

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

# Ages 6-12

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## Guide and What You Need to Know

**Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder**

**1/28/2019**

A quick reference checklist and guide for parents and/or caretakers of a child with Autism.

## Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services



# Ages 6-12

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**CAC/NC Revised 1/28/2019**

## Medical and Related Information

### Understand the Current Diagnostic Criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder

The DSM-5 is now the standard reference that healthcare providers use to diagnose mental and behavioral conditions. Understand the current diagnostic criteria for ASD by visiting Autism Speaks website at <https://www.autismspeaks.org/dsm-5-criteria>

### Review “Connecticut’s Guidelines for a Clinical Diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder”

Read into depth information related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, the diagnostic evaluation, evaluation results, early intervention and special education. Visit [https://uconnuicedd.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/1340/2015/06/CT\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Clinical\\_Dx\\_of\\_ASD.pdf](https://uconnuicedd.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/1340/2015/06/CT_Guidelines_for_Clinical_Dx_of_ASD.pdf)

### Learn about Evidenced-based Practices and Therapies

The EBP is an intervention and instructional practices or programs having scientific evidence that shows that they are effective. To know more please visit the Organization For Autism Research website at <https://researchautism.org/use-of-evidence-based-practices/>.

Select an evidence-based practice to access a module about the practice at <https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices>

### Explore Behavioral Supports if Necessary

People with Autism may display behaviors that are challenging to understand or manage. **Autism Speaks** offers *The Challenging Behaviors Tool Kit* which provides strategies and resources to address challenging behaviors and help support you during difficult times. To download a FREE toolkit, visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/challenging-behaviors-tool-kit>

### Schedule Regular Re-Evaluations and Medical Follow-up to Measure Progress and Identify Challenges

**Car Autism RoadMap**- Medical Diagnosis vs. Educational Eligibility for Special Services: Important Distinctions for Those with ASD <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/medical-diagnosis-vs-educational-eligibility-for-special-services-important-distinctions-for-those-with-asd/>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**- Screening and Diagnosis <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/screening.html>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**- Screening and Diagnosis for Healthcare Providers <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/hcp-screening.html>

## Develop a System to Organize Your Paperwork

Raising a child with Autism has its rewards and has its challenges. To assist parents with the overwhelming amount of paperwork your child may have, **Pathfinders for Autism** developed a template you can use to help organize all that paperwork <http://pathfindersforautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/A-Guide-to-Organizing-Your-Paperwork.pdf>

## Assistive Technology

### Learn about Assistive Technology Devices and Adaptations

Assistive technologies can be used to support and enhance communication for people with autism with or without speech impairments. **Autism Speaks** offers an **Assistive Technology for Communication Roadmap** to help individuals learn how to start using assistive technologies for communication <https://www.autismspeaks.org/worksheet/assistive-technology-communication-roadmap> or call the Autism Response Team at 1-888-288-4762.

**NEAT Marketplace** (New England Assistive Technology Center)- Provides information, assistive technology assessments, instruction and demonstration of the latest adaptive equipment [www.neatmarketplace.org](http://www.neatmarketplace.org)

**Assistive Technology Corner at State Education Resource Center (SERC)**- Displays of low, mid and high tech AT devices Contact them at 860-632-1485 x4 or [library@ct.serc.org](mailto:library@ct.serc.org)

**Connecticut Assistive Technology Guidelines**- Guidelines for considering, implementing, and evaluating assistive technologies from low- to high-tech [www.ct.gov/sde](http://www.ct.gov/sde) Link "Forms and Publications">Publications

**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Connecting Young Kids (YAACK)**- Provides information and guidance to families and professionals, covering a wide range of topics dealing with AAC for children at various ages and stages of communicating abilities [http://www.childdevelopmentprograms.ca/resource\\_category/augmentative-and-alternative-communication/](http://www.childdevelopmentprograms.ca/resource_category/augmentative-and-alternative-communication/)

