



Community Connection Newsletter

resources for the community

May 20, 2020



A Pathlight Program

Autism Connections

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Berkshire Office
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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 **NEW**

Whole Children's free online classes will not take place this Monday, Memorial Day. We hope you enjoy the holiday.

Check out Whole Children's [talent show!](#)

Visit www.wholechildren.org to view the calendar of classes and scroll down the page to find the calendar to see the full class listing. **Free online classes have been extended to June 27**, and we will start offering an online Yoga Dance class on June 1. Contact julie.hooks@pathlightgroup.org for more information.

IMPORTANT UPDATES THIS WEEK

[Various engaging Info for Self-Advocates: Disabilityinfo.org](#)

[Google, Apple, release joint coronavirus tracking technology](#), May 20 **NEW**

Western MA News online [article](#) on Summer Camps, May 19 **NEW**

[Reopening Massachusetts PowerPoint](#), May 19 **NEW**

[DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update](#), May 18 **NEW**

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**

[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**

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

Baker-Polito Administration [to distribute](#) \$502 Million from the Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund to Local Cities and Towns, May 14 **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**

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

[Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplaces](#) **NEW**

Economic Impact Payments

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

Job Loss/Unemployment

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](#)

[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](#), 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](#)

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

[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.



EDUCATION RELATED

DESE Resources: This Excel document from DESE contains links to resources for general and special educators, administrators, related service providers, and parents to address the needs of students with disabilities who are learning remotely during the COVID-19 crisis. **UPDATED**

PBS Learning Media **NEW**

Sample Virtual IEP Agenda

Zoom Meeting Presentation of SPED Directors, May 15 (scroll down the page to open the presentation file) **NEW**

Remote Learning Record

Turning 3 and Transition during COVID-19

DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update, May 18 **NEW**

Massachusetts **Preschool** Remote Learning Guidance & Prerequisite Content Standards, May 15 **NEW**

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.

RESOURCES IN OTHER LANGUAGES

Una guía paso a paso para usar la telemedicina

Muestra de Agenda de Reunion Virtual de IEP **NEW**

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

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 (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

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.

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

CHILDCARE

The Commonwealth's mission in reopening is to increase access to childcare and youth programs, protect children and staff, and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Child care and summer recreation camps will reopen in a phased approach. The Departments of Early Education and Care and Public Health are developing guidelines that balance families' need for child care with health and safety. The initial reopening plan will focus on families who have no safe alternative to group care by increasing emergency child care capacity. Childcare operating at reduced capacity and on an emergency basis for children of workers with no safe alternative to group care during Phase 1. Recreational day camps will open in Phase 2 and residential camps in Phase 3. Releasing detailed guidelines in the coming weeks.

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

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 graduating with a regular HS diploma.

WEBINARS: UPCOMING

May 26, 12:00 p.m., MFOFC: Emotional Support for People with Special Needs. By popular demand, join Keith and Loida as they offer a session geared toward adults with disabilities. This session will help encourage and uplift and offer positive strategies for coping during the COVID-19 crisis. Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89194943744>, Meeting ID: 891 9494 3744, Password: 781118 **NEW**

May 22, May 26, May 27 and May 28 (different times each day), The Building Blocks of Equitable Remote Learning. From LearnLaunch. These sessions are designed for Massachusetts district and school leaders who are preparing to move from crisis response to sustained practice while building or updating remote learning plans for their districts. If you are not a district or school leader but are interested in the topic, please sign up for the project mailing list here to stay in the loop about future sessions and opportunities to engage. **NEW**

May 22, May 29, June 5 (Fridays), 3 p.m., Live on-line chats, Special Olympics Massachusetts. Miss getting together and working out with your fellow Special Olympics athlete's? These sessions allow SOMA athlete's to hang out with some fellow athletes virtually during the weekly athlete chat hosted by Auburn athlete Mike Kelley. To register or for more information visit www.specialolympicsma.org/online-athlete-chat/ or [contact info@specialolympicsma.org](mailto:info@specialolympicsma.org)

