



Autism Connections

a Pathlight program

SUPPORT

RESOURCES

INFORMATION

Autism Connections provides support to individuals with autism and their families by fostering community collaboration, support for inclusion, and understanding of autism through a qualified and experienced staff.



About Autism Connections

Autism Connections was founded in 1989 by parents of children with autism. Our goal is to help families, schools, professionals, agencies, and communities understand autism, promote the well-being of individuals with autism and foster their inclusion in the community.

We help families build on their strengths, work together to create a positive vision for the future, and help children, teens and adults learn, grow, and be welcomed, fully included members of their communities.

As the local Autism Center, Autism Connections serves families in Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin and Berkshire Counties, and is funded by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Pathlight, grants and generous gifts from businesses and individuals.

Overview of Services

Autism Connections provides the following services to children and adults with autism, their families, friends, and professionals in western Massachusetts:

* Autism Center

- Information and resources
- Newsletter
- Resource center
- Information packets on a variety of autism related topics
- Online resource directory
- Young adult and adult connections/support and social skills groups
- Parent-parent connections and support groups
- Education Advocacy Clinics
- Social, sensory, and recreational activities
- Education and training: workshops/webinars and small group clinics (free)
- Annual Autism Conference
- Training for schools and other organizations (fee-based)
- Family and community focused events
- Assistive Tech Lending Library

* Children's Autism Waiver Services

Autism Connections provides comprehensive services for children enrolled in the Children's Autism Waiver Program funded by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). We serve as the western Massachusetts Autism Center and have over 25 years of experience providing services to children with autism.

The Children's Autism Waiver Program serves children, birth to age nine, with an autism spectrum disorder who meet the eligibility criteria. 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 three years.



Families are able to hire service workers and purchase a range of goods and services within an approved budget. At the conclusion of the three years of intensive in-home services, a child may access ongoing Supplemental Services (for example, respite and goods and services) that meet the child's needs and help with the transition out of the intensive Autism Waiver Program—until the child's ninth birthday.

We use our wealth of autism knowledge and the expertise of our staff to ensure that children receive the highest quality of service.

A team of professionals address areas of need including communication, social skill development, self-care, emotional regulation, behavior intervention and sensory regulation.

How to Apply for the Waiver

Applications are reviewed and processed by DDS. A child can only receive services through the Children's Autism Waiver Program if referred by DDS. Applications must be submitted during the "Open Request" time frame which is usually in the fall and has very limited available slots. For more information about when or how to submit an application please contact us at autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org.



What is Autism?

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first two years of life. It affects development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

Autism may affect an individual's ability to:

- communicate
- relate to people
- respond to pain, touch, sound, and taste
- learn and think in typical ways

Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries, family income levels, lifestyle choices or educational levels. Although the overall incidence of autism is consistent around the globe, it is diagnosed more often in boys than in girls. For more information about the prevalence of autism, visit the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov).

Contact Us

11 Village Hill Road
Northampton, MA 01060
413-585-8010

101 Munson Street
Greenfield, MA 01301
413-585-8010

75 South Church Street, Suite 402
Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-443-4780

220 Brookdale Drive
Springfield, MA 01104
413-585-8010

Detailed information and resources: 413-588-1043

Website: <https://autismconnectionsma.org/>

Email: autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org

WWW.PATHLIGHTGROUP.ORG

800-536-2910

INFO@PATHLIGHTGROUP.ORG



220 Brookdale Drive
Springfield, MA 01104
t: 800-536-2910
f: 413-732-1168

About Pathlight

Autism Connections is a Pathlight program

Pathlight is a 501(c)3 non-profit Massachusetts corporation with offices in Pittsfield, Springfield, Greenfield, Easthampton, and Hadley. It was founded in 1952 by five mothers of children with developmental disabilities.

The majority of Pathlight's revenue comes through state agencies, including the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services and the Massachusetts Department of Medical Assistance. Pathlight also raises money from a broad network of generous donors. We gratefully accept support from individuals, businesses, and foundations.