**Center on Technology and Disability**- Assists families and professionals in advocating, acquiring and implementing effective assistive and instructional technology practices, devices and services as well as offers an extensive library and an interactive learning center [www.ctdinstitute.org](http://www.ctdinstitute.org)

### Explore Financial Assistance for Assistive Technology

**Aid for Autistic Children & Families**- If you need help paying for autism related hospital bills, therapies, early intervention, adult late intervention or any obstructive debt resulting from decisions made in an effort to structure one's life routine around care for an autistic child or loved one. <http://www.aacfinc.org/contact.html>

**Autism Care Today-** Provides financial assistance for services that the person would otherwise not be able to afford. Areas of support include but are not limited to: ABA Therapy, Assistive Technology, Medical Testing & Treatments, Speech and Occupational Therapy, Safety Equipment, Summer and Social Programs, and Quality of Life Supports <http://www.act-today.org/our-funds/autism-care-today/>

**Autism Family Resource Grants-** One-time \$500 grants are awarded to families in financial need; household income may not exceed \$50,000 per year. All funds awarded are paid directly to the vendor or service provider to pay for therapy equipment, safety equipment or services. Email requests for an application along with name, address, phone number and email address to: [info@autismfamilyresources.org](mailto:info@autismfamilyresources.org)

**Jaden's Voice-** Provides funding to families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our assistance supports a family's immediate expenses related to the well-being of the family member diagnosed with autism on a case-by-case basis. Examples include: effective treatments, assessments, adults who are actively looking for employment or need additional supports, graduate minority students specializing in autism in the areas of speech, behavior or occupational therapy, parent groups, etc. <http://jadensvoice.org/jadens-voice-cares-grant-program/>

**Medic Alert Foundation-** Autism Medical IDS & 24/7 wandering support services <https://www.medicalert.org/autism#importance-of-autism-wandering-support-services> or 1.800.432.5378

**National Autism Association-** Provide Communication devices to individuals with autism who are non-verbal or minimally verbal, and whose communication challenges put them at increased risk of injury or harm <http://nationalautismassociation.org/family-support/programs/naas-give-a-voice-program/>

**Organization for Autism Research-** provides a tool kit and assist with fundraising for services needed. 1-866-366-9710

**Pervis Jackson Jr Autism Foundation-** Pervis Jackson Jr Autism Foundation helps needy parents of children with disabilities to get respite or other support services. Grants can be used for Camp Sessions, Respite of Parent's Choice, Cleaning Help, Cooking Help, Spa Day, Urgent Bills, Other Parent Needs. [www.pjjraf.org](http://www.pjjraf.org)

## Education

### Understand your Child's IEP and your Role in the IEP Process

**Autism Society-** The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a written document that outlines a child's education. Learn about the goals of an IEP, the contents within an IEP, and what to know about the IEP meeting <http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/academic-success/individualized-education-plan-iep/>

**Autism Speaks-** offers an IEP toolkit which has been put together by a team of lawyers at Goodwin Procter LLP offering a summary of an IEP, information of the process, and practical tips

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/individualized-education-program-iep-summary-process-and-practical-tips>

**Car Autism RoadMap** - Participating in evaluations of your child and developing an intervention plan are intimidating tasks for most parents. Many parents feel overwhelmed by the process and may feel that they do not have the knowledge and skills necessary to be a contributing member of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Parents are experts on their children, however, and have much to contribute to the process, even if it seems foreign to them

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/procedural-safeguards-for-families-of-preschool-and-school-age-students/>

## Learn about 504 Plans

**Car Autism RoadMap**- 504 Plans are governed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. They are mainly used by students who do not qualify for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To learn more about the basics of the 504 Plan, visit <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/504-basics/>

## Review Connecticut’s State Department of Education “A Parent Guide to Special Education in CT”

This publication, from the **CT State Department of Education**, provides a clear explanation of the laws, regulations and policies affecting special education programs and services [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Parents\\_Guide\\_SE.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Parents_Guide_SE.pdf)

