

MICHIGAN FAMILY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER



STATE'S FIRST URGENT CARE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH OPENS

A new center offering mental health services to children and youth across Michigan opened last month. Located on Pine Rest's campus in Grand Rapids, the new Pediatric Center for Behavioral Health will treat children with a variety of conditions including anxiety, depression, substance use and eating disorders.

The facility was designed to expand access to specialized mental health care for children and adolescents across Michigan. Behavioral health challenges among children and teens have increased in recent years, leaving Michigan families struggling to find timely access to care.

The facility includes a Pediatric Psychiatric Urgent Care Center, the first of its kind in Michigan. They provide same-day assessments and short-term stabilization for children experiencing acute behavioral health crises.

Prior to the opening of the center, families often did not know where to turn to when their child was in crisis. Children often ended up with lengthy stays in emergency rooms, which are not able to provide appropriate care.



The new center was designed with the needs of children and adolescents in mind. It offers many features to support treatment and recovery, including sensory rooms, calming spaces and recreation areas. In addition to urgent care, families can receive different levels of care in one place, including outpatient, inpatient, and partial hospitalization programs.

The facility was paid for with a combination of public and private funding and meets a longstanding critical need for Michigan families. Learn more about the Center at the [Pine Rest Center website](#).

**SPRING
2026**

A newsletter for families of children and youth with special health care needs, and the professionals who care for them.

Connecting you with information and news you can use.

A virtual publication brought to you by the Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and the Michigan Family to Family Health Information Center

**YOUR
MENTAL
HEALTH
MATTERS.
YOU
MATTER.**

MICHIGAN'S FAMILY SUPPORT SUBSIDY PROGRAM

The Michigan Family Support Subsidy (FSS) Program supports families caring for a child with developmental disabilities at home by providing a monthly payment to assist with expenses. The subsidy may also be used to help bring a child home from an outside placement.

What Can the Subsidy Be Used For?

Families decide how best to spend their Family Support Subsidy payment. They may choose, for example, to use their monthly payment (currently \$300.36) to cover therapies, specialized equipment, transportation, respite care, or home modifications.

Who May Be Eligible?

Families may be eligible for the Michigan Family Support Subsidy if they have a child under age 18 who has been identified by Michigan's public school system as having an educational eligibility category of:

- Severe Cognitive Impairment (SCI)
- Severe Multiple Impairment (SXI)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD eligible students must be receiving services in an ASD, SCI, or SXI designated program.

- Families may be birth parents, adoptive parents, or legal guardians. Foster parents are not eligible unless they are also the child's legal guardian.
- The family's Michigan taxable income may not exceed \$60,000, and families cannot receive both the Family Support Subsidy and the Medical Subsidy Program for Adoptive Children at the same time.

How to Apply

Families apply through their local [Community Mental Health Services Program](#) (CMHSP). For more information visit the [Family Support Subsidy program website](#).



MI-LEND LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPORTUNITY 2026-27 COHORT APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 1, 2026

MI-LEND stands for Michigan Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities.

It is a year-long leadership training program that trains people from different health-related disciplines, people with disabilities, and family members.

The goal of the MI-LEND program is to improve the health of infants, children, and adolescents who have neurodevelopmental disabilities.

MI-LEND's diverse trainees can be:

- enrolled in, or recently completed, a graduate program in one of many Maternal Child Health professions; or
- a person with a disability (self-advocate); or
- a parent or family member of a person with one or more disabilities or special health care needs.

To be a MI-LEND trainee for the upcoming 2026-27 cohort, apply by May 1, 2026.

[Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

PARENTS PARTNERING FOR CHANGE LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



Do you want to make a difference?

If you are a Michigan parent or caregiver of a child under the age of 18, and you have received specialty public services in Michigan, you are invited to apply for this leadership training opportunity. You'll gain knowledge, skills, and the motivation to get involved and affect the local and state-wide programs that impact families with special health care needs.

Participants who attend all three days will receive a \$200 stipend. Childcare reimbursement is available if needed.

Topics are:

- Sharing your story for impact
- What it means to be a parent leader
- Building your communication skills
- Handling conflict effectively
- How boards/committees operate

The Parent Leadership in State Government initiative is sponsored by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Children's Trust MI, and MI Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential.

May 4, 11, and 18
9:00–12:30pm

[To Register Click Here](#)

SUMMER FUN: ADAPTIVE BICYCLES AND TRICYCLES

Warmer weather means summer fun in Michigan. One popular activity for children of all abilities is bike riding. For some kids, this requires an adaptive bike. Like other special equipment, the higher cost of an adaptive bike is a barrier for some families. Below are some resources that may be able to help.

Children with Special Needs Fund covers equipment, including some adaptive trikes, when other funding sources are not available. Children must be under 21 years of age and enrolled in, or eligible for Children's Special Health Care Services. Application and details are available on the [CSN Fund website](#).

