

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

Pass it On

Information to use and share with families and professionals caring for children with special healthcare and education needs from birth to 26



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About this Edition

Dear Readers,

This issue of Pass It On arrives as summer begins—a season that offers families a welcome break from the structured routines of the school year and a chance to rest, reflect, and reset.

In this issue, are articles focused on children entering school for the first time, exploring the transition from daycare to kindergarten and the changes that come with it. We include an article on preventing the “summer slide,” featuring practical ideas shared by kids themselves on ways to continue learning over summer vacation. Additionally, we’ve compiled a list of accessible and adaptive summer programs and activities across NH for children and youth with disabilities. You can also learn more about home visiting services and how they provide support for the whole family. This issue also includes the next installment in our caregiver series, along with a selection of books from our Lending Library, including titles focused on occupational and physical therapy and recreation.

Summer planning can feel overwhelming, especially since every family’s needs, schedules, and routines are different. We’re here to help make the season feel a little less stressful, and maybe even more enjoyable. We hope these resources provide practical ideas, helpful options, and inspiration for creating a summer that works for your family.

Be sure to check out the PIC Family Voices Podcast if you haven’t already, and share it with your networks. New episodes are released every two weeks, covering topics such as health care, transitions, early childhood, and life after high school.

Enjoy the summer, and as always, reach out to PIC for educational support or NH Family Voices for health-related support.

Warmly,

Michelle Lewis

Executive Director, Parent Information Center (PIC)

Sylvia Pelletier

Director, NH Family Voices (NHFV)

Tips on How to Prevent the Summer Slide: Real Ideas from Kids!

By Joanne Grobecker

Summertime can be a reset from the busyness of the school year. As a parent you want your child to continue their progress in academics over the summer while also wanting them time to just be a kid. I asked some kids with learning disabilities what is their favorite way to keep learning over the summer that feels fun. Their biggest advice was to make it not feel like school and let it be a fun part of the everyday routine and not a chore to complete. Here are some of their ideas for fun ways to learn during the summer:

“Playing word games with my family like Scrabble, Boggle or word apps on our phones and tablets.”

“Taking trips to the library for their summer program. I can earn prizes and choose new books.”

“Writing in a way that is fun and not like school: writing postcards to my family when I’m on a trip or in my journal.”

“Listening to audiobooks on road trips in the car as a family.”

“Reading with my parents. We will all sit outside and read our own books while we sit together.”

“Having a family book during the summer where we take turns reading the same book out loud at bedtime.”

“Using the tablet to play math games and have extra screen time if I’m playing a learning game.”

“Learning how to do things like my laundry and cooking with my parents.”

“Practicing math and money by going with my parents to the bank, budgeting out my back-to-school shopping, and spending money at the store.”

With these tips in mind, your children may feel more refreshed and excited for a new school year in the Fall.



Accessible Summer Time Programs & Activities in New Hampshire

By Kaitlyn Gorman

With the warmer months finally here, it's important to create fun and inclusive places for everyone, including those who have disabilities. New Hampshire offers a variety of accessible outdoor activities and adaptive community programs.

Additionally, New Hampshire State Parks accept the National Park Service Access Pass, a free lifetime pass for individuals with permanent disabilities. More information on Access Passes can be found online at: <https://store.usgs.gov/access-pass> or in person at locations throughout the state.

This article will share information to ensure all youth and their families are informed on activities that will promote a summer of fun and adventure.

Accessible Activities

Nature Trails

- **Crotched Mountain Trails, Greenfield, NH** - Gregg and Dutton Brook trails offer the largest accessible mountain-based trail system in the country.
- **Mine Falls Park, Nashua, NH** - Features paved and packed gravel trails in the heart of the city.
- **Great Bay Peverly Pond Trail, Newington, NH** - A short 0.4-mile boardwalk loop with scenic pond views of the Great Bay Wildlife Refuge.
- **NH Seacoast Greenway, Portsmouth, NH** - Flat, crushed-stone surface suitable for wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, and cyclists.