## Learn about Assessments and Evaluations for Children with ASD

**Car Autism RoadMap**- the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a full and individualized evaluation be conducted before your child can be provided special education and related services. In addition to initial eligibility evaluations, reevaluations occur on a regular basis throughout your child’s education to determine the need for continued and new services. It is important to understand your family’s rights during the evaluation process, what is considered during an evaluation, and what happens if you disagree with the results <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/school-age-special-education-evaluations/>

**Car Autism RoadMap**- An Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) is an evaluation done by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public school or agency responsible for the education of your child. An IEE may evaluate any skills related to your child’s educational needs, such as behavior, social skills, or occupational therapy; it is not limited to academic skills. Learn about Independent Education Evaluations <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/independent-education-evaluations/>

## Contact CT State Department of Education Bureau of Special Education to file a Special Education Complaint, if Necessary

Any individual or organization may submit a complaint if they feel the Connecticut education agency (school) is not complying with requirements outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [Connecticut State Department of Education - Bureau of Special Education](#)

## Prepare for the Move from Elementary School to Middle School

**Autism Society-** offers a publication to prepare parents and children with autism to make the transition from elementary school to middle school [https://www.autism-society.org/wp-content/uploads/files/2014/04/Transition\\_to\\_Middle\\_School.pdf](https://www.autism-society.org/wp-content/uploads/files/2014/04/Transition_to_Middle_School.pdf)

**Asperger/Autism Network (AANE)-** offers information on an introduction to education middle school students with Asperger Profiles <https://www.aane.org/resources/family-and-friends/middle-school/>

**Autism Support Network-** visit the website to read information related to planning for school transitions and helping strategies <http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/planning-school-transitions-autism-443452>

## Begin the Conversation with your Child’s Educational Team Regarding the Transition Planning Process

As part of your child’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), address necessary supports and accommodations in advance. Begin transition planning early in the year. Have current school personnel assess current environment, student’s strengths and challenges, as well as necessary supports and accommodations

*SOURCE:* Autism Support Network Website- <http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/planning-school-transitions-autism-443452>

## Develop Student Success Plans Beginning in grade Six

In addition to any 504 Plans or IEP your child may have, beginning in grade six students should have a Student Success Plan (SSP). This is an individualized student driven plan that will be developed to address every student’s needs and interests to help every student stay connected in school and to achieve postsecondary educational and career goals. To learn more, visit the **State of Connecticut Department of Education** website at <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/SSReform/SSP/Student-Success-Plan>

## Develop Positive Behavioral Interventional Plans

If your child exhibits behaviors that impede learning for themselves and others, you can incorporate a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) into your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). For more information visit the **Car Autism Roadmap** website at <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/behavior-intervention-plan/>

Did you know any use of restraint is to be documented in the child’s educational record and, if needed, in the child’s school health record?

The **Connecticut State Department of Education** has published ‘*Understanding the Laws and Regulations Governing the use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools: July 2018*’, which provides an in-depth look at definitions, Connecticut statutes, and regulations schools follow when restraining or putting a child into seclusion. Visit [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Understanding the Laws and Regulations Governing the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Understanding%20the%20Laws%20and%20Regulations%20Governing%20the%20Use%20of%20Restraint%20and%20Seclusion%20in%20Schools.pdf)

*Inclusion Evolution* provides information on providing your child’s school with a “No Consent” letter for restraint and seclusion. As part of positive behavioral plan, you can request this letter be included in your child’s official records <https://www.inclusionrevolution.com/child-needs-no-consent-letter-restraint-seclusion/>

## Understand Your Child’s Educational Needs and Placement Options

The document that spells out your child’s needs and how these needs will be met is the Individualized Education program (IEP). To know more about the IEP, the IEP meeting, teacher/staff requirements, goals and objectives, visit the **Autism Society** website at <http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/academic-success/individualized-education-plan-iep/>

