COMMUNITY RESOURCES

In order to best support our families, we have compiled a list of useful resources.
While not all resources may be applicable to you at this time, we hope they are helpful for the future.

Family Resources

Advocacy, counseling, support groups, respite care, service access resources, community supports, parent and family educational programs

- ASAH: https://www.asah.org
  - Advocacy assistance: https://www.asah.org/parents/
  - With a focus on the needs of students, ASAH works to foster partnerships between its members, local school districts and local communities. We know that these collaborations not only enhance the quality of education programs, they ensure that students with disabilities are served in the least restrictive setting, and have the greatest chance of returning students to public school settings. While providing information and referral to anyone seeking appropriate placement of individuals with special needs, ASAH also advocates directly for individuals with special needs and their families.
  - ASAH also promotes programs and policies that protect and enhance the well-being of individuals with disabilities and their families, especially those that impact or interface with their education.

- Autism Speaks: https://www.autismspeaks.org
  - Autism Speaks is dedicated to creating an inclusive world for all individuals with autism throughout their lifespan through advocacy, services, supports, research and innovation, and advances in care for autistic individuals and their families.
  - Autism Speaks has a full resource guide for a wide variety of topics as well as an Autism Response Team (ART), an information and referral support team who are specially trained to provide personalized information.

- Division of Developmental Disabilities: https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/about/division/
  - https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/assets/documents/quick-guide-for-families-english.pdf
  - The Supports Program and Community Care Program were developed by the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), which provides public funding for certain services that assist eligible New Jersey adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, age 21 and older, to live as independently as possible.
  - In the community, individuals have access to a wide array of services through a network of over 500 providers, along with service planning by independent Support Coordinators. Available services include assistive technology, behavioral supports, day programming, a variety of employment options, various therapies, transportation, and the option to self-direct both employees and support services, including classes in the community.

- The Arc of New Jersey - SSI and Medicaid for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwixvrrYxPH4AhVRj4kEHTteAukQFnoECAsQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.arcnj.org%2Ffile_download%2Fdf6e02f5-4c62-4772-ab96-15934338da6d&usg=AOvVaw2rwg2ZXP_dWDbd_IeS5mAZ
  - The Arc of New Jersey is the state's largest organization advocating for and serving children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The Arc of New Jersey is

an affiliated chapter of The Arc, and community-based services are available statewide through our strong network of Local County Chapters.
    - This downloadable document provides helpful information on the process of applying for SSI and Medicaid.

- Family Partners of Morris and Sussex Counties: https://familypartnersms.org
    - Family Partners of Morris and Sussex Counties is designed to facilitate the empowerment of parents and caregivers of children with emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges through a community-based, family centered, culturally competent system of support, education and advocacy. Family Support Organizations (FSO's) are family-run, county-based organizations that provide direct family-to-family peer support, education, advocacy and other services to family members of children with emotional and behavioral challenges.

- NJ Courts – Guardianship Support: https://www.njcourts.gov/courts/civil/guardianship.html?lang=eng
    - The New Jersey Judiciary has compiled helpful information on obtaining guardianship and, in their guardianship packet, recommends using an attorney to navigate the process: "The court system can be confusing and it is a good idea to get a lawyer if you can. The law, the proofs necessary to present your case, and the procedural rules governing cases in the Chancery Division, Probate Part are complex. . . . It is recommended that you make every effort to obtain the assistance of a lawyer. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you may contact the legal services program in your county to see if you qualify for free legal services. Their telephone number can be found online or in your local yellow pages under "Legal Aid" or 'Legal Services.'"

- POAC Autism Services: https://www.poac.net
    - POAC is an organization dedicated to helping children and adults with autism achieve their fullest potential by providing quality training, support and recreation. POAC provides training for parents and educators; recreational and support services to children and adults with autism and their families; and training for police and first responders which, we are proud to say, has saved the lives of children with autism all over New Jersey.
    - Additionally, POAC supports ongoing quality research and promotes legislative issues that impact those with autism and their families. POAC is meeting the needs of those with autism in a very real way every day.

- SPAN Parent Advocacy Network: https://spanadvocacy.org
    - SPAN is a non-profit organization designed to empower families to know their rights, access resources and information, secure appropriate resources, navigate education, health, and mental health systems, keep children in school and help prepare them for life after high school, connect with other parents who understand, start parent groups, and advocate for other children and families.