The new Adaptive Paddling Launch at Leavitt Park in Meredith *Photo Credit - Meredith Parks and Recreation*



Accessible Mat at North Beach at Bicentennial Park in Hampton *Photo Credit - Stephen Rideout*

Explore more trails by visiting the accessible recreation map: **NH Council on Developmental Disabilities - NHCDD Accessible Recreation Map in the Resources section.**

Beach and Lake Access

State Parks with Accessible Features such as accessible parking, wheelchair mat, beach wheel chairs and paved areas:

- **Hampton Beach State Park**, Hampton, NH
- **Wallis Sands State Park**, Rye, NH
- **Great Island Common** in New Castle, NH
- **Fort Foster**, Kittery, ME - Offers accessible features, picnic tables, playgrounds, and grilling stations.
- **Pawtuckaway State Park**, Nottingham, NH
- **Ellacoya State Park**, Gilford, NH (on Lake Winnepesaukee)

Adaptive Activities for Youth

Benefits of Adaptive Programs are to encourage skill development, social engagement, self-esteem, and a sense of community.

Gymnastics

- **Granite State YMCA**, NH Locations - Offers adaptive gymnastics, swim lessons, and rock climbing.
- **Spectrum Gymnastics**, Londonderry, NH - Multiple adaptive classes throughout the month.
- **Gymnastics Village**, Amherst, NH

Dance

- **New Hampshire Dance Institute**, Keene, NH - Year-round program called REACH for individuals of all abilities. Summer camp at the end of the month—book your spot!



Accessible playground at Sunapee State Park

Photo Credit - NH State Parks

- **Everybody Dance Now**, Salem, NH - 6-week programs run by a pediatric OT, Carly Bonanno. Offers drop-in opportunities.
- **Studio 109**, Canterbury, NH - Adaptive Dance focused on motor planning, body awareness, and coordination using props. Camps running July/August.

Sports and Recreation

- **New England Handicapped Ski Association**, Sunapee, NH - Offers adaptive hikes, paddle boarding and kayaking.
- **Adaptive Sports Partners**, Franconia, NH - Offers year-round recreational activities for individuals with various disabilities.
- **New Hampshire Special Olympics (Statewide)** - Year-round sports training and community events.
- **TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer)** - Locations include Salem, Londonderry and Seacoast locations.

Check out your local Parks and Recreation leagues for additional inclusive sport options.

We hope everybody takes the opportunity to explore these options and find some new ones along the way!



Performers with the REACH program at the New Hampshire Dance Institute in Keene

Photo Credit - New Hampshire Dance Institute

Resources

Accessible Recreation Map

NH Council on Developmental Disabilities

<https://www.nhcdd.nh.gov/publications-and-resources/resources/accessible-recreation-map>

National Park Service Access Pass

<https://store.usgs.gov/access-pass>

Nature trails

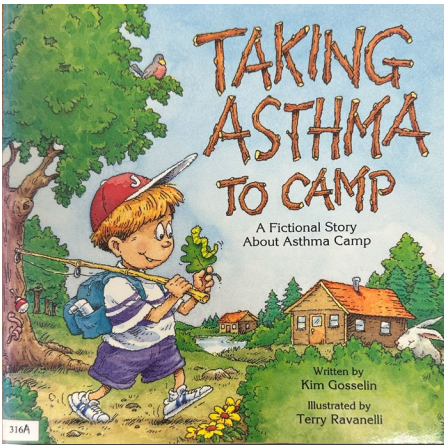
<https://www.nhcdd.nh.gov/publications-and-resources/resources/accessible-recreation-map>

Beaches and Lakes

<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/types-of-nh-state-parks/parks-with-accessibility>

