



## Parent/Guardian Support & Resource Pages Week Ending of October 2, 2020



### CASE Collaborative Community News

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As a reminder, the Autism Waiver open enrollment period begins October 16 - 31<sup>st</sup>. I had included the flyer in last week's publication of the CASE Parent/Guardian Support & Resource Pages. Below you will find an important message from the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) detailing more information about the program. In addition, I have included the flyer below for your reference. Best, Sue.

**\*\*Important Message from the Department of Developmental Services  
Regarding the Autism Waiver Open Enrollment\*\***

The Autism Division of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) runs a program for low-income children with autism called the Autism Services Waiver Program. This program serves children under the age of 9 who meet both the clinical and financial eligibility that includes having/obtaining MassHealth Standard Insurance. At this time, the program serves approximately 400 children a year. While the program is near capacity, there is a high rate of turn-over in the program every year, so we want to have a new pool of applicants to draw from to fill open slots. The Autism Division will accept new application requests for families interested in this program between the dates of October 16, 2020 and October 31, 2020. Applications must be postmarked or emailed from a parent/guardian no later than October 31, 2020. This Waiver is a Medicaid Program designed to provide services to help children with autism remain in their homes and actively participate with their families and community. This program receives partial funding from the federal government. Waiver services are supplemental to special education services provided under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.) This Program requires that each family hire a specialized clinician who creates an individually designed Behavior Plan, based on a therapy model chosen by the family, to support their child's assessed needs. The family will also need to hire direct support staff to provide the one-to-one intensive therapy designated in the Positive Behavior Support Plan. Families in the Program also have an opportunity to choose other waiver services designed to help their children develop in areas related to behavior, social skills and communication. Additional services under the waiver include community integration activities, family training and respite. A copy of the Autism Waiver Program Open Request Application and Open Request Family Overview is enclosed in English. The application form, family notice and related materials (in multiple languages\*) will also be available on the DDS web-site at [www.mass.gov/DDS](http://www.mass.gov/DDS) and at the seven regionally based Autism Support Centers (a list of the Centers is available on the DDS website).

*\*Translation and Interpretation is offered free of charge to participants. Thank you for your time, please do not hesitate to contact the Autism Division at [AutismDivision@state.ma.us](mailto:AutismDivision@state.ma.us) or your local Autism Support Center if you have any questions about this application process.*



50 AND FORWARD:  
CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY,  
SHAPING OUR FUTURE

## DDS OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR THE AUTISM WAIVER WILL BE HELD

**OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup> – OCTOBER 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

Applications and information on the Autism Waiver are now available on the [DDS/Autism division website](#) and the [MAC website](#). Any enrollment forms submitted previously will be discarded. ***Families must apply again during this open enrollment period to remain on the waitlist.***

**Applications MUST be postmarked or emailed between October 16<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> 2020**

Important information on the Waiver:

- ❖ This crucial program allows MassHealth eligible children with autism to access intensive treatments and services in their homes and communities.
- ❖ The program is limited to children between the ages of 0-8 who are MassHealth eligible and at risk of residential placement now or at some point in the future.
- ❖ Eligible children are chosen for Autism Waiver services on a lottery basis and once chosen, receive intensive in-home therapies, services and supports for 3 years, or until the child reaches the age of 9. After 3 years the child is eligible for less intensive step-down services until age 9. The waiver also provides related support services such as community integration activities and respite.
- ❖ For the application go to: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/dds-autism-waiver-service-program-awp-open-interest-period-2020>
- ❖ Click this link to find your local Autism Center to get help filling out the application: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/autism-support-centers-list>

For more information contact Johanne Pino at [jpino@massadvocates.org](mailto:jpino@massadvocates.org), or 617-357-8431 x3234

25 Kingston Street, 2nd Floor Boston, MA 02111 617.357.8431 [massadvocates.org](http://massadvocates.org)

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## Community Workshops and Conferences



### Abilities Virtual Experience 2

**When: November 20-22, 2020 | 9:00 am – 5:00 pm - visit website for schedule**

**Format: Online Globally**

Accessible 24 hours a day starting Friday, 9 am PST; Live host, workshops and adaptive activities: 9 am - 5 pm PST  
COVID-19 did not change your need for your products and services, or your need for information and resources...just the way that you can connect with them safely. From your comfiest living room chair, Abilities VE2 will help you:

- \*Find devices that help you meet your day-to-day challenges
- \*Chat directly with other attendees as well as exhibitors
- \*Share advice and get answers through discussion forums
- \*Get relevant, use-now tips and tricks on how to boost your immunity, make your kitchen accessible and more in the workshop's series

Engage from home with wheelchair dance tutorials, adaptive fitness, yoga, service dog demos and more  
The Abilities Virtual Experience is back to connect you with the disability-focused resources you need from the comfort of your living room. Thanks to all for the great feedback from the first virtual show. We kept everything you loved and improved on everything you didn't. So, settle in for more engagement, more interactivity, and more accessibility! Are you registered yet? It's free. To learn more and to register visit <https://www.abilities.com/virtual/>

Groton-Dunstable SEPAC  
Presents:

**MINDING  
YOUR MIND**



**Back to School: Re-Entry and Resilience**  
This Fall couldn't be more different. Grief, loss, the rise in anxiety and depression, and ongoing uncertainty about the future impact how our children experience the return to school. Join Counselor Jon Mattleman for a dynamic virtual program providing a framework to understand and navigate the return to school, youth mental health, and how to be a support. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and get concrete answers for practical steps they can take in real time—who has time to wait?

**THURS, OCTOBER 8  
6:30-7:30 PM**

Webinar hosted by Minding Your Mind  
To Register:  
<https://event.webinarjam.com/register/104/r45gpfnw>

Groton-Dunstable SEPAC

**MINDING  
YOUR MiND**  
[www.mindingyourmind.org](http://www.mindingyourmind.org)

Groton Dunstable Education Foundation

Contact: Kathleen Leonard, [kcleonard@gmail.com](mailto:kcleonard@gmail.com)



## Transition and Beyond (ages 14-22)



### Webinar: I Did It My Way

**When: October 7, 2020 | Wed 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm**

**Format: Virtually in Zoom.**

Learn from a group of self-advocates and their families on how they transformed their traditional day services into individualized support. Presenters will provide discussion of the before and after, how they decided the right supports, and funding sources utilized. To register visit <https://arcmass.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlfuyrqjMjG9zuPCdxvVktilw6OyDrTTj>

### LURIE CENTER FOR AUTISM



### Caregiver Monthly Workshop - Guardianship

**Format: Virtual**

Our Caregiver Workshops are presented virtually. If you have an internet connection, you will be able to participate. Please call 781-860-1700 if you have questions or would like to reserve your virtual spot.

**\*GUARDIANSHIP 101 - Monthly, 1st & 3rd Thursdays, 1:00-2:00 pm, \$25/Family**

The process of pursuing guardianship of children can be confusing. This workshop is designed for parents of children ages 14 years and older. It teaches the basics of the guardianship process, including types of guardianship, how to determine if your child needs a guardian, and how to prepare your child for turning 18.

**\*GUARDIANSHIP 102 - Monthly, 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 11:00-12:30 pm, \$50/Family**

Completing all of the court-required paperwork can be overwhelming. This workshop is a hands-on group tutorial that includes the review of checklists for each attendee and required documentation. It also provides guidance with probate court processes and referrals to legal resources. This workshop can also be provided as a private individual family meeting, by appointment only, at a cost of \$100/family.

**\*GUARDIANSHIP 103 - Monthly, 4th Wednesday, 2:00-3:00 pm, \$25/Family**

Once you have successfully completed your guardianship appointment, one of the important duties for legal guardians in Massachusetts is reporting to the probate court. The initial Guardian Care Plan/Report is required within 60 days of the appointment, and then annually on the anniversary of the guardianship appointment. This workshop is a hands-on group tutorial that walks you through the questions to help you prepare the Guardian Care Plan/Report. (MPC 821)



### Intro to Guardianship and Decision-Making Options

When your child turns 18, you no longer have the legal right to make decisions for them. Learn how to decide on the best way to help them, including applying for guardianship: legal permission to make decisions for them. We'll walk you through your options and the legal process. This Guide will help you:

- \*Assess how well your child can make their own decisions as they enter adulthood
- \*Explore ways to help them with decision-making
- \*Learn how to apply for full or limited guardianship if that's the best option
- \*Connect with organizations that can support you in this process

Read Guide here <https://guides.exceptionallives.org/hc/en-us/articles/360026164413-Introduction>



