**Massachusetts Community Resources**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has an array of community services, many of which can be accessed through the Department of Public Health’s Division of Children with Special Health Needs toll-free statewide Community Support Line (1-800-882-1435) for families of children and youth with special health needs and the providers serving those families. The service connects families to needed resources. Information, referral and technical assistance is provided to families and providers, such as benefits information, family-to-family supports, referrals to the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund, care coordination services, and other community–based and state agency services. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/family-health/community-support-line.html>

**A description of some of these programs and services follows:**

1. The DPH Care Coordination for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) provides comprehensive care coordination for families of children with special health care needs, including information, referral, and technical assistance to families and providers. Care coordinators are located in selected pediatric primary care settings statewide and in the five regional DPH offices. In pediatric practices, care coordinators work with providers to build practice capacity to identify children and youth with special health care needs and provide services using a medical home approach[. http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/community-health/family-health/special-health-needs/care-coordination.html](file:///C:\Users\SCray\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\TE2IMCVX\.%20http:\www.mass.gov\eohhs\consumer\community-health\family-health\special-health-needs\care-coordination.html)
2. The Family Support Fund helps families enrolled in the Care Coordination Program pay for expenses related to their child’s special health care needs. The Fund assists families when private or public benefits are not available for the service, or the item being requested, and with bills not covered by insurance, including medication, respite, special equipment, medical supplies or other expenses related to the child’s diagnosis. <http://childrenstrustma.org/>
3. Family TIES (Together In Enhancing Support) of Massachusetts is a statewide information and support network for families of CYSHCN and professionals supporting children and youth with special needs. The Family TIES Parent-to-Parent Program matches experienced parents with others seeking information and support. Information about services and support is provided through a toll-free in-state phone line and on-line access is available at [www.massfamilyties.org](file:///C:\Users\SCray\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\TE2IMCVX\www.massfamilyties.org). The phone line is staffed by trained, support parent volunteers of CYSHCN. Family TIES of Massachusetts also publishes an annual Directory of Resources for Families of Children with Special Needs. <http://www.massfamilyties.org/pdf/2014_FT_directory.pdf>
4. The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF) is a trust fund program established by the Massachusetts Legislature to help families bear the excessive financial burdens associated with the care of children with special health care needs and disabilities. CICRF is a payer of last resort. It provides financial assistance to Massachusetts families with children experiencing a medical condition requiring services that are not covered by a private insurer, federal or state assistance, or any other financial source. [www.mass.gov/cicrf](file:///C:\Users\SCray\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\TE2IMCVX\www.mass.gov\cicrf)
5. The Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative (MHVI) delivers home visiting services to 17 high need communities across the state. These services are located in the cities and towns with large numbers of very young families, families in poverty, and people who have not completed high school. There are five home visiting programs offered through MHVI. While each program has a different focus, all programs have had positive results in helping children and families. Also, all MHVI models address: child development, school readiness, child abuse and neglect, maternal depression, and substance abuse. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/family-health/home-visiting/about-the-massachusetts-home-visiting-initiative.html>
6. The Healthy Families Home Visiting Program, also called Healthy Families Massachusetts (HFM) is administered by the Children's Trust Fund (CTF). Healthy Families is a home-based family support and coaching program that supports young, first-time parents under the age of 21 and helps them create stable, nurturing environments for their children. Although offered to all families, priority for services is given to parents facing severe challenges including: single parenthood, low income, childhood history of abuse and neglect, and issues related to substance abuse, mental health, or domestic violence. The program matches parents with trained professionals who visit families’ homes to provide support during pregnancy and the child’s first three years of life. Home visitors teach parents about proper baby care, promote nurturing and attachment, practice effective parenting skills, and ensure parents have a solid understanding of healthy child development. They also counsel parents on achieving personal goals such as going back to school or securing a job.

