



Community Connection Newsletter

resources for the community

June 3, 2020



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THE PATHLIGHT COMMUNITY

Whole Children and Milestones Recreation **NEW**

Starting Mondays, June 8, try out the new Yoga Dance Class with Robin Diamond from 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Jackbox Party Pack, a unique set of cooperative and competitive games is another new addition to the Whole Children calendar, offered Tuesdays from 2:00-3:00 p.m. until June 23.



Visit www.wholechildren.org to view the complete calendar of free classes. News about the Summer Program will be announced soon.

IMPORTANT UPDATES THIS WEEK

Executive Order that provides a detailed list of businesses and activities that fall into Phases II, III, and IV of the Commonwealth's Re-Opening Plan, June 1 **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration's COVID-19 Command Center Files Plan With Federal Government To Expand Its Comprehensive Strategy For COVID-19 Testing And Tracing, June 1 **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration Releases Detailed Guidelines for the Phased Reopening of Child Care, Camps and Summer Recreational Programs, June 1 **NEW**

Social Security Economic Impact Payments to Rep Payees, June 1 **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration Provides Update on Phase II of Reopening Plan, Releases Guidance for Restaurants and Lodging, May 29 **NEW**

COVID-19 Command Center Releases New Nursing Home and Community-level COVID-19 Public Health Data, May 29 **NEW**

COVID-19 and Unemployment Benefits - from MassLegalHelp, update May 29 **NEW**

Gatherings Clarification: Additional Information on Governor's Emergency Order, May 26 **NEW**

Coronavirus Update for Individuals and Families from DDS Commissioner Jane F. Ryder, May 22 **NEW**

Graduation Guidance: Additional Information on Governor's Emergency Order, May 21 **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration Invests \$56 Million to Combat Food Insecurity in Massachusetts, May 17 **NEW**

Face covering update, May 17 **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration & Employer Community announce Continuation of Work From Home Policies to Support Safe Reopening of Massachusetts Economy, May 15 **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration Provides Update on COVID-19 Testing Capacity & Strategy, PPE Procurement, May 14 **NEW**

Economic Impact Payments for People with a Rep Payee, May 14 **NEW**

Email Congress to Include the Disability Community in COVID-19 Relief Bills. The Senate must act, it takes just 5 minutes to email your support for the legislation. **ONGOING & IMPORTANT**

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

[Western Massachusetts COVID-19 Case Numbers](#)

[Mass.gov](#): state COVID-19 info, updated daily

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[The Massachusetts Department of Public Health \(DPH\)](#)

[Information and resources to help DDS families and individuals.](#)

[The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#)

[Essential services during Stay at Home Order](#)

[Domestic Violence Resources](#)

Call 211: informational and referral hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All calls are free and confidential. Interpreter services are available in multiple languages.

[Massachusetts Crisis Hotlines](#)

[Look4help](#), extensive resources in Franklin and Hampshire Counties

Small Businesses

[Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplaces](#)

Economic Impact Payments

[Economic Impact Payments for People with a Rep Payee](#), May 14 **NEW**

Job Loss/Unemployment

[COVID-19 and Unemployment Benefits](#) - from MassLegalHelp, update May 29. "The Unemployment Insurance you get is about half the amount you earned every week when you were working. The most you can get is \$823/week."... "Everyone who gets any state or federal UI can get an extra \$600/week from March 29, 2020 to July 25, 2020. This \$600/week is in addition to any state or federal UI you get in these 4 months."... "...Plus \$25/week for each child for whom you provide more than 50% support, and who is under 18, or under 24 and a full-time student, or cannot work because of mental or physical disabilities. There is no age limit." **NEW**

Full unemployment information: call (617) 626-6338 to request weekly benefits, daily from 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. [File a claim online.](#)

Attend a [Virtual town hall](#) this week to learn about how to file for benefits, including Spanish language options.