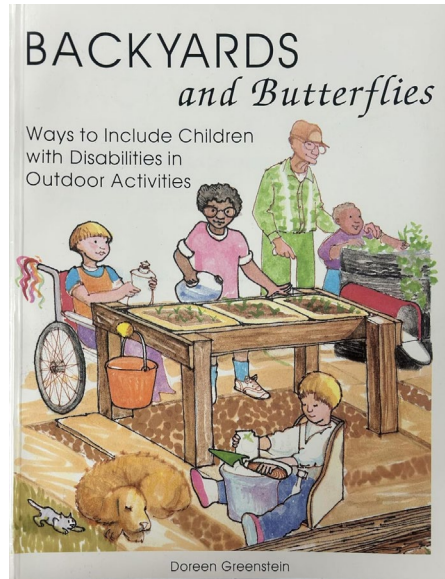
Parks and Playgrounds

There are several accessible parks and playgrounds throughout the state. For additional information on accessible locations <https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/types-of-nh-state-parks/parks-with-accessibility>



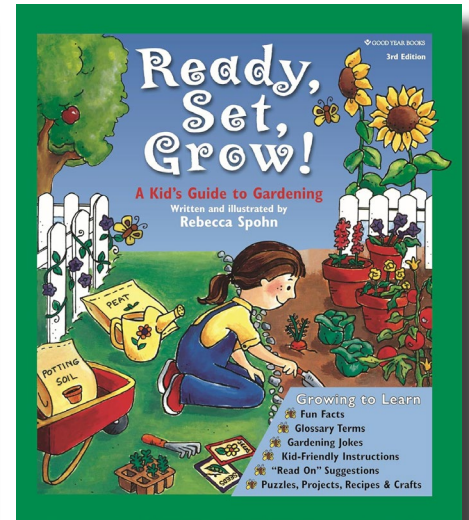
Taking Asthma to Camp
By Kim Gosselin

Just in time for summer, *Taking Asthma to Camp* follows Justin around for his first ever time at asthma camp. He's never been away from home like this before but once he arrives and sees how prepared the counselors are, Justin knows he's safe and can have fun! This book can be great to read with your child who has a chronic health condition like asthma, especially if they too are headed to camp for the first time.



Backyards And Butterflies: Ways To Include Children With Disabilities In Outdoor Activities
By Doreen Greenstein

This book offers dozens of imaginative ideas for making outdoor activities accessible to children with physical disabilities. Inside you find lots of ideas for gardening, nature, swings, and slides as well as more information about some of the materials you may need to make your activities more adaptive. This book would be a great loan for someone planning on working with children this summer!



Ready, Set, Grow!: A Kid's Guide to Gardening
By Rebecca Spohn

Grab your trowels, seeds, and watering cans! This guide for kids is really a great resource for the whole family. Learning about plants and gardening together can be a fun way to explore new foods, work on motor skills, and explore the plants around us. This book offers fun crafts and activities around gardening and growing foods, and you can giggle your way through the jokes sprinkled through the pages.

Chance to Fly

By Ali Stroker & Stacy Davidowitz

This middle grade novel is a wonderful summer read for your aspiring actor or actress. *Chance to Fly* is the story of Nat, a young girl who loves theater and happens to use a wheelchair. Nat's passion for musicals knows no bounds, and she dreams of performing on stage despite never having seen an actor with a disability in a leading role. When Nat's family moves from California to New Jersey, she discovers auditions for a kids' production of her all-time favorite musical, *Wicked*. Thrilled by the opportunity, Nat lands a spot in the ensemble. As she navigates new friendships and the challenges of rehearsals, Nat draws strength from the empowering themes of *Wicked*, particularly the song "Defying Gravity." But as opening night approaches, unexpected obstacles arise. Nat must confront her fears and insecurities, channeling the spirit of Elphaba to truly "defy gravity" both on and off the stage.



This heartfelt story celebrates resilience, inclusion, and the transformative power of theater.