## Community Support



### **In Our Own Voice Presentation**

**When: October 5, 2020 | Mon 6:30 pm or October 9, 2020 | Fri 12:00 pm**

**Format: Virtually in Zoom.**

NAMI Massachusetts is hosting an In Our Own Voice presentation as part of our celebration of Mental Health Awareness Week. Join us for a powerful presentation on Monday, October 5 from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM that aims to change attitudes, assumptions, and stereotypes about people living with mental health conditions. Two trained presenters with lived experience of a mental health condition will talk openly about their experiences and how they have found pathways to hope and healing. Audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions, learn more about mental health, and challenge misconceptions. Register here (10/5)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sceuspzwpEtNHov8m3y6gWbZBOCtoj425> or (10/9) here

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlscO-oqTkqEt0W7f8TbtWJJKVxMptACvH> Please contact Michelle Ward at [mward@namimass.org](mailto:mward@namimass.org), Assistant Director of Community Education & Training, with any questions.



## *The Network*

**The Network: A Monthly Social Networking Program for adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum**

**When: First Wednesday of each month**

**Where: On-line via Discord**

The Network is a monthly social networking program for adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum aged between 16-30 years. The goal is to provide those with ASD an opportunity to meet others and hopefully make connections. The Network takes place once a month on a Wednesday (usually the first Wednesday of the month) from 6-7:30 p.m. Sometimes we meet at the UMass Lowell south campus and sometimes we hang out somewhere else (e.g. pizza, bowling, etc.). You will receive a schedule of Network meeting events for the year so you will know what is coming up. During the pandemic however, we are meeting online through Discord. During our meetings we are chatting and having fun playing Jackbox games. There is a \$75 annual fee to participate in The Network. This fee also covers the parent group which meets at the same time and place (currently meeting in Zoom). Scholarships are available for those who cannot afford the fee. Ashleigh Hillier, Ph.D. is the Program Director and Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Learn more and enroll here <https://www.uml.edu/Research/Autism/services/the-network.aspx>



## Fun Activities and Recreation



### 8 Corn Mazes You'll Want to Get Lost in this Fall

Autumn offers the challenge of navigating your way through a corn maze at farms around the state. Pumpkin and apple picking, hayrides, children's games, and delicious fall foods add to the family fun of the adventure of tackling a maze. Before you head out, be sure to check online for each venue's specific COVID-19 regulations and accessibility. Learn more here <https://www.baystateparent.com/photogallery/WT/20200921/FROTPAGE/921009999/PH/1?>



THE UMBRELLA.

### F. U. N. Fest - Fall Umbrella Ninja Festival

**When: October 4, 2020 | Sun 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

**Where: Concord Conservation Land, Concord MA**

For Families. Fees Apply. This fall practice your nature ninja skills at the Fall Umbrella Ninja Festival! Lead Ninjas in Nature instructor Ken Clarkson will teach how to build and tend a fire safely and how to connect with your inner flame. Rob Riman will bring his own lessons on "Wildhood" - the connection between the wilderness and your neighborhood. Try out other activities including stick carving, rope walking, and games! The F. U. N. Festival is an in-person festival outside. Families are encouraged to sign up in pods. Each family will be assigned a shift for their activities. Everyone will wear a mask and socially distance themselves during the Festival. Please email Caroline Provost at [caroline@theumbrellaarts.org](mailto:caroline@theumbrellaarts.org) with questions. TO learn more and for registration click here <https://www.familyid.com/programs/musketaquid-arts-environment-adult-youth-and-family-programs-fall-classes-2020> *\*This event is not disability specific.*



### Online "Open" HallowEEK: AANE Instagram Halloween Costume Contest for Adults (Post High School)

**When: September 30th through October 26, 2020 | see website for times & tickets**

**Format: On-line**

The annual Halloween celebration at AANE has always been a major highlight on the AANE calendar. Year after year we see creative costumes that could only be designed and executed by true cosplay devotees! This year we want to give you an opportunity to show off your costume creativity, by sending us a photo of you in your costume. A panel of three judges\* (adults from the AANE community) will select the winners in these categories:

\*Funniest

\*Most Creative

\*Scariest

\*Most International (from the country furthest away from Watertown, MA)

\*Best Overall

To learn more and to register visit <https://www.aane.org/event/online-open-halloweek-aane-instagram-halloween-costume-contest-for-adults-through-10-26-20-1159-pm-et/2020-09-30/> \*participants must have an autism spectrum dx and be 18+ yrs. old (post high-school).



