

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Ages 13-17

Guide and What You Need to Know

Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder

5/19/2023

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 13-17

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NC Revised 5/19/2023

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

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

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

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://DisabledChildrensReliefFund-NationalOrganizationforRareDisorders.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>

Complete Functional and Community-Based Assessments and Interest Inventories

Autism Speaks provides a *Community-Based Skills Assessment* guide to help you create a transition plan which focuses on the individual's strengths, needs, challenges and preferences. This tool is divided into three levels based on age with eight areas of functional life skills to be assessed <http://www.vcuautismcenter.org/documents/finalcommunityassessment711141.pdf>

Filing A Special Education Complaint

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/SDE/Special-Education/Bureau-of-Special-Education>

Prepare for the Move from Middle School to High School

Raisingchildren.net.au- provides information on planning, preparing and communicating the transition process from middle school to high school <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/school-play-work/autism-spectrum-disorder-secondary-school/school-transitions-teens-with-asd#secondary-school-transition-needs-for-children-with-autism-spectrum-disorder-nav-title>

Asperger/Autism Network (AANE)- offers a video webinar providing tips to manage the transition to high school <https://www.aane.org/transition-high-school/>

MyFUTURE provides a resource for high school students who want to be sure they are on the correct college career track beginning from Freshmen to Senior year. To view the College Planning Timeline, please visit <https://myfuture.com/college/college-planning-timeline/>

CT Parent Advocacy Center in partnership with Connecticut State Dept. of Education- Has developed a guide for middle school and high school transition planning which involves planning in the areas of college, training, employment and independent living. This guide also assists with self-advocacy skills https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6efb4a_f9498a10a76c4c258ddf95d07316e3d7.pdf

Understand the Requirements/Criteria for Exiting with a Diploma vs. Certificate of Completion

The **State of Connecticut General Assembly** has legislation providing details about the requirements to obtain a high school diploma <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/fc/2015SB-01059-R000502-FC.htm>

The Anderson Community Schools special education division in Anderson Indiana has useful information which helps individuals understand what a certificate of completion is <https://sites.google.com/a/acsc.net/anderson-community-schools-special-education-services/parent-pages/what-is-a-certificate-of-completion>

For more information regarding high school diploma and certificate of completion requirements, contact your local school districts board of education.

Develop an Individualized Transition Plan with Your Child's Educational Team

The **DSS Autism website** has a document titled '*IDEA and Transition Planning Simplified*' which describes the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) process and how it relates to IDEA https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DSS/Health-and-Home-Care/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder/ASD_IDEA_Simplified.pdf?la=en

Develop Student Success Plans Yearly

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. This begins in 6th grade and continues all the way through high school. 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 Intervention Plans as Appropriate

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.inclusionevolution.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 Matters 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>

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/>.

Explore Postsecondary Education Options

Autism Speaks- provides postsecondary opportunities guide to help individuals with autism and their families explore different opportunities and learning environment after leaving high school
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/postsecondary-education>

Directory of Transition/Vocational Service Providers (On EdSight)- A program providing students with disabilities, ages 18-22 (in some cases younger), with opportunities to address their individual transition goals in an integrated, age-appropriate university environment. Programs may include functional academics, career assessment and evaluation, vocational training, job seeking/job keeping skills, social skills, transportation training, recreational and leisure skills, independent living skills, and social advocacy skills, just to name a few <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Secondary-Transition/Connecticut-Transition-Programs>

****Due to a federal court decision--[A.R. v. Connecticut State Board of Education](#)—It has been determined that extended transition services are to be offered to individuals 18-22 years of age in Connecticut. The previous law which ended special education services to the year in which the student turns 21 was found to be in violation of IDEA.

MyFUTURE provides a resource for high school students who want to be sure they are on the correct college career track beginning from Freshmen to Senior year. To view the College Planning Timeline, please visit <https://myfuture.com/college/college-planning-timeline/>

Best Colleges provides a college guide for students with disabilities. Information includes American with Disabilities Act, Section 504, Assistive Technology Act, evaluating campuses for disability services, paying for college <https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/students-with-disabilities/>

American Job Corps- Job Corps is a federal education and job training program for at-risk young men and women, ages 16 through 24. Job Corps is a public-private partnership administered by the United States Department of Labor. The program provides disadvantaged young people with academic, vocational and social skills training they need to gain independence and get quality, long-term jobs or further their education. **For further information, contact the Connecticut Job Corps Centers in Connecticut:** <https://www.jobcorps.gov/>

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)- WIOA authorizes career services, job training and education programs and services for eligible youth and adults through partnerships with state, regional and local organizations <https://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wioa.htm>

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 organize your child's special education documents by visiting <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/organize.file.htm>

