



AUTISM ALLIANCE

Empowering Families for 30 Years

a program of  Advocates

April Newsletter

Autism Welcoming Initiative



Autism Alliance's Autism Welcoming initiative is teaching businesses how to accommodate individuals and families with special needs. ***In John Laidler's article in The Boston Globe***, we learn, "The Alliance's co-directors, Allison Daigle and Pamela McKillop, said they created the initiative to help relieve the stress families face visiting a public place with an autistic child." The article profiles a family that has benefited from Autism Welcoming businesses and describes some of the locations that have received training. [**TO READ FULL STORY**](#)

GlobeLocal



YOU'RE WELCOME

Autism Alliance is teaching restaurants and other places how to accommodate families with special needs children.



**30th Anniversary
Family Special Event**



*30th Anniversary Celebration
"Teddy Bear Picnic"
Family Event*



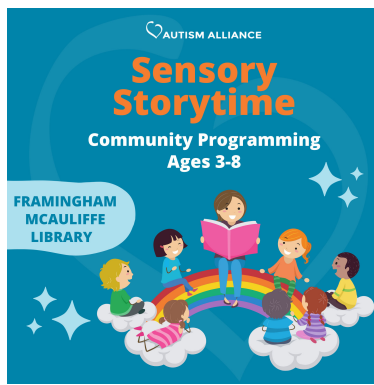
AUTISM ALLIANCE
Empowering Families for 30 Years

Autism Alliance 30th Anniversary Celebration "Teddy Bear Picnic" Family Event
Saturday April 22
6:00pm to 8:00pm
Discovery Museum Acton

Autism Alliance families are invited to join us for our 30th Anniversary Celebration at the Discovery Museum in Acton. **Bring** your favorite teddy bear or stuffed animal, a brown-bag dinner and enjoy a picnic with your family and we will do the rest. This is an Autism Alliance **EXCLUSIVE** sensory-friendly event, and we will have the entire museum to explore including discovery woods. We have some fun surprises including **FREE raffles, special** goodies and much more. Let's celebrate 30 years of creating our beautiful autism community together!! **Must register.**

[Register](#)

April Vacation Programs



Neurodiverse Storytime | Framingham McAuliffe Library
Saturday April 15
10:00am-11:00am
Ages 3-8

In partnership with the [McAuliffe Library](#), the Autism Alliance presents STORYTIME for neurodiverse children - Autism Specialist Katie Casavant will be onsite to help support parents and children at this fun FREE sensory-friendly program. **Registration is required by calling 508-532-5636 X4.** Hope to see you there!!



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND
Jam Time EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE Sensory Play
Tuesday April 18
8:30am - 10:30am
Ages 12 and under

Natick Mall

We will have the entire indoor play center just for us, for an unforgettable fun-filled party! Kids can explore, jump, play, stim and have a wonderful time being themselves. We will have healthy snacks for your little ones.

Register



RESCHEDULED FROM FEBRUARY
LUSH In-store PRIVATE PARTY- EXCLUSIVE TEENS ONLY
Thursday April 20
9:30am - 11:00am
Ages 13-21

Natick Mall | Suite 11

Join us for our very first LUSH Party.

Celebrate in store with exclusive party favors and products handmade by you. What happens when you mix good times, great people, and gorgeous one-of-a-kind goodies? You get one spectacular day! Everyone will learn how to make-your-own bubble bar or bath bomb. This party will include a product making kit and exclusive party goodies. We have a limited number of slots, and you will be notified directly if you receive a slot. No drop-offs, please. An adult caregiver must stay with our teen guests.

Register

***NEW* Vacation Program for ages 3-10**



"Going to a Restaurant" ***Autism Welcoming Skill Building Series***



AUTISM ALLIANCE

Empowering Families for 30 Years



Autism

Welcoming

"Going to a Restaurant"
NEW Autism Welcoming Skill Building Series
Wednesday April 19th
12 noon
Ages 3-10

The Autism Alliance and our Autism Welcoming Partners Burtons Grill & Bar Shrewsbury are partnering together for our VERY FIRST "Going to a Restaurant" Skill Building Series. This will be a fun, sensory-friendly lunch for you and your little one with autism. The program was created so that you can introduce your child to some of the skills they can practice when they go to a restaurant. Kids will practice greetings as they enter the restaurant, ordering from a menu, waiting for the food to arrive and of course enjoying delicious dessert. Menus will be provided ahead of time. Slots are limited. You will be notified if you receive a slot. This program does not include siblings. It is **FREE** thanks to a generous grant for the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism.