    - Mother's Together: https://www.ontheharddays.com
        - Mother's Together is an online global community created to support mothers of neurodivergent children. Their mission is to improve the mental health of their members through the formation of deep connections and true friendships in a judgment-free space.

Activities, Life Skills Practice, Learning Opportunities, and Outing Locations

Special needs-friendly outing locations, opportunities to practice life skills in the community, educational programs, activities

- Adventure Aquarium: https://www.adventureaquarium.com
  - Adventure Aquarium is home to more than 15,000 aquatic animals and offer once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to explore life underwater through up-close animal encounters, interactive touch exhibits, and the chance to see and learn about some of the ocean's rarest and most fascinating species. They have partnered with KultureCity (a non-profit dedicated to supporting individuals with sensory needs, providing a Sensory Inclusive Certification) to provide an inclusive and seamless experience for all guests for all events, Their Team Members are provided with continuous training and they offer guests sensory bags, weighted lap pads, headphone zones, designated quiet areas, and social stories, all for free.

- AMC Sensory Friendly: https://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films
  - AMC is a movie theatre chain offering new releases and special feature showings at their numerous locations. AMC is proud to partner with the Autism Society to offer unique movie showings where we turn the lights up and turn the sound down, so you can get up, dance, walk, shout or sing! Our Sensory Friendly Film program is available on the second and fourth Saturday (family-friendly) and Wednesday evenings (mature audiences) of every month. Please check your local theatre listings for specific showtimes.

- Bach to Rock: https://denville.b2rmusic.com
  - Bach to Rock in Denville is a music studio that provides individualized instruction utilizing a proprietary curriculum to teach children how to sing and play musical instruments. Bach to Rock believes learning to play music should be fun - it's called 'play' for a reason! Students are motivated to learn when they see early results and have an exciting, achievable goal. Introducing toddlers and very young children to music instruction, rhythm, and motion supports cognitive development, learning, and motor skills.

- Camp Fatima: https://campfatimanj.org
  - Camp Fatima of New Jersey provides free summer camp programs for children and adults with special needs. Their mission is to provide free, life enriching camp experiences for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Each summer Camp Fatima runs two week-long sleep-away camp sessions for children between the ages of 6 and 21, also offering four weekend sleep-away camp sessions for adults with disabilities, aged 23 and older, throughout the year. Through providing these programs, respite is also provided for their families and guardians.

- Camp Sunshine/Camp Snowflake: https://camp-sunshine.org
  - Camp Sunshine is a summer recreational program for children and young adults with multiple disabilities. Campers participate in daily Arts & Crafts and sports activities, go swimming twice during each day in their adapted, onsite heated swimming pool, and take field trips to places such as Liberty Science Center.
  - Camp Snowflake is similar to Camp Sunshine with its reliance on one-to-one attention and its adapted activities but meets once a week from September through April. Activities include arts & crafts activities, adapted games, and monthly trips to places such as the Bronx Zoo, local bowling alleys, movie theaters, Liberty Science Center, Van Saun Zoological Park, and Minor League Baseball Games.

- Chuck E. Cheese: https://www.chuckecheese.com/sensory-sensitive-sundays/

- Chuck E. Cheese is proud to support families who have children with autism and other special needs. Through their Sensory Sensitive Sundays program Chuck E. Cheese is able to offer families a quieter dining and entertainment environment, dimmed lighting, and a sensory-friendly arcade experience. Their sensory-friendly events also include a trained and caring staff to ensure each guest has a safe, fun-filled visit. Participating locations will open two hours early on the first Sunday of the month to offer a sensory-friendly experience for families.

- Danceworks: https://www.danceworksdenville.com
  - Danceworks offers several programs for children of all ages and abilities and offers quality dance education in a supportive and noncompetitive environment with a focus on teaching appreciation and enjoyment of the art of dance while creating a positive experience for students. For younger children, Wiggly Ones, Parent and Child, and Move and Groove programs are offered.

- Harbor Haven: https://www.harborhaven.com
  - Harbor Haven is a 7-week co-ed summer program for 3–15-year-olds with mild special needs. Their program is dedicated to the concept that all children benefit from the magic of summer activities, and they combine the most important elements of traditional summer activities with structured support, helping youngsters to maintain and expand social, educational and communication skills.

- Helping Horseshoe Therapeutic Riding Club: http://www.helpinghorseshoe.org
  - The Helping Horseshoe Therapeutic Riding Club provides exceptional, safe, fun, and educational Equine Assisted Activities to individuals of all ages and abilities with and without special needs.

