Kindergarten is the first year of formal school for most children in the United States. In kindergarten, hands-on learning activities help prepare youngsters for the challenges that lie ahead. Parents can prepare themselves and their children in various ways for a smooth and positive transition to kindergarten.

How can I help my child prepare?

- **Babies are born ready to learn.** Parents and families can help children make the most of these important early learning years. Up to age 5, children’s brains are growing at a dazzling pace! Contributions made to learning in those years will last a lifetime. The most important things families can do are to talk and read to their children from the day they are born. When reading or talking to your child, ask questions and explain things. Conversations and books can teach more than just how to recognize words. They can build important critical thinking skills.

- **Establish routines.** At least a month before school starts, begin to set firm mealtime and bedtime schedules. Schedule daytime activities as well, like watching TV, playing, and doing chores. Get your child used to being on time and things happening on schedule. A good night’s sleep (10 - 12 hours) and a nutritious breakfast will help keep your child focused and learning. Place is also important. Set up a place where your child reads, paints, colors, and makes things. Put the backpack and school supplies in the same place to have them ready to go in the morning.

- **Talk about kindergarten.** Weeks before school starts, talk about kindergarten with your child. Listen to how he or she is feeling. Be reassuring and upbeat. Your enthusiasm and excitement about learning will set a powerful and positive tone.
From the Executive Director:

This time of year is when parents begin thinking about Fall activities, and we hope you will consider joining us for our fifth annual family fundraiser, “Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll”! This outdoors event is a great (and inclusive!) opportunity for family and friends to come together for a good cause. This year’s event will be held on Sunday, October 1st, from noon – 3pm at the Nature Trail on the grounds of the Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children (formerly Massachusetts Hospital School), 3 Randolph Street, Canton, MA.

Attendees will enjoy an afternoon of face painting, dancing, and craft activities, and we even have a troupe of “superheroes” who will join in the fun!. Bring a picnic lunch – the Federation will provide snacks, chips, drinks and treats. Beginning at 1:30pm, the group will enjoy a relaxing stroll through the hospital’s scenic walking trails.

This is a free event - there is no registration fee required. We do ask each walker to register through FirstGiving and pledge to raise $100; that’s just 10 friends who will each “sponsor” you as a walker at $10 each! Or put together a team of walkers, and enjoy the afternoon in the company of friends.

Join Federation staff and other families for a great day of activities, food, music, games and prizes (and of course the Walk!) all to support children with special needs and those who care for them. Visit www.fcsn.org/walk for more information - we hope to see you there!

Warmly,

Rich Robison
Executive Director,
Federation for Children with Special Needs

Join Our Work to Help Children with Special Needs:

Your generous support makes it possible for us to assist families across Massachusetts who struggle to find educational, health, and community resources for their children with special needs.

Would you like to help the Federation all year long? Join our monthly Sustainer program! Consider a monthly gift of $5, $10, $20, or more to provide ongoing support throughout the year.

fcsn.org/donate
Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Continued from page 1

Encourage independence and responsibility. Create opportunities for your child to make choices. Let him or her choose what to wear, where to play, or what friends or relatives to call. Encourage your child to take a bigger role in dressing him or herself. Support good health habits, such as washing hands, and covering nose and mouth to sneeze or cough.

Make school familiar. Take a field trip to the school, visit a classroom, and introduce your child to the teachers. Walk by the school during recess and watch the children play. Take your child to play on the playground when school is not in session.

How can I prepare?

Get an early start. Before your child turns 4, you should contact your local school to learn how and when to register, and what documents are required. A year may seem like a long time, but it will go by fast, and there will be a lot to learn and do. You will want to have plenty of time to learn about all the options and make the choice that’s best for your child.

Choose a kindergarten. Usually children go to kindergarten at a school in their home school district. If you live in a large district, there could be many choices. Not everyone gets their first choice, so it is important to learn how the selection process works. Massachusetts also has a “school choice” program that parents may wish to use to enroll their children in a different district’s kindergarten. To find a kindergarten in your area, call the superintendent of schools for your town.

Plan your schedule. Kindergarten can be half-day or full-day. Half-day kindergarten usually has both morning and afternoon sessions. Some districts only offer the required half-day of kindergarten. Some cities and towns offer a free full-day of kindergarten. Others offer an optional full-day program, but charge a fee for half of the day.