Life Skills

Teach your Child Proper Hygiene

Ambitious About Autism- Article providing information related to hygiene and things to consider when its regarding an individual with autism <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/understanding-autism/health/hygiene>

Raisingchildren.net.au. Website provides information related to puberty, hygiene and ideas to make hygiene more manageable <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/health-daily-care/daily-care/personal-hygiene-teens-with-asd>

Teach your Child Money Management Skills

Autism Awareness Centre Inc.- provides an article about money management titled 'How to Teach Money Management for Independent Living with Autism' <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/how-to-teach-money-management-for-independant-living-with-autism/>

The Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation in conjunction with Widener University created a guide related to money management titled "*Cents and Sensibility: A guide to money management for people with disabilities*" <https://fliconline.org/documents/patffinancialeducationbooklet-final.pdf>

Teach your Child how to do Simple Household Chores

Autism Awareness Centre Inc.- provides 7 household chores your child with ASD can do
<https://autismawarenesscentre.com/household-chores-share-special-needs-child-grandchild/>

Middletown Centre for Autism- website provides a range of strategies to teach different types of household chores. Strategies include but are not limited to songs, visual cues, pictures, videos and much more. Visit <https://life-skills.middletownautism.com/strategies/work/household-chores/strategies-for-chores/#q1>

Employment

Develop Skills that Could Lead to Future Employment

Autism Speaks provides an employment tool kit to help with researching, finding and keeping employment <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Employment%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>

2-1-1 Infoline- Contact Connecticut's 2-1-1 Information and Referral line to inquire about Youth Employment Opportunities or volunteer opportunities in your area. Just dial 2-1-1 or visit <https://www.211ct.org/>

Connecticut Youth Employment program- intended for young people ages 14-24 who are looking for summer jobs, part-time employment and/or full-time work. The Connecticut Youth Employment program runs year-round and is implemented by the state's five Workforce Development Boards to increase youth leadership, improve job readiness, and strengthen economic stability. This can be a great opportunity for youth to build professional networks, gain valuable work experience, and improve their resumes.

Capital Workforce Partners

1 Union Place, Hartford 06103
(860) 522-1111

Workforce Alliance

560 Ella Grasso Blvd. New Haven 06519
(203) 624-1493

Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board

108 New Park Ave. Franklin 06254
(860) 859-4100

The WorkPlace, Inc.

350 Fairfield Ave. Bridgeport 06604
(203) 610-8500

Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, Inc.

249 Thomaston Ave. Waterbury 06702

(203) 574-6971

Teach your Child the “Soft Skills” needed for Employment (i.e. being on time, dressing appropriately, taking directions)

Monster provides information about soft skills to help an individual’s career

<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/soft-skills-you-need>

Careerbuilder provides helpful tips about what to wear to an interview

<https://www.careerbuilder.com/advice/what-to-wear-for-different-job-interviews-based-on-the-company>

U.S Dept. of Labor- provides information and tips on soft skills that give employees a competitive edge

[Soft Skills: The Competitive Edge | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

Make Sure your Child has a Resume that includes a list of Skills and Competencies

Organization for Autism Research- provides tips on writing a resume in an article titled ‘Writing a Resume- Where to Begin?’ Also provides samples of a resume and a link to view a step-by-step breakdown of a resume <https://researchautism.org/writing-a-resume-where-to-begin/>

Careerbuilder provides an article titled 'Effective strategies for job seekers with autism'. Article provides tips on including skills within the resume that match the company goals and shows how your skills will benefit the company <https://www.careerbuilder.com/advice/effective-strategies-for-job-seekers-with-autism>

Autism Speaks has a downloadable ‘Employment Toolkit’ that provides employment information for individuals with ASD including information on completing resumes, cover letters and applications

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/employment-tool-kit>

Explore Employment Services and Opportunities

Autism Speaks provides an Employment tool kit for job seekers with autism. Provided within the packet are topics ranging from self-advocacy to your employment rights or job interviewing techniques to creating your cover letter <https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/employment-tool-kit>

TheSpectrumCareers.com A tool for job seekers with Autism and the business community

<https://thespectrumcareers.com/>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) offers free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues <https://askjan.org/>

2-1-1 Infoline- Contact Connecticut's 2-1-1 Information and Referral line to inquire about Youth Employment Opportunities or volunteer opportunities in your area. Just dial 2-1-1 or visit <https://www.211ct.org/>

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249 Thomaston Ave. Waterbury 06702
(203) 574-6971

American Job Corps- Job Corps is a federal education and job training program for at-risk young men and women, ages 16 through 24. Job Corps is a public-private partnership administered by the United States Department of Labor. The program provides disadvantaged young people with academic, vocational and social skills training they need to gain independence and get quality, long-term jobs or further their education. **For further information, contact the Connecticut Job Corps Centers in Connecticut:** <https://www.jobcorps.gov/>