Register

April Parent Clinic and Workshops



Kids, Overeating, and Obesity Prevention - Talk and Q&A with Pediatric Weight Specialist Dr. Reich Wednesday April 12 | Virtual 6:30pm - 7:30pm

Please join us for a drop in Zoom presentation and Q&A with Pediatric Obesity specialist Dr. Sarah H. Reich. Dr. Reich will provide an overview of eating, overeating, challenges with weight and psychiatric medications and ideas on weight gain/obesity prevention. The latest views and treatments will also be discussed. Not to be missed! Be sure to calendar this today. For more information click on zoom link.

Zoom Link



Autism Alliance Brain Chat featuring Coach Allison Marean Tuesday April 25 | Virtual 12:00 noon

Our virtual, monthly Brain Chat is for parents and caregivers who want more strategies and an opportunity to ask specific questions to expert Coach Allison H. Marean, M.Ed., CLY. from Successfully Social New England. This is a virtual community call that meets once a month for an hour is **FREE** and sponsored by the Autism Alliance. **It is an opportunity to ask questions**, be a part of our community and/or just listen and learn from others. After you sign up, a few days before the group you will receive the Zoom link.

Submit a question.



Applying for Housing
Tuesday April 25 | Virtual
6:30pm -8:00pm

This FREE workshop, presented by Cathy Boyle of [Autism Housing Pathways](#), will walk families through the range of affordable and subsidized housing options available to people with disabilities in Massachusetts. A strategy for completing a basic set of applications and tracking them over time is presented.

[Register](#)

April Support Groups



Autism Alliance support groups are for families who have children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our groups are a safe and relaxed space for parent and caregivers to feel more confident and less isolated. Click below for Zoom links.

Just for Dads
April 5

Parents of children
age 10 and under
April 26

Portuguese Speaking
April 24

NEW "Let's Build a Village" Self-Care group for MetroWest moms.

"Let's Build a Village" MetroWest Moms Self-care Group
12pm-1pm | Virtual
Thursday, May 18, June 15, and July 20

Our virtual, monthly "Let's Build a Village" program is for MetroWest moms who would like to grow their "village" by connecting with other moms. This program is fun, fabulous, and **free** and is sponsored by the Autism Alliance. It is an opportunity for moms of children with autism within the MetroWest area to bond with other moms by sharing laughs while lifting each other up. Moms, this is self-care at its very best and is just for YOU!! Our hope is that we can build our village and eventually meet as a group, in person.

[NEXT SELF-CARE GROUP Thursday May 18th Click on the link to register!](#)

Register

After School Club | ALL AGES & ABILITIES



Autism Alliance After School Club ~
Tuesday April 4, 11, 25 and May 2
4:00pm - 4:30pm | Virtual
All ages and siblings

Each week we meet virtually and will learn about some fantastic zoo critters and follow up with brainstorming and voting on what we would include in our own perfect zoo. Endless possibilities for all of us to use our imaginations and connect through our

common interest in animals. All ages, levels, and siblings are invited to participate. We would like to thank the [Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation](#) for sponsoring this program.

[Zoom Link](#)

Technology, Employment, Benefits & More



Technology Strategies for Communication and Behavior Support

Tuesday, April 18

9:00am - 10:30am EDT

[FREE to register Online.](#)

Presenters: Jill Eastman and Kelly Wanzer from the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston

Communication challenges can be a significant barrier in obtaining and maintaining employment for individuals with disabilities. Similarly, unwanted behaviors in the workplace can interfere with an individual's at-work success. However, identifying strategies to increase effective communication can facilitate both communicative and behavioral growth. But where should employment professionals start, and how can technology help? This session includes information on the relationship between communication and behavior, tech-based strategies to increase communication and behavioral success at work, tips for identifying replacement behaviors, and maintaining a person-centered approach while working with unwanted behaviors.



Disability Benefits and Transition Age Youth

Thursday May 4

3:00pm - 5:00pm | Training will be online.

[FREE to register Online.](#)

Who should attend:

If you work with or support a young person with a disability who is approaching the transition from school to adult life this training is for you. Family members, educators, adult service providers and service coordinators are all encouraged to attend.

Training Description:

This training provides information related to the significant benefit changes that young adults with disabilities need to understand as they approach adulthood including the mandatory Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Age 18 redetermination process, how adult benefits differ from childhood-related benefits under both Social Security programs, SSI and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and how changes to public health insurance can occur. There is a special emphasis on young adult-related programs and work incentives such as Section 301 (Continued Payment under a Vocational Rehabilitation Program or Similar Program), the Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE) for individuals 21 and younger on SSI, and how a PASS Plan can help young adults leverage financial resources to fund education that may give them a head start on their career goals.