### **Apple Picking Round-up by Locations that Offer Reservations to Control Crowds or Not**

This roundup includes 20 places to pick your own apples in Massachusetts, split by locations where you should reserve a time or not. We have also included updates where possible about which extras many of the farms will offer for the 2020 season. Leave your dog at home this year, wear a mask, and maintain distance from your fellow apple pickers so these wonderful farms can continue to do their thing! Learn more here <https://www.bostonmamas.com/blog/apple-picking-festivals>. \*This information is not disability specific.

### **Simple Ways to Learn About + Celebrate Fall Equinox with Kids**

Fall is typically a stressful time of year for families as we transition back to school, but amidst a global pandemic the stress is next level. (We are sending you all virtual hugs, by the way.) Looking for an antidote to all the pressure? The Fall Equinox on September 22 serves up the perfect opportunity to slow down, get present, and connect with our kids, our partners, and our communities. To that end, below you'll find a few of the ways our family loves to celebrate the Fall Equinox. Read full article here <https://www.bostonmamas.com/blog/celebrate-fall-equinox>



### **“Advocates in Motion”**

**When: October 4, 2020 | Sun 12:00-1 pm - Parent-to-Parent discussion & 1:15-2:15 pm - Youth Session**

**Format: Virtual Meeting, for Parents and Their Children ages 13 – 22.**

The Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress's Advocates in Motion (AIM) program provides an inclusive, interactive events each month for teens and young adults ages 13 to 22.

\*AIM participants develop self-advocacy and leadership skills, form meaningful relationships with peers, and begin to develop their own vision for a meaningful future. and their families. 12-1 p.m.: Parent-to-Parent discussion: What are your best tips for managing during Covid?

\*Strategies, Tips and Sharing for what is helping your son/daughter manage unstructured time and social, academic and community access.

\*Share ideas, tips and supports that participants have found or are discovering now to help us parent our children with Down syndrome.

Open to parents/caregivers whose loved one with Down syndrome. 1:15-2:15 p.m.: Youth Session. Join peers ages 13-22 for an hour of fun that will include a big group welcome, small group chats and celebrity bingo.

Fees apply, registration is required to [www.mdsc.org/programs/AdvocatesInMotion.cfm](http://www.mdsc.org/programs/AdvocatesInMotion.cfm)

Scholarships are available; contact Colleen Endres [ccendres@mdsc.org](mailto:ccendres@mdsc.org) \*information found at [www.spedchildmass.com](http://www.spedchildmass.com)



### **Drive-Through Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular**

**When: October 1 – November 1, 2020 | see website for times & tickets**

**Where: Roger Williams Park Zoo, 1000 Elmwood Ave, Providence RI**

Experience a spooktacular new way to celebrate the Halloween season! Citizens Bank presents a drive-through Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular at Roger Williams Park Zoo Thursday, October 1 – Sunday, November 1, 2020. Celebrate Special Places while staying safe inside your car enjoying thousands of intricately carved pumpkins as you immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the Halloween season. Trail will be open nightly 6:30 – 11:00 pm. Gates will close at 10:30 pm.

\*Tickets are online sales ONLY and sold for each half hour. Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular is open rain or shine. NO REFUNDS OR RESCHEDULING. Visit [www.rwpzoo.org/jols](http://www.rwpzoo.org/jols) for ticket sales, safety guidelines, vehicle information, weather policy, and FAQ.



## Family Support & Special Interest



### Sesame Street Video Helps Kids with Autism Learn to Wear a Mask

In a sweet new video, Muppet Julia, who has autism, practices wearing a mask with her dad. For kids who have autism, wearing a mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19 can be a challenge. Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind "Sesame Street," is hoping to help through a new collection of videos and resources designed to help children with autism and their families cope with adjusting to life during the coronavirus epidemic. The collection, released on September 21, stars Julia, the 4-year-old Sesame Street Muppet with autism, and helps autistic kids work through difficult concepts like social distancing, disrupted routines and mask wearing. View video here

