

# DEVELOPMENT AND BEYOND NEWSLETTER



A monthly newsletter by The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center for families and individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) & other neurodevelopmental diagnoses

## Goodbye 2024, Hello 2025!

We wish all of our families & friends a wonderful year full of joy & prosperity! Along with the new year, we are so excited to be launching **Development and Beyond**, an expanded version of our newsletter that will now include **resources for transition aged (14-22) & adult individuals**. This addition will serve folks across the entire lifespan, as well as any caregivers who may be interested in learning about the resources that exist for children beyond childhood.

Continue reading to see what we have highlighted for this month and as always, don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or suggestions!

 [Autismprogram@bmc.org](mailto:Autismprogram@bmc.org)

 [@BMCAutismProgram](https://www.instagram.com/BMCAutismProgram)

### December TEAM Event



Last month, our TEAM (*Teens Engaged as Mentors*) participants enjoyed a magical visit to Boston's very own Harry Potter Experience. Full of enchanting scenery, costumes, wands and creature, it was a day to remember!

## In this edition:

**PG 2**  
FAQ:  
Family & Parent  
Support Programs

**PG 4**  
Thinking Ahead:  
Learn About Summer  
Camp options for 2025

**PG 5**  
The Autism Program:  
Services for Transition to  
adulthood & Adults

**PG 6**  
Free Resources:  
Guides, Workbooks,  
Checklists & More

# FAQ: *Family & Caregiver Support Programs*

Entering the new year can be a stressful endeavor, but we are here to remind you that you are not alone. Explore these common support needs & options.

Looking for things like **new diagnosis support, support groups, info on services, application assistance, and community connections?**



## Connect with your Autism Support Center

**Autism Support Centers (ASC)** are a hub of autism-related information & guidance for your family. From parent support groups, recreational events, educational workshops and more, they can be your first stop for helpful resources in your community. Services are available for free to families of an individual with ASD. Find your center **here!**



Looking for **services for your entire family**, such as having a Service Coordinator, getting family education, and receiving financial assistance?



### Questions re: DDS?

1/15

Attend this **virtual workshop** by DDS! They will share the eligibility process as well as services offered.

*La presentación estará presentado en ingles con interpretación en seguida de español.*



## Apply for DDS Services

**DDS** (Department of Developmental Services) is a state agency that provides a wide range of supportive services for the entire family. For more information on their services & how to apply, click **here!**



### If you're already connected:

It's important to make sure that your family's needs are communicated as clearly as possible. If you have any concerns regarding your DDS services, we encourage you to contact the **DDS Ombudsperson**.



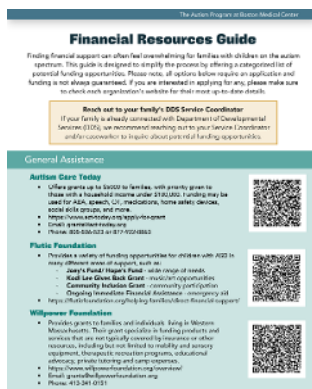
- DDSOmbuds@mass.gov
- (617) 821-1677

# FAQ: Family & Caregiver Support Programs

If you are struggling to connect with any of these resources, reach out to us or your DBP clinician.

Looking for ways to receive **financial assistance** for your family and/or for specific services such as AAC devices, therapies, and more?

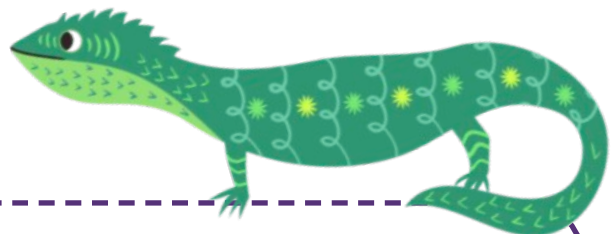
## Check out our Funding Resources Guide



This guide features 23 different opportunities for family funding. They are categorized by General Assistance, Medical Assistance, Recreational & Educational, Assistive Tech & Speech Therapy, and Home Safety Modifications.



