

Information and Community Resources for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Kent County, Michigan

Professionals and organizations on this list are not endorsed by Autism Support of Kent County. This list was compiled to help individuals find out information about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or to help locate services for individuals with ASD.



Autism Support of Kent County, Inc.

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(616) 752-8577

www.autismssupportofkentcounty.org/

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FACTS ABOUT ASD

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. There is often nothing about how people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people, but people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people. The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of people with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged. Some people with ASD need a lot of help in their daily lives; others need less.

A diagnosis of ASD now includes several conditions that used to be diagnosed separately: autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), and Asperger syndrome. These conditions are now all called autism spectrum disorder.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

People with ASD often have problems with social, emotional, and communication skills. They might repeat certain behaviors and might not want change in their daily activities. Many people with ASD also have different ways of learning, paying attention, or reacting to things. Signs of ASD begin during early childhood and typically last throughout a person's life.

Children or adults with ASD might:

- not point at objects to show interest (for example, not point at an airplane flying over)
- not look at objects when another person points at them
- have trouble relating to others or not have an interest in other people at all
- avoid eye contact and want to be alone
- have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings
- prefer not to be held or cuddled, or might cuddle only when they want to
- appear to be unaware when people talk to them, but respond to other sounds
- be very interested in people, but not know how to talk, play, or relate to them
- repeat or echo words or phrases said to them, or repeat words or phrases in place of normal language
- have trouble expressing their needs using typical words or motions
- not play "pretend" games (for example, not pretend to "feed" a doll)
- repeat actions over and over again
- have trouble adapting when a routine changes
- have unusual reactions to the way things smell, taste, look, feel, or sound
- lose skills they once had (for example, stop saying words they were using)

It is important to note that some people without ASD might also have some of these symptoms. But for people with ASD, the impairments make life very challenging.

Possible "Red Flags"

A person with ASD might:

- Not respond to their name by 12 months of age
- Not point at objects to show interest (point at an airplane flying over) by 14 months
- Not play "pretend" games (pretend to "feed" a doll) by 18 months
- Avoid eye contact and want to be alone
- Have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings
- Have delayed speech and language skills
- Repeat words or phrases over and over (echolalia)
- Give unrelated answers to questions
- Get upset by minor changes
- Have obsessive interests
- Flap their hands, rock their body, or spin in circles
- Have unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel

Social Skills

Social issues are one of the most common symptoms in all of the types of ASD. People with an ASD do not have just social "difficulties" like shyness. The social issues they have cause serious problems in everyday life.

Examples of social issues related to ASD:

- Does not respond to name by 12 months of age
- Avoids eye-contact
- Prefers to play alone
- Does not share interests with others
- Only interacts to achieve a desired goal
- Has flat or inappropriate facial expressions
- Does not understand personal space boundaries
- Avoids or resists physical contact
- Is not comforted by others during distress
- Has trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about own feelings
- Typical infants are very interested in the world and people around them. By the first birthday, a typical toddler interacts with others by looking people in the eye, copying words and actions, and using simple gestures such as clapping and waving "bye bye". Typical toddlers also show interests in social games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake. But a young child with an ASD might have a very hard time learning to interact with other people.

Some people with an ASD might not be interested in other people at all. Others might want friends, but not understand how to develop friendships. Many children with an ASD have a very hard time learning to take turns and share—much more so than other children. This can make other children not want to play with them.

People with an ASD might have problems with showing or talking about their feelings. They might also have trouble understanding other people's feelings. Many people with an ASD are very sensitive to being touched and might not want to be held or cuddled. Self-stimulatory behaviors (e.g., flapping arms over and over) are common among people with an ASD. Anxiety and depression also affect some people with an ASD. All of these symptoms can make other social problems even harder to manage.

Communication

Each person with ASD has different communication skills. Some people can speak well. Others can't speak at all or only very little. About 40% of children with an ASD do not talk at all. About 25%–30% of children with ASD have some words at 12 to 18 months of age and then lose them. Others might speak, but not until later in childhood.

Examples of communication issues related to ASD:

- Delayed speech and language skills
- Repeats words or phrases over and over (echolalia)
- Reverses pronouns (e.g., says "you" instead of "I")
- Gives unrelated answers to questions
- Does not point or respond to pointing
- Uses few or no gestures (e.g., does not wave goodbye)
- Talks in a flat, robot-like, or sing-song voice
- Does not pretend in play (e.g., does not pretend to "feed" a doll)
- Does not understand jokes, sarcasm, or teasing

People with ASD who do speak might use language in unusual ways. They might not be able to put words into real sentences. Some people with ASD say only one word at a time. Others repeat the same words or phrases over and over. Some children repeat what others say, a condition called echolalia. The repeated words might be said right away or at a later time. For example, if you ask someone with ASD, "Do you want some juice?" he or she might repeat "Do you want some juice?" instead of answering your question. Although many children without an ASD go through a stage where they repeat what they hear, it normally passes by three years of age. Some people with an ASD can speak well but might have a hard time listening to what other people say.

People with ASD might have a hard time using and understanding gestures, body language, or tone of voice. For example, people with ASD might not understand what it means to wave goodbye. Facial expressions, movements, and gestures may not match what they are saying. For instance, people with an ASD might smile while saying something sad.

People with ASD might say "I" when they mean "you," or vice versa. Their voices might sound flat, robot-like, or high-pitched. People with an ASD might stand too close to the person they are talking to, or might stick with one topic of conversation for too long. They might talk a lot about something they really like, rather than have a back-and-forth conversation with someone. Some children with fairly good language skills speak like little adults, failing to pick up on the "kid-speak" that is common with other children.

Unusual Interests and Behaviors

Many people with ASD have unusual interest or behaviors.

Examples of unusual interests and behaviors related to ASD:

- Lines up toys or other objects
- Plays with toys the same way every time
- Likes parts of objects (e.g., wheels)
- Is very organized
- Gets upset by minor changes
- Has obsessive interests

- Has to follow certain routines
- Flaps hands, rocks body, or spins self in circles

Repetitive motions are actions repeated over and over again. They can involve one part of the body or the entire body or even an object or toy. For instance, people with an ASD might spend a lot of time repeatedly flapping their arms or rocking from side to side. They might repeatedly turn a light on and off or spin the wheels of a toy car. These types of activities are known as self-stimulation or "stimming."

People with ASD often thrive on routine. A change in the normal pattern of the day—like a stop on the way home from school—can be very upsetting to people with ASD. They might "lose control" and have a "melt down" or tantrum, especially if in a strange place.

Some people with ASD also may develop routines that might seem unusual or unnecessary. For example, a person might try to look in every window he or she walks by a building or might always want to watch a video from beginning to end, including the previews and the credits. Not being allowed to do these types of routines might cause severe frustration and tantrums.

Other Symptoms

Some people with ASD have other symptoms. These might include:

- Hyperactivity (very active)
- Impulsivity (acting without thinking)
- Short attention span
- Aggression
- Causing self-injury
- Temper tantrums
- Unusual eating and sleeping habits
- Unusual mood or emotional reactions
- Lack of fear or more fear than expected
- Unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel

People with ASD might have unusual responses to touch, smell, sounds, sights, taste, and feel. For example, they might over- or under-react to pain or to a loud noise. They might have abnormal eating habits. For instance, some people with an ASD limit their diet to only a few foods. Others might eat nonfood items like dirt or rocks (this is called pica). They might also have issues like chronic constipation or diarrhea.

People with ASD might have odd sleeping habits. They also might have abnormal moods or emotional reactions. For instance, they might laugh or cry at unusual times or show no emotional response at times you would expect one. In addition, they might not be afraid of dangerous things, and they could be fearful of harmless objects or events.

Development

Children with ASD develop at different rates in different areas. They may have delays in language, social, and learning skills, while their ability to walk and move around are about the same as other children their age. They might be very good at putting puzzles together or solving computer problems, but they might have trouble with social activities like talking or making friends. Children with an ASD might also learn a hard skill before they learn an easy one. For example, a child might be able to read long words but not be able to tell you what sound a "b" makes.

Children develop at their own pace, so it can be difficult to tell exactly when a child will learn a particular skill. But, there are age-specific developmental milestones used to measure a child's social and emotional progress in the first few years of life. To learn more about developmental milestones, visit "Learn the Signs. Act Early," (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>) a campaign designed by CDC and a coalition of partners to teach parents, health care professionals, and child care providers about early childhood development, including possible "red flags" for autism spectrum disorders.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I THINK MY CHILD HAS AN ASD?