Assistive Technology Fair - Metro Region

Monday May 8

1:00pm - 5:00pm

Boston Marriott Newton

2345 Commonwealth Ave., Newton, MA 02466

Participant Registration

Join us for an afternoon of visiting with Assistive Technology vendors in the ballroom, participating in demonstrations, attending presentations, and learning about new technology to support independence. Our goal is to provide resources, education, and technology to community members, including individuals with disabilities, family members, provider agency staff, state agency staff, and teachers.



AFAM's 18th Annual Autism Advocacy Day:

"Services and Supports Can't Wait-Systemic Change Now!"

Monday, May 8th

10:00 am - 11:00 am

The Great Hall | Massachusetts State House

New Direction Spelling Center

New Direction Spelling Center is thrilled to announce a private screening of SPELLERS the movie, inspired by the book Underestimated. SPELLERS is a transformational documentary detailing autistic non-Speakers and what happens once they are able to freely communicate. Come see for yourself the power of communication in opening the world of non-Speakers! Scan the QR Code to register for a free ticket on **Friday, April 28, at 6:30 pm, or Saturday, April 29, at 1 pm**. Bring your family and stay for a brief Q&A after the showing.

Link for Friday's showing - <https://kinema.com/events/spellers-kidbzy>

Link for Saturday's showing - <https://kinema.com/events/spellers-bxww94>

AN AUTISM REVOLUTION

SPELLERS

THE MOVIE

FRIDAY



4/28/23 6:30PM



SATURDAY

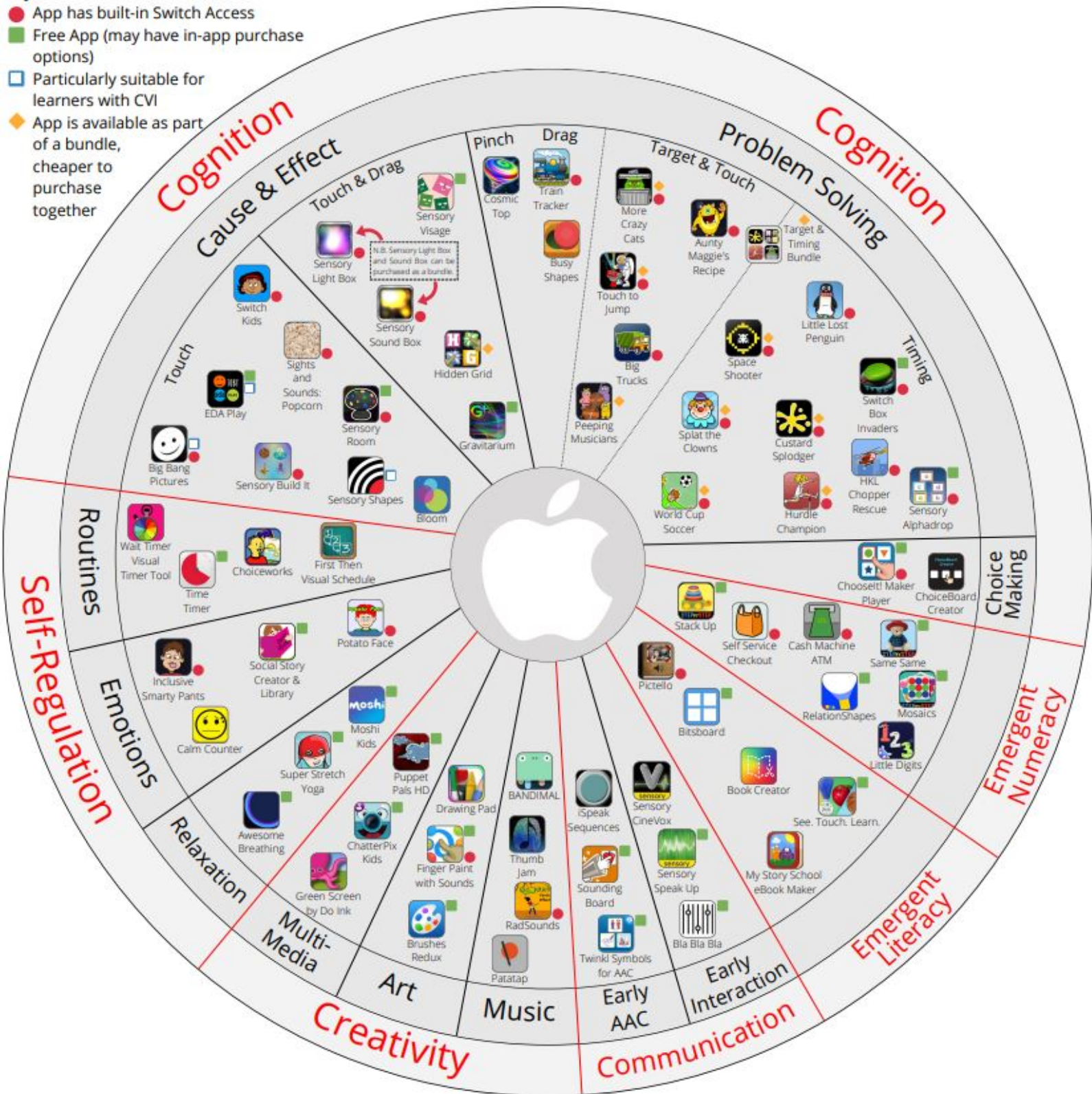
4/29/23 1:00PM

HOPKINTON HIGH SCHOOL
PRIVATE SCREENING OF THE MOVIE

iPad Apps for Learners with Complex Additional Support Needs