Gather the necessary documents. The list below shows some commonly required documents. Different districts have different requirements, so be sure to contact your local district to learn exactly which documents you must bring to registration. If your family lacks these documents because of homelessness or recent immigration, the school is legally required to enroll your child without them.

Proof of your child’s age. Most districts require a child’s birth certificate or a passport showing that he or she will be turning 5 before the school district’s cut off date.

Proof of guardianship if the responsible adult is not the child’s parent.

Proof or residency (where you actually live). Some possible examples are a copy of a deed or lease, a utility bill in your name, a valid photo ID card, recent W-2 form, payroll stub, and/or a bank or credit card statement.

Your child’s immunization record. Contact your child’s doctor for a copy of this record.

Proof of physical examination. If your child does not have a doctor, the school district will help you meet this requirement.

All children have a right to attend Kindergarten in Massachusetts.

School districts in Massachusetts must provide kindergarten for all five year old children whose families want to send them. A child does not have to already possess specific developmental, behavioral, social or academic skills to be enrolled in kindergarten. Children with physical, mental or any other kind of disability, hospitalized children, and children who are learning English for the first time cannot be denied enrollment based on those conditions.

Gather the necessary documents. The list below shows some commonly required documents. Different districts have different requirements, so be sure to contact your local district to learn exactly which documents you must bring to registration. If your family lacks these documents because of homelessness or recent immigration, the school is legally required to enroll your child without them.

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Education for All Abilities

Seven Hills Academy at Groton is a DESE-approved, private special education day program for children with complex medical and developmental disabilities whose learning needs cannot be met within a person-centered, interdisciplinary environment. Classes follow the MA curriculum frameworks with integrated arts and adaptive technology to encourage a multisensory, experiential appreciation for learning. Our highly qualified staff provides comprehensive medical health, medical, nursing, speech pathology, and individualized therapies. Assistive technology, wheelchairs, braces, and hand splints are all customized to fit as the children grow.

Hare your child grow with Seven Hills Academy at Groton! Call today: 978.732.5213.

22 Hillside Avenue, Groton, MA 01450 • 978.448.3388 • www.sevenhills.org
Introduction to Multicultural Services at FCSN

By Susan Ou, Chinese Community Outreach

Summer ends, school starts. As the parent of a child with special needs, you may switch your focus back to your child's school and supports. What about the parents who have linguistic or cultural barriers? The Federation for Children for Special Needs realizes their challenge and is proud to support them with bilingual staff members that have the capacity to serve families in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Vietnamese. In collaboration with community agencies, we have begun extending support to Arabic and Haitian families as well.

At the Federation, we have staff and volunteers available to answer questions from families of children with special needs about topics such as special education, post-secondary education, special health care needs, and community resources. When a culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) family calls, a bilingual outreach staff member will be the one who replies. We support families in several different ways:

1. We offer a base of resources and fundamental information to CLD families in their native language, including, for example, in-person training on “Basic Rights in Special Education” and “Transition”.
2. Families are often invited to participate in a language-specific support group. Currently, each staff member hosts or co-hosts at least one support group, most of which run monthly. In these groups, families receive training as well as social / emotional support.
3. In many cases, families receive one-on-one assistance as a short-term intervention. Our goal is to empower CLD families to be their child’s best advocate.

At our annual Visions of Community (VOC) Conference, we have special strands of workshops available for those who speak a language other than English. Each one of the topics is selected by our outreach staff, who tailor the sessions to meet their families’ needs. CLD families can also utilize VOC to network with others from their community.

Depending on the community, we use different media (for example: Facebook, Twitter, Wechat, as well as local TV and newspapers) to reach CLD families. We are also proud to announce that, in fall 2017, we will launch a new website with language-specific sections. Each language section has been created by outreach staff.

Beyond CLD families, outreach staff also provide support to professionals who service CLD families. We use “Cultural Broker” model to help professionals understand the culture of each community. If you have any questions about our multicultural services, please give us a call.

