Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services

Advocacy and Legal Aid Resources

Teaching Your Child Self-Advocacy

Autism Society- Website offers resources by topic to help individuals find the support they need. https://autismsociety.org/

Autism Speaks - A tool kit to teach your child self-advocacy and knowing its never too early to start teaching them. https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/teaching-your-child-self-advocacy

Car Autism Roadmap- Article titled "Developing self-advocacy skills to last a life time". https://www.research.chop.edu/car-autism-roadmap/developing-self-advocacy-skills-to-last-a-lifetime

Center for Disability Rights- CDR's mission is to promote options that empower people with disabilities to achieve their full potential and live independently, fully participate in their community, and exercise their rights as citizens. It shall challenge, through advocacy, education and citizen action, those systems that limit such options. https://cdr-ct.org/

CT Parent Advocacy Center in partnership with The CT State Dept of Education- Guide book titled "Stepping Forward: A Self-Advocacy Guide for Middle and High School Students". https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6efb4a_f9498a10a76c4c258ddf95d07316e3d7.pdf

Learn from Autistic People- Article titled '5 Tips for Teaching Children with Autism Self-Advocacy'. https://learnfromautistics.com/autism-self-advocacy-tips/

Milestones Autism Resources - Article titled 'Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination: How to Share Your Needs and Protect Your Rights'. http://milestones.org/individuals-with-asd/self-advocacy/

Organization for Autism Research - Provides information and tips to teach your child to learn self-advocacy such as your child being a part of the IEP process and allowing children to make independent choices. https://researchautism.org/help-children-learn-how-to-self-advocate/

Pacer Center- Provides information related to advocating for yourself in high school, at work, and at college. https://www.pacer.org/

Path Parent-to-Parent Family Voices - Open to youth 13-26 years of age who are living with a disability or chronic health condition. CT KASA participants learn how to advocate for themselves. CT KASA helps by teaching young people about their rights and how to change the systems that affect their lives. CT KASA meetings are held on the last Thursday of every month on zoom. http://pathct.org/programs/kasa-kids-as-self-advocates

The Autism Community in Action (TACA)- A resource for families to learn, practice and teach advocacy skills. https://tacanow.org/family-resources/self-advocacy/

The Washington Post- Provides an article titled 'Teaching children with autism the fine art of self-advocacy'. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/06/05/teaching-children-with-autism-the-fine-art-of-self-advocacy/?utm_term=.e14ab2ac27b8

Advocacy and Legal Assistance

Academic-Autistic Spectrum Partnership in Research and Education (AASPIRE)- Provides information on Autism, healthcare, health tips, medical information, and your healthcare rights. Also has worksheets and forms used to assist individuals with self-advocacy when meeting with healthcare providers. https://autismandhealth.org/

African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP)- Has resources for parents of children with disabilities related to advocacy, education, resources and support in the areas of special education, disability, juvenile justice, and health equity. https://www.afcamp.org/

Andrew Arboe: Autistic Self-Advocate and Speaker - Andrew Arboe is a self-advocate and public speaker whose motivation is to empower autistic individuals, families, and professionals to start building up their futures. Types of presentations include In-person workshops in the New England states like Connecticut and Massachusetts, Panel, Webinars, Professional development for schools, Conferences, and Keynote Presentations. Topics include but are not limited to driving, employment/self-employment, sensory needs, and transition to adulthood. https://andrewarboe.weebly.com/

Ari of Connecticut - Assists with school to adult life transition services. https://www.arict.org/

Autism Services & Resources Connecticut (ASRC) - Assists with advocacy, training and family support. https://ct-asrc.org/

Autism Speaks- Advocacy Toolkit- provides basic information about advocacy skills and ways to apply these skills in different situations. https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/advocacy-tool-kit

Center for Children's Advocacy- The Medical-Legal Partnership Project advocacy and representation to improve the health and welfare of children. The area of assistance includes matters affecting the children's health, education and welfare. Representatives are on site at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Yale New Haven Health, and Yale Child Study Center. https://cca-ct.org/

Center for Medicare Advocacy - The Center offers legal advice, advocacy, community education and information on Medicare and related issues, including assistance with Medicare appeals. The Center also answers questions about changes to Medicare coverage, including Medicare prescription drug coverage. https://www.medicareadvocacy.org/