You can also review “**A Parent Guide to Special Education in CT**” which is a publication from the CT State Department of Education. It provides a clear explanation of the laws, regulations and policies affecting special education programs and services. Within the publication is information on IEP’s [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Parents\\_Guide\\_SE.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Parents_Guide_SE.pdf)

**Autism Society**- provides information related to the placement of your child by determining your child’s level of functioning, evaluations, re-evaluations, prospective teachers, service providers, and more. To learn more visit <http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/academic-success/placement/>

**Indiana University Bloomington**- Indiana Resource Center for Autism provides a publication about children with autism and the differences with educational placement <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/Educating-Students-with-Autism-Are-There-Differences-in-Placement>

## Address Any Instances of Bullying Immediately

**Autism Society**- has an article discussing bullying prevention including ‘3 R’s for Bullying Prevention: Recognize, Respond and Report’ and ‘Healing from Bullying for the individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder’ <http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/how-the-autism-society-can-help/safe-and-sound/bullying-prevention/>

**Raisingchildren.net**- provides information and strategies when dealing with bullying and your child is autistic <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/behaviour/common-concerns/bullying-asd>

## Understand Matter of Discipline including Connecticut's guidelines regarding suspension and expulsions

Did you know a suspension can only last for up to ten days? Did you know an expulsion can last up to one year? Learn more about suspensions and expulsions by visiting the websites below.

SOURCE: CTLawHelp.org website <https://ctlawhelp.org/en/school-expulsions-child-expelled>

**Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIP)**- may prevent instances where a school has to resort to suspending or expelling a student by having already created a behavior intervention plan. Refer to **pg. 9** of this guide

The **211 eLibrary** website offers literature on the topic of school expulsions  
<https://uwc.211ct.org/school-expulsions-connecticut/>

**State of Connecticut Department of Education**- has created a guide book consisting of a compilation of school discipline-related laws and regulations  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/discipline-compendium/Connecticut%20School%20Discipline%20Laws%20and%20Regulations.pdf>

**State of Connecticut Department of Education**- Provides guidance and tips for supporting students who are expelled from school <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Discipline-in-Schools/How-To>

## Review your Child's Rights Under IDEA

**Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center** – provides information related to the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). You can also access the *IDEA Due Process Parents Guide* which provides details about filing a complaint and requesting a hearing related to your child's special education needs <http://www.cpacinc.org/materials-publications/legal-rights/>

## Contact your local Family Support Network

**Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN)** is a parent-to-parent organization offering support groups, training, email list serve, information and advocacy [www.ctfsn.org](http://www.ctfsn.org)

## Get involved in your local Special Education Parent Organizations (SEPTO)

Be part of your school districts Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO). These organizations typically focus on the needs and issues encountered by special education students and parents/guardians. For more information, call your local school district.

## Explore Summer Time Options

The **State of Connecticut ConneCT Kids** website provides links to recreational activities, free places to visit, summer camps, indoor and outdoor fun for children with disabilities  
<https://www.ct.gov/kids/cwp/view.asp?a=4072&q=478302#Visit>

## Develop a System to Organize Education Records

Having a child with special educational needs will generate loads of documents. Knowing what to save, throw away or make a priority is challenging. Visit the **Wrightslaw** website and find tips on how to organizing your child's special education documents by visiting

<https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/organize.file.htm>

## Help Your Child Learn About Appropriate Social Skills

**Autism Speaks** offers literature on social skills and autism. Within the reading you will find tips to personalize a template to teach your children of appropriate social skills in various settings such as going to a restaurant, going to the store, handling bullying and much more. Visit

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/social-skills-and-autism>

Another website you can use is **Raisingchildren.net.au**. This website provides information about ASD and teaching parents how to teach children social skills through role-play and video-modelling. Visit <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/communicating-relationships/connecting/social-skills-for-children-with-asd#strategies-for-developing-social-skills-nav-title>

