

# Family Education Sheet

## What you can do while you're waiting for an appointment in the Developmental Medicine Center



**Boston Children's Hospital**

Where the world comes for answers

View more health education materials at  
[www.bostonchildrens.org/familyeducation](http://www.bostonchildrens.org/familyeducation)

We know that it can be challenging to wait for your child to be seen in the Developmental Medicine Center. This family education sheet offers some resources you can use before the evaluation.

### Early Intervention (birth – age 3)

Early Intervention (EI) in Massachusetts is a program available for children ages birth to 3-years old who show signs of a developmental delay or are at risk for developing a delay. These family-centered services are provided to help children progress in their development and to help a family meet the needs of their child.

Your child does not need to have a specific diagnosis. If you aren't already involved with EI, visit Family TIES of Massachusetts to find your local agency. You don't need a referral from your child's pediatrician, and you can call yourself to see if your child is eligible for these services.

#### **Family TIES of Massachusetts**

<https://www.massfamilyties.org/>

1-800-905-8437 (TIES)

Support is available in several languages

### Public school (age 3 – 22)

If you're concerned about your child's development and they are nearing age 3 (or older), contact your local school department. Tell the early childhood coordinator or special education coordinator that your child is waiting to be evaluated by the Developmental Medicine Center and you want to request an evaluation to begin the special education process. They will walk you through the next steps.

If you're having a hard time getting the school involved, you may need to send a letter requesting their help. For more information on the special education process in Massachusetts, go to the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) "A Parent's Guide to Special Education" (available in English, Spanish and Portuguese).

#### **A Parent's Guide to Special Education**

<https://fcsn.org/a-parents-guide-to-special-education/>

For more information on Early Childhood Special Education in Massachusetts, visit the Department of Education webpage.

#### **Department of Education: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**

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

### Special educational resources

#### **Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)**

Offers special education support and trainings, support groups in a variety of languages, information on transition planning, emotional support and referrals to local resources, help with health insurance-related issues and connects parents to other parents of children with special needs.

<https://fcsn.org/resources/parents-families/special-education/>

**The Arc of Massachusetts** - Offers webinars and other resources

<https://thearcofmass.org/>

#### **Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC)**

Includes educational workshops, fact sheets and letters

<https://www.massadvocates.org/>

**Children's Law Center of Massachusetts** – Provide

quality advocacy and legal services to low-income families

<https://www.clcm.org/>

#### **Special Needs Advocacy Network (SPAN)**

<https://spanmass.org/professional-directory.html>

### Parent education resources

Some resources below are available in other languages. Please visit their websites to access other languages.

#### **CDC Act Early**

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>

#### **CDC's Milestone Tracker App**

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>

#### **CDC's What to Do While You Wait to See a Developmental Specialist**

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/concerned-whileyouwait.html>

**Age 0 – 3** - Resources and articles on common topics for children ages 0-3. Topics include play, sleep and emotional development.

<https://www.zerotothree.org/>

#### **Boston Children's Hospital Health Education Library**

<https://extapps.childrenshospital.org/efpec>

**CDC What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?**

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

**Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)** - Resources regarding understanding ADHD, education and advocacy and other support

<https://chadd.org/>

## Behavioral health services

**Children's Behavioral Health Initiative** (for families who have a [MassHealth](#) insurance plan) and **Behavioral Health Services for Children and Adolescents** (for families with [private health insurance](#)) services are behavioral health services that can be offered in the home, community and school.

Some services available under CBHI/BHCA include: Intensive care coordination (ICC), Family support and training (FS&T/Family Partners), In-home therapy services (IHT), In-home behavioral services (IHBS) and Therapeutic Mentoring services (TM). Qualifications for each service can differ. Ask to speak with the intake coordinator to see if your child is eligible.

To Find a Behavioral Health Services Provider:

**CBHI (MassHealth)**

<https://www.mass.gov/childrens-behavioral-health-initiative-cbhi>

**BHCA (Private Insurance)**

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/behavioral-health-services-for-children-and-adolescents-bhca>

## Outpatient services

You can access insurance-based outpatient services for certain therapies without needing a diagnosis. These services can happen in addition to any services your child gets through school.

Ask your child's pediatrician which services may be appropriate for your child. Examples are speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and counseling. If you're interested in these services, we have Massachusetts directories available upon request.

- **Speech therapy** can focus on a child's communication, feeding or social skills. If your child is facing challenges communicating their wants and needs, understanding what you're asking them to do or socializing with other children, speech therapists might be able to help. If feeding is a concern, you will want to find a speech therapist who is trained and able to address feeding and swallowing needs.
- **Occupational therapy** can focus on your child's independence skills, like getting dressed or feeding themselves, sensory needs or self-soothing skills. An

occupational therapist is trained to help you find the best combination of activities throughout the day to address concerns, such as over-stimulation, helping your child understand their emotions and better express how they're feeling.

- **Physical therapy** can focus on a child's physical movements ("gross motor") and promote safe ways to participate in community and play activities. If you're worried about how your child moves in their environment, or if they have trouble with their movements, talk with a physical therapist to see if PT is appropriate.
- **Counseling** can help to address your child's emotional and behavioral needs. Some forms of counseling focus on the child, while others forms bring in the family to address concerns.

## Emergency services program and mobile crisis intervention

The statewide Emergency Services Program (ESP) provides 24/7/365 crisis help – without you having to go to a hospital emergency room. If you or a loved one are experiencing a behavioral health crisis, call the ESP at 1-877-382-1609 or call your local program (see link below).

You'll talk to a behavioral health professional who can help you. They will work with you to determine the best plan for your unique situation. A team member may come meet you where you are – at your home, a hospital or another place in your community. Some teams also have walk-in locations you can go to.

**Local Emergency Services Contact Information**

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/emergency-services-program-contact-information>

## Support for families

**Massachusetts Parent & Caregiver Supports**

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/parent-and-caregiver-support>

Parent Stress Line: 1-800-632-8188

**Mass Family Ties** - Family TIES of Massachusetts provides information and referral services, emotional support and training to parents of children and youth with special needs.

<https://www.massfamilyties.org/>

**Family Resource Centers**

<https://www.frcma.org/>

**The Arc of Massachusetts**

<https://thearcofmass.org/>

### **Sibling Support Project**

<https://www.siblingsupport.org/>

### **Massachusetts Sibling Support Network**

<https://www.masiblingsupport.org/>

### **Boston Children's Hospital Hale Family Center for Families Integrative Therapies program**

<https://www.childrenshospital.org/patient-resources/holistic-medicine/integrative-therapies>

## Support for LGBTQ+ youth

### **The Trevor Project**

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/trevor-support-center/>

### **Greater Boston PFLAG**

<https://gbpflag.org/>

## Bullying prevention

### **Boston Children's Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention and Advocacy Collaborative (BACPAC)**

<https://www.childrenshospital.org/programs/bullying-and-cyberbullying-prevention-and-advocacy-collaborative-bacpac-program>

Phone: 617-355-6388

### **Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center**

<https://www.marccenter.org/>

### **StopBullying.gov**

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

### **MDESE Bullying Prevention and Intervention**

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/>