- LEGOLAND Discovery Center: https://www.legolanddiscoverycenter.com/new-jersey/
  - LEGOLAND is an indoor LEGO playground, full of creativity, color, and playful learning. Families with children ages 3-10 can enjoy an interactive LEGO-themed ride, a workshop to learn build tips, and a 4D cinema where favorite LEGO® characters come to life. Explore MINILAND New Jersey, featuring local New Jersey/ NYC landmarks made from over a million bricks and get hands-on in LEGO®-themed build and play areas where kid's imaginations can explore endless possibilities.

- LifeTown: https://www.lifetown.com
  - LifeTown is a 53,000 square foot fully inclusive and accessible center where everyone celebrates and experiences life together. It offers a myriad of opportunities for recreation, education and therapeutic play aimed at providing a comprehensive slate of programming for individuals with special abilities and their families.

- MetLife Stadium: https://www.metlifestadium.com
  - MetLife Stadium is a multipurpose stadium which hosts football games, concerts, and other fun events. They have partnered with Kulture City in an effort to provide a more inclusive and comfortable experience for our guests with sensory processing needs. Their team members are trained and certified to recognize opportunities to assist these guests in their enjoyment of their events. They also offer sensory bags containing noise-cancelling headphones brought to you by Bose, fidget toys, and weighted lap pads among other resources for checkout at any Guest Service Booth or Concierge Desk located through the Stadium.

- NJ Bubble Parties: https://www.njbubbleparties.com/?page_id=4

- NJ Bubble Parties provides endless fun for everyone! All ages, cultures and languages recognize bubbles. They are instant reminders of a childhood, a playfulness and fun. Bubbles quite simply offer an easy opportunity to reach people, whatever age or ability. NJ Bubble Parties has a special program called "Sensory Bubble Blast" that offers a stimulating approach designed for those with special needs, seniors, and seniors dealing with dementia. With age-appropriate music, their bubble show is geared to encourage movement and interaction. Little bubbles, big bubbles, bouncing bubbles, smoke in bubbles and more. All leading to the grand finale, person in a bubble, the fun doesn't stop.

- Paper Mill Playhouse: http://papermill.org/access-for-all/autism-friendly-performances/
  - The Paper Mill Playhouse is a musical theatre which presents plays and musicals and offers educational programs. Autism-Friendly performances are theater experiences in which the environment and typical "rules of attendance" have been relaxed to accommodate individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities and the families and professional who support them. Learn more about our Autism-friendly accommodations below.

- Pathways for Exceptional Children: https://www.pathwayskids.org/about-pathways
  - Pathways for Exceptional Children understands that children struggle to succeed and feel included. Using a children-teaching-children model, Pathways empowers children of all abilities ages 3-21 to discover their passions, develop their strengths, and build the skills, not only to achieve their greatest potential and independence, but most importantly, a sense of value and belonging.

- Princeton Youth Ballet: https://princetonyouthballet.org/sensory-friendly/
  - The Princeton Youth Ballet offers sensory-friendly/relaxed performances in a welcoming and judgment-free atmosphere with moderated lighting and sound, alternative seating arrangements, and a pre-performance guide for audience members. A Q&A session and photo opportunities with selected characters follow each relaxed performance. For pre-performance information to help families and caretakers prepare for the whole experience, please email info@princetonyouthballet.org for materials.

- Prudential Center (specifically New Jersey Devils): https://www.prucenter.com
  - The Prudential Center is a multipurpose indoor arena that hosts sports teams, concerts, and family-friendly events. They have teamed up with KultureCity to provide a sensory-friendly and inclusive environment for guests with sensory issues. Sensory bags are available at Guest Services Centers for guests to utilize at all events. The New Jersey Devils pair with Autism Speaks and frequently host Autism Acceptance Nights.

- Rocking Horse Rehab: http://rockinghorserehab.com
  - The mission of Rocking Horse Rehab is to enhance the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and their families by offering innovative opportunities for clinical, educational, and social development. Their philosophy is to treat the "whole child" using the expertise of our specialized staff consisting of physical, speech, and occupational therapists, clinical social workers, and music therapists.

- Sensory One: https://sensoryone.com
  - Sensory One provides unique products, exceptional designs, high-quality materials, state-of-the-art technology, exacting standards, expert knowledge, and top-notch customer service to create

unparalleled experiences. Sensory One provides no-fee consulting to help families design and build sensory spaces based on each child's needs and also have a full catalog of products for purchase.