Multicultural Outreach Contacts at the Federation for Children with Special Needs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Outreach Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Valeska Toledo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vtoledo@fcsn.org">vtoledo@fcsn.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Oanh Bui</td>
<td><a href="mailto:obui@fcsn.org">obui@fcsn.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Susan Ou</td>
<td><a href="mailto:susanou@fcsn.org">susanou@fcsn.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Olga Lopez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:olopez@fcsn.org">olopez@fcsn.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reach us at:
(617) 236-7210
Cómo preparamos para el kindergarten

Los bebés nacen listos para aprender. Los padres y las familias pueden ayudar a sus hijos a aprovechar al máximo estos importantes años de aprendizaje temprano. Hasta los 5 años de edad, los cerebros de los niños se desarrollan con una rapidez increíble. Las contribuciones al aprendizaje en estos años duran para toda la vida. Lo más importante que las familias pueden hacer es hablarles y leerles a sus hijos desde el día en que nacen. Cuando le lea o hable a su niño, hágalo preguntas y ofrezca explicaciones. Con las conversaciones y los libros aprenderá mucho más que si sólo le enseña a reconocer palabras. Podrá desarrollar importantes habilidades de pensamiento crítico.

Establezca rutinas. Por lo menos un mes antes de que empiecen las clases, empiece a fijar horarios firmes para comer y acostarse a dormir. Programe también actividades durante el día como ver televisión, jugar y ayudar con los quehaceres domésticos. Acostumbre a su niño a hacer las cosas puntualmente y en el horario previsto. Dormir bien por la noche (de 10 a 12 horas) y comer un desayuno nutritivo le ayudará a concentrarse y aprender. El lugar también es importante. Establezca un sitio para que su niño lea, pinte, coloree y haga cosas. Ponga la mochila y los suministros escolares en el mismo lugar para tenerlos listos.

Hable con su niño sobre el kindergarten. Unas semanas antes de que empiecen las clases, hable acerca del kindergarten con su hija o hijo. Preste atención a cómo se siente. Hábale con palabras tranquilizadoras y optimistas. Su ánimo y entusiasmo por el aprendizaje establecerán un tono energético y positivo.

Promueva la independencia y la responsabilidad. Ofrezca oportunidades para que su niño pueda elegir. Deje que decida qué ponerse, dónde jugar o a qué amigos o parientes llamar. Anímelo a que asuma un papel mayor al vestirse. Promueva hábitos saludables, como lavarse las manos y taparse la nariz y la boca al estornudar o toser.

Familiarícese a su niño con la escuela. Visiten la escuela y las aulas y preséntele a su niño a los maestros. Caminen por la escuela durante el recreo y observen cómo juegan los demás niños. Lívele a su hija o hijo a jugar al patio escolar fuera del horario de clases.

¿Cómo puedo prepararme?

Empiece temprano. Antes de que su niño cumpla cuatro años, llame a su escuela para saber cómo y cuándo registrarse y qué documentación necesitarán. Un año puede parecer mucho tiempo, pero se pasará rápido y habrá mucho para aprender y hacer. Deje suficiente tiempo para enterarse de las diferentes opciones y escoger las mejores para su niño.

Elija un kindergarten. Los niños generalmente van al kindergarten de una escuela de su distrito. Si ustedes viven en un distrito grande, tal vez tengan muchas opciones. Como no todos consiguen la primera elección de escuela, es importante aprender cómo es el proceso de selección. Massachusetts tiene un programa de “elección de escuela” que permite inscribir a los hijos en un kindergarten de un distrito diferente. Para encontrar uno en su zona, llame al superintendente escolar de su ciudad.

Planifique el horario. El kindergarten puede ser de medio día o de día completo. Los de medio día suelen tener sesiones de mañana y de tarde. Algunos distritos ofrecen sólo el medio día requerido mientras que otros ofrecen en forma gratuita programas de un día entero. Algunos tienen un programa opcional de día completo, pero cobran por la segunda mitad del día.

Reúna los documentos necesarios. La siguiente lista muestra algunos de los documentos comúnmente requeridos. Cada distrito tiene requisitos diferentes, así que llame al suyo para saber exactamente qué documentos debe traer para inscribir a su niño. Si su familia no los tiene por falta de vivienda o por haber inmigrado recientemente, la escuela tiene la obligación legal de inscribir a su hija o hijo sin esta documentación.

Prueba de la edad del niño. la mayoría de los distritos

En Massachusetts, todos los niños tienen derecho a asistir a un kindergarten.