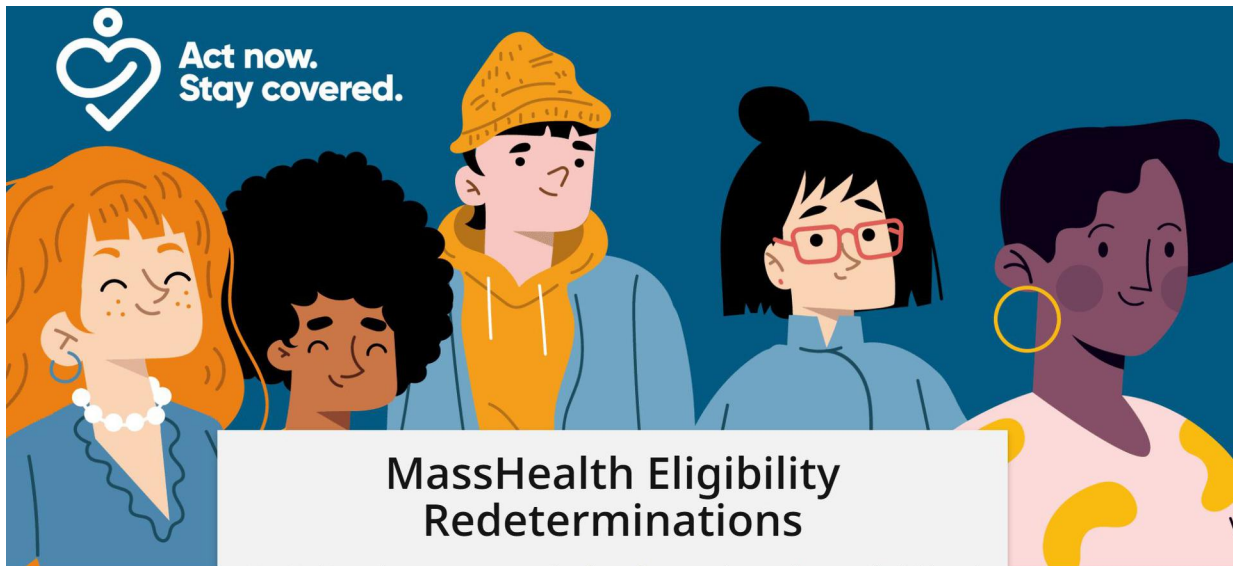
Key:


- App has built-in Switch Access
- Free App (may have in-app purchase options)
- Particularly suitable for learners with CVI
- ◆ App is available as part of a bundle, cheaper to purchase together



Download for FREE!

[HERE](#)



 **Act now.
Stay covered.**

MassHealth Eligibility Redeterminations

MassHealth needs to renew coverage for all members to make sure they are still eligible and receive the best benefit they qualify for

MassHealth Members! Due to the COVID-19 emergency, MassHealth has been maintaining your health coverage, but soon we will be returning to normal eligibility renewal processes. This means **we must renew all members** to make sure they still qualify for their current MassHealth coverage. Make sure to check all mail from MassHealth. You may need to take action to get the best benefit you qualify for. Here's what you can do now to make your renewal process easier.

[Learn More](#)

SafetyNet Federal Grants Available

The Framingham Police Dept. has received a federal grant for SafetyNet and will support any family in Framingham with a child at risk on the SafetyNet program at no cost. Other towns may also apply for grant. Click on the link to learn more.

[SafetyNet](#)

SafetyNet
Tracking Systems



Did you miss seeing one of our featured guest speakers? If so, click on the link and you will see the recordings on the Autism Alliance of MetroWest YouTube Channel.

YouTube

Please submit requests for accommodations, including ASL interpreters, at least 2 weeks prior to the event date to AutismAlliance@advocates.org or call (508) 652-9900

Connect With Us



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