## Teach your Child about his/her Body and Sexuality as Age Appropriate

The **Autism Awareness Centre Inc.** -website offers parents a guide to teaching your child about sex and sexuality while being fully aware that individuals with autism develop sexually and have feelings just as others without autism do <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/teach-sexuality-person-asd/>

**Raisingchildren.net.au** -provides literature regarding learning about bodies and personal boundaries for parents of children with autism. The techniques are suitable for children ages 3-9 years old

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/development/physical-development/bodies-boundaries>

**Car Autism RoadMap** - Provides information and tips about teaching children with autism about sexuality beginning at a young age <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/teaching-young-children-about-sexuality/>

## Engage in Recreational and Leisure Activities that your Child and Family Enjoy

Leisure activities are an important part of life for everyone. Finding fun and enjoyable activities for an autistic child may be more challenging due to difficulties in behavior, social interaction and communication. Visit **Autism Awareness Centre Inc.** and read "Developing Leisure Activities for Individuals with ASD" to learn about leisure activities <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/developing-leisure-activities-for-individuals-with-asd/>

**Autism Speaks** provides information about the benefits of recreation and provides answers to frequently asked questions. Visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/recreation-0>

## Safety

### Teach your Child about the ‘Uh-Oh’ feeling and “Tricky People”

For a long time, the ‘Stranger Danger’ concept taught children all strangers were potential dangers. Nowadays, studies show most abductions occur from someone the child knows. According to David Finkelhor (2013), “But children taken by strangers or slight acquaintances represent only one-hundredth of 1 percent of all missing children. The last comprehensive study estimated that the number was 115 in a year.”

*SOURCE:* Finkelhor, D, (2013, May). *Five myths about missing children*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-missing-children/2013/05/10/efee398c-b8b4-11e2-aa9e-a02b765ff0ea\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.acc67eafd044](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-missing-children/2013/05/10/efee398c-b8b4-11e2-aa9e-a02b765ff0ea_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.acc67eafd044)

The ‘**Uh-Oh**’ Feeling teaches children to trust their gut feeling when they know something is wrong, even if it’s unknown at the time. Teach your children to tell a parent, teacher, or trusted grownup. To learn more about the Uh-oh feeling, visit <https://www.whenigrowupcoach.com/the-uh-oh-feeling/>

Another article you can use to teach children about the ‘Uh-Oh’ Feeling and trusting their intuition <https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/the-uh-oh-feeling/>

‘**Tricky people**’ teaches children that a tricky person can be someone known or unknown to the child and does something that breaks a safety rule or asks you to do something that makes the child feel uncomfortable <https://www.kidspot.com.au/health/family-health/safety/the-tricky-people-lesson-you-need-to-teach-your-kids/news-story/36dd4010c5f49a893948561e493f02fc>

To learn more about teaching stranger safety to children with ASD, visit Autism <http://blog.stageslearning.com/blog/teaching-autism-stranger-safety>

### Discuss What is Appropriate Talk and Touch

Learning about bodies and body parts can help your child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) understand and feel comfortable with her body. It also lays the groundwork for teaching your child about personal boundaries and safety, including good and bad touch <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/development/physical-development/bodies-boundaries>

Parents and children can also view the following short clip video titled ‘*Safe Touch/Unsafe Touch*’ at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNTUMNKSNowk>

The **Jacob Wetterling Resource Center** also provides a guide for age appropriate conversation starters to teach your children about “bad touch” <http://www.gundersenhealth.org/ncptc/jacob-wetterling-resource-center/keep-kids-safe/personal-safety/age-appropriate-conversations/>

### Address Wandering and Elopement

Wandering and Elopement is all too common among children with Autism. This puts families under a high level of stress and puts children with Autism at high risk of harm. Becoming familiar with these behaviors, planning and implementing safety strategies can prevent a preventable tragedy.

**Autism Speaks** offers wandering prevention, preparedness and response tips for families with a child with Autism. Visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/wandering-prevention-resources>

**Pathfinders for Autism** provide literature, tips, and guides related to wandering and elopement. Visit <https://pathfindersforautism.org/resources/safety/wandering-and-elopement/>

## Be Aware of Potential Household Dangers

Safety in the home environment for children in general is a major concern for parents and caregivers, let alone if a child in the home has Autism.