The Kids' Summer Fun Book

By Claire Gillman & Sam Martin

Designed to inspire family fun, *The Kids' Summer Fun Book* offers parents ideas to recapture their childhood as they join with their kids in dozens of delightful summer activities. Ideas include summer beach parties with a sand castle building theme, hiking and camping trips in the great outdoors, kite flying, snorkeling, and even croquet in the backyard on stay-at-home leisure days. Activities are categorized by chapters: Out of Doors, On the Water, Summer Games, Crafts and Activities, and Feasting.

Hi! I'm Sam Collyar, a Resource Specialist at NH Family Voices.



Outside of work, I'm a wife, mom, and pet mom to 3 dogs, a cat, and 21 chickens. I keep busy in my garden and love books. My passion for books really kicked off when my then-eight-year-old was diagnosed with cancer, and we saw just how much hope could hide in the pages of a book. We turned to books for knowledge and stories from others in our shoes a lot, and I'm so excited to be in a position to connect people with books from our FREE Lending Library that could provide that same level of knowledge and comfort.

If you are looking for a specific book or resource on a particular topic, email me at snc@nhfv.org!

Borrowing from the NHFV Lending Library is Easy and FREE for NH Residents!



Call 603-271-4525 or go to nhfv.org/how-we-can-help/lending-library/



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Add the book(s) you like to your cart and fill out the delivery form



Books will be delivered to your home or office with a prepaid postage envelope for you to return them when you're finished!

What Home Visiting Is — and What It's Not

By Sarah Love, Healthy Families America Family Support Specialist- Granite VNA

When I explain home visiting to someone new, I usually say it's about partnership. I come with a background in early childhood education and over 20 years of working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families, but while I may be an expert in child development, YOU, the parent or caregiver, is the expert in YOUR child.

Raising young children was never meant to be done alone. It was meant to happen within a village. As our society has moved further away from that, parenting can feel incredibly isolating. Home visiting helps rebuild that sense of village by offering connection, consistency, and support. Home visiting is about bringing our perspectives together in a way that feels supportive, not intimidating.

A common misconception is that a Home Visitor is coming in to check up on you. In reality, it is the opposite. It is not about judging, evaluating, or telling families what to do. It is about building a relationship where the power dynamic stays balanced and families feel respected, heard, and in control. We are there to walk alongside you. Every visit looks different because every family is different, and there is no checklist you have to pass.

Home visiting is also not just about one parent and one baby. It is support for the whole family. Every family system is unique, and the well-being of each member matters. Home visiting is flexible. It can happen wherever you call home, but it can also take place in a park, in your car, or even during a doctor's appointment. It is about meeting you in real life, in the moments and spaces that matter most.

If you have never heard of home visiting, I would want you to know it is simply support grounded in relationship, respect, and partnership. If you are feeling unsure or hesitant about receiving Home Visiting services, that is completely understandable. Inviting someone into your space can feel vulnerable. You are always in control. This is your time, your family, and your goals. If there is one thing I would want families to know, it is this. You do not have to do this alone. Home visiting can help build that sense of village while also helping you recognize the strengths and superpowers that already exist within your family.



Alternatives for Extended School Year

By Kaitlyn Gorman



Extended School Year (ESY) refers to the special education and related services that are necessary for a child with a disability to receive a free appropriate public education that is provided during any time that school is not in session, which includes before and after school hours, school vacations, summer, and weekends.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams, of which parents are equal members, determine ESY eligibility and services. When considering whether or not to accept the IEP Team's proposal for ESY, it's important to weigh several factors, including changes in routine, the possibility of new staff working with your child, and typically limited hours. It is important to know that families may choose not to have their child participate in ESY and it will not jeopardize any school year service or future ESY services.

Private therapies are often difficult or overwhelming to schedule throughout the school year. The summer months offer a valuable opportunity to enhance services, such as Speech, Occupational, and Physical Therapy to support meaningful progress. For some families, these services are crucial to work on skill development outside of the educational environment.