Looking for **in-home assistance** for you and/or your child's activities of daily life, that can be covered by MassHealth?



## Apply for a Personal Care Attendant

You can hire a **PCA** to receive in-home assistance. They can assist with activities such as bathing, grooming, dressing, eating, toileting, and more. They can be hired from an agency or chosen from a family member (*child's legal guardian cannot be a PCA for the child*). If approved, MassHealth will cover a certain amount of hours of PCA care based on assessments. For more information on the program & how to apply, visit **here**.



# FAQ: *Family & Caregiver Support Programs*

Are you experiencing a more specific situation and would like **1:1 support** for your family?



## Talk to a Professional

**Attend caregiver workshops.** They are hosted by community organizations and provide opportunities for you to hear from a variety of professionals (ex: *psychologists, social workers, lawyers, accountants, and parents*). They can address a wide range of topics from services, parenting strategies, supports & resources, and much more. You can also ask directly questions during a Q&A.

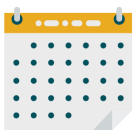
**Support specialists** are available in Autism Support Centers as well as other community organizations. They can help answer questions and provide relevant information, resources, and referrals for your family.

**Advocates** are types of professionals who can advocate for your needs and rights during specific situations. They can use legal knowledge to help push for those services. There are different types of advocates for different realms of situations (ex: special education, legal, healthcare). Some require a fee, while some work pro bono.

**Share your concerns with your child's clinicians.** They will be able to provide advice, support and the appropriate referrals to begin addressing your concerns.



## Thinking Ahead: Summer Camps



Although summer may feel very far ahead at this point (*especially amid this cold weather*), we encourage you to check out the upcoming events below if you are looking for a summer camp this year. Also make sure to stay tuned for our Summer Guide, which will share lots of summer opportunities for your family!

### Inclusive Summer Camp Fair

With the Brookline SEPAC

**Saturday, 1/11 from 9 to 11am**

Florida Ruffin Ridley School

This free & in-person (Brookline) event will be joined by many inclusive camps! Attend and learn about summer camps near you that are tailored to support children with specific needs.



### 2025 Virtual Summer Expo

With Boston Parent's Paper

**Sunday, 1/12**

This free & virtual event will feature more than 2,000 camp options in MA! Visit their website and subscribe to this event to receive a flipbook specifically designed for your areas of interest.



**Click [here](#) for more information.**

**Click [here](#) to register.**



# DEVELOPMENT & BEYOND NEWSLETTER

## Getting Started...

Welcome to the very first edition of *Development and Beyond*, featuring this new segment for **transition-aged (14-22)** & **adult** individuals with ASD and other neurodevelopmental diagnoses!

Let's kick it off with some introductions. Did you know that our program provides **individualized support** for neurodiverse BMC patients well beyond pediatrics? We have two incredible staff who specialize in supporting individuals in the transition to adulthood and beyond. **Meet Katie & Katherine!**



**Katie Campbell, M.A.**  
*Transition Specialist*

**As a Transition Specialist,** Katie provides support to BMC's adolescent patients (14-22) and their families as they transition to adulthood. Her work includes supporting families in navigating services & support across school, medical and social service systems. These can include: transition services in high school, state agencies, government benefits, decision-making support options, life skills training, college and employment, and more.



**Katherine Shields, B.A.**  
*Adult Autism Resource Specialist*

**As an Adult Autism Resource Specialist,** Katherine provides support for BMC's adult patients (20+) with ASD and other neurodevelopmental diagnoses. Her work includes connecting patients with appropriate adult services, such as: services, such as: state agencies, government benefits, career services, decision making supports and more.

## Adolescent &amp; Adult Resources

Together, they also lead the **Teens Engaged as Mentors (TEAM) program** that involves monthly recreational & community service activities for youth (ages 9-22) with and without ASD. Check out the first page for a recap of our December event!