Los distritos escolares de Massachusetts tienen que ofrecerles kindergarten a todos los niños de cinco años de edad cuyas familias deseen enviarlos allí. El niño no necesita habilidades específicas de desarrollo, conducta, sociales o académicas para poder inscribirlo en un kindergarten. No se les puede negar la inscripción a un niño por tener discapacidades físicas, mentales o de otro tipo, ni por estar hospitalizado o estar aprendiendo inglés.
Multicultural Family Support Groups

The Federation for Children with Special Needs is proud to introduce a Newsline section especially for Culturally Linguistically Diverse families. This month, we would like to make readers aware of multicultural support group offerings.

Portuguese:

Temos disponível vários grupos de apoio em colaboração:

Grupo de Apoio para Pais de Crianças com Autismo
Última segunda-feira do mês
Autism Alliance of MetroWest
Framingham, MA
Contato: Jessica da Silva
(508) 782-0016

Grupo de Apoio para Pais de Crianças Especiais
Segunda quarta-feira do mês,
ligue pra mais informações
New Life Church
Framingham, MA
Contato: Claudia Basilio
(508) 533-4213

Grupo de Apoio para Pais de Crianças Especiais
Ligue pra mais informações
Arc of Brockton
Brockton, MA
Contato: Maria Eugenia da Silva
(508) 583-8030 ext: 223

Spanish:

Grupo de Apoyo para Padres de Familia:

FIUPEDS: Este grupo de apoyo creado para apoyara los padres de familia con niños con Syndrome de Down.
Días: Primer Sabado de cada mes
Hora: 10:00am - 12:00pm
Lugar: Northeastern University, Boston

CATCH: Grupo de apoyo para padres de familia con niños con condiciones medicas muy compejas.
Días: Tercer Jueves de cada mes
Hora: 10:00am - 12:00pm
Lugar: 10 Gove Street, Third floor, Boston
Numero telefónico: (617) 568-4477

CENTRO:
Días: Segundo Jueves de cada mes
Hora: 10:00am - 12:00pm
Lugar: 11 Sycamore St., Worcester
Numero telefónico: (508) 798-1908

Children’s Hospital: Este grupo de apoyo trabaja con las familias hispanas que reciben asistencia medica a en el Children’s Hospital.
Días: Primer Jueves de cada mes
Hora: 10:00am - 12:00pm
Lugar: 1300 Longwood Avenue, Boston

@FCSNEspanol
@grupodeapoiodafederacao
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<td>Boston, MA 02111</td>
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<td>Susan Ou: 617-399-8358</td>
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<td>提供晚餐與托兒</td>
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<td>中部、北部地區家長支援小組</td>
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<td>Lexington, MA 02420</td>
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<td>Susan Ou: 617-399-8358</td>
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**Fall 2017 Seminars FOR Families & Professionals**

**October 3** - Framingham, MA for CFPs and CPAs - **Special Needs Briefing**. Earn 3 CE credits

**October 28** - Marlborough, MA, for families and trustees - **How to Administer a Special Needs Trust**

Seminars are led by Frederick M. Misilo, Jr., Esq. and the Fletcher Tilton Special Needs Team.

Visit [FletcherTilton.com/seminars-events](https://www.fletcherilton.com/seminars-events) for details, more seminars, and to register. Or call Celia at 508.459.8095.

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@federationforchildren

Nhóm hỗ trợ phụ huynh - Vòng Tay Cha Mẹ Việt

Thời gian:
Tối thứ ba tuần thứ ba mỗi tháng từ 6 giờ chiều - 8 giờ tối.
Địa điểm: Dorchester House
1353 Dorchester Ave, Dorchester, MA
Phụ huynh có thể liên hệ với Oanh để có thể chi tiết về nhóm sinh hoạt hàng tháng theo số điện thoại: (617) 399-8328

Thời gian:
Sáng thứ 4 tuần thứ nhất mỗi tháng từ 10 giờ sáng - 12 giờ trưa.
Địa điểm: the Home for Little Wanderers
45 Deerfield street, Dorchester, MA
Để có thêm chi tiết về nhóm này, Phụ huynh có thể liên hệ với Chị Trúc Phương: 857-294-1135

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Nhóm hổ trợ phụ huynh - Vòng Tay Cha Mẹ Việt

Thời gian:
Tối thứ ba tuần thứ ba mỗi tháng từ 6 giờ chiều - 8 giờ tối.
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Vào trang web này để có thêm tài liệu bằng tiếng việt:
[https://issuu.com/vongtaychameviet](https://issuu.com/vongtaychameviet)
Cómo prepararse para el kindergarten (Cont’d)

Continued from page 5

requieren la partida de nacimiento o el pasaporte del niño para comprobar que cumplirá 5 años para la fecha límite establecida.

