

For Families of Children Newly Diagnosed with Autism

RESOURCES

Provided by Acton Medical Associates' Behavioral Health Team



Getting the Help my Child Needs

After your child receives a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) you may feel overwhelmed, and you may be wondering what resources are available to help.

This guide provides resources that can help you navigate your child's new autism diagnosis.

Early intervention services for children under the age of 3

If your child's evaluation indicates that he or she is eligible for Massachusetts' Early Intervention (EI) programs, your service coordinator will set up a meeting to work on your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP is the foundation of Early Intervention and spells out a child's needs and the services that will be provided. It is based on a comprehensive evaluation and may include information about ABA Services.

Locate Your Early Intervention Program by calling 1-800-905-8437, or visiting <https://www.massfamilyties.org/>

Minute Man Arc Early Intervention Program

Serves Acton, Bedford, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, and Stow.

1269 Main Street
Concord, MA 01742
978-287-7800

Thom Child and Family Services

Serves Marlboro, Westboro, Northborough, Hudson, and Southboro.

340 Maple Street, Suite 203
Marlboro, MA 01752
(508) 624-0304

Community Healthlink Lipton Early Intervention Program

Serves Ashby, Ayer, Berlin, Bolton, Clinton, Devens, Fitchburg, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley, Sterling, and Townsend.

6100 Erdman Way
Leominster, MA 01453
(978) 840-9354



Special Education Services (What happens after Early Intervention?)

After age 3, Special Education Services will pick up where Early Intervention Services leave off. The local school district and their Special Education Department are responsible for these services.

Instead of an IFSP, your child will now transition to an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is a document that spells out your child's needs and how these needs will be met. It describes your child's strengths and weaknesses, educational goals, and supports needed in order to be successful in school. Learn more about IEPs in Massachusetts by visiting:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/>

A Parent's Guide to Special Education: <https://fcsn.org/parents-guide>

Find out more about the Massachusetts IEP process online at <https://exceptionallives.org/guides/massachusetts-iep-process-guide/>

Department of Developmental Services

You may be wondering if there are additional supports available outside of the Special Education Department within your child's school and their IEP. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) may provide supplemental services for families of children with autism who qualify. Some of the services that DDS provides include case management, supports for families, transportation services, respite care, and support for autistic youth transitioning into adulthood.

Learn more about DDS and the application process here:

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-developmental-services>

Autism Therapy Services and Programs

Local Therapy Services

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services: ABA is a therapy based on the science of learning.

ABA is designed to increase helpful behaviors and to decrease behaviors that are harmful. ABA uses positive reinforcement in order to promote appropriate behaviors and/or skills. Parents and family members will learn ABA techniques so that they can support healthy development outside of formal ABA services. ABA is considered a best practice treatment for children with autism.

The Autism Community Therapists (TACT)	20 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720 https://www.tact.care (978) 263-1427
Bierman Autism Centers - Bedford	223 Crosby Dr Suite #300, Bedford, MA 01730 https://www.biermanautism.com (781) 832-3146
Kaleidoscope ABA Therapy Services	229 Billerica Road Chelmsford, MA 01824 https://www.kfsaba.org/chelmsford-ma/ (877) 222-0399
Shapiro Educational & Behavioral Consultants	76 Summer Street., Fitchburg, MA 01420 https://sebcaba.com/ (978) 790-5793
Mass Pediatric ABA	288 Littleton Road, Unit #20 Westford, MA, 01886 https://www.masspediatricaba.com/ (978) 201-2764
The Peter Pan Center	657 Hill Rd, Boxborough, MA 01719 https://peterpancenter.com/ (978) 413-1965
Horizons Social Coaching	481 Great Rd, Suite 12 Acton, MA 01720 https://www.horizons-socialcoaching.com/ (978)-460-4575
Simply Social Kids	One Industrial Way Tyngsboro, MA 01879 https://simplysocialkids.com/ (978) 764-2758

Social Skills Groups

Social Skills Groups provide opportunities for children with autism to practice interacting and communicating with their peers in healthy and appropriate ways. Social Skills Groups promote self-awareness and self-esteem.

Caregiver Support

Autism Support Centers

There are seven Autism Support Centers located throughout Massachusetts. These centers provide support services, information about referrals, resources, parent networking, and support groups. Find your local Autism Support Center here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/autism-support-centers-list>

Autism Alliance of MetroWest	1881 Worcester Road Framingham, MA 01701 https://autismalliance.org/resources/autism-alliance-metrowest (508) 652-9900
Northeast ARC (NEARC)	1 Southside Road Danvers, MA 01923 https://ne-arc.org/ (855) 696 -3272
HMEA: Autism Resource Central	712 Plantation Street Worcester, MA 01605 https://www.autismresourcecentral.org/ (508) 835-4278

More Resources for Parents

A Parent's Guide to Autism– <https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/parents-guide-autism>