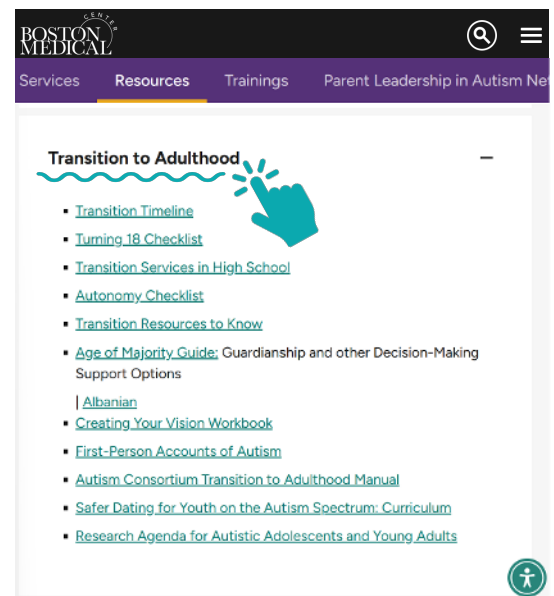
To scan a QR code, open your phone's camera and hold it over code. Tap the link that appears.

**In addition to the individualized supports and community engagement, our specialists are also constantly developing and sharing resources.** The materials created aim to break down some key topics that families and individuals should know about, which can often feel complicated. Topics include:

- [Timeline: Transition-to-Adulthood](#)
- [Creating Your Vision Workbook](#)
- [Transition Services in High School](#)
- [Turning 18 Checklist](#)
- [Autonomy Checklist](#)
- [Age of Majority Guide: Guardianship & Other Decision Making Support Options](#)
- [Reaching Out to Your Police Guide](#)
- [And more!](#)

If you would like to learn more about these topics, make sure to visit our program website by clicking the image or scanning the QR code to the right.

**These resources are free to access for everyone!**



**Coming Soon: New Programs for Transition Aged Youth!**

At Boston Medical Center's Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP), we are continually thinking of ways to expand our programming & resources to further support our patients and families. Keep an eye out within the next couple of months for information about some exciting new programming for transition aged DBP patients and their families!




## Resources



The Autism Program continues to support families in many ways both inside and outside of Boston Medical Center. Check out our website to learn more about the services, supports and programs we offer including our Autism Friendly Hospital Initiative, Teens Engaged as Mentors (TEAM) program, and our training offerings. We also have a huge resource library where you can access free information on a variety of topics such as safety, behavioral support, transition to adulthood, insurance and more!



 [www.bmc.org/autism](http://www.bmc.org/autism)  
[Autismprogram@bmc.org](mailto:Autismprogram@bmc.org)

 The Autism Program

 @BMCAutismProgram

## Clinic

Our DBP clinicians are available for developmental evaluations, assessments and follow up. To connect with the clinical team, please call 617-414-4841 and follow the prompts for Developmental Pediatrics.



### Our Clinicians

- Marilyn Augustyn, MD
- Arathi Reddy, DO
- Rachel Amgott, NP
- Christina Lazdowsky, NP
- Mei Elansary, MD
- Audrey Christiansen, MD
- Sarah Canale, MD
- Mary Ellen Killion, NP
- Arielle Spellun, MD
- Bridget Poznanski, PhD
- Rachel Vuolo, MD
- Selcen YarogluKazanci, MD

## ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

*Development and Beyond* is brought to you by the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center, a family support program of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. We are committed to supporting our families in DBP and beyond! Please don't hesitate to reach out to us and make sure to follow us on social media for more tips and information. **To unsubscribe, please reply by email with the word "Remove"!**

**Do you have an idea for a future newsletter? Email us at**

**[autismprogram@bmc.org](mailto:autismprogram@bmc.org)**

**with suggestions.**