AMBUCS sells and donates Amtrike trikes. They offer payment assistance through their local chapters. [Contact your local chapter](#) for more information. If there isn't a chapter near you, you can enroll your child on the AMBUCS [National Wish List](#).

Lori's Voice helps with equipment costs for children up to age 21 years with neurologic, muscular, or neuro-degenerative disorders with physical limitations for families in Michigan. Information on how to apply is available on [Lori's Voice website](#).



Mary Free Bed Guild sponsors [Bikes for the Rest of Us](#), an annual adaptive bike event. Pre-registered families are paired with therapists who match their physical need with the most appropriate bicycle.

Michigan Elks Association – Major Project exists to help special needs children in Michigan by raising funds to help with therapies, equipment, technology, and scholarships to camp. Contact the [Major Project website](#) for more information.

Other organizations that may help: [Elks](#), [Kiwanis](#), [Lions Clubs](#), [Knights of Columbus](#), and [Rotary International](#). Contact your local chapter for more information.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

Would you be willing to talk with a parent who is seeking support from someone who is experienced in caring for a child with their child's diagnosis or care needs?

The Family Support Network (FSN) is looking for volunteers to be matched 1:1 with other families. Matches can be made by diagnosis, where you live, what kind of surgeries and treatments you are familiar with, or any other kind of support or service you have experienced.

You could make a difference for a family that's feeling overwhelmed and alone. To learn more, contact Amy Fontaine: fontainea@michigan.gov or call the Family Phone Line 800-359-3722

FSN SUPPORT GROUPS

The Family Support Network (FSN) is now hosting online support groups for families of children and youth with special health care needs. These small online groups offer a safe, judgement-free space to share freely about the joys and challenges of raising a child with special health care needs with peers who truly understand.

Groups for Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship families are starting soon. A group for the U.P. and a dads group are in the works.

To find a group that fits your needs and schedule, contact Amy Fontaine: fontainea@michigan.gov or call the Family Phone Line 800-359-3722.

UPCOMING ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Family Center Learning Opportunities for spring 2026 are listed below. Anyone interested is welcomed to attend. Register at the links below or on the [Family Center website](#). Each webinar provides resources, information, and skill development on topics related to children and youth with special health care needs and their families.



A Parent Panel Discussion: Navigating Wills, Trusts, and Guardianship

Parent panelists will share their lived experiences and challenges to help you learn about some of the options available for your child and family.

Date: April 22, 2026, 3:00 to 4:30 pm **Registration:** <https://redcap.link/Parentvoices>

Navigating Healthcare in Schools: Understanding Student Health Plans

Dayna Bennett, MSN, School Nurse Consultant from the Michigan Department of Education will provide an in-depth discussion on school health plans.

Date: May 12, 2026, 10:00 to 11:00 am or 7:00 to 8:00 pm (Two options)

Registration for 10:00 am: <https://redcap.link/SchoolHealthPlan>

Registration for 7:00 pm: <https://redcap.link/SchoolHealthPlansPM>

Beyond the Diagnosis: A Parent Panel of Dads

Our panel of dads share their lived experience - the raw, the real, and the remarkable, and to remind others they aren't alone.

Date: May 20, 2026, 4:00 to 5:00 pm **Registration:** <https://redcap.link/DadPanel>

SAVE THE DATE: Sibshops Facilitator Training, Grand Rapids, MI

September 25 & 26, 2026

Complete this training to become a certified Sibshops facilitator to start Sibshops in your area. For more information call the Family Phone Line 800-359-3722 and/or email Aleisha at: Leavittal@michigan.gov.

FAMILY CENTER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS STILL AVAILABLE

Family Center 2026 Camp Scholarships (up to \$500) are still available to families with a child under age 21 who has special health care needs. Scholarships will be awarded until funds are depleted.

Applications can be downloaded from the Family Center website, [linked here](#). For questions, call the Family Phone Line 800-359-3722.



MICHIGAN FAMILY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTERS

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WHO WE ARE

The Michigan Family to Family (MI F2F) Health Information Center is a federally funded project*.



MI F2F* shares resources and information on disability and health issues with families of children and youth with special health care needs in Michigan. MI F2F also works with health and other professionals. MI F2F helps families make informed decisions and supports families to partner with professionals.

For more information and resources, look for us on Facebook or visit our website.

[MI Family to Family Website](#)
and Facebook group



*This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The contents are those of the Michigan Family to Family staff and do not represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. The sharing of resources is for your consideration only. Use at your own discretion.

The Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (Family Center) is the statewide parent-

directed center within the Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) Division at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).*



The primary role of the Family Center is to offer emotional support, information, and connections to community-based resources to families of children and youth with special health care needs, including all children who have, or are at an increased risk for physical, behavioral, developmental, or emotional conditions.

[Family Center Website](#)
CSHCS Family Phone Line:
800-359-3722

**The Family Center serves families with children with any disability, physical medical, mental health, developmental or intellectual condition.