Prueba de la custodia legal si el adulto responsable no es el padre o la madre del niño, se requiere prueba de la custodia legal.

Prueba de domicilio Algunos comprobantes aceptados son: copia del título de propiedad o contrato de alquiler de la vivienda, factura de servicios públicos a su nombre, tarjeta de identificación válida con foto, formulario W-2 reciente, talón del cheque de pago o estado de cuenta bancario o de una tarjeta de crédito.

Registro de vacunación del niño. Llame al consultorio del médico de su niño para obtener una copia.

Prueba de examen físico. Si su niño no tiene médico, el distrito escolar le ayudará a cumplir con este requisito.

Preparando-se para o Jardim de Infância

Ha escrito por Janet R. Vohs | atualizado por Janet Sauer, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Lesley University

O jardim de infância é o primeiro ano da escola formal para muitas crianças nos Estados Unidos. No jardim de infância, atividades práticas ajudam a preparar os jovens para os desafios que tiverem pela frente. Os pais podem preparar a si próprios e aos seus filhos de várias maneiras para uma transição suave e positiva para o jardim de infância.

Como posso ajudar a preparar o meu filho?

Os bebês nascem prontos para aprender. Os pais e as famílias podem ajudar as crianças a tirar o maior proveito destes primeiros anos de aprendizado. Até a idade de 5 anos, o cérebro das crianças está crescendo em um ritmo estonteante! As contribuições feitas para o aprendizado neste período durarão por toda uma vida. A coisa mais importante que as famílias podem fazer é conversar e ler para as suas crianças desde o dia de seu nascimento. Quando estiver lendo ou conversando com a sua criança, faça perguntas e explique as coisas. Conversas e livros podem ensinar mais do que apenas a forma de reconhecer paravras. Podem construir importantes habilidades de pensamento crítico.

Estabeleça rotinas. Pelo menos um mês antes do início da escola, comece a programar os horários das refeições e de ir para a cama. Programe também as atividades do dia, como assistir a TV, brincar, e fazer as tarefas. Acostume o seu filho a estar sempre no horário e a coisas acontecendo dentro do programa. Uma boa noite de sono (10 - 12 horas) é de grande importância. Converse sobre o jardim de infância. Semanas antes da escola começar, converse com seu filho sobre o jardim de infância. Ouça como ele ou ela está se sentindo. Seja reconfortante e otimista. O seu entusiasmo e emoção sobre o aprendizado irá definir um tom forte e positivo.

Encourage independência e responsabilidade. Crie oportunidades para que o seu filho faça escolhas. Deixe que ele ou ela escolha o que vestir, onde brincar, ou que amigos ou parentes chamar. Encourage o seu filho a ter um papel importante na hora de se vestir. Apoie bons hábitos de saúde, tais como lavar as mãos, e cobrir o nariz e a boca para espirrar ou tossir.

Faça da escola um local familiar. Faça um passeio até a escola, visite uma sala de aula, e apresente o seu filho para os professores. Caminhe pela escola durante o recreio e veja as crianças brincarem. Leve seu filho para brincar no parquinho, quando a escola não estiver em aula.

Como posso me preparar?

Comece logo. Antes do seu filho completar 4 anos, você deveria entrar em contato com a sua escola local para aprender como e quando fazer a inscrição, e quais são os documentos exigidos. Um ano pode parecer um longo tempo, mas passará depressa, e haverá muita coisa para aprender e fazer. Você vai querer ter tempo suficiente para aprender sobre todas as opções que são melhores para o seu filho.

Todas as crianças têm o direito de frequentar o Jardim de Infância em Massachusetts.