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

## Practice Street Safety

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

The **National Autistic Society** provides social stories, toys, and interactive games to teach children with autism about road safety <https://www.autism.org.uk/roadsafety>

## Enroll your Child in Swimming Lessons if Possible

**Aquamobile** offers an article titled “Autism and Drowning: Why Kids With Autism Are More Likely To Drown” which provides facts and reasons why children with Autism have a high mortality rate due to drowning <https://aquamobileswim.com/autism-and-drowning-why-kids-with-autism-are-more-likely-to-drown/#.XEiP87LrvGg>

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affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

The **National Autism Association** provides information of locations that offer Special Needs Swimming Instructions by state <https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-safety-facts/swimming-instructions/>

## **Establish a Safety Network (including first responders) in Case of an Emergency**

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

**Autism Speaks** provides tips and a guide for safety within the community including safety planning, getting around, asking for help, using public rest rooms, interacting with law enforcement, and more just to name a few <https://www.autismspeaks.org/safety-community>

## **Familiarize Yourself with Community Play Spaces and Their Boundaries as well as their Proximity to Possible Dangers (i.e. roads, ponds, river, pools)**

**Goric** website offers an article offering tips on choosing a playground for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder <https://goric.com/asd-friendly-play-choosing-playground-kids-autism-spectrum-disorder/>

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

**Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN)** provides a listing of summer camps, recreation programs, and family destinations for children with special needs <http://www.ctfsn.org/summercamps>

## **Address Internet Safety**

**Pathfinders for Autism** provides information related to internet safety, cyberbullying, cybercrimes, and other safety information <https://pathfindersforautism.org/resources/safety/internet-safety/>

**Organization for Autism Research-** provides an informational guide related to safety including internet safety [https://researchautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/A\\_Guide\\_to\\_Safety.pdf](https://researchautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/A_Guide_to_Safety.pdf)

## Funding for Services and Legal Issues

### Apply to the Department of Social Services Division of Autism Spectrum Services

Visit [www.ct.gov/dds](http://www.ct.gov/dds) (Eligibility is still determined through the Department of Developmental Services).

- Left hand side select 'Divisions' > DSS Autism Spectrum Services (This is at DSS) > Eligibility > scroll down and select 'Please Follow this link for eligibility application'
- Or
- From the DDS homepage [www.ct.gov/dds](http://www.ct.gov/dds)- Left hand side select 'Families' > select the



'Early Childhood' icon > select the DDS Eligibility box DDS Eligibility > then select [Application for Someone with Autism and NO Intellectual Disability over the age of 3](#) > select 'Autism Eligibility > Application

### Determine if Your Child is Eligible for Social Security Benefits

Cash payments for low income older adults, ages 65+, or for people with a physical or mental impairment expected to last at least 1 year or to result in death, are made to assure an income. Low birth weight infants weighing less than 1200 grams (2 pounds 10 ounces) at birth may be eligible for presumptive disability payments. Up to 6 months of PD payments may be made to an infant who is age 6 months or younger at the time of the PD finding and whose birth certificate or other evidence indicates a birth weight of less than 1200 grams. Call 1-877-405-4874 or visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

*SOURCE:* UWC 211 Website

### Explore Insurance Coverage for Autism Services

**Autism Speaks** Initiative provides answers to frequently asked questions about the Autism Insurance Reform Law and what you need to know [http://advocacy.autismspeaks.org/atf/cf/%7B2A179B73-96E2-44C3-8816-1B1C0BE5334B%7D/Connecticut\\_FAQs.pdf](http://advocacy.autismspeaks.org/atf/cf/%7B2A179B73-96E2-44C3-8816-1B1C0BE5334B%7D/Connecticut_FAQs.pdf)