CT Association of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL)- Core services of the Centers for independent Living include 1. Information & referral, 2. Independent living skills training, 3. Peer Mentoring and Networking, 4. Advocacy, 5. Nursing facility transition, 6. Youth transition to higher education or employment. https://cacil.net/

Child Development Infoline- Helps families learn to advocate for appropriate health and educational services. Advises parents of children with disabilities or with special health care needs of their rights under the law with regard to obtaining needed services or equipment in educational settings. Directs parents to the appropriate resources to assist with information on health care financing and SSI. https://cdi.211ct.org/

Connecticut Bar Association- Offers civics education programs for students in grades k-12, a virtual legal advice clinic for low-income Connecticut residents, help with finding a pro-bono attorney for a legal matter, and much more. Visit the website to learn about the different array of services. www.ctbar.org

Connecticut Families for Effective Autism Treatment (CT FEAT) - Provides legal resources related to education and links to legal and advocacy resources. www.ctfeat.org

Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN)- Agency provides direct support to individuals and families by sharing information and resources that empower people to make their voices heard and become their own best advocate. www.ctfsn.org

Connecticut Legal Services - Provides legal advice and representation for people who are low income in the areas of housing and homeless prevention, employment, education and keeping at-risk children safe at school, family law and response to domestic violence, elder rights, health, safety, public benefits, disability rights, consumer rights, and immigration rights for victims of domestic violence and unaccompanied minors. https://ctlegal.org/

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)- Is a statewide non-profit organization that offers information and support to families of children with disabilities ages birth to 26. The variety of supports and programs is intended to improve the educational outcomes for children with disabilities. www.cpacinc.org

She Leads Justice (formerly Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund)- Agency works to ensure equal access to legal, education and social service systems. Agency provides workshops to educated individuals of their rights in areas of family law, employment and education. https://sheleadsjustice.org/

CTLawHelp.org- Several Statewide Legal Services agencies have collaborated to provide this user friendly, self-help guide to special education law, benefits, housing, family law, immigration and

citizenship, LGBTQ+, medical and healthcare, and more. https://ctlawhelp.org/en/special-education-in-connecticut

Disabilities Network of Eastern CT, Inc. - Agency provides advocacy support with issues such as obtaining benefits, social services, access to public facilities, employment, education, and communication discrimination. https://www.dnec.org/

Disability Rights CT, Inc - Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc. (DRCT) is an advocacy organization providing legal advocacy and rights protection for individuals with disabilities. Areas of concern include but are not limited to issues with abuse, neglect, discrimination, access to assistive technologies, community integration, voting, and rights protection issues. https://www.disrightsct.org/

Family Advocacy Program (FAVOR) - Offers training, technical assistance, information and resources, and support to parents and caregivers with children with special mental, emotional, and behavioral health challenges and/or developmental and intellectual disabilities. www.favor-ct.org

The FAP- Friends of Autistic People - Is an Autism Education and Advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders and their families- particularly those from financially struggling families. http://www.autisticadults.org/

Independence Unlimited - Independence Unlimited Youth Transitions Project increases the participation of youth with disabilities and their parents in the process of planning for their transition into adulthood. https://www.independenceunlimited.org/index.php/our-programs/youth-transitions

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

National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making - A resource individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities can use to help create Supported Decision-Making plans, connect with resources, and answer questions. http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/about

Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA) - Provides free advocacy and assistance to resolve healthcare and insurance issues. https://www.ct.gov/oha/site/default.asp

Organization For Autism Research- Life Journey through Autism: Navigating the Special Education System. https://researchautism.org/resources/navigating-the-special-education-system/?utm_source=OARacle+Newsletter+Subscribers&utm_campaign=d67ea08004-Week+of+Apr+10+-Resource+Last+Call+Eblast-AAM+2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_132914a232-d67ea08004-171428105

LARC Autism Resource Center - LARC Autism Resource Center provides services and supports recognized as being beneficial to children and youth with ASD. The center offers opportunities for socialization, special events, parental support, financial and legal resources. Social groups provide opportunities for children and youth to engage in activities that promote socialization, support with

individual goals as well as form friendships. https://www.litchfieldarc.org/larc-autism-resource-center.html

Path Parent-to-Parent Family Voices of CT- Assist families with educational navigation and support. Can also refer to an advocate outside of PATH. Provides healthcare related information. www.pathct.org