[http://childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/healthy-families](http://childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/healthy-families%20)

1. One Tough Job - is available 24/7, in English and Spanish, and provides immediate access to current, practical parenting information, tips, and support parents can trust. <http://onetoughjob.org/>
2. MA Family Centers are where parents and children go to meet other families, tap into community resources, learn new parenting skills, and participate in activities and support programs. Programs are open to all families with young children within the community and may include parent-child activities, playgroups, social events, and drop-in hours. Centers partner with parents and kids to help them navigate and strengthen family relationships so that the whole family thrives. The Children’s Trust supports seven Family Centers statewide that offer programs to families in nearly 40 communities. <http://childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/family-centers/family-centers-contact-list>
3. Early Intervention (EI) is a statewide, integrated, developmental service available to families of children between birth and three years of age. Children may be eligible for EI if they have developmental difficulties due to identified disabilities, or if development is at risk due to certain birth or environmental circumstances. EI provides family-centered services that facilitate the developmental progress of eligible children. Any Massachusetts child up to three years of age and his/her family may be eligible for EI services if the child is not reaching age-appropriate milestones in one or more areas of development, is diagnosed with a physical, emotional, or cognitive condition that may result in a developmental delay or is at risk for developmental delay due to various biological and/or environmental factors. EI provides comprehensive developmental evaluations, multidisciplinary therapeutic and education services for those who are at established, biological or environmental risk for development delay. EI provides support and education for families caring for these children, especially those with complex medical needs. Early Intervention Services Specialized Training and Support Projects provides EI child and family services for children with low-incidence conditions including children who are blind and those diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. [www.mass.gov/dph/earlyintervention](file:///C:\Users\SCray\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\TE2IMCVX\www.mass.gov\dph\earlyintervention)
4. EI Partnerships Program (EIPP) is a home visiting program that provides services in communities with some of the state's highest rates of infant mortality and morbidity. The purpose of the EIPP is the early identification of maternal and infant risk and linkage of families to services to prevent or reduce poor health and/or developmental outcomes. Coordinated by an existing Early Intervention (EI) program, EIPP serves families during the perinatal period, offering the necessary supports to promote maternal health and perinatal outcomes, and optimal infant growth and development through the first year of life. EIPP provides maternal and infant health assessment and monitoring; health education and guidance; screening and appropriate referrals for preterm labor, maternal depression, substance and tobacco use, and domestic violence; assistance with breastfeeding; parenting skills; and linkage with WIC and other resources. Upon discharge from the birth hospital, many preterm infants are referred to the EI program, with the objective of improving functional outcomes through screening, surveillance, and coordination of therapeutic services for a population vulnerable to developmental delays. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/family-health/early-intervention-partnerships-program/overview.html>
5. MASSTART (Massachusetts Technology Assistance Resource Team) provides specialized nurse consultation to parents and schools to ensure safe placement of technology-assisted children and other children with complex medical needs in school settings. Training sessions are also provided.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/special-needs/masstart-brochure.pdf>

1. The Office of Medicaid administers the MassHealth programs, which covers a broad range of health-care services for low and medium income individuals and families by paying for part or all of a MassHealth member's health insurance, or paying MassHealth providers for medical services given to members. All children under age 19 who cannot get MassHealth are eligible for limited health-care coverage from another state program called the Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP). [www.mass.gov/masshealth](file:///C:\Users\SCray\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\TE2IMCVX\www.mass.gov\masshealth)
2. The DPH Medical Review Team (MRT) and Program for Short-Term Post-Hospitalization Placement has established a multidisciplinary team that screens all children for whom placement, both long and short term, is sought in a pediatric skilled nursing facility in Massachusetts, to ensure they meet strict medical and cognitive criteria. MRT also reviews young adults ages 18-22 who need placement in an adult skilled nursing facility for either rehabilitation or long term placement. This program is currently for hospitalized children who could be discharged to home or community placements, but need to remain in a hospital because of requirements for complex skilled nursing care. The children must meet the MRT skilled nursing criteria but the cognition criteria are waived for this population. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/family-health/medical-review-team.html>
3. The Pediatric Palliative Care Network provides a range of services individualized to the family and child living with life-limiting illness to improve their quality of life by meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs experienced during the course of illness, death, and bereavement. They complement existing services and most services are expected to be provided in the home. They may be provided simultaneously with curative treatment. Services include pain and symptom management, case management, social services and counseling, respite, advanced care planning, spiritual care, and bereavement. [www.mass.gov/ppcn](file:///C:\Users\SCray\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\TE2IMCVX\www.mass.gov\ppcn)