



Community Connection Newsletter

resources for the community

May 13, 2020



A Pathlight Program

Autism Connections

Easthampton Office
¡Hola! Hablamos español
116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366
Easthampton, MA 01027

Berkshire Office
75 South Church Street, Suite 402
Pittsfield, MA 01201



Family Empowerment

a Pathlight program



MILESTONES



WHOLE CHILDREN



WHOLE SELVES®

41 Russell Street
Hadley, MA 01035



Shared Living

a Pathlight program



Adult Family Care

a Pathlight program

220 Brookdale Drive
Springfield, MA 01104

THE PATHLIGHT COMMUNITY

Whole Children and Milestones Recreation

Whole Children and Milestones Recreation programs continue to offer an exciting choice of free online classes!

Visit www.wholechildren.org to view the calendar of classes - scroll down the page to find the calendar to see the full class listing. Contact julie.hooks for more information.

Family Empowerment Webinar

Special Education Topics with Pathlight's Special Education Advocate Nancy Farnsworth

May 19, 2020, 6-8 p.m.

This is the meeting for you if you have questions about current Special Education Topics. Submit a question on the registration form to have it addressed during the webinar. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

IMPORTANT UPDATES THIS WEEK

Baker-Polito Administration Files Supplemental Budget Bill to Authorize \$1 Billion in COVID-19 Spending, May 12, 2020 **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Four-Phase Approach to Reopening and Publishes Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards May 11, 2020 **NEW**

(On April 28, Governor Baker announced the creation of the Reopening Advisory Board. This group is charged with advising the administration on strategies to reopen the economy in phases based on health and safety metrics.) **NEW**

If you are interested in submitting comments to the board, please fill out the form. Your comments will be reviewed and taken into consideration as the Advisory Board develops a reopening report. **NEW**

Baker-Polito Administration, Partners in Health, Public Health Officials Provide Update on Community Tracing Collaborative, May 7, 2020 **NEW**

COVID-19 contact tracing resources and information, in multiple languages **NEW**

DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update, May 11, 2020 **NEW**

DESE Resources: This Excel document contains links to resources that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) offers to help general and special educators, administrators, related service providers, and parents address the needs of students with disabilities who are learning remotely during the COVID-19 crisis.

Updated May 8, 2020 **NEW**

Sample Virtual IEP

Agenda **NEW**

Coronavirus Scam information: Federal Trade Commission, and 22News WWLP.com story on fake test locations

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Mass.gov: state COVID-19 info, updated daily.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has information for the public and providers.

Information and resources to help DDS families and individuals.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

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

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

[Domestic Violence Resources](#)

[Call 211](#)

[Massachusetts Crisis Hotlines](#)

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

Small Businesses

[Reopening your Business](#), from Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly, **Webinar** on May 20 **NEW**

Economic Impact Payments

Economic impact payments for Social Security and SSI recipients, [update](#) **NEW**

[General Social Security information](#)

[Who will NOT receive a stimulus check](#)

Job Loss/Unemployment

[Flow Chart](#): What you need to know about the CARES Act and if you can file for unemployment **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.

[Pandemic Unemployment Benefits](#): Unemployment Assistance for Those Not Eligible for Regular Unemployment Benefits

[Pathlight Job Opportunities](#)

HEALTH SERVICES

[Masshealth Information](#), 800-841-2900

PCA services: those receiving PCA services and who cannot currently fill the hours, can receive Home Health Aides to cover the amount of PCA hours they receive.

MassHealth PCA Consumers who have unfulfilled PCA hours and who 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.

MassHealth will supply some members with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) so they can continue to receive home services if someone is sick in the home.

