



## MESSAGE TO FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

### An Important Message to Massachusetts Families with Children under Age 9 Diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder - August 2010

The Autism Division of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) started a model Program, called the Children's Autism Spectrum Disorders Home and Community Based Services Waiver Program in October 2007. This Waiver Program ends on September 30, 2010 and a new Renewal Autism Waiver Program replaces this program beginning on October 1, 2010. The Renewal Waiver Program will continue to provide one-to-one interventions to help children with autism who exhibit severe behavior, social and communication problems through a service called **Expanded Habilitation, Education** (Intensive In-Home Services and Supports, such as Applied Behavioral Analysis, Floor Time and Communication models). This service occurs in the child's home or other natural settings under the supervision of trained clinical staff. The waiver will also provide related support services such as community integration activities and respite.

The Renewal Waiver will continue to serve children up until their 9<sup>th</sup> birthday, with an autism spectrum disorder who meet the eligibility criteria for the Waiver Program. Shortly, the Autism Division will offer an opportunity to apply for the waiver through an open application period. The Autism Division staff anticipates that approximately 60 additional children may be eligible for the Program during the initial enrollment period that will last for approximately 12-18 months. After this period, the Department will do another open enrollment to ensure that this list stays current and allows newly diagnosed young children access to the Renewal Program.

A new element in the Renewal Program is the reserved capacity for children who are age 3 and transitioning out of Early Intervention. This means that the Autism Division reserves 10 statewide slots for children who are age 3. These children will still need to meet all relevant financial and clinical eligibility standards required for entry into the Program.

The Renewal Waiver allows children to receive Expanded Habilitation, Education, (Intensive In-Home Services and supports, such as ABA and Floor Time) for a total of 3 years. For children transitioning into the Renewal Waiver, the existing In-Home services and supports count toward the overall 3 year period. At the conclusion of the 3 years of the intensive In-Home services, a child may access ongoing Supplemental Services (respite and goods and services, etc.) that meet the child's needs and help with the transition out of the intensive Autism Waiver Program—until the child's 9<sup>th</sup> birthday.

All waiver services require that the child continues to meet the financial and clinical eligibility requirements for the Waiver Program.

In order to deliver these new services, under this Renewal Program the Autism Division will conduct an open application process to find eligible children across Massachusetts.

#### **This message is to notify you about the eligibility requirements for the Renewal Waiver Program:**

**Eligibility:** the following requirements are necessary for participation in this program:

1. The child must have a **confirmed diagnosis** of an Autism Spectrum Disorder, which includes Autistic Disorder, PDD-NOS, Rhetts's Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, and Asperger Syndrome subject to verification by the Department of Developmental Services.
2. The child has not yet reached his/her 9th birthday. Children birth through age 8 may participate.
3. The child is a resident of Massachusetts.
4. The child meets the level of care required for services in an Intermediate Care Facility for persons with Intellectual Disability (ICF/ID) as assessed by DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.
5. The family chooses to have the child receive services in the home and community.
6. The child must be able to be safely served in the community.

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7. The child must have a legally responsible representative able to direct the services and supports of the Waiver.
8. The child must be found by the MassHealth agency to be eligible for MassHealth Standard coverage, based on family income. For families who have not yet applied for MassHealth, this must be done at the time of the filing of the Waiver Program Eligibility Request Form.

Below is the maximum Income Guidelines for MassHealth Standard at 150% of Federal Poverty Level. In order to participate in the Renewal Program, your family income must fall below the levels on the list\*:

Family Size	150% Federal Poverty Level	
	Monthly	Yearly
1	\$1,354	\$16,248
2	\$1,822	\$21,864
3	\$2,289	\$27,468
4	\$2,757	\$33,084
5	\$3,224	\$38,688
6	\$3,692	\$44,304

\*If your child is under age one or has a specialized medical condition such as blindness, deafness or a debilitating chronic medical illness the standards are different from those listed above; please contact the Autism Division for clarification in these cases.

### How to Participate in the Eligibility Process:

#### 1. Get a copy of the Renewal Program Request Form

- a. Please contact your local Autism Support Center (listed below) to request the Application Form.
- b. The Autism Support Centers are available to help you complete Application Form.
- c. The Autism Division will post all forms on the DDS website:
  - [www.mass.gov/DDS](http://www.mass.gov/DDS) under 'Autism Spectrum Services'

#### 2. Complete the Renewal Program Application Form

To complete this Form you will need:

1. your child's date of birth
2. your child's social security number
3. your child's MassHealth ID number

#### 3. Submit the Renewal Program Eligibility Application Form **Between September 20th-October 1<sup>st</sup>.**

- All Applications Must have a Postmark or Date Stamp between September 20<sup>th</sup> – October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Autism Division will discard forms outside of this designated time period.
- Please complete the form in Pen and Print Clearly.
- Please Sign the Form in Pen.
- ONLY ONE APPLICATION PER CHILD—The Autism Division will discard multiple forms
- Please Mail Form (The Autism Division is not accepting hand delivered forms) to:

**AUTISM DIVISION of DDS**  
**Att. Renewal Program Application Form**  
**500 Harrison Avenue**

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**Boston, MA 02118**

It is a priority of the Autism Division of DDS to ensure that the process for requesting eligibility for the Autism Waiver Program is fully accessible to families and children with autism who are from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

The Autism Division of DDS has the family related Renewal Program Application Forms available in multiple languages. Please go to the DDS website or call one of the seven DDS funded Autism Support Centers for a copy in Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Khmer, Russian, Portuguese and Mandarin.

This Notice and other waiver information is available on the DDS web-site at [www.mass.gov/DDS](http://www.mass.gov/DDS) under 'Autism Spectrum Services' and at the DDS funded Autism Support Centers. For additional information about the Autism Waiver Program, call toll free at 1-(888)367-4435.

## **Listing of the Autism Support Centers:**

### **Autism Resource Center:**

71 Sterling Street, West Boylston, MA 01583  
#508-835-4278: Serving: Central, MA

### **Community Resources for People with Autism:**

116 Pleasant St. Easthampton, MA 01027  
#413-529-2428: Serving Western, MA

### **Community Autism Resources:**

33 James Reynolds Rd, Unit C, Swansea, MA 02777  
#508-379-0371: Serving Southeastern, MA

### **TILL and Boston Families for Autism:**

20 Eastbrook Rd. Dedham, MA 02026  
#781-302-4600 x 4661: Serving Greater Boston

### **The Family Autism Center:**

789 Clapboardtree Street, Westwood, MA 02090  
#781-762-4001, X. 395 Serving Norfolk County Area

### **NEARC: The Autism Support Center:**

6 Southside Road, Danvers, MA 01923  
#978-777-9135: Serving Northeastern, MA

### **Charles River Center:**

59 East Militia Heights Road, Needham, MA  
# 781-972-1048: Serving MetroWest