Os distritos escolares em Massachusetts devem fornecer jardim de infância para todas as crianças de cinco anos de idade, cujas famílias desejem enviá-los. Uma criança não tem que já possuir habilidades de desenvolvimento, comportamentais, sociais ou acadêmicas específicas para ser matriculada no jardim de infância. As crianças com deficiência física, mental ou de qualquer outro tipo, crianças hospitalizadas, e crianças que estão aprendendo inglês pela primeira vez, não podem ser negadas a matrícula baseadas nestas condições.
Preparando-se para o Jardim de Infância (Cont’d)

Continued from page 8

Escolha um jardim de infância. Geralmente as crianças vão para um jardim de infância no seu distrito escolar. Se você vive em um grande distrito, poderão haver várias escolhas. Nem todo mundo consegue obter a sua primeira escolha, por isso é importante aprender como o processo de seleção funciona. Massachusetts também tem um programa de "escolha de escola" que os pais poderão querer usar para matricular seus filhos em um jardim de infância, em um distrito diferente. Para encontrar um jardim de infância em sua área, entre em contato com o supervisor das escolas de sua cidade.

Planeje sua agenda. O jardim de infância pode durar meio dia ou dia inteiro. O jardim de infância de meio dia geralmente tem tanto no período da manhã como o da tarde. Alguns distritos somente oferecem o jardim de infância exigido de meio período. Algumas cidades e bairros oferecem um jardim gratuito de período integral. Outros oferecem um programa de período integral, mas cobram uma taxa para metade do dia.

Junte os documentos necessários. A lista abaixo mostra alguns dos documentos normalmente exigidos. Distritos diferentes têm exigências diferentes, por isso assegure-se de entrar em contato com o seu distrito local para aprender exatamente quais os documentos você tem que trazer para fazer a matrícula. Se a sua família não tem estes documentos por causa da falta de moradia ou de imigração recente, a escola está obrigada legalmente a matricular o seu filho sem estes documentos.

Prova da idade do seu filho. Muitos distritos exigem a certidão de nascimento ou um passaporte da criança mostrando que ele ou ela vai fazer 5 anos, antes da data limite do distrito escolar.

Prova de tutela se o adulto responsável não for o pai ou a mãe da criança.

Prova de residência (onde você mora atualmente). Alguns dos exemplos possíveis são uma cópia de escritura ou contrato de locação, uma conta de serviço de utilidade pública em seu nome, uma carteira de identificação válida com fotografia, formulário W-2 recente, topo de folha de pagamento, e/ou um extrato bancário ou cartão de crédito.

Certificado de imunização de seu filho. Entre em contato com o médico de seu filho para uma cópia deste certificado.

Prova de exame médico. Se o seu filho não tiver um médico, distrito escolar irá ajudá-lo a atender a esta exigência.
Care for the Caregiver – A message from Family TIES of Massachusetts

By Laura Noble, Project Director, Family TIES of Massachusetts

Family TIES of Massachusetts is a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, in collaboration with and funded by the Department of Public Health. We are a statewide information, referral, and parent-to-parent matching program for families and professionals caring for children with special health needs, chronic illness, or disability.

In today’s fast-paced world, all parents struggle to meet the needs of their families while balancing their own personal needs. We have all heard about the importance of taking care of ourselves so we can care for our families. It is critical for good health and quality of life.

If you are the parent of a child with special health needs (CSHN), you may think it is impossible to find time to take care of yourself. Family TIES receives many calls from parents of children with complex medical needs who are stressed out or burned out! Our Regional Coordinators make every effort to find resources and supports that will enhance the quality of life for CSHNs and their families. While this is an important part of our work, we are also committed to providing emotional support. The staff members at Family TIES are all parents of children with complex medical needs or disability, and many callers find comfort in sharing their stories with our staff. Sometimes, this is just enough to help a parent or family member get through a rough period.

For parents who need more assistance, Family TIES offers the Parent-to-Parent Program (P2P). Through the P2P Program, a parent needing emotional support or information can speak with another parent who has a child with a similar diagnosis or life situation.

Call us today!
Family TIES of Massachusetts: 1-800-905-TIES
www.massfamilyties.org

A Project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
When you’re a caregiver for a child with special health care needs, or special needs of any kind, you have a lot on your mind. You are focused on making sure that your child is receiving the care that they need. You may be advocating for their education, advocating for their mental health care needs, addressing medical or behavioral issues or any combination of the above. Sometimes, you may just be trying to make it through the day. Preparing for an emergency of any kind, be it a fire, natural disaster or an active shooter situation may never have entered your mind.