If you think your child might have ASD or you think there could be a problem with the way your child plays, learns, speaks, or acts, contact your child's doctor, and share your concerns.

If you or the doctor is still concerned, ask the doctor for a referral to a specialist who can do a more in-depth evaluation of your child. Specialists who can do a more in-depth evaluation and make a diagnosis include:

- Developmental Pediatricians (doctors who have special training in child development and children with special needs)
- Child Neurologists (doctors who work on the brain, spine, and nerves)
- Child Psychologists or Psychiatrists (doctors who know about the human mind)

At the same time, call your state's public early childhood system to request a free evaluation to find out if your child qualifies for intervention services. This is sometimes called a Child Find evaluation. You do not need to wait for a doctor's referral or a medical diagnosis to make this call.

Where to call for a free evaluation from the state depends on your child's age:

If your child is not yet 3 years old, contact your local early intervention system.

- You can find the right contact information for your state by calling the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) at 919-962-2001.
- Or visit the ECTA website.

If your child is 3 years old or older, contact your local public school system.

- Even if your child is not yet old enough for kindergarten or enrolled in a public school, call your local elementary school or board of education and ask to speak with someone who can help you have your child evaluated.
- If you're not sure who to contact, call the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) at 919-962-2001.
- Or visit the ECTA website.

Research shows that early intervention services can greatly improve a child's development. In order to make sure your child reaches his or her full potential, it is very important to get help for an ASD as soon as possible.

SCREENING AND DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosing autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can be difficult, since there is no medical test, like a blood test, to diagnose the disorders. Doctors look at the child's behavior and development to make a diagnosis.

ASD can sometimes be detected at 18 months or younger. By age 2, a diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered very reliable. However, many children do not receive a final diagnosis until much older. This delay means that children with an ASD might not get the help they need.

Diagnosing an ASD takes two steps:

- Developmental Screening
- Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluation

Developmental screening is a short test to tell if children are learning basic skills when they should, or if they might have delays. During developmental screening the doctor might ask the parent some questions or talk and play with the child during an exam to see how she learns, speaks, behaves, and moves. A delay in any of these areas could be a sign of a problem.

All children should be screened for developmental delays and disabilities during regular well-child doctor visits at:

- 9 months
- 18 months
- 24 or 30 months

Additional screening might be needed if a child is at high risk for developmental problems due to preterm birth, low birth weight or other reasons.

In addition, all children should be screened specifically for ASD during regular well-child doctor visits at:

- 18 months
- 24 months
- Additional screening might be needed if a child is at high risk for ASD (e.g., having a sister, brother or other family member with an ASD) or if behaviors sometimes associated with ASD are present

It is important for doctors to screen all children for developmental delays, but especially to monitor those who are at a higher risk for developmental problems due to preterm birth, low birth weight, or having a brother or sister with an ASD.

If your child's doctor does not routinely check your child with this type of developmental screening test, ask that it be done.

If the doctor sees any signs of a problem, a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation is needed.

Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluation

The second step of diagnosis is a comprehensive evaluation. This thorough review may include looking at the child's behavior and development and interviewing the parents. It may also include a hearing and vision screening, genetic testing, neurological testing, and other medical testing.

In some cases, the primary care doctor might choose to refer the child and family to a specialist for further assessment and diagnosis. Specialists who can do this type of evaluation include:

- Developmental Pediatricians
- Child Neurologists
- Child Psychologists or Psychiatrists

TREATMENT

There is currently no cure for ASD. However, research shows that early intervention treatment services can improve a child's development. Early intervention services help children from birth to 3 years old (36 months) learn important skills. Services can include therapy to help the child talk, walk, and interact with others. Therefore, it is important to talk to your child's doctor as soon as possible if you think your child has ASD or other developmental problem.

Even if your child has not been diagnosed with an ASD, he or she may be eligible for early intervention treatment services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) says that children under the age of 3 years (36 months) who are at risk of having developmental delays may be eligible for services. These services are provided through an early intervention system in your state. Through this system, you can ask for an evaluation.

In addition, treatment for particular symptoms, such as speech therapy for language delays, often does not need to wait for a formal ASD diagnosis.

Early Intervention Services

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In addition, treatment for particular symptoms, such as speech therapy for language delays, often does not need to wait for a formal ASD diagnosis. While early intervention is extremely important, intervention at any age can be helpful.

Types of Treatments

There are many different types of treatments available. For example, auditory training, discrete trial training, vitamin therapy, anti-yeast therapy, facilitated communication, music therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and sensory integration.

The different types of treatments can generally be broken down into the following categories:

- Behavior and Communication Approaches
- Dietary Approaches
- Medication
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Behavior and Communication Approaches

According to reports by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Research Council, behavior and communication approaches that help children with ASD are those that provide structure, direction, and organization for the child in addition to family participation.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

A notable treatment approach for people with an ASD is called applied behavior analysis (ABA). ABA has become widely accepted among health care professionals and used in many schools and treatment clinics. ABA encourages positive behaviors and discourages negative behaviors in order to improve a variety of skills. The child's progress is tracked and measured.

There are different types of ABA. Following are some examples:

- **Discrete Trial Training (DTT)**
DTT is a style of teaching that uses a series of trials to teach each step of a desired behavior or response. Lessons are broken down into their simplest parts and positive reinforcement is used to reward correct answers and behaviors. Incorrect answers are ignored.
- **Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention (EIBI)**
This is a type of ABA for very young children with an ASD, usually younger than five, and often younger than three.
- **Pivotal Response Training (PRT)**
PRT aims to increase a child's motivation to learn, monitor his own behavior, and initiate communication with others. Positive changes in these behaviors should have wide-spread effects on other behaviors.
- **Verbal Behavior Intervention (VBI)**
VBI is a type of ABA that focuses on teaching verbal skills.

Other therapies that can be part of a complete treatment program for a child with an ASD include:

Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship-Based Approach (DIR; also called "Floortime"). Floortime focuses on emotional and relational development (feelings, relationships with caregivers). It also focuses on how the child deals with sights, sounds, and smells.

Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped CHildren (TEACCH). TEACCH uses visual cues to teach skills. For example, picture cards can help teach a child how to get dressed by breaking information down into small steps.

Occupational Therapy. Occupational therapy teaches skills that help the person live as independently as possible. Skills might include dressing, eating, bathing, and relating to people.

Sensory Integration Therapy. Sensory integration therapy helps the person deal with sensory information, like sights, sounds, and smells. Sensory integration therapy could help a child who is bothered by certain sounds or does not like to be touched.

Speech Therapy. Speech therapy helps to improve the person's communication skills. Some people are able to learn verbal communication skills. For others, using gestures or picture boards is more realistic.

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). PECS uses picture symbols to teach communication skills. The person is taught to use picture symbols to ask and answer questions and have a conversation.

Visit the **Autism Speaks** or **Autism Society** website to read more about these therapies.

Dietary Approaches

Some dietary treatments have been developed by reliable therapists. But many of these treatments do not have the scientific support needed for widespread recommendation. An unproven treatment might help one child, but may not help another.

Many biomedical interventions call for changes in diet. Such changes include removing certain types of foods from a child's diet and using vitamin or mineral supplements. Dietary treatments are based on the idea that food allergies or lack of vitamins and minerals cause symptoms of ASD. Some parents feel that dietary changes make a difference in how their child acts or feels.

If you are thinking about changing your child's diet, talk to the doctor first. Or talk with a nutritionist to be sure your child is getting important vitamins and minerals.

Medication

There are no medications that can cure ASD or even treat the main symptoms. But there are medications that can help some people with related symptoms. For example, medication might help manage high energy levels, inability to focus, depression, or seizures.

To learn more about medication and ASD, please visit the **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's** website.

Complementary and Alternative Treatments

To relieve the symptoms of ASD, some parents and health care professionals use treatments that are outside of what is typically recommended by the pediatrician. These types of treatments are known as complementary and alternative treatments (CAM). They might include special diets, chelation (a treatment to remove heavy metals like lead from the body), biologicals (e.g., secretin), or body-based systems (like deep pressure).

These types of treatments are very controversial. Current research shows that as many as one third of parents of children with an ASD may have tried complementary or alternative medicine treatments, and up to 10% may be using a potentially dangerous treatment. Before starting such a treatment, check it out carefully, and talk to your child's doctor.

