As we enter the fifth week of COVID disruption, much has changed in the world and in our lives, but our goal remains the same: to keep our staff, our care providers, and the people we serve as healthy and safe as we possibly can.

Our commitment to serve people with disabilities and autism is stronger than ever, and the work to ensure the health and safety of the individuals we serve has greatly intensified.

Pathlight provides care for many people in situations where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is needed to safeguard the health of everyone.

We asked our community to help us find PPE for people in those situations and many of you responded by making handmade masks for us!

We are so grateful to our many friends and community partners who made additional donations of all kinds to Pathlight in recent weeks. Your kindness and generosity are making a meaningful difference in the lives of people we serve during these extraordinary times. Thank you for caring, and thank you for acting on your wish to help.

Find more information about Pathlight’s COVID-19 preparations on our website.

Whole Children/Milestones Recreation enrichment classes

Whole Children and Milestones Recreation are offering free online classes! Visit www.wholechildren.org, click on ‘community’ and scroll down to our calendar to check out the selection! From there you can simply click on the class and find the link to join. Classes include Minecraft, Animal Crossing, Self-Advocacy, Art Explorations, Dungeons & Dragons, Smash Brothers, Harry Potter Club, Music and Dance, Manga & Anime, Boundaries & Relationships and Indonesian Kung Fu.

We hope to see your virtual smiles soon!

Dates for the summer session are July 6 to August 21 and may take place if restrictions are lifted. We remain optimistic! Stay tuned for more information.

Milestones Day Program

Milestones is offering virtual check-ins, classes and groups every day!

Autism Connections

Our highlight program this week is Intensive Flexible Family Supports (IFFS), which is keeping very active in the community. IFFS is a program that is only offered through a DDS referral.

The IFFS team is in constant contact with families in the program. They are meeting weekly with the Athol Autism Task Force (North Quabbin area) and also will start meetings this week with the Eastern Pioneer Valley Autism Task Force (Palmer, Monson, Ware,
Belchertown and Granby) to continue to help families connect to DDS and local services in those areas.

**Family Empowerment**

**Becoming Person-Centered: For Families with Cheryl Ryan Chan**, May 6, 2020, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
*Virtual workshop*  
Families who attend the workshop will be entered into a lottery (if they wish) to win three FREE sessions of Person-Centered Planning with Cheryl. Check the Family Empowerment Facebook page for information as it becomes available.

**Charting the LifeCourse Tools**. May 12, 2020, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., *Virtual workshop*  
Learn how Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) tools can be used by families for future planning.

Check the Family Empowerment Facebook page for workshop information as it becomes available.

Our Coffee and Conversation series continues every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Call Donna Kushi at 413-585-8010, x105 for more information. Download the flyer for meeting times and access codes.

**IMPORTANT UPDATES**

Who will NOT receive a stimulus check *(If an SSI recipient can be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return, for example this would include a child, student or older dependent who can be claimed on a parent's return, they will not receive a check.)*

If you do not currently receive direct deposits for Social Security payment, create a direct deposit account here for your stimulus check.

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

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.

Disability Health Form to fill in and bring to hospital in the case an individual with disabilities needs treatment.

Mass.gov update for individuals and families

**Grocery Store employees test site at The Big E.**

**IMPORTANT RESOURCES**

Mass.gov: general state information relative to COVID-19, updated daily.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: updated daily.

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.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) links to National Institute of Infectious Diseases Resources.

The American Hospital Association (AHA) provides a single source repository for many materials relating to COVID-19.

Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association

Essential services during Stay at Home Order

Information about Covid-19 in plain language for individuals with disabilities.

Domestic Violence Resources

Call 211

Massachusetts Crisis Hotlines

Text Hotlines

State, Special Education Related

Mass Advocates for Children

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

Small Businesses

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), enacted on March 27, 2020, is designed

**More Business relief programs**

**COVID-19 Economic Impact Payments**

**Latest news from April 1:**

**General Social Security information, SSI, IRS info**

**Who will NOT receive a stimulus check**

**Job Loss/Unemployment**

Full unemployment information can be found [here](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-unemployment) or call (617) 626-6338 to request weekly benefits, daily from 6 a.m.–10 p.m.

The quickest way to file a successful unemployment claim is through the UI online portal which can be viewed [here](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-unemployment).

Attend a Virtual town hall this week to learn about how to file for benefits.

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

**HEALTH SERVICES**

**Masshealth Information** (call MassHealth at (800) 841-2900)

**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. Click this [link](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-unemployment) for all the details including how to access this service.

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. View more information [HERE](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-unemployment).

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

MassHealth Telehealth Services for Behavioral Health

Governor Baker’s Expansion of Telehealth Services Order

MassHealth Telehealth Services for Behavioral Health

**General Health Related Information**

**Save Receipts for over the counter medicines if you use a Health Savings Account**

**Buoy Health Care Tool:** The new online resource for residents to check their symptoms and connect with the next appropriate health care resource.

**Mental Health Resources**

Maintaining Emotional Health & Well-Being During the COVID-19 Outbreak: Click [HERE](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-unemployment) for a list of resources and tips from Mass.gov for staying emotionally healthy and well.