September is National Preparedness Month. Won’t you take a moment to think about your family’s specific needs should an emergency happen? It can be something as basic as practicing a fire drill in your home or apartment. Perhaps you might want to put together a “preparedness kit.” What should be included in your family’s kit? FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has put together a list that can be found at https://www.ready.gov/kit. Sometimes, it can take the government 3 days to activate emergency help, depending upon the emergency, so they suggest individuals plan accordingly and pack supplies for 3 days.

No one can prepare for every emergency, but creating a plan is a great place to start. Plans can help people to feel prepared and to decrease uncertainty. If your child is on an IEP, you can ask for emergency preparedness to be addressed as a safety goal. If there was an emergency at your child’s school, would you know what the protocol is? It’s a great conversation to have with your Team and to work towards ensuring a plan is put in place. Do you have a child who is over 22? Safety and preparedness are lifelong concerns. You can also bring up safety goals and preparedness at your child’s IEP meeting.

The Red Cross has an online resource entitled, “Preparing for Disaster for People with Special Needs” available at http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities. It’s a great resource to share with providers and people involved in your child’s care. Another thing that you can do is to bring a current picture of your child each year to your police/fire station. You can have a conversation with them about your child’s specific needs in case of an emergency. Some stations have forms you can fill out with information specific to that child. They can type it in directly into their computer so that if they are dispatched to your residence, they will be better prepared to meet your loved one’s needs.

There are also apps for cell phones where you can list the same information. One free app is called ICE (In Case of Emergency) where you can enter information in case of an emergency. The goal is to increase the safety of your loved one during an emergency by including their medical background and needs. If you’ve read this article all of the way through, I hope you will have been motivated to take steps to make your family more safe and to better prepared in case of an emergency!

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Whether you are at home or at work, grab a sandwich and a drink and join us for a discussion on the topic of Emergency Preparedness and what it means for your family. September is Emergency Preparedness Month. We know that families are busy with the start of the school year or simply the hustle and bustle of the day to day. Please take 30 minutes of your lunchtime break to spend with us, to hear from an expert, to de-mystify emergency preparedness and empower you to take first steps towards preparedness!
A Higher Level of Advocacy

By Leslie M. Leslie, MassPAC Project Director

When I first met Lisa Nelson, I could tell she had that “drive”, that she was someone who would make a difference. Seeing her July testimony at the Massachusetts Statehouse in support of proposed dyslexia legislation confirmed my instinct. Not only did Lisa testify before the panel, she also stood in the back of the room quietly encouraging others to step forward. In fact, a room full of professionals, educators, parents and students gave testimony for over 4 hours to encourage the adoption of legislation for the early screening for dyslexia. The conviction of the need for change was strong in that hearing room, and Lisa was smiling.

Lisa was recently selected by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women as a 2017 Unsung Heroine for her outreach and advocacy efforts on behalf of individuals living with dyslexia. In his nomination of Lisa for the award, State Senator Michael Moore said, “Lisa is an energetic, engaged citizen... instead of sitting idly by, she has sprung to action to spread awareness and to propose public policy changes…”

What causes some individuals to rise to a higher level of advocacy, to find the time and energy to take on a cause? Parents of children with special needs face daily challenges, often spanning both work and home life. Yet some parents are stepping forward – serving as SEPAC officers, running for School Committee, or even championing legislation. They have decided that there is a need for change. Lisa co-founded Decoding Dyslexia Massachusetts as part of a national network of grassroots groups in all 50 states.

http://www.decodingdyslexiama.org/our-blog

Lisa, thanks for your advocacy and inspiring example. Congratulations and well done.
The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study: A Hidden Public Health Crisis

By Janie Crecco, MA, MSEd, Training and Support Specialist, RTSC

It has been almost 20 years since Vincent J. Felitti, MD and Robert Anda, MD published the results of their Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. The research began as an obesity study, but has toppled our long-held ideas about long-term health outcomes and the root of challenging behaviors in children and adults. The ACE Study was conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997, with two waves of data collection. Over 17,000 Health Maintenance Organization members from Southern California receiving physical exams completed confidential surveys regarding their childhood experiences and current health status and behaviors.