To learn more about CAM therapies, go to the **National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Get the Facts** webpage.

Additional Treatment Resources

The **National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders** has a website to help individuals with an ASD who have communication challenges.

The **National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research** has a website to help health professionals with the oral health care needs of patients with an ASD.

Clinical Trials.Gov lists federally funded clinical trials that are looking for participants. If you or someone you know would like to take part in an autism study, go to the website and search "autism."

The **Autism Treatment Network (ATN)** seeks to create standards of medical treatment that will be made broadly available to physicians, researchers, parents, policy makers, and others who want to improve the care of individuals with autism. ATN is also developing a shared national medical database to record the results of treatments and studies at any of their five established regional treatment centers.

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism>

Information in this Resource Directory is obtained either directly from organizations or from organizations' websites. Professionals and organizations on this list are not endorsed by Autism Support of Kent County. This list was compiled to help individuals find out information about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or to help locate services for individuals with ASD.

ADVOCACY, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

The Arc Kent County

Tammy Finn, Executive Director
2922 Fuller Ave. NE Ste 201
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
Phone: (616) 459-3339
Email: info@arckent.org
Website: www.arckent.org

The Arc Kent County advocates for the rights and full participation of all people with Developmental Disabilities and is committed to building inclusive communities through advocacy, support and information.

Autism Alliance of Michigan

26500 American Dr.
Southfield, MI 48034
Phone: (248) 436-5606
Website: www.autismallianceofmichigan.org

The Autism Alliance of Michigan leads unprecedented collaboration that improves the quality of life for individuals with autism and their loved ones through education, comprehensive services, coordinated advocacy, dedication to community and navigation. The long-term vision of the Autism Alliance of Michigan is to ensure high-quality services, remove roadblocks and create opportunities for all individuals impacted by autism so they may lead purposeful and fulfilling lives.

Autism Society of Michigan

2178 Commons Parkway
Okemos, MI 48864
Phone: (517) 882-2800 and (800) 223-6722
Website: <http://www.autism-mi.org/>

The mission of the Autism Society of Michigan (ASM) is to assure full participation and self-determination in every aspect of life for each individual. We will realize this vision by opening avenues of self-advocacy and advocating on behalf of others in a way that values equity, respect, dignity and diversity in all communities.

Autism Support of Kent County, Inc.

Pamela Liggett, Executive Director
P. O. Box 150348
Grand Rapids, MI 49515
Phone: (616) 752-8577
Website: www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org

ASK provides support, resources and guidance to those who are diagnosed with, care for, and live with autism. Meetings are generally the first Monday of every month during the school year at the Kent Intermediate School District Educational Service Center.

C.H.A.D.D.

3215 4 Mile Rd NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525
Phone: (616) 874-5662
Email: linda@chaddgr.org
Website: <http://chaddgr.org>

CHADD of Grand Rapids works to help ALL individuals affected by AD/HD reach their inherent potential, across the lifespan. At local levels, CHADD of Grand Rapids has been working to increase awareness and provide accurate information about AD/HD. It's been working collaboratively with other disability/advocacy organizations on common causes, to help build a community where everyone belongs and is valued, and can access what they need to succeed.

D.A. Blodgett – St. John's

805 Leonard Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
and
2355 Knapp Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Agency Phone Number: (616) 451-2021
Leonard Street Campus: Fax: (616) 451-8936
Knapp Street Campus: Fax: (616)-361-9923
Email: info@dabsj.org
Website: www.dabsj.org

D.A. Blodgett - St. John's is an agency that works in partnership with our community for the good of all children. We are local, non-profit and accredited. We provide comprehensive services to children and families, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, foster care, adoption, and family support, as well as, residential treatment and emergency shelter care at St. John's Campus.

Disability Advocates of Kent County

David Bulkowski, JD, Executive Director
3600 Camelot Drive Southeast
Grand Rapids MI 49546
Phone: (616) 949-1100
Website: www.dakc.us

Disability Advocates' mission is to advocate for, and facilitate action by, persons living with disabilities and our community in order to achieve equal access for all.

Early On - Kent ISD

1800 Leffingwell NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (616) 365-2310
Website: <http://www.kentisd.org/instructional-services/early-childhood/early-on/>

Early On assists families with infants and toddlers, from birth until 36 months, who have a delay in their development or a diagnosed disability. We provide evaluations for your child's development right in your home. If they qualify, we create a plan and provide services and support to help your child reach their full potential.

Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan

161 Ottawa Avenue NW, Suite 211
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 454-7979
Website: www.epilepsymichigan.org

The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan has a passionate and well-educated staff and a devoted team of volunteers, all of whom contribute to the fight against seizures. We offer a variety of educational, social, and supportive services to promote the goal of "Not Another Moment Lost to Seizures."

Friendship Ministries

Tom VanWingerden, Executive Director
2215 29th St SE #B6
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Phone: (888) 866-8966
Website: www.friendship.org/

Friendship Ministries is a not-for-profit organization that exists to help churches and organizations around the world share God's love with people who have intellectual disability.

Goodwill Industries of Greater Grand Rapids

3035 Prairie St. SW
Grandville, MI 49418
Phone: (616) 532-4200
Website: www.goodwillgr.org

To assist people with disabilities or other barriers to employment to realize their full potential to be self-reliant, self-supporting, contributing members of society. Provides career development, employment and occupational skills training, and job placement services.

Hispanic Center of Western Michigan

1204 Grandville Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 742-0200
www.hispanic-center.org

The Hispanic Center of Western Michigan is a non-profit organization serving the needs of the Latino and broader community. We strive to provide an avenue for education and openness to promote discussion of the distinctions and values of different nationalities and cultures. The Center also focuses on the common thread that unites all people: a desire for understanding and respect of our differences. We believe that this shared human experience connects us all

Hope For Jabez, LLC

Cheri Brockman, Owner/Consultant
Grand Rapids, MI
Phone: (616) 915-3167
Email: cheribrockman@gmail.com
Website: www.hopeforjabezllc.com

Hope For Jabez, LLC is an important resource for understanding, identification, and intervention referrals for the parents/caregivers and individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Please visit the website for additional services such as Mentorship Programs and Case Management Assistance.

Hope Network West Michigan

755 36th St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49548
Phone: (616) 301-8000
Email: talktous@hopenetwork.org
Website: www.hopenetwork.org

Hope Network is a non-profit Christian organization in Michigan that helps people with disabilities live independently. Hope Network provides services for people with brain injury and spinal cord injury, mental illness, developmental disabilities, drug and alcohol addictions, and other disadvantages. Hope Network also provides transportation, low-income housing and job training.

Kent CAN (Collaborative Autism Network)

Kent Intermediate School District
2930 Knapp Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (616) 364-1333
Website: www.kentisd.org/instructional-services/special-education/services/kent-can/

Our Mission Statement: To build a comprehensive model for identification, training, shared resources, and effective practices which promotes collaborative and consistency between families, educators, and community partners in support of our students with ASD.

Michigan Alliance for Families

1325 S. Washington Avenue
Lansing MI 48910
Phone: (734) 994-8100 ext. 1590 and (800) 552-4821
Website: www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Michigan Alliance for Families is a statewide resource to connect families of children with disabilities to resources to help improve their children's education. We help facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities. Michigan Alliance can assist you in knowing your rights, effectively communicating your child's needs, and advising how to help them develop and learn.

Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc.

4095 Legacy Parkway, Suite 500
Lansing, MI 48911
Phone: (517) 487-1755 / (800) 288-5923 (Voice or TTY)
Website: www.mpas.org

Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc. (MPAS) is the independent, private, nonprofit organization designated by the governor of the State of Michigan to advocate and protect the legal rights of people with disabilities in Michigan. MPAS services include information and referral, short-term assistance, selected individual and legal representation, systemic advocacy, monitoring, and training.

MOKA Foundation - Kent County Regional Offices

5281 Clyde Park Avenue SW, Suite 2
Wyoming, MI 49509
Phone: (616) 719-4263 / TTY: (800) 649-3777
Website: www.moka.org

MOKA is a non-profit organization that serves individuals with disabilities in western Michigan. We provide supports and services to assist individuals to become valued members of their communities. We offer treatment in specialized community based homes, training and support to live in your own home, skill building with the goal of employment, skill development and job placement, and family support of children with autism and other disabilities. We believe in gentle teaching and created a gentle culture to treat the individuals we serve with the greatest respect so they feel safe and affirmed.