Private services, whether private clinic-based or in-home services, during the summer months offer the ability to increase these services beyond the typical once-a-week schedule. Additional opportunities to work on skill building are social groups held by local speech and language clinics, adaptive recreational programs or in-home services. In-home services, in particular, provide a family-centered approach by embedding strategies into a child's natural environment and daily routines. However, availability may be limited due to a shortage of providers, so early planning is encouraged.

Examples of summer skill-building may include:

- An Occupational Therapist can focus on activities of daily living (ADLs) within the home to promote independence, supporting gross motor development, such as helping a child learn to ride a bike independently alongside neighborhood peers.
- A Speech-Language Pathologist can provide services in more natural environments whether through play-based 1:1 articulation session or in a group setting working on social skills with peers.
- A Physical Therapist can help children achieve goals across settings, including playing at the park, participating in community sports, and improving overall physical independence.

Therapeutic summer camps are another excellent option, offering structured support in engaging, social environments. Because these programs often have long waitlists, families are encouraged to explore options early. Please see QR code for a list of camps <https://nhfv.org/resources-category/camp/>

To help manage the costs of these alternatives, we recommend having a discussion with your Area Agency for what support may be available if your child is served by one of the ten agencies statewide. You may also consider contacting your insurance provider to discuss saving approved private therapy sessions for summer use. Grant opportunities may also be available through organizations such as the Harry Gregg Foundation.

Ultimately, families should consider their child's unique needs and their family priorities when deciding how to spend the summer months. This includes not accessing ESY or other private options at all. This article is not intended to guide you toward a specific decision, but rather to encourage thoughtful and creative planning that aligns with your family's goals and priorities.

What is going on with the YEAH Council! (Youth for Education, Advocacy, and Healthcare)

Youth voice can influence policies and how health and education professionals engage with young people while also empowering other young adults!

Visit nhfv.org/get-involved/youth-involvement to learn more about the YEAH Council mission and check out our podcasts while you are there.

The YEAH Council is supported by The Parent Information Center and NH Family Voices. If you would like to chat with us, e-mail yeahcouncil@nhfv.org.



PIC & NH Family Voices Transition Conference

By Aaron Russell

On March 21st, PIC/NHFV with the support of the YEAH Council, held their first in-person conference since 2020. “Dream. Plan. Launch” focused on planning for life’s next steps after high school for youth with disabilities. Throughout the day, youth and families participated in interactive sessions focused on employment, accommodations, technology, benefits, knowing your rights, supported-decision making, and guardianship. Current and former YEAH Council members helped plan, develop content, and participated in sessions to share their experiences navigating the big life changes after high school.

into the workforce. Through individualized support, Vocational Rehabilitation helped her develop strategies that emphasized her strengths and positioned her for success.

Youth emphasized the importance of self-advocacy, both in the workplace and in navigating difficult decisions. Another YEAH Council member described looking over her accommodation plan and clearly communicating her needs—such as support when learning new tasks and taking breaks—to create a work environment aligned with her strengths. Support networks were also a major theme of the day. With youth discussing how parents/guardians, teachers, case managers, and job coaches were able to support their future planning.

Youth talked about engaging support networks when exploring options like guardianship and supported decision-making, using collaboration and research to make informed choices. Together, these experiences showed participants the value of communication, education, and access to resources in supporting young adults’ success wherever their next step leads them to.



YEAH Council members highlighted the importance of the supported-decision making process and its role in building skills necessary for when they began planning for life after high school. This was especially clear in healthcare environments, where tools such as scaffolding helped members to become more independent when managing their health. Youth also reflected on the role of engaging with Vocational Rehabilitation. One YEAH Council member shared that connecting with these services during high school provided a significant advantage when transitioning



Planning for Success: Summer Tips for Families

By PIC Staff

Summer is here! Of course, this is a time to relax and recharge. And it is the perfect time to reflect on the school year, organize your records, and plan for the new school year. Here are some end-of-the-year and summer tips.