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)- WIOA authorizes career services, job training and education programs and services for eligible youth and adults through partnerships with state, regional and local organizations <https://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wioa.htm>

Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS)- assist individuals with disabilities with preparing, finding and keeping a job. BRS provides a wide array of individualized services which can include but is not limited to:

- Vocational counseling
 - Benefits counseling
 - Job search assistance
 - School-to-work transition services
 - Skills training and career education in college and/or vocational schools
 - On-the-job training in business and industry
 - Assistive technology services such as adaptive equipment for mobility, communication and work activities
 - Vehicle and home modification
 - Supported employment services
 - Services to assist in restoring or improving a physical and/or mental impairment
 - Help accessing other programs and services
-
- **Ask about Customized Employment (CE) Opportunities**- is an alternative method of finding competitive integrated employment that matches the strengths, skills, and abilities of individuals with significant disabilities with the unmet needs of employers. It is a highly structured, person-centered process, carried out over time. Customized Employment is comprised of three (3) primary components: Job Discovery; Job Development, Negotiation and Placement; and Post-Employment Supports.

To learn more about how BRS can help you, call **1-866-844-1903** or fill out an online form to request to speak with a BRS counselor at https://portal.ct.gov/rehabilitation/services/general-information?language=en_US.

Individuals can also speak with a benefits counselor who can explain how employment affects state/federal benefits (disability benefits from SSA, Husky, snap, etc...). To reach a benefits counselor, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/AgingandDisability/Content-Pages/Programs/Benefits-Counseling> and find the closest office to where you live.

Explore Volunteer Opportunities

United Way of Connecticut 2-1-1 Infoline has an extensive database which lists agencies offering volunteer opportunities throughout the state 2-1-1 (1-800-203-1234) or www.211ct.org

The following article explains 9 reasons why teens with Autism and ADHD may benefit from volunteering at <https://autismadhdconnection.com/9-ways-volunteering-helps-autistic-teenagers/>

Safety

Help your Child Learn about Appropriate Social Skills

Raisingchildren.net.au provides a 'Teens: Communicating & Relationships' section on the website which allows you to explore topics relevant to ages 12-18 years of age. These social skills topics include communicating, family relationships, friends and peers, romantic relationships, coping with trauma, and bilingualism & multilingualism <https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/communicating-relationships>

Psychology Today provides an article titled '*Helping Your Child with Autism Improve Social Skills*' to provide parents with skills needs to help their children develop social skills <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/socioemotional-success/201706/helping-your-child-autism-improve-social-skills>

Address Community and Relationship Safety

Individuals with autism will engage in many community activities and interact with people like many other individuals without autism. There may be safety concerns related to walking to school, attending fairs, relationships with peers, abuse, swimming at a local pool, and more. Safety will always be a concern for individuals with autism. Below you will find some resources discussing some of the many types of safety concerns.

Autism Speaks provides helpful and informative literature about maintaining safety for individuals within the community, safety within relationships, and safety from different abuses. <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-safety-project>

Consider an **Autism Identification Card** that can be placed in your wallet and presented to law enforcement and First Responders during an emergency situation <https://www.aane.org/resources/wallet-card/>

State of CT Dept. of Motor Vehicles The Blue Envelope- Effective January 1, 2020, The "Blue Envelope" was created by a new state law to enhance communication between a police officer and a driver with autism. The purpose of the envelope is to have the driver place their insurance card, registration, and driver license in it so it can be handed to the officer during a stop. The outside of the envelope provides

helpful tips and instructions for both the officer and driver on how to successfully communication with each other. The envelopes are available at all DMV locations, police stations, driving schools and through autism advocacy groups. <https://portal.ct.gov/DMV/Licenses/Licenses/Autism-awareness>

Social and Relationships

Help your Child Learn about Appropriate Social Skills

Raisingchildren.net.au provides a 'Teens: Communicating & Relationships' section on the website which allows you to explore topics relevant to ages 12-18 years of age. These social skills topics include communicating, family relationships, friends and peers, romantic relationships, coping with trauma, and bilingualism & multilingualism <https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/communicating-relationships>

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

Learn about what to expect during teenage development in areas ranging from personal identity, social & emotional changes, puberty, sexuality, hygiene, and more at **Raisingchildren.net.au** <https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/development>

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>

Spectrum- Article titled "**Gender and Sexuality in Autism, Explained**" by Laura Dattaro <https://www.spectrumnews.org/news/gender-and-sexuality-in-autism-explained/>

Medical News Today- Article titled "**How does autism affect sexuality and sexual relationships?**" <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/autism-and-sex>

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>

The **Connecticut Tourism Office** website provides a listing of statewide activities held each week for individuals and families of all ages

http://www.ctvisit.com/?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=Paid_Search&utm_content=Winter2019&utm_campaign=Brand&gclid=EAlaIQobChMlyYfm-bal4AIVDK_ICh2irwqwEAAYASAAEgJijfD_BwE

Additional suggestions:

- **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/>.