**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. You can also check out this list of ESPs by location. [More information from NAMI](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-unemployment).

**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).

**EDUCATION RELATED**

**WGBH - Distance Learning Center Tools:** Well organized and not overwhelming!

**Maintaining Transition Skills at Home**

Action needed to keep remote services for students with disabilities, (202) 408-9514, National Disability
Rights Network Link
The ARC Special Education Updates

SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATION
Northampton Community Resources/Emergency

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS
Western Mass listing of school lunch programs
Springfield Schools expanding meal plan to include dinner

HEALTH DISABILITY RIGHTS
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.

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/
Food stamps online application (SNAP) 877) 382-2363
Western Mass Community Mutual Aid Website
Project Bread Food Source Hotline: If you or your family is facing hunger right now, Project Bread wants to help. Call the FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333

SHOPPING: SPECIAL ELDER HOURS
Stop & Shop - 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. daily
GeiSSLer’s in Agawam: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Big Y: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. daily
Whole Foods: one hour before standard opening hours
Trader Joe’s: expedited senior line to enter the store from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Walgreen’s: 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.: Tuesdays
Walmart: 6:00 a.m. - 7:00 a.m.: Tuesdays *or one hour before standard store opening
Costco: 8:00 a.m - 9:00 a.m.: Tuesdays/Thursdays
Target: Reserved shopping the first hour on Wednesdays

DELIVERY SERVICES/PICK UP
General information
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: groceries, especially in the Berkshires.
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
From the Mass Coalition for the Homeless: Families with children seeking to apply for Emergency Assistance (EA) shelter only can apply by phone with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Please share this number with families seeking shelter: 1-866-584-0653. More details about the EA program can be found here: Get Help: Families with Children
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 4-6-20: PVTA is providing transportation for ESSENTIAL TRIPS ONLY. Call 413-781-7882 for more information.

CHILDCARE
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.

ADVOCACY/STUDIES
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)
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

WEBINARS/ONLINE GROUPS
April 16, 8 p.m., pre-register, Weekly Chat from Mass Advocates for Children: For this week’s chat, join MAC Attorney Julia Landau as she discusses how to get special education services while your child with autism is home
April 18, 9:30 a.m., Supporting Teenage Females on the Autism Spectrum
April 18, Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress: Supporting your student during COVID-19
April 18, Parent Autism Conference: Endicott College’s Institute of Applied BEmhavioral Science.
April 21, 12:30 p.m., Supporting Children on the Autism Spectrum in Schools from FCSN
April 23, 2 p.m., Supported Decision Making, an alternative to Guardianship, from the ARC
April 23, 6-7 p.m., Anxiety and Autism, Michael Wilcox with the Northeast Arc.

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

Greater Massachusetts Special Needs events
Autism Research Institute: weekly webinars, excellent topics relating to a wide range of families.
AANE (Asperger/autism network): Check out upcoming online events here. Call 617-393-3824 x32 for more information. There is a wide variety of wonderful online groups for parents and young adults.

The Arc Webinar Series: The Arc team hosts weekly, half-hour webinars and Q&A sessions for updates on federal and local policies.
A Spectrum of Difference: Very interesting groups, activities and education.

VETERAN SERVICES
Mass Vets Advisor: Qualifying Veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into account the number of dependents and income from all sources.
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). The office is open from 8:30-4:30 M-F.

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.

GENERAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

**Federation for children with special needs:** disability related resources

**National Autism Association, 877.622.2884**

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

**Family toolkit** from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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

**Adlib Resource Guide**

LEGAL RESOURCES

**Mass Legal Help:** legal resources for a wide variety of COVID-19 related topics

**Disability Law Center:** Know your rights

HOW TO MANAGE TIME AT HOME

**A Spectrum of Ideas for Autism at Home**

Supporting Individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times, from the UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute Autism Team, [full package of information](#) including social stories, schedules and all downloadable support sheets

AT HOME RESOURCES FOR CARE & CALM

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.

[https://www.facebook.com/Federacionlatino/](https://www.facebook.com/Federacionlatino/)

[https://www.facebook.com/grupodeapoiiodafederacao/](https://www.facebook.com/grupodeapoiiodafederacao/)

**FAMILIAS: Buscando Ayuda para Nuestros Niños con Plane de Educación Individualizados/Necesidades de Apoyo**

**Información de COVID-19 Por y Para Personas con Discapacidades**

FUN THINGS!

As cabin fever sets in, try these [all-ages ideas for fun](#), self-improvement, and even a little stress relief from the Boston Globe. [https://www.bridgewell.org/event/virtual-dance-parties-and-fitness-groups/all/](https://www.bridgewell.org/event/virtual-dance-parties-and-fitness-groups/all/)

**Valuing our Children** in Athol calendar of daily virtual activities.

**Berkshire Theater Group fun classes**

**Bridgewell:** Dance Parties and fitness groups daily.
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.
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.

THANK YOU!

We are so grateful to our many friends who have made donations to Pathlight in response to COVID19. Your kindness and generosity are making a meaningful difference in the lives of the people Pathlight serves during these extraordinary times. Thank you for caring.

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 familyempowerments@pathlightgroup.org.