**Beacon Health Options** (1-877-552-8247) offers clinical mental health and substance use disorder management, a comprehensive employee assistance program, work/life support, specialty programs for autism and depression, and insightful analytics to improve the delivery of care. Beacon manages the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) benefits for Medicaid beneficiaries who have Husky A, C, and D and are under age 21. A feature of the program provides access to a Beacon Peer Specialist and Care Coordinators to assist with explaining benefits covered under Medicaid, helping families navigate the health care system, and coordinating non-traditional services <https://www.beaconhealthoptions.com/who-we-are/>

## Direct Questions Regarding ASD Insurance Issues to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate

**Office of the Healthcare Advocate** (1-866-466-4446) Provides assistance with selecting health insurance coverage. Agency will answer questions about health insurance issues, including, but not limited to, enrollment/eligibility issues, clarification of plan benefits, plan benefit limitations, and out-of-network services [www.ct.gov/oha](http://www.ct.gov/oha)

## Learn about Life Planning Tools

**ABLE National Resource Center- Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account** - ABLE Accounts, which are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families, were created as a result of the passage of the Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 or better known as the ABLE Act. The beneficiary of the account is the account owner, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. Contributions to the account, which can be made by any person (the account beneficiary, family and friends), must be made using post-taxed dollars and will not be tax deductible for purposes of federal taxes, however some states may allow for state income tax deductions for contribution made to an ABLE account <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>

**Special Needs Trust (SNT's)** are well-established savings tools that also protect eligibility for public programs <https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/able-accounts-and-snts-how-to-choose/>

## Explore Tax Deductions and Exemptions for Children with Special Needs

**Autism Support Network** provides information regarding tax planning for parents with children with autism <http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/tax-planning-parents-children-autism-221234>

**Talk About Curing Autism (TACA)-** provides information regarding tax advantages and deductions for parents of children with special needs <https://tacanow.org/family-resources/tax-strategies-for-parents-of-kids-with-special-needs/>

## Develop a System to Organize Financial and Legal Records

**Pathfinders for Autism-** offers a guide to organizing your paperwork <http://pathfindersforautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/A-Guide-to-Organizing-Your-Paperwork.pdf>

**Wrightslaw-** You need a simple, foolproof document management system. In this article, you will learn how to organize your child's file. After you organize the information about your child into a file, you will have a clearer understanding of your child's disability and needs <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/organize.file.htm>

## Support

## Network with Others at Support Groups

**Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN)** - Parent-to-parent organization offering support groups, training, email list serve, information and advocacy [www.ctfsn.org](http://www.ctfsn.org)

**Autism Services and Resources Connecticut (ASRC)**- Provides advocacy and support groups, recreational and social opportunities, trainings, newsletter, and information [www.ct-asrc.org](http://www.ct-asrc.org)

For a more comprehensive listing of information related to *Support Groups*, please contact the DSS Autism Unit and speak with an Autism Support and Resource Specialist by calling Nathaniel Calixto, 860-424-5677, or Cathleen Calaway, 860-424-5567 or visit the DSS Autism website

<https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Health-And-Home-Care/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder---ASD/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder---ASD>

## Identify your Support System

**Autism Speaks** – Offers tips and guidance to parents and caregivers related to identifying and/or creating a support system after a child has been diagnosed with Autism

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-and-your-family>

**Stepping Stones**- Webpage has an article providing information on the importance of having a support system and some tips on how to develop one <https://www.steppingstonesca.com/single-post/2016/11/20/Building-a-support-network-when-dealing-with-ASD>

## Take Care of Yourself, your Spouse and your other Children

**Synapse**- website offers self-care tips to parents of parents with an autistic child <http://www.autism-help.org/family-autism-self-care-strategies.htm>

**Autism Resources and Community (ARC)**- website offers parents an article on self-care <http://blog.stageslearning.com/blog/autism-parents-self-care>