- Sensory TaeKwon-Do: https://www.sensorytaekwondo.com
  - Sensory Tae-Kwon-Do is a unique Therapeutic Martial Arts program for children on the spectrum, or with behavioral and/or learning disabilities. It is a breakthrough doctor supervised martial arts program custom-designed around each child's neurological requirements and needs. They offer services for children and adults with or without special needs and also host birthday parties.

- Sesame Place: https://sesameplace.com
  - Sesame Place is a mix of theme park and water rides, games, activities, and family-geared attractions. Sesame Place® has partnered with The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), a global leader in online training and certification programs, to become the first theme park in the world to be designated as a Certified Autism Center (CAC). Their goal to provide every family with an enjoyable and memorable visit to Sesame Place, and they are proud to offer specialized services to guests with autism and other special needs. Visit their site for a full Sensory Guide to prepare children and their families for a memorable and sensory-friendly visit.

- So I Heard Music: https://soiheardmusic.com
  - So I Heard Music's Board-Certified Music Therapists use research and experience to tailor exercises to each child's functional goals. Music Therapy is a fun, effective way to improve functional life skills through music making. It is an allied healthcare practice that can serve as an excellent complement to other traditional types of therapy, or a stand-alone therapy for people who need a more creative approach to pursuing non-musical goals.

- Soul Search Music Therapy: https://www.soulsearchmusictherapynj.com
  - Soul Search Records provides clinical and evidence-based music therapy services for both children and adults to improve quality of life. Our board-certified music therapists (MT-BC) serve an array of clinical populations. Through music therapy, clients work through music to improve verbal and nonverbal communication skills, foster social skill development, improve emotional expression, develop fine and gross motor skills, and more! Interventions are tailored to meet each individual's needs and data is collected to measure progress towards goals.

- Special Dragons Special Needs Karate: https://www.specialdragons.us
  - Adaptive Karate lessons for children with developmental and behavioral disabilities. Special Dragons adaptive karate uses special education teachers and black belts as instructors. The adaptive karate lessons focus on improving coordination, motor control, sensory integration, attention span, conditioning, and behavior management.

- Special Olympics New Jersey: https://www.sonj.org
  - The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

- The Center for Contemporary Arts: https://ccabedminster.org/create/teenkids-classes/
  - The Center for Contemporary offers mixed media and in-depth art classes for young artists ages 5 through teens in drawing, painting, and pottery. Children develop a solid foundation to expand upon as they progress and explore the principals of visual art, art historical periods and styles, and the work of well-known artists. Teachers provide frequent demonstrations and individual attention.

- The Growing Stage: https://growingstage.com/sensory-friendly-performances/
  - The Growing Stage strives to follow our mission of providing not just a moment, but lasting memories for the entire family. Therefore, our commitment is to create an environment that is accessible to all. Their Sensory Friendly Performances are theater experiences in which the environment and typical "rules of attendance" are relaxed. We strive to accommodate individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. A pre-visit social story and pre-show sensory seminar are provided and during the show lights are dimmed, attendees are able to bring in their own snacks and drinks, crowds are limited, designated quiet spaces are allotted, and the use of tablets and smartphones are permitted for communication purposes.

- TRYCAN Special Needs Community Programs:
  https://summitcommunityprograms.com/156/TryCAN-Special-Needs
  - TryCAN coordinates inclusive recreation and social development programs for children with special needs. Programs are taught by experienced coaches and instructors from the community. Skill-building sports programs are held a few weeks before start of each season to enable child (those interested) to try out for a particular sport. Programs include: yoga, cooking, baseball, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, football, tennis, martial arts, golf, learn-to-bike ride, gardening, social skills, reading, arts, and music.

- Unique Athletics Movie Night:
  https://www.bergen.org/cms/lib/NJ02213295/Centricity/Domain/121/MovieNight.pdf
  - Designed for ages 14+, Unique Athletics holds a social skills clinic for teens with special needs the first Friday of each month. Teens enjoy a movie, pizza, popcorn, a drink, and fun with friends while promoting age-appropriate social skills and interactions.

- Unique Athletics Special Needs Fitness Programs: https://www.uniqueathletics-sn.com
  - Unique Athletics provides fitness programs to children & adults with a variety of Special Needs such as Autism, Williams syndrome, ADHD, OCD, DMDD, Downs syndrome, Anxiety and so much more. We make every effort to provide unique opportunities to everyone.

