

Waukesha County Children with Special Needs COVID-19 Resource Newsletter – Issue #1

Hello! To our fantastic Waukesha County Children's Long Term Support Waiver families!

During this trying time of uncertainty for many children and families, the Children with Special Needs Unit wanted to be able to provide you with additional resources on a variety of topics over the next few weeks. We know that for many families, our worlds have been turned upside down and our daily routines have been impacted greatly. We hope that you find a few of these resources helpful, as we all walk through uncharted territories.

Department of Health Services Updates:

As of March 13, 2020, the following Children's Long-Term Support Waiver Program services can be provided remotely:

- Community integration services
- The following counseling and therapeutic services:
 - Art therapy
 - Music therapy
 - Other activities therapies for which the desired outcome can be accomplished via verbal and visual cueing
- Daily living skills training
- Housing counseling
- Mentoring
- Support and service coordination
- Supported employment – individual
- Training for unpaid caregivers

“Remotely” means provision by telephone or an alternate electronic or virtual method. Remote provision of these services must be done in real-time, or live, with the exception of support and service coordination. Support and service coordination may be provided remotely either live or by the exchange of telephone or electronic messages. Remote service provision is a measure to ensure that participants and families get the supports they need during the pandemic. This measure will be reassessed at the conclusion of the crisis. County waiver agencies (CWAs) and service providers will need to work with families to affirm their acceptance of remote service during this health pandemic. * All Waukesha County CLTS service providers have been made aware of this option.

Respite is a services that can still occur in person – however parents and providers should assess the potential health risks associated with having in person contact and jointly that determination can be made if the respite will continue.

Notes from the CLTS Waiver Program:

- Waukesha County Service Coordinators are working remotely at this time. They have access to check their desk voicemails as well as they have access to county cell phones. We are conducting what we are calling “phone visits” for Initial, 6-month, and Recertification visits to keep youth enrolled into our program. You will still have your scheduled visits during March and April just via technology.
- Please note that Service Coordinators are calling you via cell phones that have blocked or restricted numbers. Therefore, it could show up as “Unknown caller” or “Restricted”. Please check your voicemails, as it is likely that you have been left a voicemail message if you haven’t already been in contact with your service coordinator.
- If you have additional needs during this time, please do not hesitate to reach out to your service coordinator.

Special Education Services during school closures:

Attached to this newsletter is a PDF document from the Department of Public Instruction regarding how youth with IEP’s are affected during this time of school closures.

Resources for caregivers:

A free, on-line "course" that Respite Care Association of WI has created titled: Finding your New Normal during COVID-19: <https://respitewi.talentlms.com/catalog/info/id:143> This "course" is full of lots of tools for helping those who use respite care (either for adults or kids) to find their "new normal during COVID-19". The sections include things like: Explaining COVID-19 (provides several different social stories), Social Distancing/Staying at Home/How Do I Get Through This (including tips and tools), Disability and Learning Resources (including Special Education, OT/PT/SLP activities), Activities for Any Age, Self-Care, and Using In-Home Care Workers. This is GREAT resource that just came out this week!

An article from the Harvard Business Review- a brief interview with David Kessler (co-author with Elizabeth Kubler-Ross)- that helps give explanation to some of the waves of emotions and grief we as a human collective are experiencing right now. <https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>

Create new routines at home:

As changes seem to be our new constant, and routines have undoubtedly been disrupted, AutismSpeaks gives us some guidance in how we might create and maintain some balance. Click here for some really great information to help you get started, ideas to keep things fun and interesting, and resources to stay connected.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/news/how-cope-disrupted-family-routines-during-covid-19>

CDC Guidance for Children:

Below are links to articles from the CDC that includes tips to keep children healthy while they are out of school and at home, how to talk to children about Coronavirus, and helping them to cope through this time.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/children.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>

Helping keeping our youth engaged:

Have you been struggling to find things to do to keep your children occupied during the social isolation? Here is a link that will take you to 250 great and creative suggestions to help keep everyone

busy: <https://rochester.kidsoutandabout.com/content/250-creative-ways-keep-your-family-sane-during-covid-19-crisis>

Also attached to this email are multiple different activities guides that our Department created by age range to help keep your youth engaged during this trying times.

Stay current with the response by Waukesha County to COVID-19 at:

<https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/COVID19>

If you have additional needs during this time, please do not hesitate to reach out to your assigned service coordinator. If you do not have an assigned service coordinator – you can reach out to Erin Zellmer: ezellmer@waukeshacounty.gov .