Network 180

Access Center
790 Fuller Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 336-3909 / Toll Free: (800) 749-7720
Website: www.network180.org

The community mental health authority for Kent County, network180 connects individuals and their families to services for mental illness, substance use disorders or developmental disabilities.

Real Life Living Services (RLLS)

Western Regional Office
2922 Fuller Ave NE #203-B
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
Phone: (616) 272-3064
Website: <http://www.rlls.org/>

Real Life Living Services (RLLS) is a non-profit agency that provides community and home-based care of developmentally and/or physically challenged adults and children, as well as Senior Care. We promote maximum self-sufficiency and services delivered in a dignified and humane manner. Our care staff is hand-picked, thoroughly screened, and insured and bonded. Each individual has undergone numerous background checks to verify that they are trustworthy, punctual, and professional. We offer several types of services, including the following:

- Community Living Support Services
 - Children's Waiver & Respite Services
 - Home Help Services
 - Supported Employment Services
-

Social Security Administration (The)

3045 Knapp Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (877) 319-5710 / TTY: (616) 363-4128
Website: www.socialsecurity.gov

Administers the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. This Federal Government agency provides assistance for completing applications for retirement, survivor, disability and SSI benefits, and Medicare. Make appointments to file by calling 1-800-772-1213 from 7:00 am -7:00 pm, or file on the Internet at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Spectrum Community Services

Western Regional Office

3353 Lousma Dr. SE

Wyoming, MI 49548

Phone: (616) 241-6258

Website: www.spectrumhuman.org

Spectrum Community Services (SCS) was established to provide community-based, residential treatment as an alternative to the institutionalization of mentally and physically disabled individuals. We specialize in community integration by operating residential group homes that provide services specifically for individuals that have developmental, mental and physical disabilities. Mental health services and special assistance are provided to enable individuals to live in the least restrictive environment and to build daily living skills to the individual's maximum level. Our programs include:

- [Adult Foster Care \(Specialty Certified\)](#)
- [Self-Directed Services](#)
- [Community Living Supports](#)
- [Supportive Independent Services](#)
- [Support Coordination](#)
- [Enhanced Health](#)

START (Statewide Autism Resources & Training) Project

401 W. Fulton Street

Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Phone: (616) 331-6480

Email: autismed@gvsu.edu

Website: www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter

START Mission: To work with schools, community partners, and families to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder to become active, engaged members of their schools and local communities and successfully move into adulthood as independent individuals with many choices and opportunities.

Tardive Dyskinesia Center

Phone: (800) 584-6601 (Toll Free)

E-mail: information@tardivedyskinesia.com

Website: www.tardivedyskinesia.com

Information and treatment options for Tardive Dyskinesia (TD). TD is a result of damage to the bodily systems that process dopamine, and is typically caused by exposure to certain neurological medications – including Reglan. Symptoms include involuntary, repetitive movements which often continue after the drug is no longer used. The Center distributes free support books and informational packets.

Thresholds

1225 Lake Drive SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Phone: (616) 774-0853

Website: www.threshnet.org

Thresholds is a non-profit social-service agency that provides assistance to Kent County residents with developmental disabilities. The people we help are actively engaged in making a life for themselves and we're here to support them as they move ahead. Our mission is to enable children and adults who have developmental disabilities to live as productively and independently as possible in the community.

Wrightslaw

Website: www.wrightslaw.com

Website contains information about legal advocacy for children with disabilities. For parents, educators, advocates, and attorneys who want information about special education law, education law, and advocacy. Articles, cases and free resources on many related topics. Has free online newsletter --The Special Ed Advocate.

SCHOOLS – PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

CLC Network (Christian Learning Center)

4340 Burlingame Ave. SW

Wyoming, MI 49509

Phone: (616) 245-8388

Website: www.clcnetwork.org

CLC Network promotes the development of people with a variety of abilities and disabilities to live as active, integrated members of their communities. We partner with families and organizations to understand more fully the individuals we serve and to build support systems that enable their inclusion in all aspects of life.

Kent Intermediate School District Directory:

http://www.kentisd.org/downloads/acct_/00/00/00/39/final_kisd_directory_2014-15_20140929_134931_6.pdf

Kent Intermediate School District (ISD) Special Education Directory:

http://www.kentisd.org/downloads/sped_main/kent_isd_special_ed_directory_20121023_094258_1.pdf

Lake Michigan Academy

2428 Burton SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Phone: (616) 464-3330

Website: www.mylma.org

Lake Michigan Academy strives to transform the lives of children with learning disabilities. We empower students to focus and build their strengths not their weaknesses. Students leave LMA with renewed self-esteem and lifelong tools for success. Our alumni continue to develop learning skills, social skills, and self-awareness techniques which help them become valuable individuals in society.

CHILDCARE, AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS, AND REFERRAL AGENCIES

CARE.COM

Website: www.care.com

Care.com is an online service that helps families find high-quality care providers. We provide a trusted place for families and caregivers—including babysitters, nannies, special needs caregivers, tutors, senior caregivers, pet caregivers, and housekeepers—to easily connect and get advice. We help families find and select the best care possible based on detailed profiles, background checks and references for hundreds of thousands of caregivers. Our job is to help families find great care providers for their children, loved ones and pets whenever they need them!

Kent Regional 4C

233 East Fulton Street, Suite 107
Grand Rapids Michigan 49503
Phone: (800) 448-6995
Email: info@4Cchildcare.org
Website: www.4Cchildcare.org

Kent Regional 4C's purpose is to provide opportunities for young children and youth, and those who care for them, to realize their potential and become caring, self-directed individuals, responsible to themselves and others; to provide resources and support for continuous program quality improvement; and improve those conditions in society that affect children, youth and their families.

United Way's 2-1-1

Website: www.hwmuw.org/211onlinedatabase

Updated yearly by Heart of West Michigan United Way, this website offers detailed program information on services, times, availability, locations, and cost. Offers a comprehensive list of services throughout the community related to health and human services, emergency needs, education, training, and after school programs.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Parent Support Group

Email: asdsuppgrpkentcounty@yahoo.com

The ASD Parent Support Group meets monthly in the evenings during the school year at KISD in the Educational Service Center (ESC). To be added to the contact list for information about future meetings and guest speakers, send an email to asdsuppgrpkentcounty@yahoo.com.

Parent Support Group for Families with Children with Special Needs

Kent County Health Department
Lobby Area - 700 Fuller NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Website: www.accesskent.com

Tuesdays, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm. Children are always welcome! Call/email Chris with questions at (616) 632-7055 or chris.buczek@kentcountymi.gov (share your email address for monthly reminders).

Parent Support Group for Older Teens and Young Adults with Autism

Phone: (616) 752-8577 and (616) 822-0944 (cell phone)
Email: pam@autismsupportofkentcounty.org

If you are a parent or guardian of a teen or young adult with autism, please join us. This is a new support group and we will start taking ideas for topics and planning for speakers. This group will meet monthly at KISD in the Educational Service Center. Notices of meetings will be posted on the ASK website and on the ASK Facebook page. We'd love to have you join us!

Sibling Group

Sessions are held at Family Tree Therapies
2251 East Paris
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Contact Andrea Vugteveen for more information:
Email: amvugteveen@gmail.com or by phone: (616) 460-3781

Groups are facilitated by a social worker who specializes in working with youth. Children will have the opportunity to meet other children who understand the unique experience of having a sibling with special needs, share their experiences and feelings about having a brother or sister with special needs, learn more about their sibling's special needs, learn new ways to cope with the challenges that come with being a sibling of a child with special needs, and have lots of fun!

ART, CAMPS, RECREATION, AND SPORTS

Aerials & Baranis Gymnastics Center

Special Needs Gymnastics Class
6001 Coit NE
Grand Rapids, MI, 49525
Phone: (616) 364-8320
Email: info@aerialsgymgr.com
Website: www.aerialsgymgr.com

Studies have shown that children with special needs can benefit greatly from participating in gymnastics. They build strength, coordination, balance, and overall body control. They will also improve self-confidence, focus, weight control, and social skills.

Gymnastics can also contribute to several positive physical benefits, cognitive benefits, and higher self-esteem and self-confidence. Our experienced instructors have designed a program that will help your child surpass expectations and ultimately have fun and be happy.

Children with the conditions listed below often see vast improvements.