- Union County Sensory Friendly Theatre: https://ucnj.org/sensory-friendly-theatre/
  - Presented by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Sensory Friendly Theatre (SFT) is a series of live performances specially designed and adapted for children with autism and similar sensory sensitivity. Sensory-friendly music, theater and dance performances are specially adapted for children and adults with autism and other sensory sensitivities. Implementing the supportive atmosphere is the organization Autism Friendly Spaces, which provides specialists to train staff and volunteers on working with children with autism and other special needs during Sensory Friendly Theatre performances, while providing comfort and help to families. The Freeholder Board is proud to support programs for adults and children of all abilities throughout the year.

Supplies and Food

Sites for yummy treats and toy ideas

- Fat Brain Toys: https://www.fatbraintoys.com/index.cfm
  - The mission of Fat Brain Toys is to enrich families and provide a "Smarter Way to Play" by inspiring creativity and sparking curiosity. They design and curate world-class toys and games, while providing an extraordinary customer experience. Their focus is to create a culture that revolves around a "family first" model and to facilitate an emotional transaction between giver and receiver.

- Focus Posters: https://focusposters.com
  - Focus Posters promotes lifelong confidence and independence through childhood task management. Their posters and card sets offer a wide variety of illustrations to help you create your child's own visual schedule for routines at home, in school, and for health. You can completely customize the posters and schedules with images of your child; all characters are customizable and hand-drawn by the Focus Posters artist. They believe in empowering children with resources to flourish, from the ground up.

- Fun & Function: https://funandfunction.com
  - The mission of Fun & Function is to empower different and create tools that help children thrive. Every item made is kid-friendly, affordable, and makes a real developmental and therapeutic difference in the lives of children.

- Mo'Pweeze Bakery: https://www.mopweezebakery.com
  - Mo'Pweeze Bakery is open 5 days per week and is 100% vegan, kosher, and also free of the Top 10 allergens (dairy, eggs, peanuts, gluten, soy, tree-nut, fish, shellfish, sesame, and mustard). They are also adept at creating special and custom blends for other dietary needs. They specialize in creating delicious plant-based foods that are even more delicious than the traditional.

Testing and Evaluations

Sites for additional testing, assessments, and comprehensive evaluations

- Children's Specialized Hospital: https://www.rwjbh.org/childrens-specialized-hospital/?utm_source=childrens-specialized.org&utm_campaign=rackspace&utm_medium=redirect
  - Children's Specialized Hospital, an RWJ Barnabas Health facility, is the nation's leading provider of inpatient and outpatient care for children from birth to 21 years of age facing special health challenges – from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities like brain and spinal cord injuries, to a full scope of developmental, behavioral, and mental health concerns. At 15 different New Jersey locations, our pediatric specialists partner with families to make our many innovative therapies and medical treatments more personalized and effective so each child can reach their full potential.

- Goryeb Children's Hospital: https://www.atlantichealth.org/locations/hospitals/goryeb-childrens-hospital.html

- Located on the campus of Morristown Medical Center and part of Atlantic Health System Children's Health, Goryeb Children's Hospital is a nonprofit, state-designated "Children's Hospital" – an earned recognition from New Jersey and the national Children's Hospital Association. With more than 250 community pediatricians on staff and more than 100 board-certified pediatric specialists, Goryeb is northern New Jersey's leading specialized pediatric hospital. To meet high demand, Goryeb Children's Hospital is currently expanding its pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) and adding inpatient beds. These spacious private patient suites will feature the latest equipment and rooming-in accommodations for parents, as well as a dedicated pharmacy for improved safety and quality of care.

Online Resources

Websites dedicated to education and strategies for at-home support and activities

- Busy Toddler: https://busytoddler.com
  - Website with tons of activity ideas and learning opportunities founded and run by Susie, an early childhood education expert and advocate. Susie also created a home preschool program, Playing Preschool, and wrote a no-fussing parenting book, Busy Toddler's Guide to Actual Parenting. Busy Toddler focuses on bringing hands-on, play-based learning back to families and the classroom.

- Kids Eat in Color: https://kidseatincolor.com
  - Website with articles, classes, recipes, strategies, and recommendations founded and run by Jennifer Anderson, a registered dietitian and mother. Kids Eat in Color® is committed to providing parents with the support and guidance they need to help their kids eat better and thrive at mealtime. Every parent deserves to know what to do in challenging situations, to know they are not alone, and to feel less stressed.

- NJ Special Needs Resources (Facebook Group): https://www.facebook.com/groups/1865905163653466
  - The NJ Special Needs Resources page was created to assist special needs families to find resources in their communities.