is to assist school districts and other interested parties in understanding these new requirements and in implementing best practices for meeting the needs of these students.
http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/07_1ta.html

Special Education Planning and Policy Office

Individualized special educational services are designed for students with disabilities who - because of their disabilities - need specially designed instruction or related services in order to make progress in the general curriculum and access the life of the school. The Special Education Planning and Policy Office has many resources available for families.
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/>

These resources include Technical Assistance Advisories and Guidance. Some of these resources provide information specific to individuals diagnosed with ASD.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/default.html>

Public School Monitoring (PSM)

PSM implements the Department’s compliance monitoring and provides technical assistance to school personnel and the public regarding the implementation of laws and regulations.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/781-338-3000>

Problem Resolution System (PRS)

PRS receives and resolves complaints from the public on special education issues.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs/781-338-3700>

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (cont.)

A Parent's Guide to Special Education

Written by the Federation for Children with Special Needs in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Guide is a resource for parents, and the organizations that serve them. The Guide contains the most current and accurate information available regarding the special education in Massachusetts.

<http://fcsn.org/parents-guide>

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources

This document assists schools and IEP Teams to prevent bullying of students with disabilities.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/considerations-bully.html>

Additional Resources

Asperger/Autism Network (AANE)

AANE works with individuals, families, and professionals to help people with Asperger Syndrome or similar autism spectrum profiles build meaningful, connected lives by providing information, education, community, support, and advocacy—all in an atmosphere of validation and respect.

<http://www.aane.org/>

Autism Speaks

AutismSpeaks provides an online toolkit that is designed to help assist families of children between the ages of 5 and 13 recently diagnosed with autism during the critical period following an autism diagnosis.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits>

Family Ties of Massachusetts

Family Ties is a directory of resources for families of children and youth with special needs.

<http://www.massfamilyties.org>

Additional Resources

Autism Commission – Printable Guide on Transition Services

A guide intended to help families and individuals better understand the types of resources that exist in the Commonwealth and which may be available to an individual with ASD. www.mass.gov/service-details/secondary-

Exceptional Lives

Exception Lives offers a free Resource Directory, a searchable online database of disability programs and providers, and free How-to Guides, which walk people step by step through processes like special education, health insurance, guardianship and SSI. www.exceptionallives.org

Federation for Special Needs (FCSN)

The Federation for Children with Special Needs provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities. They are committed to listening to and learning from families, and encouraging full participation in community life by all people, especially those with disabilities. <http://fcsn.org/>

Massachusetts Advocates for Children Autism Center

Massachusetts Advocates for Children Autism Center works with elected officials and partners to create laws and regulations to ensure that children and young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have access to the services and resources they need in order to reach their full potential. <http://massadvocates.org/autism>

Wrightslaw

This resource provides information for parents, educators, advocates, and attorneys for accurate, reliable information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities. www.wrightslaw.com

Contact the Autism Commission

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www.mass.gov/autism

