

Family Support

Support Groups



The basic purpose of a support group is to provide support and companionship to parents with common interests and experiences. People who have been through, or are going through, a similar circumstance can do more than sympathize with you. They can relate to what you are feeling and ease the isolation and frustration you might sometimes feel. Many of the unique problems you seem to encounter daily are not so unique after all. A special needs or disability support group can also be a great place to find practical tips and resources. Solutions to difficult problems may arise as you listen to others.

It's not always easy to find the right support group. Each group has its own dynamics. There are support groups for almost any topic you can imagine. Some are specific to medical diagnosis; others may focus on better communication with schools or provide information about medical or therapeutic options. Once you find a group that you want to join, contact the leader and ask questions.

Support groups can meet anywhere, including the internet. If you cannot find a group that suits your needs, think about starting a new support group of your own. You do not need an agency or even an office to start a support group. You just need the inspiration and a few other people who want to share their experience and hopes. Contact your Family TIES Regional Coordinator for more information about support group resources.

Family TIES of Massachusetts provides information, referral, and parent to parent support for families of children with special health needs or disability and their professional partners. We also provide information about Early Intervention (EI) and maintain a complete list of EI Programs in Massachusetts.

The information provided on the back page of this sheet is not a complete list of the resources that may be available. For information about community based programs, resources and local support groups, please call your Regional Coordinator or our toll-free line 800-905-TIES (8437).

We publish an annual *Directory of Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Special Needs*. The Directory is always listed as the first place to look for resources on our Topic Sheets!

Call us if you would like a copy of the directory mailed to you. A pdf version of the directory is available to download on our website www.massfamilyties.org. You can also find the phone number for the Family TIES Regional Coordinator for your area on our website.



Information and Resources

Massachusetts Programs:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
<https://namimass.org/family-support/>
- Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC)
<https://www.mdsc.org/getinvolved/FindASupportGroup.cfm>
- Parent Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)
<http://ppal.net/find-help/support-groups>
- Sped Child Massachusetts
<http://www.spedchildmass.com/>

Statewide:

- Medway Special Education PAC Support Group List
<https://medwayspedpac.wordpress.com/support-groups/>

National:

- New Hampshire Family Voices – *Organizing and Maintaining a Support Group Guide*
<http://nhfv.org/publication/organizing-and-maintaining-a-support-group/>

Other:

- Family TIES 2019 Support Group Guide
<https://www.massfamilyties.org/information-resources/support-groups/>