[Pathlight Job Opportunities](#)

HEALTH SERVICES

Masshealth Information, 800-841-2900

PCA services: MassHealth PCA Consumers who have unfulfilled PCA hours and would like to be connected to a local Home Health Agency that can fill those hours, should call [MassOptions](#) at (1-844-422-6277) for live support.

MassHealth Prescription services: MassHealth is allowing early refills and 90 day supplies. Contact your pharmacist to order medications.

Telehealth services: Telehealth services are covered by MassHealth. Discuss with your provider for more information.

[Step-by-Step Guide to Using TeleMedicine](#)

[MassHealth Telehealth Services for Behavioral Health](#)

General Health Related Information

Health Coverage [Helpline](#): 800-272-4232

Disability COVID-19 Healthcare Support Advocacy Hotline 800-626-4959

Mental Health Resources

Franklin County Crisis Services: 413.774.5411 (CSO)
Athol/N. Quabbin Crisis Services: 978.249.3141 (CSO)
Hampshire County Crisis Services: 413.586.5555 (CSO)
Berkshire County Crisis Hotline: 1-800-252-0227 (Brien Ctr)

[Western MA Mental Health Resources](#), Very complete resource organized by Community Action

[Mass General Hospital Mental Health Resources related to COVID19](#)

[NAMI \(National Alliance on Mental Health\) Navigating a Crisis](#): You can find the ESP serving your area, by calling 1-877-382-1609 and entering your zip code.

Samaritans is continuing operations 24/7, as always. Call or text their 24/7 helpline any time at 877-870-4673.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255



HEALTH DISABILITY RIGHTS

[Suggested Visitation Policy Statement](#) from the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry **NEW**

Disability Law Center's recent [letter](#) to the MA Commissioner of Public Health regarding reasonable accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

[Civil Rights, HIPPA, and the Coronavirus Disease](#)

COVID-19 COMMUNICATION RIGHTS [TOOLKIT](#)

This toolkit: (1) explains your communication rights; (2) provides tips on advocating for them, and (3) has an accommodation request form you can bring to the hospital.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU CARE FOR IS SICK

[Should I be tested?](#) (from Mass.gov) **NEW**

[Guidance on Interpreting COVID-19 Tests](#)

[CDC Testing Information](#)

[Getting Tested Social Story](#)

[Testing Site Locator](#) **NEW**

[Caring for someone sick at home](#), from the CDC

[Plain language medical information form](#)

[Healthcare Passport](#)

Critical Care Covid-19 [Communication Chart](#) to help patients communicate in hospital and critical care **NEW**

Plain language [sample advocacy letter](#) about patients with intellectual or developmental disabilities having a support person with them when they are in the hospital.

[COVID-19 Disability Form](#) to have ready for the hospital to show that an individual needs 1-1 assistance.

DOCUMENTS FOR SELF ADVOCATES

[A Self-Advocates Guide to Covid-19: Green Mountain Self-Advocates](#) have created this toolkit about the Coronavirus written in plain language. **NEW**

[Plain Language Coronavirus Glossary](#)

[What is the Census?](#) A plain language document.

EDUCATION RELATED

[Autism Home School, Online Courses for High School. Registration June 14, class starts June 22](#) **NEW**

[Letter from DESE Commissioner Riley, June 1](#) **NEW**

[DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update, June 1](#) (includes [Preparing for Summer Recreational Programs](#)) **NEW**

[Zoom Meeting Presentation for Special Education Directors, May 29](#) **NEW**

[Graduation Guidance: Additional Information on Governor's Emergency Order, May 21](#) **NEW**

[Moving Assessments Forward, May 20](#) **NEW**

[Massachusetts Preschool Remote Learning Guidance & Prerequisite Content Standards, May 15](#) **NEW**

[Special Educator's Meeting, DESE and DPH Joint Recommendations, May 1,](#) **NEW**

[PBS Learning Media](#)