Reflect on the Past Year

- Review your child's report cards, progress reports, and feedback from teachers.
- What were your child's successes?
- What were the most challenging parts of the school year?
- What skills have they mastered and where do they need some support?
- Did they meet expected goals?
- What is the data telling you? Are they making progress?

Plan what you can do over the summer to support learning

- Meet with your child's IEP Team and ask what is the most important skill(s) to work on over the summer
- Ask what you can do to help your child and if they have activity suggestions, book lists or even "fun" work to take home over the summer.
- Be realistic – Make a list of the top things you want your child to work on over the summer.
- Find creative ways to work on the identified skills.



Organize your child's school records

- Most recent Individualized Education Program, Written Prior Notices, evaluations, progress reports, and report cards
- Attendance and discipline records
- Work samples

Keep a log of summer activities and plan for the upcoming year

- Write down how you think the summer went, including successes and challenges
- Document your concerns and goals for the upcoming school year
- Share with your child's IEP Team



Remember you do not have to wait for your child's annual IEP Team meeting or the school to schedule an IEP Team meeting. You can request a meeting at anytime including for the start of the school year to discuss your concerns, goals, and vision for the upcoming school year. PIC has a sample letter for requesting an IEP Team meeting. Remember you are an equal member of the IEP Team. Your insight into your child's needs, strengths, and history is essential.

Resources

Sample Letters and Forms <https://picnh.org/sample-letters/>

Special Education Resources <https://picnh.org/special-education-resources/>

The Beauty of an Un-Magical Summer: A Blog Review

By Kimberley EB Fasano

“So maybe it’s time to ask:

What does a perfect summer actually feel like?

And what if, instead of chasing magic, we simply gave ourselves permission to find small, honest moments of ease — even just one a day?”

Wise words from the blog, “Our Little House in the Country” in an entry entitled, ‘Maybe This Summer Isn’t Meant to Be Magical’. In this blog article the author, Ciara, talks about how we, as parents, need to give ourselves a little grace and understanding in our approach to making the summers with our children as magical as possible.

It is drummed into us from well-meaning older generations “You only have 18 summers with your kids, make the most of it!” That’s all well and good, but when you are parenting neurodivergent children, children with health complexities, or disabilities, just thinking about planning, maneuvering and, frankly mentally surviving those types of excursions is exhausting.



I have, personally, felt this pressure throughout my almost 16-year motherhood journey. When my children were young, I would enter the month of June with so much hope and promise of beach and lake filled days, nights watching baseball and fireworks, or family day trips to amusement parks and zoos, playdates in the yard filled with friends and activities. While yes, those things did occur, they were sporadic at best. A few years ago, when we reached September and the children had walked back into their classrooms, I realized that we had not gone to the beach, just 45 minutes from our home, once. I felt like a failure as a parent.

As my children entered school, I felt guilty for dreading the last day of school, unlike my peers that were excited to be home with their children. With three neurodivergent children, it would be incumbent upon me to manage the sensory meltdowns, the over-stimulation, the food refusals and the Rock Brain against trying new things for 14 hours a day, seven days a week. Then there was the exhaustion that comes at the end of the school year when you have special ed children. The battles that you are constantly fighting throughout the year about homework, accommodations, disciplines and whether milestones were reached, are finally over and you just want to take a breath, to be free of that battle before it began all over again in August.

That is why this blog spoke so much to me when I read it. Ciara gives us allowance as parents to not try so hard to make every moment with our children magical. Not every second of every day must be planned to perfection, we can revel in the pleasure of the unplanned. The magic of finding the special in the mundane. To point your face to the sun and take in the bliss of feeling the heat of the light on your face, even for just a minute. If life is heavy for you during this season, for whatever reason, giving yourself, and your kids, the grace to allow your summer to happen organically is okay.

“...if this summer isn’t big or bold or beautiful in the way you imagined, let it be what it is.

Let it be gentle.

Let it be slow.

Let it be healing.

Let it be yours.”