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

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

[MassHealth Telehealth Services for Behavioral Health](#)

General Health Related Information

Health Coverage Helpline: 800-272-4232 **NEW**

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 Center)

[Western Mass Mental Health Resources](#), from 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, HIPAA, 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

[Learn about testing process](#) **NEW**

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

May 14, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., **Webinar:** [How to Plan for COVID Hospitalization and Disability](#), from *A Safer Me*, with Cheryl Chan and Carrie Noseworthy. **NEW**

[Prepare a Medical Plan](#) **NEW**

[CDC Testing Information](#) **NEW**

[Getting Tested Social Story](#) **NEW**

[Will Antibodies After Covid-19 Illness Prevent Reinfection?](#) from NPR **NEW**

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

[Plain language medical information form](#)

[Healthcare Passport](#)

[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

[Plain Language Coronavirus Glossary](#)

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

[Tips For Working With Support Staff During COVID-19](#), written by individuals with disabilities.

[Information about Covid-19 in plain language for individuals with disabilities.](#)

EDUCATION RELATED

[DESE Resources:](#) This Excel document contains links to resources that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) offers to help general and special educators, administrators, related service providers, and parents address the needs of students with disabilities who are learning remotely during the COVID-19 crisis. Updated May 8, 2020 **NEW**

[The Benefits of Video-Mediated Instruction](#) (pre-COVID-19 resource) - an instructional avatar creates an inclusive educational experience for students

with autism. Edutopia & George Lucas Educational Foundation. **NEW**

[Sample Virtual IEP Agenda](#) **NEW**

[Zoom Meeting Presentation of SPED Directors, May 8](#) (scroll down the page to open the presentation file) **NEW**

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

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

[Subscribe to the DESE Commissioner updates](#)

[DESE Commissioner's Updated Report of Remote Learning Guidance for Massachusetts Schools](#)

[May 5 Update from DESE on Student Assessments](#)

[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!](#)

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

[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

RESOURCES IN OTHER LANGUAGES

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

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

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

[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

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

[General information](#)

[Amherst Food Delivery](#) (delivery available elsewhere)

[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](#)

[Stop & Shop/Uber discount ride offer for 60+](#)

[Berkshires List of Restaurant Delivery/Pick up](#)

[List of Northampton restaurants with delivery/pick up](#)

SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS

[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 **NEW**

[PVTA](#): Service Update 4-21-20: ESSENTIAL TRIPS ONLY. Call 413-781-7882 for more information.

CHILDCARE

[Massachusetts Emergency COVID-19 Child Care](#)

[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

[Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities](#) letter asking to include people with disabilities who are over 17 and a tax dependent of someone else in the next coronavirus relief package. At the moment they do not qualify for either the \$500 payment or the \$1200 payment.

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

[Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities](#) and current policy priorities

Send Governor Baker an email to address biases in [COVID-19 Health Care Triage](#) (via The Arc of MA)

[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](#)

[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 who plan graduate with a regular HS diploma.

WEBINARS: UPCOMING

May 14, 2:30-3:30 p.m., [MassHealth Behavioral Health](#)



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

Updates, Autism Insurance Resource Center. Update from the Office of Behavioral Health on current efforts and initiatives to support families and providers. **NEW**

May 14, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., How to Plan for COVID-19 Hospitalization and Disability, from *A Safer Me*, with Cheryl Chan and Carrie Noseworthy. **NEW**

May 18, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (\$10), AANE Transition Planning: Guidelines and Timelines for Supporting and Individual with Autism. **NEW**

May 19, 10:00 a.m., Special Education Topics During School Closures, with Nancy Farnsworth, Pathlight's Education Advocate. This webinar currently takes place every other week. Submit questions for consideration when you register. **NEW**

May 19, 3pm, Support and Strategies for Family Members of People Hearing Voices, sponsored by western MA Recovery Learning Community. **NEW**

May 19, 7:00 p.m., An Evening with Dr. Temple Grandin, A Virtual Town Hall, hosted by the Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence. (they will fill very quickly) **NEW**

May 20, 10:00 a.m., Reopening your Business, from Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly **NEW**

May 26, A Full Life Ahead, Leaving the School System, What Services are Available?, MFOFC organized presentation.