[Sample Virtual IEP Agenda](#)

[Remote Learning Record](#)

[Remote Learning Plan](#) **NEW**

[Turning 3 and Transition during COVID-19](#)

[Subscribe to the DESE Commissioner updates](#)

[SEPAC Best Practices During Covid-19](#)

[A simple approach to help your child with IEP goals while sheltering at home](#)

[SPaN: School Closure and Special Education Rights](#)

[WGBH - Distance Learning Center Tools: Well organized and not overwhelming!](#)

[Family Resource Toolkit from the Department of Education: multiple languages](#)

[MatchUs](#), part of MFOFC, is working with families and educators ANYWHERE to support 1:1 conversations on how best to support students at home.

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

[Western Mass listing of school lunch programs: note that there may be updates to this information.](#) **UPDATED**



RESOURCES IN OTHER LANGUAGES

[Una guía paso a paso para usar la telemedicina](#)

[Muestra de Agenda de Reunion Virtual de IEP](#)

[Hacer un plan médico durante el COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Fact Sheets in Multiple Languages](#): These materials are reviewed and vetted by physicians and medical school faculty members at the Harvard hospitals and are created in collaboration with Harvard Health Publishing.

[Guía de Asistencia para Beneficios de Desempleo por Pandemia](#)

[Recursos para familias de niños con necesidades especiales que están confinadas en casa](#)

[Federación para Niños con Necesidades Especiales](#)

[Información de COVID-19 Por y Para Personas con Discapacidades](#)

Mass Advocates for Children: [facebook.com/groups/MACEspanol/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MACEspanol/)

[Special Education Family Resource Toolkit](#) from the Department of Education.

<https://switchboardta.org/blog/a-round-up-of-multilingual-resources-on-covid-19/> **NEW**

FOOD PANTRIES & OTHER RELATED SUPPORT

Did you get a P-EBT card in the mail for your DTA funds? Click [HERE](#) for instructions on how to use it. **NEW**

Find a food bank or food distribution site near you [HERE](#), or contact the Food Bank of Western MA at 413-247-9738.

[Extra SNAP Benefits](#): Congress approved special SNAP supplement benefits in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Call 877-382-2363.

[Western Mass Community Mutual Aid Website](#)

If you or your family is facing hunger right now, Project Bread wants to help. Call the Food Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333

DELIVERY SERVICES/PICK UP

[Amherst Food Delivery](#)

[Massachusetts Food Delivery](#): Farm fresh food delivered to your door, SNAP discounts

[Buy Local Food/Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture](#) - all in western Massachusetts. 413.665.7100

[Instacart](#)

SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS

[Attorney General Advisory on Residential Evictions](#) **NEW**

[Local Emergency Shelters in Western MA](#) during COVID-19, including options for isolation.

[Community Action](#): Call the Community Resources and Advocacy program at 413-475-1570 or 413-582-4237.

RAFT- [Residential Assistance for Families in Transition](#)

TRANSPORTATION

[Registry of Motor Vehicles](#): general information.

PVTA: [Service Update](#). Call 413-781-7882 for more information. **NEW**

CHILDCARE

[Massachusetts Child Care](#), updated June 1 **NEW**

[Mass Options](#): MassOptions connects elders, individuals with disabilities and their caregivers with agencies and organizations that can best meet their needs, including connections to respite help.

ADVOCACY/STUDIES

Email [Congress](#) to Include the Disability Community in COVID-19 Relief Bills - it takes just 5 minutes. The U.S. House of Representatives has passed legislation that includes many of our top asks – and now the Senate must act! **ONGOING & IMPORTANT**

[The Arc](#): legislative priorities related to COVID-19

[Disability Law Center's recent letter to the MA Commissioner of Public Health regarding reasonable accommodations for Persons with Disabilities](#)

Action needed to keep remote services for students with disabilities. (202) 408-9514, National Disability Rights Network, [Link](#)



Autism Connections, Family Empowerment, Whole Children, Milestones, Whole Selves, Adult Family Care, Shared Living

UCONN STUDY: Understanding Stress and Personal Well-Being Among Primary Caregivers of Children Aged 6 to 18 During COVID-19 Pandemic

Boston University's The Road Ahead Study, focuses on autistic high school students graduating with a regular HS diploma.

