

# LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

Phone | 650-558-0915

Fax | 408-517-8973

THE NATALIE LANAM JUSTICE CENTER  
SOBRATO CENTER FOR NONPROFITS - REDWOOD SHORES  
330 TWIN DOLPHIN DRIVE, SUITE 123  
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94065  
WWW.LEGALAIDSMC.ORG

## RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TIP SHEET

*This tip sheet is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.*

### About the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County

The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County provides free civil legal services to low income residents of San Mateo County.

Legal Aid's **Kids in Crisis Project** provides advocacy on behalf of children with disabilities and their families on issues related to Special Education, Regional Center eligibility and services, California Children's Services and SSI. We also help children and their families access health care programs and other services they need, including Medi-Cal, Healthy Kids and In-Home Supportive Services.

### Parent to Parent Support

**Parents Helping Parents (PHP)**, located in San Jose, offers consultations to identify resources and services to address your needs; IEP training and guidance; parent mentor program and education workshops; support groups and speaker series (conducted in English, Japanese, Spanish, and Vietnamese); specialized book and video library with over 6,000 items; online resources and events guide; free on-site web access; demonstration center for Assistive Technology (low and high-tech equipment, including the iPad); and a staff fluent in English, Spanish, Arabic, Cantonese, Japanese, ASL, Vietnamese, Hindi and Gujarati. Parent Information & Training Center for San Mateo County; assistance also available over the phone or by email. (408) 727-5775; [www.php.com](http://www.php.com)

**Support for Families**, located in San Francisco, offers the following services: individualized referrals (by phone or drop-in basis); parent mentor program; support groups (conducted in English, Spanish, and Chinese); quarterly family gatherings; educational workshops and clinics; lending library of over 3,500 books, DVDs, and toys; and a staff fluent in English, Spanish, Mandarin and Cantonese. (415) 920-5040; [www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org)

**The Family Resource Center (FRC)**, located at Community Gatepath in Burlingame, offers individualized referrals, support groups and a lending library. (650) 259-0189;  
[www.gatepath.org/knowledge](http://www.gatepath.org/knowledge)

**Parents Place**, located in San Mateo and Palo Alto, offers parent coaching and workshops, social skills groups, drop-in play, advocacy and support groups, assessments, and intervention services. Sliding fee scale available to families who qualify. (650) 931-1840 (San Mateo);  
(650) 688-3028 (Palo Alto);  
[www.parentsplaceonline.org](http://www.parentsplaceonline.org)

**PARCA's Family Support Services** offers support groups, advocates for IEP meetings, and speakers in San Mateo County. (650) 312-0730; [www.parca.org](http://www.parca.org)

**Stanford Autism Parent Support Group**, located at Stanford, offers monthly support groups for parents of children on the autism spectrum. (650) 721-6327;  
[www.childpsychiatry.stanford.edu](http://www.childpsychiatry.stanford.edu)

**Peninsula Parents of Special Needs Kids (PPSNK)** is an online Yahoo discussion group for families living on the Peninsula; it has over 1,000 members. On this parent-only forum, you can ask questions and build connections with other parents. To subscribe, email:  
[peninsulaparentssnk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:peninsulaparentssnk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

## Service Providers

**Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC)** is a state-funded program that supports individuals with developmental disabilities by providing diagnosis and coordination of services and supports. Visit [www.dds.ca.gov/RC](http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC) online to see all services offered. To find out if your child is eligible, call for an intake interview. (650) 574-9232;  
[www.ggrc.org](http://www.ggrc.org)

Alternatively, Santa Clara County residents should call **San Andreas Regional Center (SARC)** at (408) 374-9960;  
[www.sarc.org](http://www.sarc.org)

**California Children's Services (CCS)** is a state program that assists children with certain physical limitations and chronic health conditions and diseases. CCS can authorize and pay for specific medical services and equipment. CCS is not a health insurance plan, however, and will not cover all of a child's health care needs, only those related to eligible conditions. Call (650) 573-2755 to see if your child is eligible or view qualifying conditions online:  
[www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs](http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs)