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



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

May 28, 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Stavros Housing Workshop/Webinar. **NEW**

May 29, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., ABA: The Basics. This introductory training is specifically designed for parents and professionals interacting with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The training will begin with an overview of ASD including core symptoms, strengths, challenges and how ASD symptoms impact learning and behavior. Next, an introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) will be presented including an overview of different ABA teaching strategies and basic behavioral principles used in this therapeutic approach. This is a beginner level event for providers, educators, and parents of preschool and school-aged children with ASD who have little to no training in ABA. This event is fee based. **NEW**

Greater Massachusetts Special Needs events: various

WEBINARS: UPCOMING, FOR PROFESSIONALS-REMOTE LEARNING TOOLS

May 22, May 26, May 27 and May 28 (different times each day), The Building Blocks of Equitable Remote Learning. Sessions are designed for Massachusetts district and school leaders who are preparing to move from crisis response to sustained practice while building or updating remote learning plans for their districts. If you are not a district/school leader but are interested in the topic, please sign up for the project mailing list [here](#) to stay in the loop about future sessions and opportunities to engage. **NEW**

Starting May 26, various times, Virtual Professional Learning Series, from MTSS Tiered Literacy Academy. Join Nathan Lang-Raad, chief education officer at WeVideo, and Kelly True, an instructor for DESE's Tiered Literacy Academy, in a free professional learning series that will focus on remote tiered literacy. Participants may opt into up to four one-hour webinars and a 10-hour online asynchronous learning module. Topics will include: implementing writing strategies and formative feedback via remote instruction, delivering quality small group reading instruction remotely, using scaffolds and accommodations to provide access to core literacy instruction at the middle school level, and examining high-quality lesson design elements. **NEW**

May 29, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., ABA: The Basics. This introductory training is specifically designed for **parents and professionals** interacting with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The training will begin with an overview of ASD including core symptoms, strengths, challenges and how ASD symptoms impact learning and behavior. Next, an introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) will be presented including an overview of different ABA teaching strategies and basic behavioral principles used in this therapeutic approach. This is a beginner level event for providers, educators, and parents of preschool and school-aged children with ASD who have little to no training in ABA. This event is fee based.

WEBINARS: RECORDED

Special Education and Remote Learning, Pathlight's Nancy Farnsworth, May 19 (stay tuned for another Webinar on June 2, info to be posted on Family Empowerment Facebook [events page](#)) **NEW**

Becoming Person Centered with Cheryl Ryan Chan, May 6 **NEW**

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

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. **NEW**

AANE events for May: Virtual Game Night, 5/25, Holyoke Virtual Game Night, 5/28 (activities and support groups for both young adults and parents) **UPDATED**

Youthworks, MassHire Franklin/Hampshire **NEW**

Whole Children/Milestones activities

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

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

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!

Mansfield (CT) Drive-In is open for business from May 20, practicing social distancing. See schedule here. **NEW**

Old math reveals new secrets about these alluring flowers, from National Geographic. A model developed by Alan Turing can help explain the spots on these astoundingly diverse flowers—and many other natural patterns as well. **NEW**

The Kids Should See This; all ages friendly educational video collections

Hilltown Families Summer Camp Directory

Remote Summer Camps

The Bridge Family Center, May calendar of activities.

Valuing our Children in Athol, May calendar of activities

PARENT/CAREGIVER SELF-CARE

May 27, 2 p.m., Balancing Parenthood and Me Time from the *New York Times*. **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.

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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.



Created by Anissa Mekrabech in France, the mask is transparent, allowing hearing-impaired people to read the wearer's lips. A crowdfunding campaign was launched under the slogan, "Your lips are my ears." *

Click [here](#) for instructions on how to make a "window version" of this mask. Click here for the mass.gov animated video on face coverings.

**from the Insider's "28 of the most creative masks from around the world"*