- ADD/ADHD
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Cerebral Palsy
- Developmental Disabilities
- Downs Syndrome
- Speech Disorders

Artists Creating Together (ACT)

1140 Monroe Avenue NW Suite 4101
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 885-5866
Website: www.artistscreatingtogether.org

Artists Creating Together connects Teaching Artists with individuals who have disabilities at all life stages. Our specially trained instructors are professional working artists who provide unique programming to students with differing needs in a variety of settings. From partnership with local rehabilitation hospitals to community-wide educational events, we provide art and creative expression programming and classes that enrich and improve the lives of people with disabilities in every corner of our community.

Arts in Motion Studio

147 Diamond SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Phone: (616) 446-7452
Website: www.artsinmotionstudio.org

Arts in Motion Studio specializes in adaptive instruction in the creative arts for the physically, emotionally or mentally challenged. Our adaptive instruction focuses on the potential for personal expression, not on the rules of technique. By using a variety of styles, music and props, students are able to outwardly express the beauty within. Courses are available for all ages, developmental levels and challenges. Special day camps and additional classes are available in summer.

Gymco Sports

2306 Camelot Ridge Court SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 956-0586
Website: www.gymco.com

Gymco offers **free evaluations** for your student with special needs to determine if private gymnastics lessons or a mainstream gymnastics class would be most beneficial. At Gymco, we focus on teaching skills in small increments and building one skill on another. This allows students to enjoy achieving small successes as each building block is mastered, creating a sense of self-worth and confidence. Participants increase their coordination, auditory processing, cognition and social skills as they gain independence.

Gymco also offers specialized curriculum for schools. When students are transported to our facility, they enter a world of awesome adventure and unique experiences! Join the many school systems that take advantage of Gymco's programs for their students with special needs!

Hearts for the Arts

Shannon Harris, Owner/Instructor
1141 Quarry Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: (616) 450-1922
Email: hearts4thearts@live.com
Website: www.hearts4thearts.com

Hearts for the Arts provides a safe, positive, person-centered environment that celebrates the diversity of artistic expression for all abilities and backgrounds. Our studio is fully handicapped accessible. We work with a variety of specific needs including (but not limited to): developmental and physical disabilities, mental health issues and brain trauma injuries. For those with physical impairments, we also offer unique artistic tools and projects, as well as teach various artistic methods. If you have specific requirements, please contact us prior to your visit so we can accommodate your needs. We welcome those with special needs to attend any of our classes. If you'd like a smaller, low-sensory environment, we also offer weekly Art Therapy classes for all ages and abilities.

Indian Trails Camp

Tim Hileman, Executive Director
O-1859 Lake Michigan Drive
Grand Rapids, MI 49534
Phone: (616) 677-5251
Email: info@indiantrailscamp.org
Website: www.indiantrailscamp.org

For over 50 years, Indian Trails Camp has been committed to offering recreational camping for children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities. Every year, hundreds of children and adults engage in traditional camp activities that hold no barriers. With a carefully controlled camper to staff ratio, campers are able to achieve the highest of their goals. Whether engaging in spring time hikes, talent shows, canoe trips, archery, creative arts, swimming, dramatics, music, dances or celebrating New Year's Eve, the activities are numerous and the results are immeasurable.

Kentwood AYSO VIP (Very Important Player) Soccer

Lynn Denzinger, VIP Coordinator
P.O. Box 888685
Grand Rapids, MI 49588
Phone: (616) 531-2552
E-Mail: vip@kentwoodayso.org

The AYSO Very Important Players (VIP) Program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams. VIP teams may include:

- Blind or visually impaired
- Amputees or with conditions that impair mobility
- Mentally or emotionally challenged
- Autistic
- Down syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy

Teams can have as few as three players and may be co-ed. VIP teams can be put together with players who register based on mobility or ability. Older and younger players can also be separated onto different teams when numbers allow.

Kentwood Parks and Recreation

355 48th Street SE
Kentwood, Michigan 49548
Phone: (616) 656-5279
Email: foxk@ci.kentwood.mi.us
Website: www.yourkprd.org

Adaptive recreation programs, including: bowling league, leisure club, golf league, adaptive biking, creative movement, adaptive swim, rock climbing, Fall Dance, archery, martial arts, and more. Check out all of the exciting new special events and programs we have for you in our Fall 2015 Leisure Times Brochure! Health Form must be on file before participating (available on website). Proud Partners: Hope Network and Mary Free Bed.

Puzzle Partners (a program of Autism Support of Kent County for teens and young adults)

Phone: (616) 752-8577

A friendship/social group for teens and young adults who have Asperger Syndrome, high-functioning autism, or some other social impairment. Puzzle Partners creates a safe space for teens and young adults to belong, try new things, make friends, and expand their horizons. *Past activities:* bowling, writing group with published author, Craig's Cruisers, Griffins hockey Game, baseball game, dinner at restaurants, cooking new recipes, board game nights, learning Zentangle, discussion groups, Grand Rapids Public Museum, pottery, craft sale, building boats from recyclables and floating them down the Grand River, building and launching rockets, decorating gingerbread houses, Sky Zone.

Special Olympics Michigan - Area 11

1239 76th Street SW, Suite E

Byron Center, MI 49315

Phone: (616) 583-1202

Email: area11@somi.org

Website: www.somi.org/area11/

The mission of Special Olympics Michigan is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Athletes develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy while participating in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship among their families, Special Olympics athletes and the community. Athletes achieve their dreams with the support of caring volunteers, coaches, family members and staff. Donations from individuals and businesses provide funding for the program.

YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin

Respite Weekends for Young Adults with Special Needs -- Age 18-30

1095 N. Briggs Rd.

Middleville, MI 49333

Phone: (888) 909-2267

Email: camp@gymca.org

Website: <https://www.gymca.org/camp-manitou-lin/>

Respite weekends allow family to rest and relax while campers find new independence, make life-long friends and have fun. Campers will stay in heated, carpeted cabins. Activities include archery, canoeing, arts and crafts, hiking, hayrides and more. Campers should be independent in the bathroom. Approval and preregistration required.

YMCA Family Hope

YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids – Spartan Stores YMCA

5722 Metro Way

Wyoming MI 49519

Phone: (616) 885-5500

Email: familyhope@gymca.org

Website: <https://www.gymca.org/>

YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids, in partnership with Hope Network and local parent support groups, is expanding the services available for young adults on the autistic spectrum and their families. The new YMCA Family Hope program hosts monthly events, which give parents and young adults diagnosed with autism the opportunity to participate in social and physical activity, garner emotional support, and have time for respite. Each session is designed to incorporate both social and physical activities for both young adults and their parents. The first hour is structured to include physical activity, which is selected by the participants. The second hour is set aside for socialization, games and respite. Monthly meetings are held on the third Friday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Spartan Stores YMCA. The YMCA Family Hope events are free to both Y members and non-members.

THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

Autism Asperger Associates of Michigan

Kristen Priem
7027 10 Mile Rd NE
Rockford, MI 49341
Phone: (616) 780-1358
Website: www.autism-asperger-associates.com

Experienced behavior analyst and educator, teaches practical social skills and helps build friendships in a fun and data based instructional format. Parents in all social classes can mingle and borrow books from our extensive library! Individual consultation available to parents as needed.

Behavior Analysts of West Michigan

2142 Three Mile Road
Walker, MI 49544
Phone: (616) 915-2066
Email: margie@bawmi.com
Website: www.bawmi.com/

Professional group dedicated to promoting the science of Applied Behavior Analysis and enhancing the professional development of Behavior Analysts (BCBA's and those in training) in the greater Grand Rapids, Michigan region. Behavior Analysts of West Michigan provide ABA therapy for children with autism, ages 2-14. We are center-based program.

Behavior Health Partners

5242 Plainfield Avenue NE, Suite A
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (616) 363-2200
Website: www.behaviorhealthpartners.com/

Behavior Health Partners specializes in the assessment and treatment of behavior and learning challenges of childhood and adolescence. Serving youth with a wide range of developmental and behavior difficulties, their practice uses a collaborative model to provide services including academic accommodations, behavior plans, individual behavior therapy, parent education and training, school consultation, and strategy development for children to learn new and more appropriate skills. Specific services include: psychological and educational assessments, individual therapy, parent coaching, academic intervention, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and specialty group interventions.