Support Groups– <https://aane.org/services-programs/group-services/>

Federation for Children with Special Needs- <https://fcsn.org/>

Aspire Parent Programs- <https://www.massgeneral.org/children/aspire/aspire-parent-programs>

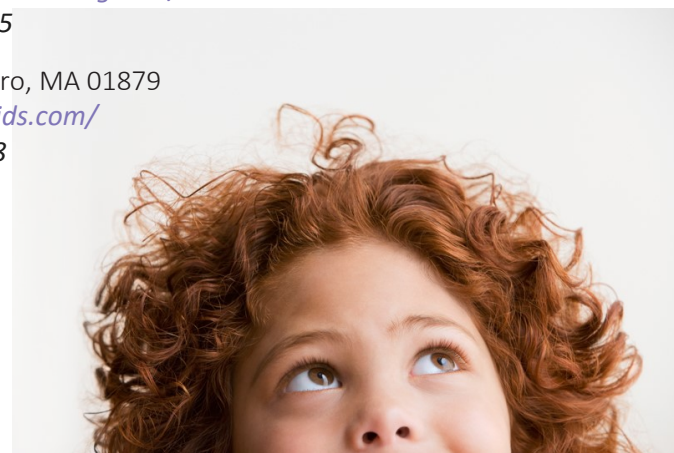
Apps (available in the app store)

ABC Kids – Tracing & Phonics (Learn phonics and letters) [Apple](#) + [Android](#)

Starfall (Pre-K to 5th grade reading and math practice) [Apple](#) + [Android](#)

Speech Blubs: Language Therapy (Speech therapy app) [Apple](#) + [Android](#)

Proloquo2Go (Practice and build language skills) [Apple Only](#)



Legal/Financial Planning

Legal Support

Disability Lawyer: A Disability Lawyer can help with:

- Ensuring You Receive the Right Benefits
- Facilitating the Social Security Administration (SSA) Application Process
- Communicating with the SSA on your behalf
- Handling the Appeals Process

The Disability Law Center Massachusetts – "Providing protection and advocacy for the rights of Massachusetts residents with disabilities" <https://autismalliance.org/resources/disability-law-center> or (617) 723-8455

Financial Planning Options

Autism Society Financial Planning– Learn more about financial planning for families with autism by visiting <https://autismsociety.org/resources/future-and-financial-planning/>

Financial Planning Toolkit – Visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/financial-planning-tool-kit>



Autism and Insurance

In Massachusetts, both private health insurers and MassHealth are required to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Navigating the insurance process for Autism services can feel overwhelming but there are many resources that can help. One important step is to identify which type of insurance you have.

Fully Funded Insurance Plans are a type of insurance plan where your employer purchases health insurance from an insurance company. These plans are regulated by state law and in Massachusetts that means that fully-funded insurance plans must provide coverage for autism therapies. On the other hand, Self Funded Insurance Plans are a type of insurance plan where the employer provides insurance directly to the employee. Employers who utilize self-funded plans typically have 1000 or more employees. These plans are governed by Federal law and *may* provide coverage for autism therapies. If you have a self-funded plan that doesn't cover services, there are options for obtaining insurance through MassHealth (which *must* provide coverage for autism therapies).

More Information About State Regulated Insurance Plans

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/state-regulated-health-benefit-plans>

More Information About Self-Funded Insurance Plans

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/self-funded-health-benefit-plans>

Additional Resources

Autism Insurance Resource Center- 774-455-4056 or <https://massairc.org/>

Massachusetts Autism Insurance FAQ – <https://www.mass.gov/news/autism-insurance-resource-center-faqs>

Massachusetts Autism Insurance Law- https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/12_1.html

General Resources

National Resources

Autism Speaks – <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Autism Society of America <https://autismsociety.org/>

Massachusetts Resources

Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts <http://www.afamaction.org/>

Greater Massachusetts Special Needs – <https://www.spedchildmass.com/>

Private Case Management

Consider working with a private case manager to explore long-term care options specific to you or your loved one's needs.

Find Out More About Autism

Educational Opportunities

Association for Autism and Neurodiversity – <https://aane.org/autism-info-faqs/autism-basics/what-is-autism/>

CDC – <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>

Child Mind Institute – <https://childmind.org/topics/autism/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – <https://www.hhs.gov/programs/topic-sites/autism/index.html>



ACTON MEDICAL IS HERE TO HELP

Need more help navigating these resources or have additional questions?
Social Workers at Acton Medical Associates are available to help you or your loved one.

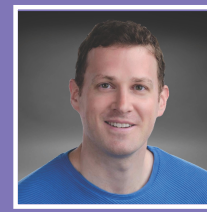
Contact one of our Behavioral Health team members.



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Acton Medical Associates is committed to providing convenient access to high quality care in a friendly, compassionate and respectful manner for patients of all ages.

Striving for outstanding health services, our teams are dedicated to providing educational materials, behavioral health services, and support to help patients of all ages and their families lead healthy and happy lifestyles.