WEBINARS: UPCOMING

June 8, 12:00 p.m., Access in the College Classroom: A discussion about the differences between High School and College accommodations for learning. Items to be covered include the basics of the law, student disclosure, and common college accommodations used to provide access to the classroom setting. from FCSN **NEW**

June 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Turning 18, What You Need to Know. Join Family Empowerment and Frederick Misilo from Fletcher Tilton PC for an overview of the legal consequences of reaching the age of emancipation at 18. This webinar is for parents and family members of children with an intellectual or developmental disability. **NEW**

June 9, 10:00 a.m., Supports for Students with a History of Trauma and Significant Anxiety, from FCSN

June 11, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Basic Rights Transition Planning, from FCSN **NEW**

June 18, 1:00 p.m., HomeWorks: A model of independent living for individuals with disabilities, from MFOFC **NEW**

June 30, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., Let's Get Away, Together! (A six-part armchair travel series for caregivers. Each week our "virtual" travelers will visit a new part of the world, incorporating storytelling, music, poetry writing, and/or a simple craft. **NEW**

Greater Massachusetts Special Needs events: various

WEBINARS: PREVIOUS

Testing in the Age of Remote Learning, May 15, Federation for Children with Special Needs and various partners.

Charting the LifeCourse for Transition, Laurel Peltier, May 12, Family Empowerment **NEW**

Becoming Person Centered with Cheryl Ryan Chan, May 6, Family Empowerment

Special Education and Remote Learning, May 5, Pathlight's Nancy Farnsworth

SUPPORT GROUPS/CONTACT A SPECIALIST

▶ Pathlight Open Office Hours: Meet virtually with a specialist to discuss the topics of your choice, including transitioning out of high school during Covid-19, virtual IEP meetings, remote learning, behavioral challenges, and managing isolation. Hours available: Sunday mornings Facebook event, Register, 9:30-11:00 a.m.; Thursday mornings Facebook event, Register, 9:30-11:00 a.m.; Thursday evenings Facebook event, Register, 8:30-10:00 p.m. Click on the links or email joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org for more information.

Autism Support Group, hosted by A Spectrum of Difference (Athol). This Group is held via Zoom on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each Month.

Parent Life Coaching available from Jewish Family & Children's Service. Set up a free phone call or video meeting for advice on creating a schedule for your loved one or troubleshoot challenging behaviors during school and day program closures.

CONFERENCE

International Fragile X Conference. The fully virtual conference takes place over four days across three months: May 29-30, June 27, and July 22.

Massachusetts Down Syndrome Virtual Conference: Recorded presentations available starting in mid-June.

YOUNG ADULT ACTIVITIES

Roots, Northern Berkshire Teen Center: QuaranTEEN, Mondays, 2:30. Welcome to all Berkshire County High School juniors and seniors.

AANE events for June: Northampton Women's Support Group, June 8, 4:00-6:00 p.m.; Netflix Watch Party, The Bee Movie, June 11, 6:00-9:00 p.m. (activities and support groups for both young adults with autism and their parents) **UPDATED**



Autism Connections, Family Empowerment, Whole Children, Milestones, Whole Selves, Adult Family Care, Shared Living

[Youthworks](#), [MassHire Franklin/Hampshire](#)

[Whole Children/Milestones Rec activities](#) **NEW CLASSES**

[MA Down Syndrome Congress Teens and Adults](#)

[Newsletter](#): full of some awesome things to do **NEW**

VETERAN SERVICES

[What Veteran's Need to Know about Coronavirus, from the US Department of Veteran's Affairs](#)

HEAT AND ELECTRIC SERVICES

[National Grid](#): call customer service for COVID-19 programs, 1-800-322-3223.