<https://youtu.be/wRYfw5hIWwM>



### COMPASS 101

**When: October 8, 2020 | Thur 12:30 pm**

**Format: Virtually in Zoom.**

Bring your lunch and join us to learn more about the COMPASS Helpline! We will talk about how we work, what we can and cannot help with, how we've adjusted our process during this COVID era, and more! Register here

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ovYa\\_1evRt-eRZJ0q0ueuw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ovYa_1evRt-eRZJ0q0ueuw) The COMPASS Helpline at NAMI Massachusetts provides information and resources to help people navigate the complex mental health system, and problem solve in difficult circumstances. COMPASS is staffed by people with experience navigating the mental health system for themselves or a loved one. Our trained Navigators are available to answer a wide range of questions and refer to community resources! The COMPASS helpline is available Monday through Friday, 9 am – 5 pm (excluding holidays). Call us at 617-704-6264 or 1-800-370-9085 or email us at [compass@namimass.org](mailto:compass@namimass.org). Please note that we are unable to make in-person appointments at this time.



### Mindfulness for Parents/Caregivers

**When: October 8, 2020 | Thur 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm**

**Format: Virtually in Zoom.**

The Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) and the Boston Children's Hospital Down Syndrome Program co-host a support group for families of children with Down syndrome and special health care needs.

We are excited to offer this session to ALL parents and caretakers!

\*8 – 8:30 Connect and Share

\*8:30 – 9:30 Relaxing Yoga and Meditation

This will be a slow, gentle class for all levels starting with yoga poses to stretch the body and connect to the breath and ending with guided deep relaxation. Wear comfortable clothes or pajamas. Have a yoga mat, carpet, or towel to practice on. A blanket and a rolled-up towel can be nice props for relaxation. You are welcome to have your camera on or off during the practice. Please take this time for self-care and relaxation and support! Email Sarah Cullen at [scullen@mdsc.org](mailto:scullen@mdsc.org) or Angela Lombardo at [angela.lombardo@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:angela.lombardo@childrens.harvard.edu) for the ZOOM registration link.

**CDC Issues Halloween Guidance: Trick-or-Treating Discouraged By Hannah Yasharoff, USA TODAY**  
**Posted Sep 22, 2020 at 1:16 PM**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Monday it advises against traditional trick-or-treating this year amid the novel coronavirus. The recommendation came as part of a list of Halloween guidelines broken down by level of risk. "Door-to-door trick-or-treating, trunk-or-treating "where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots" and indoor parties or haunted houses are among the riskiest Halloween activities when it comes to preventing the spread of COVID-19, the CDC says. Others to be avoided include hayrides or tractor rides with others, visiting fall festivals in other communities and using alcohol or drugs, "which can cloud judgment and increase risky behaviors." Read full article here <https://www.baystateparent.com/news/20200922/cdc-issues-halloween-guidance-trick-or-treating-discouraged>



### Supporting Siblings During COVID-19

**We encourage caregivers AND siblings to join us!**

**Why is it important?** This is a stressful time for families. Siblings might be subjected to physical and verbal aggression from brothers/sisters with mental health or behavioral needs. Siblings can be deeply affected and may be at risk for developing depression & anxiety.

**What's it like?** Over Zoom, siblings meet other children and teens who know what it's like to have a brother or sister with mental health issues. Siblings have a chance to talk and feel better. The Zoom session is facilitated by doctors in the psychiatry dept at UMass Medical School.

**What about parents?** First time participants join a Zoom session led by our trained parent mentor. They learn about the sibling experience, the importance of supporting siblings, and strategies to support siblings. Returning participants join a different Zoom session led by the program social worker, to address ongoing family challenges that impact siblings.

**Registration is required. We meet on the first Thursday night of each month from 5:30pm-7:00pm. The program starts on October 1, 2020.**

#### DETAILS...

- 1. Do siblings and parents have separate Zoom sessions? Yes**
- 2. Can parents/caregivers attend even if siblings do not attend? Yes**
- 3. Who is eligible to attend? All caregivers are eligible if the affected child has siblings. Siblings are eligible if they are 6 to 18 years old and do not have behavioral issues**
- 4. Is there a cost? This is a free program**
- 5. How do I register? To reserve your spot, call (857) 523-1145 or email [emily.rubin@umassmed.edu](mailto:emily.rubin@umassmed.edu). After signing an online consent form, you will receive an email with instructions to log into Zoom**

***Please Note: These resources are provided for informational purposes only.  
Please do your own due diligence and research.***