## Advocacy

### Learn how to Advocate for your Child

**Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN)** - Parent-to-parent organization offering support groups, training, email list serve, information and advocacy [www.ctfsn.org](http://www.ctfsn.org)

**Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)** - Provides information and support to families of children with disabilities from birth to 26 years [www.cpacinc.org](http://www.cpacinc.org)

**Autism Services and Resources Connecticut (ASRC)**- Provides advocacy and support groups, recreational and social opportunities, trainings, newsletter, and information [www.ct-asrc.org](http://www.ct-asrc.org)

**Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA)** - Provides free advocacy and assistance to resolve healthcare and insurance issues 1-866-466-4446 [www.ct.gov/oha](http://www.ct.gov/oha)

**Family Advocacy Program (FAVOR)**- Offers training, technical assistance and, support to parents and caregivers [www.favor-ct.org](http://www.favor-ct.org)

**Center for Children’s Advocacy** [www.kidscounsel.org](http://www.kidscounsel.org)

**CT Families for Effective Autism Treatment (CT FEAT)** - Provides information, training, support and networking. It has a “Parents Only” internet discussion list. [www.ctfeat.org](http://www.ctfeat.org)

**Autism Families CONNECTicut** - An organization formed by a group of parents and family members that provides recreational, cultural and social activities for children with ASD. [www.autismfamiliesct.org](http://www.autismfamiliesct.org)

**PATH Parent to Parent and Family Voices of CT**- A network of families providing informational and emotional support to others who have a child with developmental or health related needs. [www.pathct.org](http://www.pathct.org)

**Wrightslaw**- Provides advocacy, legal information, support [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

**Your Special Education Rights**- Video based resource for parents to provide them with the knowledge to advocate for their child’s education [www.yourspecialeducationrights.com](http://www.yourspecialeducationrights.com)

**CT Network for Legal Aid (Special Education)** - Free legal help for people with low income <http://ctlawhelp.org/special-education-in-connecticut>

**Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut**- Advocacy, legal representation, advice, and information for all education related issues for people with low income [www.slsct.org](http://www.slsct.org)

**Connecticut Legal Services**- Provides legal representation for people with low income. Priority area include: divorce, child support and other aspects of family law, housing subsidies, all aspects of public benefits ( SNAP, Medicaid, SSI etc.), special educations, employment related issues [www.connlegalservices.org](http://www.connlegalservices.org)

## Help Your Child Learn Self-Advocacy Skills

Teaching your children social skills is crucial given an autistic child’s limitation with certain social skills. As part of the social skills lesson, teach your child to self-advocate.

**Organization for Autism Research**- Too often, young people with disabilities have things done for them that their typical peers do themselves, which they could do as well. These well-intended supports can get in the way of their ability to advocate for themselves. In this week’s blog, an autism specialist, Deborah Hammer, describes the steps you can take to help children learn to self-advocate. This post originally appeared in the [July 2015 edition](#) of the OARacle newsletter <https://researchautism.org/help-children-learn-how-to-self-advocate/>

## Get involved in your local Special Education Parent Organizations (SEPTO)

Be part of your school districts Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO). These organizations typically focus on the needs and issues encountered by special education students and parents/guardians. For more information, call your local school district.

### Additional Resources

For a more comprehensive listing of information related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, please contact the DSS Autism Unit and speak with an Autism Support Resource Specialist:

Nathaniel Calixto  
Autism Support and Resource Specialist  
[Nathaniel.Calixto@ct.gov](mailto:Nathaniel.Calixto@ct.gov)  
Tel: 860-424-5677  
Fax: 860-920-3170

Cathleen Calway  
Autism Support and Resource Specialist  
[cathleen.calway@ct.gov](mailto:cathleen.calway@ct.gov)  
Tel: 860-424-5567  
Fax: 860-920-3170

\*\*\*Please note: The contents of this document are provided solely for informational purposes. It is meant to give individuals with ASD and their families a choice regarding services and supports. The DSS Autism Division does not specifically recommend or endorse any individual provider or practitioner.