Read the Blog for yourself at: https://ourlittlehouseinthecountry.com/2026/04/10/maybe-this-summer-isnt-meant-to-be-magical/#google_vignette

Making Summer Reading Stress-Free (and Even Fun!)

By PIC Staff

As summer approaches are you dreading the anticipated arguments as you try to encourage your reluctant reader to enjoy summer reading? The responses of “but its vacation!” I’d rather do.....”, and the most painful one for a parent to hear “I’m no good at it, why bother?”

Trying to explain to a child that the best way to improve



their ability to read is by doing more of it is a hard concept for adults to understand so expecting our kids to understand is probably not worth our breath. So instead, how about trying some new methods. It might be counterintuitive to think that listening is going to improve their reading but evidence shows that audio books offer great benefits when it come to improving a child’s reading development. And when you combine reading with audio books it also:

- Boosts Literacy
- Enhances comprehension and retention
- Increases vocabulary

Audio books are also much more accessible in today’s world. Your local library very likely has an app through which you can “borrow” audio books. Hoopla and Libby are two very popular and easy to use apps. You can borrow a hard copy and an audiobook for reading and listening at the same time. This allows for additional discussion about the book because a narrators use of different voices and intonations can make a big difference in how the book comes to life in a reader’s imagination. Following along with the book helps with word recognition.

If you use an audio book at the same time you’re reading it can also boost literacy by improving fluency and

comprehension. It will support children who wish to read above their reading level and is helpful to children with dyslexia to access content. It boosts imagination and is a “screen-free” activity that many parents are seeking.

And it’s not always necessary to have both the hard copy and the audiobook. Try going between the two methods to encourage reading time. Audiobooks means reading can be done while riding in the car, doing chores or playing in the yard. And most importantly reading audiobooks can encourage a lifelong love of reading!



Caregiver Conversations

A Series for Parents & Caregivers of Children with Disabilities & Special Healthcare Needs

Whether you join one conversation or all six, you will leave feeling heard, energized, and better equipped for the journey ahead. Come as you are; together, we create connections that strengthen us all.

Join us via Zoom the second Wednesday of the month starting in September!



<https://bit.ly/3Ne3bW2>

One-hour sessions at either 11:30 am or 6:30 pm

- **Build real community** and meet others who “get it,” exchange ideas, and grow a network you can lean on.
- **Share practical strategies & resources** from personal well-being tips to navigating services, each session offers tools you can use right away.
- **Show up on your schedule!** Register once, attend when you can.

**Taking July and August off,
Fall/Winter Topics
Coming Soon**

The Kindergarten Shift No One Warns You About

What to expect as communication changes & how to stay connected

By Kendra Dix



As you get ready for kindergarten, you're probably thinking about routines, school supplies, and what the first day will look like. Over the summer, as things start to shift, one thing that often catches parents off guard is the change in communication.

In early childhood programs, you hear everything. You might get photos throughout the day, little notes about what your child ate, how they napped, who they played with, and even the funny or sweet things they said. There are quick conversations at pick-up, daily reports, and those small moments that help you feel connected to their day.

When kindergarten starts, that can shift pretty quickly—and it can feel like it all just... stops.

If that happens, you're not alone—and it's not a sign that something is wrong.

Kindergarten classrooms run differently. Teachers have more students, fuller schedules, and less time for individual updates. Communication becomes more structured—and often less frequent. But less communication doesn't mean your child isn't being supported. It just looks different now.

Going into this transition, one thing that can really help is thinking ahead about how you'll stay connected. Instead of relying on daily updates, you may find yourself learning more directly from your child. Asking specific questions can make a big difference—like who they sat with at lunch, what made them laugh, what they did at recess, or if anything felt tricky. Even asking who they helped (or who helped them) can open the door to more meaningful conversations.

It's also helpful to think about how you'll connect with the teacher. You may not get a full play-by-play of each day, but you can still check in on the big picture—how your child is adjusting to the routine, how they're doing socially, and whether they're engaging during the day. Asking if there's anything to be aware of, or anything you can support at home, can go a long way.