[Eversource](#); Learn more [HERE](#).

[Las respuestas a las preguntas frecuentes están disponibles en español.](#)

[Fuel assistance](#): Call 413-552-1548 (press 1 for English, 2 for Spanish and then 4 to speak with a live person).

INTERNET/PHONE DISCOUNTS

[MassHealth Directory of Internet and Phone discount programs.](#)

SOCIAL STORIES

A wide variety of [Social Stories](#) from *Autism Little Learners* **NEW**

[This social story](#), made for children under 7 and in many languages, communicates important prevention information about the coronavirus without focusing on fear. **NEW**

THE CENSUS

[What is the Census?](#) A plain language document.

[Complete the Census online](#)

GENERAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

[Strategies to support teens/young adults with autism during COVID-19](#), from Harvard Health Publishing

[Mass Advocates for Children](#)

[Greater MA Special Needs Events](#)

[COVID-19 Resources for families](#): includes excellent information that may not be included elsewhere.

[Family toolkit](#) from DESE

[Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#): Excellent toolkit with specific need relations resources

LEGAL RESOURCES

[Disability Law Center](#): Know your rights

[Mass Legal Help](#): A variety of [resources](#) about your rights during the COVID-19 breakout.

FUN THINGS!

NY Times events: [Opening Night](#), THURSDAY, JUNE 11 - Celebrate the Broadway season that was (and will be). *Join the stage's biggest stars as they virtually gather to perform the songs, scenes and show stoppers.* **NEW**

June 30, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., [Let's Get Away, Together!](#) (A six-part armchair travel series for caregivers plus a guest. Each week our "virtual" travelers will visit a new part of the world, incorporating storytelling, music, poetry writing, and/or a simple craft. **NEW**

[Cosmic Kids Yoga](#) **NEW**

[Ludlow Zoo Opens with Restrictions](#) **NEW**

[Boston Museums](#): [Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum](#) and the [Museum of Fine Arts](#) **NEW**

[The Bridge Family Center](#), [June Calendar](#) of virtual activities **NEW**

[Valuing our Children in Athol](#), [June Calendar](#) of virtual activities **NEW**

PARENT/CAREGIVER SELF-CARE

[Virtual Calm Room](#), Created by Mia J. Gray, School Adjustment Counselor at Patrick E. Bowe Elementary School Chicopee, MA **NEW**

June 30, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., [Let's Get Away, Together!](#) (A six-part armchair travel series for caregivers (and up to one guest). Each week "virtual" travelers will visit a new part of the world, incorporating storytelling, music, poetry writing, and/or a simple craft. **NEW**



Our team is using a variety of technology to stay connected to you - email is our first choice. If we return your phone call our calls may show as restricted in some cases, so please check your messages if you are expecting to hear from us.

TEAM DIRECTORY

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A Pathlight Program
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

How can we help you?

Contact any of us at the Pathlight programs and we will do our best to direct you to resources and help you with your request and needs. Email info@pathlightgroup.org, familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org or autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org. If you don't have email, call the program managers listed on our team directory on page 7.

Please share this newsletter with families and other individuals you think may need help.

 Life can be tough,
but so are you,
and we can help.

Please note that all resource information is subject to change as the situation and supports or activities evolve. If you have questions, want to help, or need help, email us at the above addresses and we will be glad to assist and guide you.



Sensory Issues with Wearing Masks?

Some people have difficult sensory issues with wearing a protective mask, but here are ways to try and help. You can make it fun like our Super Hero mask wearers above have done, or keep the material soft and simple, with loose elastic so it is not too tight but still effective. Here are some great ideas (and great understanding of the issues) from *The Mighty*, in the article "[What to Do If You Can't Wear a Face Mask](#)".