Funding, Services and Legal Information

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](#)

Understand What it Means to move from Entitlement to Eligibility

According to The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), once your child either earns a high school diploma or a Certificate of Program Completion, this means that public education is now complete. Your child has transitioned from the stage of Entitlement to the stage of Eligibility.

Pathfinders for Autism website contains information related to Entitlement vs. Eligibility

<https://pathfindersforautism.org/articles/maryland-services/the-dilemma-of-entitlement-vs-eligibility/>

Apply for Social Security Benefits by the age of 18

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 worked 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 the 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

Explore the Legal Implications of Reaching Age 18 (Conservatorship)

The age at which an individual is considered legally an adult, or “age of majority”, in most states is 18.

SOURCE: CGS Sec. 1-1d https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_001.htm#sec_1-1d

This means individuals in the State of Connecticut are old enough to be considered legally capable of making personal and financial decisions. Individuals with autism, however, may be unable to direct his or her own personal affairs and/or financial decisions, therefore, matters related to their safety, health, and finances are of concern.

A **conservator** is a person appointed by the probate court to oversee the financial or personal affairs of an adult determined to be incapable of managing his or her own affairs or unable to care for himself or herself. There are two basic types of conservatorships:

- A **conservator of the person** is appointed to supervise the personal affairs of an individual who is found by the court to be unable, even with appropriate assistance, to meet essential requirements for personal needs. These needs may include, but are not limited to, the need for food, clothing, shelter, health care, and safety.
- A **conservator of the estate** is appointed to supervise the financial affairs of an individual who is found by the court to be incapable of doing so himself to the extent that property will be wasted unless adequate property management is provided. This may include, but is not limited to, actions to obtain and manage assets, income and public assistance benefits.
- A person may be in need of one or both types of conservators. Two separate individuals may perform these two roles, or one person may serve in both capacities. A conservator of the estate or person may be an individual, a legally authorized municipal or state official, or a private or nonprofit corporation. However, hospitals and nursing homes cannot be appointed conservators of either the person or the estate, and banks cannot be appointed conservators of the person.

SOURCE: UWC 211 eLibrary <https://uwc.211ct.org/conservator-of-estate-conservator-of-person/>

To become a conservator, please visit the **Connecticut Probate Courts** website at <http://www.ctprobate.gov/Pages/Conservatorships.aspx>

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 serve, 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>

Investigate Support Groups for Your Child

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

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>

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>

Transportation

Explore Transportation Options including Public Transportation, Mobility, and Divers License

Autism Speaks offers has created the Autism Safety Project which contains a list of experiences and activities that take place in the community and put them into separate sections in order to focus specifically on safety in each of the components of daily living. Visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/safety-community>

CTrides is a free program that helps commuters find the best way to get to work or school. We provide resources for choice commuting options throughout Connecticut, including bus, rail, carpools, vanpools, biking, walking, and teleworking <https://ctrides.com/>

TIP: Find a driving school that specializes in providing a comprehensive driver program for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD):

- Visit www.ct.gov/dss
- Click on 'Programs and Services'
- Click on 'Autism Spectrum Disorder-ASD'
- Select the 'Related Resources' tab
- Select the 'Search by Topic' tab
- Select the 'Transportation' tab
- Open the document titled 'Drivers License'

The State of Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles- for more information on obtaining a learner's permit and to take the test for the driver's license. You can also access the locations where learner's permit testing sites are located and download practice test questions for the learner's permit via app (android, iPhone, iPad)

State of CT Dept. of Motor Vehicles The Blue Envelope- Effective January 1, 2020, The "Blue Envelope" was created by a new state law to enhance communication between a police officer and a driver with autism. The purpose of the envelope is to have the driver place their insurance card, registration, and driver license in it so it can be handed to the officer during a stop. The outside of the envelope provides

helpful tips and instructions for both the officer and driver on how to successfully communicate with each other. The envelopes are available at all DMV locations, police stations, driving schools and through autism advocacy groups. <https://portal.ct.gov/DMV/Licenses/Licenses/Autism-awareness>

Help your Child Obtain a Connecticut Non-Driver Identification Card through the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles

The State of Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles provides information regarding the eligibility criteria, what to bring, and locations to apply for a non-driver identification card <https://www.ct.gov/dmv/cwp/view.asp?a=805&q=490078>

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/>

Have an Understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The **United Way of Connecticut 2-1-1 eLibrary** webpage has information regarding the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) <https://uwc.211ct.org/ada-the-americans-with-disabilities-act/>

United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division website offers information and technical assistance on the American with Disabilities Act <https://www.ada.gov/>

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 and 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.