Before the school year starts, you also have an opportunity to share what you know about your child. Teachers are just getting to know them—you've known them all along. Letting the teacher know how your child communicates, what they might struggle with, what helps them feel safe, and what they're excited about can make a real difference. It doesn't have to be formal—just share what you know about your child in a way that helps them be understood.

The first few weeks of kindergarten can feel like a big shift—for kids and for parents. There's less day-to-day feedback, and more independence. That can feel uncomfortable at first, especially if you're used to being closely connected. But over time, trust builds. Your child finds their place, and you find new ways to stay connected.

From one parent to another:

If this transition feels a little uncertain, that's completely normal. You're not losing connection—you're just stepping into a new phase. And your role is still just as important—it just looks a little different now.

Paid Caregiving Series: Self-Directed Personal Assistant Service (PAS)

By Sam Collyar

In our previous issue of Pass It On, we started talking about the different avenues families can explore when it comes to being a “paid caregiver” for their child with special health care needs. We looked at the programs that support caregivers in becoming an LNA; however, not every child meets or needs that level of care. In those cases, caregivers can look at the Self-Directed Personal Assistant Service made available through the New Hampshire 1915 (J) Service program.

What is Self-Directed Personal Assistant Service (PAS) and who is it for?

PAS provides medically necessary support to individuals in their homes and communities. Some of these supports include performing range-of-motion exercises, bathing and personal hygiene, toileting, assistance with medications (as allowed by Medicaid rules), and mobility assistance. Individuals may qualify for this level of support if they have previously demonstrated a need for assistance with at least 2 Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as eating, dressing or undressing, and toileting.

- This is not an exhaustive list, just a few examples to consider when trying to decide if this program is right for your family.

Other requirements include needing at least 2 hours per day of medically necessary PAS, living in a non-institutional setting, and a complete assessment and Medicaid approval. Currently, caregivers can contact either Granite State Independent Living (GSIL) or Regency Home Health for more information about the eligibility process and to schedule an assessment for their loved one.



There are a few things to consider when deciding whether this program is right for your loved one. One thing to remember is that, unlike the parent stipend option, which we will cover in the next issue, income earned for self-directed personal assistant services is taxable because you are an employee, much like the LNA programs we previously discussed, so other services that your family may be accessing could be impacted. Individuals also need to be able to self-direct their care OR have an authorized representative who can make informed decisions about services and participate in the development of a plan of care. It’s also important to remember that PAS services are only provided to the individual who was found eligible, so tasks such as running errands and babysitting are not covered by this program.

If you are unsure about the differences in this and the LNA programs, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at NH Family Voices.

Podcast Review: Moving On: Young Adult Perspectives on Adult Care

By Aaron Russell

This podcast discusses the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare through the experiences of two young adults, Keagan Watson and Justin Bonny. They explain that moving into adult care is an ongoing process that requires independence, flexibility, and strong support systems.

Both describe challenges such as finding the right specialists, understanding insurance, and taking over healthcare responsibilities from parents or caregivers. Keagan shares that adult specialists often work separately instead of together, making it hard to understand how different parts of his condition affect each other.

Keagan also experienced problems with insurance changes that delayed access to important medical equipment. Justin highlights the difficulty of finding a primary care provider while also balancing work, school, appointments, and insurance on his own.

Despite these difficulties, both emphasize the importance of support systems in easing the transition. Programs such as New Hampshire Family Voices, Medicaid services, and waiver programs helped provide guidance and continuity of care. Overall, their experiences show the need for more coordinated, patient-centered healthcare systems that better support young adults during the transition to adult care.

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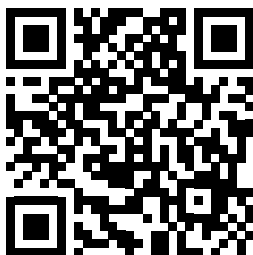
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