Behavioral Resources and Institute for Neuropsychological Services (BRAINS)

3292 North Evergreen Dr. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (616) 365-8920
Website: www.brainspotential.com

Our highly qualified and experienced psychologists and therapists provide expertise in a variety of areas, including specialization with children through adults. Our services are extensive, including neuropsychological and diagnostic assessments, counseling, behavioral interventions, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language therapy, neurofeedback, Special Education consultation, workshops, and specialized tutoring.

Center for Childhood Development (The)

7086 8th Avenue

Jenison, MI 49428

Phone: (616) 667-9551

Website: www.thecenterforcd.com

The Center for Childhood Development is a multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment center located in West Michigan. Our multi-disciplinary team of occupational therapists, speech therapists, and psychologists has extensive experience in working with children, birth through adolescence, and their families. By looking at the child's individual developmental profile, we work to assist the family in determining their child's optimal treatment plan. Through collaborative efforts with the child's family, school, and community professionals, our goal is to maximize a child's adaptation/functioning within these environments.

Comprehensive Therapy Center, Inc.

Jean Silbar, Executive Director

2505 Ardmore SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Phone: (616) 559-1054

Website: www.therapycenter.org

Comprehensive Therapy Center offers the West Michigan community speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, sensory integration and motor therapies. Therapy and Fun, our award-winning summer outreach program, and our school-based special education services help more than 300 children with special needs each year. Therapists and teachers also offer individual sessions, academic tutoring specializing in learning disabilities and brain injury, and educational classes for caregivers. Accredited by CARF, CTC's mission is to provide therapeutic and advisory programs to individuals through skill building, academic enhancement, and social and emotional support. We help people walk, talk, learn and play – so they can read, write and work.

Developmental Enhancement

7086 8th Ave

Jenison, MI 49428

Phone: (616) 667-9551

Website: www.developmentalenhancement.com/

We provide state-of-the-art developmental and mental health services for children and adolescents with all types of problems. Our psychologists and social workers are specially trained and highly experienced professionals who are specialists in childhood development, neurodevelopmental disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders, mental health concerns, behavioral challenges, learning and performance, and early intervention. We are closely affiliated (and located in the same building) with The Center for Childhood Development which allows us to integrate occupational therapy, speech language therapy, and physical therapy for children.

Easter Seals of Michigan, Inc.

West Michigan Therapy Center

4065 Saladin Dr. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Phone: (616) 942-2081

Website: www.essmichigan.org

Offers an eight week individual occupational therapy program for children 0-12 years of age and group sensory programs for children. Programs aim to increase children's self-confidence, communication, speech and language, focus, and gross and fine motor skills through a sensory integration-based approach. Also offers Sensory Summer Camps.

EnCourage Institute for Teaching and Learning

2845 Wilson Ave. SW, Suite D
Grandville, MI 49418
Phone: (616) 530-2224
Website: www.encourageinstitute.com

Our Mission is to provide expert instruction to all students, helping them grow into successful life-long learners. We provide a model of academic intervention that is most closely aligned with Educational Therapy and is specific to each student's unique learning strengths and needs. We design instructional interventions based on diagnostic assessments, and use strategic interventions that are the best research-based practices available. We are not bound by a franchised program, but are free to use whatever instruction will really match the learner. Additionally, we are a resource center for parents, teachers, and administrators. We provide short-term and long-term consultation, teacher development opportunities, and private assessment and tutoring services.

Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding

3777 Rector Ave. NE
Rockford, MI 49341
Phone: (616) 866-3066
Website: www.equestcenter.org

We improve quality of life through equine-based therapy to physically, mentally & socially/emotionally challenged individuals. Our unique program integrates academic, social and physical skills, using the horse as a catalyst. Equest is a Member Center of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International ~ "PATH International" and is one of only 3 therapeutic riding programs in Michigan that owns its own farm. Our facility is the ONLY year-round facility in the area which is a critical piece for many individuals with disabilities. This helps to prevent regression and foster greater physical, mental, emotional and social improvement and benefits experienced due to a consistent riding therapy schedule throughout the year.

Family Tree Therapies

2251 East Paris Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 447-7799
Website: www.familytreetherapies.com

We are a private therapy office providing speech and occupational therapy, parent coaching and Positive Discipline workshops. We are available for speaking engagements on a range of topics including: Positive Discipline, Reflex Integration, Feeding Therapy, Tummy Time, Learning through Play and more! We service birth through age 18 for developmental challenges. Adults with a diagnosis of Autism, Down Syndrome, or voice pathologies are welcome for evaluation and treatment options. Sibshops (run by Andrea Vugteveen) are also offered.

Franciscan Life Process Center

11650 Downes Street
Lowell, MI 49331
Phone: (616) 897-7842
Website: www.lifeprocesscenter.org

The Franciscan Life Process Center, a religiously-oriented non-profit organization, is located on a 230 acre site thirteen miles east of Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is a non-residential facility which houses day, evening, and weekend programs. The individual programs and types of services provided are: Counseling, Music Therapy, Music Education, Preschool, Art, Individual/Group Retreats, and a Volunteer Program. A unique aspect of the Center is its location on a working Michigan farm. The orchard, nature trails, woods, and animals are sometimes integrated into different aspects of programming.

Hope Discovery ABA Services LLC

1454 Forrester St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Phone: (616) 970-4172
Website: <http://www.hopediscoveryabaservices.com/>

Scott Horton M.Ed., BCBA received his undergraduate degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Education from Aquinas College. He completed course work for Applied Behavior Analysis from George Mason University. Scott has 9 years' experience as a special education teacher. He has worked with children with various developmental, communication, social and behavioral needs.

Hope Network Center for Autism

Hope Network Behavioral Health
3361 36th Street SE
Kentwood, MI 49512
Phone: (616) 942-2522
Website: www.hopenetwork.org/autism

Located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Hope Network Center for Autism is where we diagnose and treat autism spectrum disorders (ASD), providing comprehensive outpatient treatment with an emphasis on evidence-based, early intervention, and ABA therapies with children as young as age two. The Center for Autism is West Michigan's leading provider of early autism diagnosis and early intensive behavioral intervention / ABA therapy for autism.

Horizons Developmental Remediation Center

Nicole Beurkens, Director
3120 68th Street SE
Caledonia, MI 49316
Phone: (616) 698-0306
Website: www.horizonsdrc.com

The Horizons Developmental Resource Center provides family-focused treatment for developmental disabilities including autism, communication problems, speech and language problems, feeding problems, sensory-motor problems, and behavior problems. Our team specializes in comprehensive evaluation of emotional, behavior, learning, communication, relational, and sensory processing challenges. We utilize a wide variety of formal and informal assessment tools to gain a complete picture of each patient's functioning.

Kent Special Riding Program

9705 Morse Lake Road
Alto, MI 49302
Phone: (616) 891-0057 and (616) 891-8066
Email: k srp.org@gmail.com
Website: www.kentspecialridingprogram.org/

Kent Special Riding Program is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high quality therapeutic and recreational horseback riding instruction to physically, mentally, and emotionally challenged individuals in Kent and surrounding counties. KSRP strives to maximize the potential of all individuals involved in the program in a safe and stimulating environment.

Legacy Stables/Karin's Horse Connection

Karin Schmidt
8001 Patterson Ave. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316
Phone: (616) 498-7028
Email: karinhorses@gmail.com
Website: www.karinhorses.com

The mission of Karin's Horse Connection at Legacy Stables is to share our passion for horses and enable anyone who seeks to experience the joy of the human-horse connection. We offer horse lovers a full range of equestrian activities in a safe, relaxing and family friendly environment. While we cater to new and inexperienced riders, we serve all ages, skill levels and disciplines. Our highly qualified staff works with 20 well-trained, gentle horses to provide a wide variety of riding programs, equestrian vaulting and therapeutic riding.

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital

235 Wealthy St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (800) 528-8989
Website: www.maryfreebed.com

Pediatric Therapy Services. Provides services for children presenting multiple therapy needs in a one-to-one setting. May focus on motor, cognitive, or perceptual skills based on need.

Neurocore

1971 East Beltline NE Suite 204
Grand Rapids MI 49525
Phone: (616) 228-0707
Website: <https://www.theneurocore.com>

3148 44th St SW
Grandville MI 49418
Phone: (616) 228-0770
Website: <https://www.theneurocore.com>

Neurocore Brain Performance Centers specialize in data-driven, brain-based diagnostics and treatments that help children and adults improve concentration, sleep better, and manage stress. Using data from quantitative electroencephalography (qEEG), along with other physiological measures, Neurocore gains a deep understanding of why a person's health and well-being may be compromised. Neurocore has provided diagnostic qEEG to over 10,000 children and adults. Once the diagnosis is completed, Neurocore uses proven neurofeedback therapy to train the brain to operate more efficiently.