Pathfinders for Autism- A Maryland-based website offering "Parent Tips" articles on a variety of topics. https://pathfindersforautism.org/

Plan of CT- PLAN of CT currently partners with over 180 attorneys across the state. Explore their interactive map to find a PLAN Professional Member local to you. After meeting with the Outreach Coordinator, families interested in establishing a PLAN of CT Special Needs Trust will next want to determine which Professional Member Attorney is the best fit for your family. They encourage you to contact these attorneys directly regarding their area of practice. https://www.planofct.org/

Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities - Organization provides information and support to parents of children with learning disabilities or attention deficit disorders through their website, blog, regional educational programs or through its e-newsletter. Individuals can register for the e-newsletter via the website. https://www.smartkidswithld.org/

Special Education and Legal Fund (SELF) - Special Education Legal Fund (S.E.L.F.) was founded by parents who have navigated the special education system for their children, for parents who may need financial support to secure legal assistance for their own children in special education. https://spedlegalfund.org/

Special Needs Alliance- The Special Needs Alliance (SNA) is a national organization comprised of attorneys who practice disability and public benefits law. They can advise you about qualifying and applying for appropriate public benefits, estate planning, tax planning, trust planning, advance directives, creating special needs trusts (SNTs) to protect eligibility for means-tested government programs, availability of local services and supports, special education issues, guardianship and powers of attorney just to name a few. https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/

Spednet- Is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping parents of children with special needs become their children's best advocates throughout the special services process and the transition to college, employment or other post-secondary pursuits. They serve parents of children who have been diagnosed with a disability and receive services through an IEP or a Section 504 Plan, who are newly diagnosed, or who are struggling and have yet to be diagnosed. SPED*NET – Support, Advocacy and Information Network for Families with Neurodivergent Children or Other Children Who Have Disabilities.

State of Connecticut Department of Education - The Surrogate Parent Program appoints individuals as surrogate parents and provides education advocacy for children and youth under the Jurisdiction of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) (foster children) or unaccompanied minor or homeless youth who need or may need special education. https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Surrogate-Parent-Program.

State of CT Department of Education - Connecticut General Statute (CGS) § 10-74s requires the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to make a plain-language online resource for students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) age 14 and older, and their parents. This resource provides information about decision-making options for eligible students who turn age 18. CGS § 10-76d(a)(10)(F)(ii) requires that Districts provide information to students and parents about decision-making supports. The information contained within this resource must be given annually at a planning and placement team (PPT) meeting, starting when students turn age 14. https://portal.ct.gov/sde/special-education/secondary-transition/resources-for-students-and-families/understanding-decision-making-options

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

The Arc- Arc Connecticut advocacy programs are intended to support, promote and protect the civil and human rights of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. https://thearcct.org/

The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) - COPAA is an independent non-profit organization of attorneys, advocates, and parents that work to protect the legal and civil rights of students with disabilities. https://www.copaa.org/default.aspx

Wrightslaw- A website where individuals can access information about special education law, education law, and advocacy resources for children with disabilities. https://www.wrightslaw.com/

Disclosure of Autism Diagnosis

Asperger/Autis m Network (AANE) - Has information and tips on its website related to the disclosure of ones ASD diagnosis. https://aane.org/

Autism Awareness Centre, Inc. - Article titled 'Who should be told about an autism diagnosis?' https://autismawarenesscentre.com/told-autism-diagnosis/

Autism Speaks- An article that explores the pros and cons of disclosing and not disclosing an autism diagnosis**.** https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/disclose-or-not-disclose

Car Autism RoadMap - Article titled ' To tell or Not to tell: Issues of Disclosure in the Workplace' https://www.research.chop.edu/car-autism-roadmap/to-tell-or-not-to-tell-issues-of-disclosure-in-the-workplace

Interactive Autism Network- Article titled 'Adults with ASD: Deciding When to Disclose' https://iancommunity.org/cs/adults/deciding_when_to_disclose

National Autistic Society- Talking about and disclosing your autism diagnosis. https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis/disclosing-your-autism/autistic-adults

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability - A 2009 Guidebook published by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability titled 'The 411 on Disability Disclosure'. Guide and workbook provide expert advice about the disclosure of a disability and providing support for a young person. https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf

Organization for Autism Research- Article titled 'Understanding Disclosure and Workplace Accommodations' https://researchautism.org/understanding-disclosure-and-workplace-accommodations/

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