



Community Connection Newsletter

resources for the community

May 6, 2020

THE PATHLIGHT COMMUNITY



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Giving Tuesday, the online donation event, took place this week and many of you donated to Pathlight programs. Your support helps us meet the emerging and fluctuating needs of the Pathlight community, as we manage unexpected expenses. **Thank you for your generous support!**

If you have a moment, take a look at Pathlight's [Facebook page](#) to see how some of the residents in our homes and specialized programs are enjoying the days!

And remember to let us know if we can help you with anything.

Find more information about Pathlight's COVID-19 preparations on our [website](#).

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.

We are also sponsoring a Virtual Talent Show - **deadline for submissions is May 10!** Show off your skills and send in your video.

Here are the instructions:

- Please hold your camera in landscape mode (sideways) when filming and introduce yourself in your video so we know who you are (first name only is fine). Your submission should be no longer than one and a half minutes.
- Please save your video with your name and upload it here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14t1V5IFW7O_BQP1vXagWaszlfzaAVsR1?usp=sharing
- NOTE: When you submit your video, please write this sentence in order for us to include/share it: "I understand that my child's video may be included on social media and sent in an email to all Whole Children families".



Autism Connections

We have been very fortunate to have received several significant donations to our Berkshire office. A local donor arranged a contact



free delivery of a large number of Lego Sets for families. The sets will be a welcome diversion during the long, "remote-learning" days.

Another local organization donated gift cards for a play and building space (when it re-opens), and a Berkshire business donated bulk quantities of hand sanitizers that we were able to repackage in smaller bottles for families.

All of the items are being distributed to families in a sanitized "gift bag" so they can start the fun!

Family Empowerment

Parents are busy right now organizing remote learning for their children, working in the community or at home and managing meals and chores. Trying to schedule a time to talk live quickly turns into a game of phone tag. We've created some times during the week where we will be available for all families to make a phone appointment with us and talk about where they need assistance, or whatever feels right. Hours available are Sunday mornings 9:30-11 a.m., Thursday mornings 9:30-11:00 a.m. and Thursday evenings 8:30-10:00 p.m.

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

Check our schedule of virtual events [HERE](#) (on page 2) to register, or take a look at the events on Family Empowerment's [Facebook page](#) for more information.

Family Empowerment Webinars

Charting the LifeCourse Tools

May 12, 2020, 6-8 p.m.,

Learn how Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) tools can be used by families for future planning. Local specialist Laurel Peltier will lead the discussion. Register and find more information [HERE](#). **NEW**

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. RSVP and more information [HERE](#). **NEW**

IMPORTANT UPDATES THIS WEEK

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

[Subscribe to the DESE Commissioner updates](#) **NEW**

[Zoom Meeting Presentation of SPED Directors, May 1](#)
(scroll down the page to open the presentation file) **NEW**

[Baker-Polito Administration Orders Use of Mask or Face Covering in Public](#) **NEW**

[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. **NEW**

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

Coronavirus Scam information: [Federal Trade Commission](#), and [22News WWLP.com story on fake test locations](#) **NEW**

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

[Mass.gov](#): general state information relative to COVID-19, 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.](#)

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

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

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

[The World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) provides rolling updates from around the globe.

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

[Domestic Violence Resources](#)

[Call 211](#)

[Massachusetts Crisis Hotlines](#)

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

State, Special Education Related

[Mass Advocates for Children](#)

[Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](#) provides updated information for schools.

Small Businesses

[Small Business Relief programs](#)

COVID-19 Economic Impact Payments

[General Social Security information](#)

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

[A blog all about stimulus checks and who receives them and why](#) **NEW**

Job Loss/Unemployment

Full unemployment information can be found [here](#) or 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](#)

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



MassHire: Resources for job seekers in Franklin and Hampshire Counties (other counties as well) **NEW**

Pathlight Job Opportunities **NEW**

HEALTH SERVICES

Masshealth Information (call MassHealth at (800) 841-2900) or click on the link for all MassHealth info.

PCA services: For those receiving PCA services and who cannot currently fill the hours, they 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.

How To Get The Most Out Of Your Virtual Medical Appointment from National Public Radio.

MassHealth Telehealth Services for Behavioral Health Governor Baker's Expansion of Telehealth Services Order

MassHealth Telehealth Services for Behavioral Health

General Health Related Information

How To Get The Most Out Of Your Virtual Medical Appointment from National Public Radio.

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

Mental Health Resources

Western Mass Mental Health Resources, from Community Action. **NEW**

Mass General Hospital Mental Health Resources related to COVID19 **NEW**

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.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, (US Department of Health & Human Services).

HEALTH DISABILITY RIGHTS

Disability Law Center's recent letter to the MA Commissioner of Public Health regarding reasonable accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: the letter urges the adoption of a statewide hospital visitor policy that includes reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities who require a support person to remain with them in the hospital. The letter can be downloaded or attached to an email if you would like to send a letter to the commissioner yourself. **NEW**

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 THE PERSON YOU CARE FOR IS SICK

Plain language medical information form **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 **NEW**

COVID-19 Disability Form to have ready for the hospital if you to show that an individual needs someone to help them while hospitalized.

Healthcare Passport

DOCUMENTS FOR SELF ADVOCATES

Plain Language Coronavirus Glossary or Words To Know **NEW**



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

What is the Census? A plain language document.