Paws with a Cause

4646 Division Avenue South
Wayland, MI 49348
Phone: (800) 253-7297
Website: www.pawswithacause.org

Service Dogs for children with autism act as constant companions to help them improve social interactions and relationships, expand verbal and nonverbal communication, teach life skills, increase interest in activities, and decrease stress within the family. A PAWS Dog doesn't pass judgment, but breaks into the world of autism and becomes a crucial part of the family's life.

Sensory Learning Center of West Michigan

11301 Commerce Road, Suite A
Allendale, Michigan 49401
Phone: (616) 895-9550
Website: www.wmsensorylearningcenter.com

The Sensory LearningSM Program is a supra-modal approach to developmental learning that unites three modalities (auditory, visual and vestibular) into one 30-day drug-free intervention to improve perception, understanding, and the ability to learn. This program is for children and adults alike. Preceding the intervention, a listening profile and visual-motor measurements are taken. These "perception" maps help provide baselines that are used to customize the Program for the individual. These evaluations are done throughout the Program to track improvement in sensory regulation.

Specialized Language Development (SLD) Center

2650 Horizon DR SE -- Suite 230
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 361-1182
Website: www.sldcenter.org

SLD Read is a nonprofit community resource serving West Michigan. Our vision is a community working together for literacy that empowers all individuals to achieve their full potential. To reach this vision, we help individuals with dyslexia, learning differences, and other reading challenges to develop lifelong language skills through our multisensory program. We assist educators to identify learning challenges and provide training and techniques to enhance their reading curriculum. We increase community awareness and understanding of literacy issues.

Vision and Sensory Center

4467 Byron Center Avenue SW
Wyoming, MI 49519
Phone: (616) 534-4953
Website: www.vscenter.com

The Vision and Sensory Center strives to help each person coordinate the visual system with the body so that it may operate at its most efficient potential. Our approach is developmental; engaging our bodies and movement in the visual process, integrating vision with our other senses, and learning to think visually. Our patients work one on one with a therapist who guides the learning process. We want our patient's brains to learn to "see it", "integrate it" and "own it" for themselves.

PSYCHIATRIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Dr. Matthew Clark, Clinical Psychologist

The Clark Institute: Psychotherapy for Children and Adults
161 Ottawa Ave NW, Suite 300-C
Grand Rapids, MI 495043
Phone: (616) 458-0692
Website: <http://www.theclarkinstitute.com>

The Clark Institute Offers Expert Help for Adults and Children with Social Challenges, Emotional Development, Family Problems, and Identity Issues. Therapies and Workshops at the Clark Institute are based on Empirically Supported Parent-Child Relationship, Behavior Management, Pervasive Developmental, and Sensory Integration Techniques and Theories.

**Helen DeVos Children's Hospital
Pediatric Psychology**

35 Michigan Street NE
Floor 3, Suite 3003
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
Phone: (616) 267-2830
Website: www.helendevoschildrens.org/psychology

Brittany Barber-Garcia, PhD
Licensed Psychologist

Steven L. Pastyrnak, PhD
Division Chief

Licensed Psychologist. Special Interests: Infant and toddler development, ADHD, anxiety disorders, autism spectrum disorders, cognitive behavioral therapy, pediatric research

Dr. Mark Hinshaw, MD, Psychiatrist

Psychology Associates of Grand Rapids, PC
1000 Parchment Dr. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 957-9197

Diagnostics, prescription medication.

Dr. Michael D. Ruch, PhD, Psychologist

3300 Burton St. SE, Suite B
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 957-2576
Website: www.drMichaelRuch.com

Dr. Robert J. Shaffer, M.A., Ph.D.

Human Resource Associates
Suite 300-C, Waters Building
161 Ottawa NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 458-0692 and (800) 237-2673
Website: www.hresource.com

Child psychology, school issues, children with serious medical problems, adolescent behavior issues, learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, assessment and therapy, and family counseling. Hospital privileges at Butterworth, Blodgett, and Forest View. 20 years of experience.

Dr. William Walters, DO, Psychiatrist

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services
3225 N. Evergreen Drive
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (866) 852-4001
Website: www.pinerest.org

NEUROLOGISTS

Dr. Jason T. Umfleet, M.D.

Pediatric Neurologist
Helen DeVos Children's Hospital
35 Michigan Street NE Suite 3003
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 267-2500
Website: www.spectrumhealth.org

DEVELOPMENTAL - BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICIANS

Dr. Anthony J. Richtsmeier

Behavioral Pediatrician
Helen DeVos Children's Hospital
35 Michigan Street NE -- Floor 4, Suite 4150
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 267-2850
Website: www.helendevoschildrens.org

Children with behavioral and developmental challenges require specialized care and treatment. Our behavioral pediatrics program helps parents and caregivers evaluate and treat a variety of behavioral/developmental problems, which include a variety of early childhood disturbances of behavior and development. Our practice is has limited availability and is currently limited to consultative referrals for evaluation and management of toddlers, preschool, and early school age children (Age 5 and under) who have developmental/behavioral challenges.

PEDIATRICIANS

Dr. Lisa Brown

Cascade Pediatrics
5150 Cascade Road SE, Suite B
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 940-3168
Website: <http://www.cascadepediatrics.com/>

Dr. William Bush

Forest Hills Pediatrics
877 Forest Hill Ave SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 949-4465
Website: www.foresthillspediatrics.com

Dr. Dana Leary

Pediatrics Associates of Kentwood, P.C.
4444 Kalamazoo Avenue SE Suite 103
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Phone: (616) 281-5800
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/PAK4Kids>

Dr. Tiffany Letts

Metro Health Southwest
2215 44th Street SW
Wyoming, MI 49519
Phone: (616) 252-8300
Website: <https://metrohealth.net>

Dr. Erika Pott

SHMG Pediatrics - GR
1545 68th Street -- Suite 100
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Phone: (616) 267-7881
Website: www.spectrumhealth.org

DENTAL SERVICES

Thomas J. Burdo, DDS

1100 4 Mile Road NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49544-7397
Phone: (616) 784-6377
Website: www.burdodds.com

Working together with St. Mary's Hospital, Dr. Burdo and his staff provide exceptional care and extra attention for patients with special needs, both children and adults alike. Dr. Burdo is one of a few dentists in West Michigan with hospital privileges to serve special needs patients who, for a variety of reasons, cannot tolerate dental care in an office setting.

Amy K. DeYoung, DDS

3297 Eagle Run Drive NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (616) 447-7900
Website: www.akidsdds.com

Jonathan Eagle, DDS

2872 East Beltline NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: (616) 361-9330
Website: www.eagledds.com

Richard J. Elias DDS

535 Greenwood Ave. SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Phone: (616) 458-2048 / Cell and Emergency: (616) 516-6856
Website: www.RichardEliasdds.com

Dr. Elias and his staff display great qualities and attributes to special needs patients. Our laid back personalities, patience, and willingness to accept the disability and work with it, rather than against it, allow us to make remarkable progress in special needs dentistry. We actively treat many patients with autism, making profound progress with each and every one of them – individually, and as a family. We find special needs dentistry to be remarkably rewarding. Dr. Elias has been the president of Autism Support of Kent County since 2007.

Partners in Dental Care

Timothy H. Gietzen, DDS
Shawn M. Dial, DDS
Christine M. Mason, DDS
Matthew K. Gietzen, DDS
2565 Forest Hill Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 949-0230
Website: www.partnersindentalcare.com

Robert C. Payne, DDS

Pediatric Dentistry
1179 East Paris SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 942-9840
Website: www.pediatrictoothdoc.com

Specialist in dentistry for infants, children, teens, and young patients with special needs.

Smilie's Pediatric Dentistry

Dr. Douglas Ladue, DDS
2017 Eastcastle SE Suite A
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Phone: (616) 455-4646

Dentistry for Infants, Children, Teens, Medically Compromised and Special Needs Children

Valleau, VanDeven & Massie

Dentistry for Children
2000 43rd Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Phone: (616) 455-1301
Website: www.vvandmkidsdentistry.com

At Valleau, VanDeven, and Massie Dentistry for Children, we recognize that providing comprehensive preventive and therapeutic oral health care to individuals with special health care needs is an integral part of the specialty of pediatric dentistry. We respect the unique qualities of each individual and the need to ensure optimal health for all, regardless of a special health care need.