**Community Gatepath (CGP)** in Burlingame has a GGRC-funded Early Intervention program, an on-site therapy clinic, and an inclusive preschool (Learning Links). (650) 652-0667; [www.gatepath.org](http://www.gatepath.org)

**Abilities United (formerly C.A.R.)** in Palo Alto has a GGRC-funded Early Intervention program, an on-site therapy clinic, an inclusive preschool (Milestones), an after-school socialization program, and a warm-water wheel-chair accessible pool. (650) 494-0550; (650) 494-1480 (pool);  
[www.AbilitiesUnited.org](http://www.AbilitiesUnited.org)

## Respite Care

**Respite** occurs when your child with special needs is well-supervised while you take a break to be with your other children or to rejuvenate. If your child lives at home with you, you may qualify for reimbursement of respite care costs; ask your GGRC

social worker. You can use your respite hours with a provider of your choice (including relatives) or ask your social worker about programs such as:

**Raji House**, a weekend care program. (650) 376-3593; [www.parca.org](http://www.parca.org)

**Via Services** (formerly Camp Costanoan), a year-round camping program. (408) 243-7861; [www.viaservices.org](http://www.viaservices.org)

In addition, if your child is "institutionally deemed" under Medi-Cal through GGRC, and if your child's care is particularly challenging to manage, you may qualify for additional respite and support through **In Home Support Services (IHSS)**. Call (800) 675-8437 for an interview.

**Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County (4Cs)** supports families in finding appropriate child-care. All of 4C's services are free or low-cost. (650) 655-5053; [www.sanmateo4cs.org](http://www.sanmateo4cs.org)

## Other Government Programs

**San Mateo County's Health Coverage Unit** (formerly Children's Health Initiative) provides free assistance to residents with questions about enrollment and retention in Medi-Cal and Healthy Kids health insurance programs. (650) 616-2002; [www.smcchi.org](http://www.smcchi.org)

**The Social Security Administration (SSA)** is a federal agency that provides low-income disabled children with cash assistance called Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Your child may qualify for SSI if your child meets the SSA definition of disability and certain income and resource limits. (800) 772-1213; [www.ssa.gov/pubs/10026.html](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10026.html)

A **disability placard** entitles you to park in disabled spots, next to green curbs with no time limits, and in metered spots at no charge. Your child's disability may qualify for a placard if it interferes with mobility. Work with your child's doctor to fill out an "Application for Disabled Person Placard or Plates," available at the Department of Motor Vehicle's (DMV's) office or online; [www.dmv.ca.gov/vr/disabled.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/vr/disabled.htm)

If you or your child is enrolled in a public assistance program such as Medi-Cal or your income meets certain limits, you may qualify for **discounted residential telephone service**; call your phone company to begin the application process. Ask for the California LifeLine discount; for details online, visit: [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org)

**The CARE Program (California Alternative Rates for Energy)** helps low-income families with reduced rates on energy bills. Call (866) 743-2273 for a CARE application or enroll online: [www.pge.com/care](http://www.pge.com/care)

## Additional Resources

**Dandelion** is a quarterly parenting magazine for Special Needs families. It maintains a calendar of events, shares relevant news, has updates from service providers, and prints contributions from local parents. [www.goDandelion.com](http://www.goDandelion.com)

**Kidpower** is a non-profit that teaches all people how to use the skills they already have to be safe, including children with special needs and their caregivers. It offers workshops in bullying and abuse prevention, stranger awareness, and personal safety. You can take an existing public class or organize your own around your group's needs. Kidpower can also assist you over the phone; it has never turned away anyone for lack of financial resources. (800) 467-6997 ext. 1; [www.kidpower.org](http://www.kidpower.org)

**PPSNK Clips** is an online Yahoo group of over 450 members of the public (not just parents) who share information about resources and upcoming events for the Special Needs Community. To join this group, send an email to: [ppsnkclips-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:ppsnkclips-subscribe@yahoo.com)

In addition, many local support organizations like those listed below have special needs groups or adapted classes that might fit your family's needs:

Mother's Clubs

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)

City Recreation Departments and Libraries

Houses of Worship (churches, mosques, etc.)