Tips For Working With Support Staff During COVID-19, written by individuals with disabilities.

EDUCATION RELATED

Turning 3 and Transition during COVID-19 **NEW**

Subscribe to the DESE Commissioner updates **New**

Zoom Meeting Presentation of SPED Directors, May 1 (scroll down the page to open the presentation file) **NEW**

DESE Commissioner's Updated Report of Remote Learning Guidance for Massachusetts Schools

SEPAC Best Practices During Covid-19

Remote Learning Daily Tracking Form

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.

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

Western Mass listing of school lunch programs

RESOURCES IN OTHER LANGUAGES

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

Los servicios de salud están cambiando su sistema de atención al servicio en línea: Lo que necesita saber sobre el "telehealth"

<https://www.facebook.com/Federacionlatino/>

<https://www.facebook.com/grupodeapoiodefederacao/>

FAMILIAS: Buscando Ayuda para Nuestros Niños con

Planes de Educación Individualizados/Necesidades de Apoyo

Información de COVID-19 Por y Para Personas con Discapacidades

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

Bilingual video for children explaining COVID-19 for Haitian families.

Special Education Family Resource Toolkit from the Department of Education.

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.

Northampton Survival Center Update

<https://www.servings.org/>

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

Pandemic EBT (PEBT): information about extended food stamp benefits

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

PVTA: Service Update 4-21-20: PVTA is providing transportation for ESSENTIAL TRIPS ONLY. Call 413-781-7882 for more information.

CHILDCARE

https://eeclead.force.com/apex/EEC_ChildCareEmergencyProcedure

Click this link for information on how the emergency childcare program will work. Priority will be given to essential workers.

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.

Childcare Aware of America: Their recent Child Care during COVID-19: Guidance and Implementation from the experts webinar is available in slides.

ADVOCACY/STUDIES

The Arc: legislative priorities related to COVID-19

Share your story with the Arc: People with disabilities, their families, and the direct support professional workforce can't be left out of coronavirus response legislation. Share your story now!

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and current policy priorities **NEW**

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: the letter can be downloaded and attached to an e-mail.

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. **NEW**

WEBINARS/GROUPS

May 7, 8:30-10:00pm, Pathlight Open Office Hours. Speak with a Pathlight specialist by arranging a phone appointment. Register HERE (see page 2) **NEW**

May 12, 10:00 a.m., Attainable: The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE). Info about the plan here.

May 12, What are You Worried About? Treating Fears, Phobias and Emotional Distress in Children. Training from PPAL. **NEW**

May 13-14: Online screening of The Kids We Lose with virtual follow up discussion on May 14, 2020
The Kids We Lose is the award-winning documentary film documenting the archaic, counterproductive, unnecessary intervention practices often applied to kids with social, emotional and behavioral challenges. If you haven't been able to attend a screening, here's your chance to watch the film online and at no charge before it goes into distribution. We'll send you a link to watch the film online -- the window is from Wednesday May 13th at 7 pm ET to Wednesday, May 14th at 7 pm ET -- and information for joining in on a virtual discussion about the film moderated by Dr. Ross Greene on Wednesday, May 14th at 7 pm. Just register and we'll send you all the information beforehand. **NEW**

May 14, 2:30-3:30 p.m., MassHealth Behavioral Health Updates, Autism Insurance Resource Center, Join Meeting, ID: 921 3133 3374 **NEW**

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

Weekly or recurring events or groups

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.

YOUNG ADULT ACTIVITIES

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

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

Whole Children/Milestones activities

VETERAN SERVICES

What Veteran's Need to Know about Coronavirus, from the US Department of Veteran's Affairs **NEW**

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.

Mortgage: Consumer Hotline Call Attorney General's Consumer Advocacy & Response Division, (617) 727-8400.

THE CENSUS

What is the Census? A plain language document.

Complete the Census online **NEW**

GENERAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

We all need help sometimes, mass.gov resource site **NEW**

Greater MA Special Needs Events **NEW**

MatchUs, part of MFOFC, is working with families and educators ANYWHERE to support 1:1 conversations on how best to support students at home. **NEW**

Family Caregiver Alliance, National Center on Caregiving: extensive and excellent resources related to COVID-19

COVID-19 Resources for families: this is a long list of resources, but includes excellent information that may not be included elsewhere.

Federation for children with special needs: disability related resources

Family toolkit from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services: Excellent toolkit with specific need relations resources

LEGAL RESOURCES

Disability Law Center: Know your rights

SELF-CARE

Ted Talk: The Importance of Self-Care **NEW**

Six Daily Questions to Ask Yourself While Social Distancing

FUN THINGS!

Appalachian Mountain Club: Backyard/outdoor activities for kids **NEW**

Virtual family activities from the Berkshire County ARC, including Mindfulness, Trivia, Book Club, and a knitting group.

The Bridge Family Resource Center, Amherst MA, virtual groups and activities

Valuing our Children in Athol calendar of daily virtual activities.



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.

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A Pathlight Program
116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366
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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 page.

Please share this newsletter with families and other individuals you think may need help. We are also mailing it by post to those who do not have online access.

 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 info@wholechildren.org, info@pathlightgroup.org, autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org or familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org.



Happy Mother's Day to all the wonderful Moms who are working so hard for their families. We see you, and know how tough it is to keep it all together right now. You are doing a great job.