LEGAL SERVICES

Daniel Blauw - Attorney

2020 Raybrook SE, #204A
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 336-5098
Email: danblauw@iserv.net
Website: <http://www.blauwkirkpatricklaw.com/>

Attorneys Dan Blauw and Sarah Kirkpatrick assist clients with a wide range of disability-related matters, such as petitioning for legal guardianship, setting up supportive housing, and drafting special needs trusts. They frequently work with the parents of special needs children to create comprehensive estate plans that incorporate special needs trusts.

Law Office of Thomas A. Geelhoed

Social Security Disability Lawyer
600 McKay Tower
146 Monroe Center NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 454-0300

Howard Law Group

25 Ionia Ave. SW Suite 230
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-6415
Phone: (616) 235-6000
Website: www.howardlawgr.com

Lauretta K. Murphy, Attorney

Miller Johnson
Calder Plaza Building
250 Monroe Avenue NW Suite 800
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2250
Phone: (616) 831-1733
Website: www.millerjohnson.com

Special Needs Planning. Ms. Murphy believes that every person deserves the highest level of respect and consideration. Her practice also includes planning to maximize resources for people with disabilities and special needs. Ms. Murphy prepares trusts to protect people with disabilities so they can maintain government benefits while family funds are used to enhance quality of life. She works with disabled people who receive funds from insurance proceeds and money judgments to draft and fund special needs trusts specifically authorized by state and federal law to shelter assets.

C. Jill Smith-Goodell, PLLC

2525 East Paris SE -- Suite 100
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (616) 204-3316
Website: www.smith-goodell.com

Services include: Special Needs Trusts, Durable Power of Attorneys, and Guardianships,

W. Michael Van Haren - Attorney**Warner Norcross & Judd LLP**

900 Fifth Third Center / 111 Lyon Street NW

Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2487

Phone: (616) 752-2125

Website: www.wnj.com

Westerbeke Law Firm, PLLC

4595 Broadmoor Ave SE -- Suite 237

Grand Rapids, MI 49512

Phone: (616) 965-2060

Website: www.michiganlegacyplan.com

We help clients with Special Needs Trusts, Guardianships, Conservatorships, and related matters.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

David Knooihuizen, MBA, CLTC

Mass Mutual Financial Group

3152 Peregrine Drive NE #110

Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Phone: (616) 447-7665

Website: www.massmutual.com

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Family Hope Foundation

Lara Kitts

7086 8th Avenue

Jenison, MI 49428

Phone: (616) 780-3839

Website: www.thefamilyhopefoundation.org

Family Hope Foundation invests in children with special needs through family support, engaging community experts, advocacy through collaboration, and financial assistance to provide access to therapies.

Michael P. Lettinga Pediatric Fund

Hope Network Foundation

P. O. Box 890

Grand Rapids, MI 49518

Website: www.hopenetwork.org/projects/michael-p-lettinga-pediatric-fund

Despite increasing access to care, remaining gaps in health insurance funding means that Hope Network's life-changing therapies are still out of reach for many children in need. As a member of Hope Network Foundation's Board of Directors, as well as the caring father of Crystal and Coral, Michael Lettinga championed the needs of children throughout his life. In honor of Michael's passionate commitment to children with developmental and cognitive disabilities, the Michael P. Lettinga Pediatric Fund provides scholarships to deserving families and ensures Hope Network's transformational care reaches all children in need.

HOUSING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Benjamin's Hope

15468 Riley Street
Park Township, MI 49424
Phone: (616) 399-6293
Website: www.benjaminshope.net

Benjamin's Hope is a first of its kind community model designed to address the multifaceted needs of individuals and families affected by autism and developmental disability. A vibrant, interactive community where people with extraordinary needs realize a future of meaning, security and hope. Our mission is to be an embracing natural setting where people with disability and the community gather for Christ-centered fellowship, treatment, housing and meaningful work.

Homes for Autism

P.O. Box 904
Birmingham, MI 48012
Phone: (586) 477-0493
Email: info@homesforautism.org
Website: www.homesforautism.org

Homes for Autism has provided seven residences that encourage and provide independent living to adults with autistic challenges - giving the freedom of independent living to our members and peace of mind to their families. We own homes in Wayne, Oakland, Livingston, and Washtenaw counties. We also helped establish a home in Monroe County and an apartment in Oakland County. We're flexible. **We will build or buy a home anywhere in the state.** Through management of housing needs, we help those with autism to develop their talents so that they and their families can enjoy long-term security and care. Families who benefit from Homes for Autism's residential program become an important part of the Homes for Autism network. Families volunteer their time, support one another and, through Homes for Autism, they are informed of national, state, and local issues regarding autism.

LIFE COACHING SERVICE

Social Incites, LLC

Laurel and Steve Falvo
384 W 33rd Street
Holland, MI 49423
Phone: (616) 422-5886 and (616) 706-6958 (cell)
Website: <http://socialincites.com/>

Social Coaching (individual and group), Parent/Family Coaching, Job Coaching, Presentations, Autism Information and Support. Providing personalized, proactive insights which incite (encourage) personal and interpersonal growth. More than social awareness... we provide information and services that promote effective social interactions.

TOYS AND THERAPY PRODUCTS

Discovery Toys

Denise Spratt
1896 Ridgeview Street
Jenison, MI 49428
Phone: (616) 667-8565
Email: denisespratt.dt@gmail.com

Discovery Toys is committed to bringing fun, safe and developmentally appropriate toys and products to children and adults of all abilities. Children with developmental disabilities, such as autism, develop at a unique rate and pattern of development. Our products have useful applications for children and adults with developmental disabilities

OTvest, LLC

Phone: (269) 329-3287
Email: otvest@otvest.com
Website: www.otvest.com

Weighted vests are used as a means of applying deep pressure, which can be helpful in decreasing purposeless behaviors, hyperactivity, and inattention (often seen in autistic and ADHD children and those with sensory processing difficulties). The deep pressure applied by the OTvest™ has a calming effect upon children that is comfortable to them, and provides an alternative or adjunct to medication.

Peaceful Product

Grandville, MI
Phone: (616) 805-8716
Website: www.peacefulproduct.com

I specialize in custom made weighted blankets, throws, and lap pads. I also have medical grade material for use in hospitals and dental offices.

Therapy Shoppe Inc.

P. O. Box 8875
Grand Rapids, MI 49518
Phone: (800) 261-5590 / (616) 696-7441
Email: info@therapysshoppe.com
Website: www.therapysshoppe.com

On our site you will find a wonderful assortment of therapy merchandise: specialty toys and games, hard-to-find favorites, innovative new products you haven't even heard of yet, and lots of other great goodies and gadgets. We're looking forward to serving you and to providing one of the most exciting and inclusive selections of therapy products anywhere. We are an Occupational Therapist-owned and operated company, celebrating our 15th year serving therapists, families, teachers, and others.

GLUTEN FREE-CASEIN FREE FOODS

Harvest Health Foods

Website: www.harvesthealthfoods.com

Store Locations:

6807 Cascade Road SE
Grand Rapids MI, 49546
(616) 975-7555

1944 Eastern Ave SE
Grand Rapids, MI
(616) 245-6268

4150 32nd Ave.
Hudsonville MI, 49426
(616) 896-6630

Harvest Health Foods is here to provide you with the finest quality fresh, natural, organic and whole foods, nutritional products, body care products and health information in a fun comfortable clean, safe environment. Make us your doorway to total health.

Penn Street Bakery

A Division of Savory Foods, Inc.

900 Hynes SW

Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Phone: (800) 84-CAKES or (616) 241-2583

Website: <http://www.pennstreetbakery.com/glutenfree.asp>

Savory Foods has been producing delicious wholesome gourmet confections and baked goods to the food service and retail industry for over 20 years. When our owner was diagnosed with gluten intolerance, we set out to create a "delicious" line of gluten free products that could truly be called gourmet! Nearly one in every four people has intolerance to gluten or celiac disease. At Savory Foods we adhere to the strictest quality and testing standards exceeding those set by the industry. We believe our products provide you with a satisfying taste experience and declare that life truly can be Gluten Free-licious™.