The results of the study shed a new light not only on entrenched issues regarding obesity, but around many other health outcomes as well. In a nutshell, the HMO members were asked 10 questions about their adverse experiences as young children, including three types of abuse (sexual, verbal and physical), and five types of family dysfunction (a parent who’s mentally ill or struggles with alcoholism, a mother who’s a domestic violence victim, a family member who’s been incarcerated, or the loss of a parent through divorce or abandonment). Dr. Felitti later added emotional and physical neglect, for a total of 10 types of adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs.

The most jaw-dropping finding of the study was how common ACEs are: almost two-thirds of study participants reported at least one ACE, and more than one in five reported three or more ACEs. The “ACE score”, the total number of ACEs on an individual’s questionnaire, is used to assess cumulative childhood stress. Study findings repeatedly reveal a “graded dose-response relationship between ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes across the life course”. Essentially, this means that as the “dose” of stressors increases, so does the intensity of negative outcomes.

Here are some potential risks that increase with a higher ACE score:

- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Risk for sexual violence
- Poor academic achievement

This list is not exhaustive. As research continues on the subject of developmental trauma, including advances that enable us to measure changes to developing neurology, we will be able to better understand the enormity of this public health crisis. The newest ACE Study questions include exposure to such events as: witnessing violence other than a mother being abused; experiencing discrimination based on race or ethnicity; feeling unsafe in your neighborhood or not trusting your neighbors, and bullying.

The ages-old theories about challenging behaviors being willful, deliberate, manipulative are being tossed to the wind,

Continues on page 14
The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (Cont’d)

Continued from page 13

punishment. Developing neurology, it seems, is extremely vulnerable to adverse experiences and not easily reparable. Hence, the new education laws are beginning to focus on social-emotional learning, school climate, trauma sensitive schools, safe and supportive environments, and skill-building rather than relying on punitive negative consequences. In essence, this is a major paradigm shift.

Do you know your own ACE Score? Answer the original 10 questions -- each “yes” equals 1 ACE.

http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/03/02/387007941/take-the-ace-quiz-and-learn-what-it-does-and-doesn't-mean
It’s that time of year again! School has started, and parents and students are navigating the new year’s challenges. The transition team at The LINK Center would like to remind parents and families of the importance of student involvement in the IEP process, especially for transition age youth (age 14 to 22). In Massachusetts, students aged 14 or older must be invited to attend all IEP meetings where the IEP Team discusses transition planning. Ideally, students will be involved in their IEP development and meetings as early as elementary school. Below we have collected some best practices and advantages to getting your student involved in their IEP.

Prepare students for the IEP meeting by helping them:

- Read and understand the IEP language
- Understand progress made on goals
- Understand why some goals may not have been met
- Understand their disability and how it will impact their transition to adult life
- Know their personal strengths and challenges
- Know their preferences and dislikes
- Advocate for needed accommodations
- Voice their vision for life after high school (future goals for employment, education, and independent living)

Students of all abilities can participate in the IEP meeting and some are even able to take a leadership role. Here are some ways a student can take charge:

- Decide who they would like to invite to the IEP meeting
- Create the invitation to the IEP
- Deliver the IEP invitations
- Prepare food or coffee for the meeting
- Attend the meeting
- Keep track of time
- Take meeting notes
- Introduce the attendees at the meeting
- Develop IEP goals and identify needed services
- Identify their postsecondary goals regarding education, employment, and independent living
- Advocate for supports and accommodations

Self-determination is an important skill for young adults of all abilities, and full participation in the IEP process can help students feel empowered and independent. Benefits from involvement in the IEP process include:

- Learning to self-advocate
- Learning how and when to self-disclose
- Experiencing empowerment and leadership
- Ownership of their goals and motivation to achieve them
- Understanding their rights under IDEA and state education laws
- Increasing self-awareness of strengths, preferences, interests, and needs

There are many more ways in which a student can participate in an IEP meeting. Considering their strengths and interests and offering choices on how they can participate may increase their motivation to attend and be an active member of the IEP Team. The most important thing is to get them participating and being active in their educational decision-making process in any way possible.
Make a difference for children with special needs: WALK WITH US!

October 1, 2017
12pm-3pm

Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children Canton, MA

fcsn.org/walk