WEBINARS: UPCOMING, FOR PROFESSIONALS

May 19, 3:00-5:15 p.m., Same Side of the Table: At this year's remote forum, BSEA (Bureau of Special Education Appeals), Director, Reece Erlichman will moderate a panel of Hearing Officers, Advocates and Special Education Administrators. **NEW**

WEBINARS: ONGOING

Federation for Children with Special Needs facebook page for their weekday Livestream events for info and support. More information: (617) 236-7210.

Parent Training: Everyday ABA, from Boston Medical Autism Program. A six week training - download sessions at your convenience.

Greater Massachusetts Special Needs events

Autism Research Institute: weekly webinars

AANE (Asperger/autism network): Check out upcoming online events here. Call 617-393-3824 x32 for more information.

The Arc Webinar Series: The Arc team hosts weekly, half-hour policy related webinars and Q&A sessions.

WEBINARS: RECORDED

Executive Function in the Era of Remote Learning, NESCA (Neuropsychology & Education Services for Children and Adolescents). **NEW**

DESE Special Education and COVID-19, FCSN/SPaN Webinar, May 6. Powerpoint only, Video recording on presentation. **NEW**

The Arc of Massachusetts - Friday Federal Covid-19 Updates, May 8. Powerpoint only. **NEW**

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 9:30-11:00 a.m., Thursday mornings 9:30-11:00 a.m., Thursday evenings 8:30-10:00 p.m. Click on the links or email joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org for more information. **NEW**

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. **NEW**

Parent and caregiver support group, May 19, 2:00 p.m. Sponsored by Behavioral Health Network. This group is for caregivers of someone who has autism and receives DDS services. **NEW**

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. **NEW**

YOUNG ADULT ACTIVITIES

Adult Social Group on Zoom, May 14 and May 21, 5pm. Sponsored by JCC Kehillah **NEW**



Teen Social on Zoom, May 20, 4:30-5:30 p.m., sponsored by JCC Kehillah **NEW**

AANE events for May (activities and support groups for both young adults and parents)

MA Down Syndrome Congress Teens and Adults Newsletter: full of some awesome thing to do

Whole Children/Milestones activities

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.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Neighbor to Neighbor: one-time assistance for local residents who are in economic distress. Berkshires.

THE CENSUS

What is the Census? A plain language document.

Complete the Census online

GENERAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

Registry of Motor Vehicles **NEW**

Strategies to support teens/young adults with autism during COVID-19, from Harvard Health Publishing **NEW**

Mass Advocates for Children

We all need help sometimes, mass.gov resource site

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!

The Kids Should See This: TKSST is a free, unprecedented collection of over 4,500 kid-friendly videos, curated for teachers and parents who want to share smarter, more meaningful media in the classroom and at home. Selections are grown-up-friendly, too! **NEW**

Hilltown Families Summer Camp Directory **NEW**

Remote Summer Camps

Kids printable comic book on COVID-19, from NPR in English, Chinese and Spanish. **NEW**

At home architecture challenges for kids in quarantine. Currently, the British studio has featured the instructions for how to build a paper skyscraper, how to create their own city, how to draw trees, and how to create the architecture of the future. **NEW**

The Bridge Family Center, May calendar of activities.

Valuing our Children in Athol, May calendar of activities.

FOR ADULTS

World 101 (from the Council on Foreign Relations): Understand the issues and forces that shape our world.

Podcast from *Parenting Special Needs* magazine: Do you Suffer from Decision Fatigue? Here's help.

SELF-CARE

WBUR: Therapist Esther Perel shares relationship advice for quarantined couples. **NEW**

Advice For Dealing With Uncertainty, From People Who've Been There, NPR. Seven tips to read, or listen **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

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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.



The people behind the masks!

While masks and other protective gear are essential for healthcare workers to stay safe while treating coronavirus patients, they also make it difficult for isolated patients to feel connected to the only other humans they see.

Some medical professionals have come up with a clever way to make that connection with isolated patients by wearing large photos of themselves taped to their protective gear. It works!