



## *Autism Waiver Program Overview*

### **Autism Division of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)**

### **The Children's Autism Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Program**

#### **The Autism Waiver Program**

The Autism Waiver Program at the Department of Developmental Services Autism Division serves children, birth through age 8, with an autism spectrum disorder who meet the eligibility criteria. Shortly, the Autism Division will offer an opportunity to apply for the Autism Waiver through an open application period. The last open application period took place in October 2015.

The Autism Waiver Program has a reserved capacity for children who are age 3 and transitioning out of an Early Intervention Program. This means that the Autism Division reserves 20 statewide slots for children who are age 3. These children will still need to meet all relevant financial and clinical eligibility standards required for entry into the Program.

The Autism Waiver allows children to receive Expanded Habilitation, Education, in-home services and supports, such as Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and Floor Time, for a total of up to 3 years. At the conclusion of the 3 years of the intensive in-home services, a child may access ongoing Supplemental Services (for example respite and goods and services, etc.) that meet the child's needs and help with the transition out of the intensive Autism Waiver Program—until the child's 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Waiver Services remain supplemental to the special education services provided under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

All waiver services require that the child continues to meet the financial and clinical eligibility requirements for the Waiver Program.

#### **Program Highlights:**

This Autism Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver Program is a Medicaid program designed to provide services to help children with autism remain in their homes and actively participate in their families and in their communities. This Autism Waiver provides one-to-one behavioral, social and communication based interventions through a service called **Expanded Habilitation, Education**. The service consists of one-to-one interventions developed and monitored by a trained clinician and is carried out in the child's home and community. Expanded Habilitation includes positive behavioral supports including, but is not limited to, behavioral approaches such as Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), Developmental and Relational Models such as Floor Time and Communication Models. Expanded Habilitation Services, Education should help children develop basic adaptive skills, elementary verbal skills and appropriate interactive and play skills.

The Waiver Program also provides related support services such as community integration activities and respite.

The Waiver Program uses a service delivery model called Participant Direction. In this model, the parent takes the lead in designing the program and selecting service providers based on the child's assessed level of need. Each family receives support from a designated staff person, an

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Autism Support Broker -- at one of the seven Department of Developmental Services funded Autism Support Centers and from a Clinical Manager at the Autism Division.

### Waiver Program Capacity:

260 children may participate in the Autism Waiver Program at any one time.

Eligibility: the following requirements are necessary for participation in this program:

1. The child must have a **confirmed diagnosis** of an Autism Spectrum Disorder, which includes Autistic Disorder, PDD-NOS, Rhetts's Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Asperger Syndrome subject to verification by the Department of Developmental Services.
2. The child has not yet reached his/her 9th birthday. Children birth through age 8 may participate.
3. The child is a resident of Massachusetts.
4. The child meets the level of care required for services in an Intermediate Care Facility for persons with Intellectual Disability (ICF/ID) as assessed by DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.
5. The family chooses to have the child receive services in the home and community.
6. The child must be safely served in the community.
7. The child must have a legally responsible representative able to direct the services and supports of the Waiver.
8. The child must be found by the MassHealth agency to be eligible for MassHealth Standard coverage, based on family income. For families who have not yet applied for MassHealth, this must be done at the time of the filing of the Waiver Program Application Request Form. Eligibility for MassHealth Standard is based on the household income which cannot exceed 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

*\* If your child is under age one or has a specialized medical condition such as blindness, deafness or a debilitating chronic medical illness the standards are different from those listed above; please contact the Autism Division for clarification in these situations.*

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### Structure:

The Autism Division at Department of Developmental Services oversees the management of the Autism Waiver Program. Autism Clinical Managers provide oversight, technical assistance and monitoring. There are seven DDS funded Autism Support Centers across the state. These Centers provide support brokerage services to assist families with service planning, identifying service providers and managing their budgets for this program.

### Services:

An individualized planning process, resulting in an Autism Support Plan of Care, assists each family in identifying the assessed needs of their child and the specific waiver services available to address these needs. All services have limits on their frequency and scope. With the assistance from a Support Broker and oversight from an Autism Clinical Manager, each family develops and directs a plan of supports and services within the limits of an individual budget, up to \$25,000 based on the child's assessed needs. Families receive support in identifying, hiring and training providers who are qualified to deliver these services. Please review the chart below for a listing of the service options offered in this Program.

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| <b>Services Available on the Autism Waiver Program</b>                               |
| <b>The primary service of the autism waiver program is:</b>                          |
| Expanded Habilitation, Education (in-home Services)                                  |
| <b>Additional Services include:</b>  |
| Habilitation, Community Integration  |
| Family Training  |
| Respite  |
| Homemaker  |
| Individual Goods & Services  |
| Home & Vehicle Modifications   |
| Adaptive Aids  |
| Behavioral Supports & Consultation (only available after 3 years of Ed Hab services) |

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Additional Information about this Waiver Program is available on the DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES Website at: [www.mass.gov/DDS](http://www.mass.gov/DDS) under 'Children's Autism Waiver' or contact 1-888-367-4435. Information is also available through the Autism Support Centers listed below.

### **Listing of the Autism Support Centers:**

#### **HMEA: Autism Resource Central**

71 Sterling Street, West Boylston, MA 01583  
#508-835-4278: Serving Central, MA

#### **Pathlight: Community Resources for People with Autism (CRPA)**

116 Pleasant St. Easthampton, MA 01027  
#413-529-2428: Serving Western, MA

#### **Community Autism Resources (CAR)**

33 James Reynolds Rd, Unit C, Swansea, MA 02777  
#508-379-0371: Serving Southeastern, MA

#### **TILL, Inc.: Autism Support Center**

20 Eastbrook Rd. Dedham, MA 02026  
#781-302-4600 x 4661: Serving Greater Boston

#### **SNCARC: The Family Autism Center**

789 Clapboardtree Street, Westwood, MA 02090  
#781-762-4001, X. 395: Serving Norfolk County Area

#### **NEARC: The Autism Support Center**

6 Southside Road, Danvers, MA 01923  
#978-777-9135: Serving Northeastern, MA

#### **Advocates: Autism Alliance of MetroWest (AAMW)**

14 Central Street, Natick, MA 01760  
#508-652-9900: Serving Metro West of Boston