

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Ages 6-12

Guide and What You Need to Know

Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder

5/18/2023

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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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://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/CYSHCN/Connecticut-Guidelines-for-a-Clinical-Diagnosis-of-Autism-Spectrum-Disorder.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

Autism Speaks

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>

Behavioral Health Services through Medicaid

Carelon Behavioral Health (formerly Beacon Health Options) is the Administrative Service Organization for the State Plan ASD services. They are responsible for reviewing documentation to support level of care guidelines and medical necessity to authorize ASD services for Medicaid (HUSKY A, C and D) members under the age of 21. ***Husky B members are **not** eligible for State Plan ASD services. Carelon Behavioral Health also provides Care Coordination and Peer Specialist Services for individuals with ASD.

If approved for Husky, individuals can contact **Carelon Behavioral Health** to obtain a listing of providers that accept Husky insurance and offer behavioral health services. Carelon can be reached at 1-877-552-

8247 or visit <http://www.huskyhealthct.org/members.html> to search for a listing of doctors/providers. A unique feature of the program is the support of Carelon's Peer Specialists, all of whom have lived experience with ASD, and Care Coordinators. They offer the necessary tools and services to ensure families are connected to effective resources in their community by:

- Helping members and their families understand what benefits are available to them through their Medicaid coverage
- Assessing the needs of the member and their family
- Helping families navigate the health care system
- Coordinating nontraditional services
- Creating and updating a local area resource database

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.research.chop.edu/car-autism-roadmap/medical-diagnosis-vs-educational-eligibility-for-special-services-important-distinctions-for-those#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20the%20possible,condition%20has%20on%20student%20learning>

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. Provides information about different diagnostic methods and tools <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

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 <mailto:libraryhelp@ctserc.org>

Connecticut Assistive Technology Guidelines- Guidelines for considering, implementing, and evaluating assistive technologies from low- to high-tech <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Publications/atguide/Appendix/Section1/Appendix-5-section-1-Connecticut-Assistive-Technology-Guidelines.pdf>

Explore Financial Assistance for Assistive Technology

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/>

FODAC (Friends of disabled adults & children)- FODAC assists adults and children with disabilities in need of wheelchairs, other medical equipment, vehicle adaptations, assistive technologies, refurbished computers, and equipment repair. Visit <https://fodac.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 <https://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.
<http://www.pjjraf.com/>

The Disabled Children's Relief Fund- DCRF grants for assistive devices, equipment, rehabilitative services, and for innovative arts and humanitarian services. The online application is available between April and September. For more information, visit [Disabled Children's Relief Fund - National Organization for Rare Disorders \(rarediseases.org\)](http://www.disabledchildren.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 <https://autismsociety.org/resources/education/>

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>

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

Learn about 504 Plans

Pathfinders for Autism- 504 Plans are governed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prevents discrimination based on disability. They are mainly used by students who do not qualify for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) but whose disability creates substantial limitations on major life activities, such as learning. To learn more about 504 Plans, please visit <https://pathfindersforautism.org/articles/education/learn-about-504-plans/>

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

Learn about Assessments and Evaluations for Children with ASD

Autism Research Institute has an article titled 'Screening & Assessment'. Article provides information about ASD, autism screening tools used by physicians, getting an autism diagnosis and continual autism assessments. Visit <https://www.autism.org/screening-assessment/>.

Child Mind Institute has an article titled 'What Should an Evaluation for Autism Look Like?' which contains information the ASD evaluation process, the tools used, interpreting the results, and FAQs. Visit <https://childmind.org/article/what-should-evaluation-autism-look-like/>

CT Dept. of Education has information about an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). An 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://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Guidance-for-Independent-Educational-Evaluations-and-In-School-Observations>

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) https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Parents_Guide_SE.pdf

Prepare for the Move from Elementary School to Middle School

ASERT- website offers tips to help students transition into Middle School including: beginning preparation during the last year of elementary school, Review IEP and setting appropriate goals, and preparing student for a new environment <https://paautism.org/resource/transition-middle-school-education-student/>

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/>

Pacer's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment- has a guide titled '*Making the Move from Elementary to Middle or Junior High School: Transition Tips for Parents of Students with Disabilities*' <https://www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-53.pdf>

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. You can 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

Pacer's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment- has a guide titled *'Making the Move from Elementary to Middle or Junior High School: Transition Tips for Parents of Students with Disabilities'* <https://www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-53.pdf>

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.research.chop.edu/car-autism-roadmap/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

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 <https://autismsociety.org/resources/education/>

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

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 Speaks- has an article which provide guidance and tips for bullying prevention
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/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 State Dept. of Education, Bureau of Special Education- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide parents with a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards under the IDEA and the regulations implementing IDEA. A copy of this notice must be given to the parent one time each year and when the following occurs:

- The first time you or the school district asks for an evaluation.
- You ask for a copy of these procedural safeguards.
- The first time in a school year you request a due process hearing or file a state complaint.
- A decision is made to take a disciplinary action against your child that is a change in placement.

To view the entirety of the document titled *'Procedural Safeguards Notice Required Under IDEA Part B'*, visit <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Prosaf.pdf>

Contact your local Family Support Network

Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN) is a parent-to-parent organization offering support groups, training, email list distribution, information and advocacy 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 Summertime 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>

Museums for All- is an initiative of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Through Museums for all, individuals with SNAP benefits can gain free or reduced admission to museums by simply presenting their EBT Cards and a photo ID. You can use the website search engine to find a participating museum in CT by visiting <https://museums4all.org/>.

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>

Social and Relationships

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>

Raisingchildren.net/au- Learn about what to expect between the ages of 9-18 years old in areas ranging from sexuality and sexual development among autistic teenagers. Learn that sexuality is more than sex. It has to do with how your child feels about their developing body, understands feelings of intimacy, attraction and affection for others, develops and maintains respectful intimate relationships, and much more <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/development/sexual-development/sexuality-teens-with-asd>

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>

- **Autism Families of Connecticut in Newington**
 - Recreational and Social activities for youth and adults. There may be a small fee per class/event. To learn more, visit <http://www.autismfamiliesct.org/about/>

- **Autism Services and Resources Connecticut in Wallingford**
 - Offers a variety of social and recreational activities throughout the year, in person and virtually. Must register with Sara Taussik first. In-Person events may take place at different regions throughout the state to give individuals from different regions opportunities to participate. To learn more visit <https://ct-asrc.org/>
- **Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN) in Glastonbury**
 - Maintains a Camp and Recreation Database of agencies offering recreational activities and those serving as family destinations for individuals with disabilities. To learn more visit <https://ctfsn.org/>
- **Museums for All**
 - is an initiative of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Through Museums for all, individuals with SNAP benefits can gain free or reduced admission to museums by simply presenting their EBT Cards and a photo ID. You can use the website search engine to find a participating museum in CT by visiting <https://museums4all.org/>.

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

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=zNTUMNKSNwk>

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/>

Enroll your Child in Swimming Lessons if Possible

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/>

United Way of CT 211 Infoline- maintains a comprehensive database of supports and services throughout the state, including locations that offer Swimming Classes. Just call 2-1-1, toll free 1-800-203-1234, or visit [2-1-1 Connecticut \(211ct.org\)](http://211ct.org)

Other Suggestions:

- Special needs swimming in Connecticut
- Contact a local YMCA
- Contact your local parks and recs department

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)

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 <https://ctfsn.org/>

Other Suggestions:

- Contact your local parks and recs departments to inquire about bodies of water, pools and parks in the area, for example

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 . Internet Safety located on Page 47 of the guide.

Funding for Services and Legal Issues

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

- Visit www.ct.gov/dss
- Click on 'Programs and Services'
- Click on 'Autism Spectrum Disorder-ASD'
- Select the 'Eligibility' tab
- Towards the bottom of page, select **Please follow this link for the eligibility application.** Application is available in **Spanish**

Determine if Your Child is Eligible for Social Security Benefits

The Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs are the largest of several Federal programs that provide assistance to people with disabilities. Social Security Disability Insurance pays benefits to individuals who have work long enough and paid Social Security taxes while Supplemental Security Income pays benefits based on disability status and financial need.

You can apply online at <https://www.ssa.gov/> . Once you finish the online process, a Social Security representative will contact you for any additional information needed for the applications. You can also call 1-877-405-4874.

Explore Insurance Coverage for Autism Services

Autism Speaks Initiative provides answers to frequently asked questions about Connecticut's Autism Insurance Reform Law and what you need to know <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DSS/Health-and-Home-Care/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder/Connecticut-Autism-Insurance-Law.pdf>

Carelon Behavioral Health (1-877-552-8247) 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 Carelon 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.ctbhp.com/autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/>

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

Learn about Life Planning Tools

ABLE Accounts

- Funds within an able account may be used for qualified disability expenses (QDEs), which can assist the beneficiary with expenses that can include things like education, training, expenses related to improve health, and their independence (life skills coaching, job coaching, for example).
- ABLE accounts allow individuals with disabilities to save money and use the funds for qualified disability expenses while remaining eligible for state and federal benefits programs, which many have asset tests.
- The total annual amount of contributions by individuals, including family members, is \$17,000 per year. The maximum amount someone can have within an ABLE account without benefits being affected is \$100,000 in any given year. To learn more about CT's ABLE Accounts visit <https://savewithable.com/ct/home.html>

Special Needs Trust

- Allows a person with a disability to have additional assets and still qualify for benefits.
- Permits a family member to leave an inheritance to a person with a disability without disrupting entitlements.
- Provides funds for supplementary services (i.e. clothing, home visits, phone service etc.).
- Creates protection against creditors.
- Assures family members that they or their relative with a disability will continue to live a dignified life.

Individuals with Special Needs Trusts can use the funds to:

- Supplement state and federal benefits

- Help maintain self-sufficiency
- Purchase services and items or pay bills
- Enhance quality of life

For more information, contact PLAN of CT at 860-523-4951 or visit <https://www.planofct.org/>

Explore Tax Deductions and Exemptions for Children with Special Needs

Special Needs Alliance- Article titled “**Tax Tips for Parents of a Child with Special Needs**”

<https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/the-voice/tax-tips-for-parents-of-a-child-with-special-needs/>

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 distribution, information and advocacy 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

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 at 860-424-5677 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>

Raisingchildren.net.au- provides some ideas for building supportive relationships with your extended family and friends <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/communicating-relationships/family-relationships/family-friends-asd>

For a 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 860-424-5677 or visit the DSS Autism website at:

- Visit www.ct.gov/dss
- Click on 'Programs and Services'
- Click on 'Autism Spectrum Disorder-ASD'
- Select the 'Related Resources' tab > select 'Search by Topic' > select 'Support Network and Groups' tab > select the 'Support Networks for Youth and Peers' document

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

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) - Provides information and support to families of children with disabilities from birth to 26 years 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

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

Family Advocacy Program (FAVOR)- Offers training, technical assistance and, support to parents and caregivers www.favor-ct.org

Center for Children’s Advocacy 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

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

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

Wrightslaw- Provides advocacy, legal information, support 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

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

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 <https://ctlegal.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
Tel: 860-424-5677
Fax: 860-920-3170

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***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.