

# Family Connections Center

## Spring 2020 Gatherings

**Newly Diagnosed Families**

Tuesday, March 31, 2020  
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
Lawler Library, NB

Wondering where to go from here? Come for a guided discussion with families who have older children who have been through it already.

**IEP Cheat Sheet**

Tuesday, April 28, 2020  
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
Lawler Library, NB

Join us for a discussion about what an Individualized Education Plan is, IEP terms, what each page is for, and more.

**Make & Take IEP Binder Workshop**

Tuesday, May 19, 2020  
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
Lawler Library, NB

Have too much paperwork for your child? Empty your unorganized file cabinet into a box & come let us help you get organized.

\*Binders and Blank Forms Provided\*

### Family Connections Center

The Nemasket Group  
109 Fairhaven Road, Mattapoisett, Ma 02739  
Tel: (508)999-4436  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Fax: (508)997-9239  
[www.NemasketGroup.org](http://www.NemasketGroup.org)  
Emergency Tel: 508-207-2538

Find us on Facebook! [Https://www.facebook.com/nemasketgroup](https://www.facebook.com/nemasketgroup)

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# Food for Thought

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## The Lighter Side of Special Education: Parents & Kids

by Aimee Gilman, Esq.

Before you read this article, you should be warned. If you are among those humor-challenged individuals who believe THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT DISABILITIES, then I urge you to stop now and go back to biting your nails down to your elbows.

I understand how you feel.

When my child was born, and we found out that he had special needs, I was seriously bummed. I know that if anyone had suggested there was anything funny about this situation I would have called them callous and unfeeling and burst into a torrent of hysterical tears. As the years passed, I began to realize that my child actually provided me with some pretty funny moments. For example, I recall one year when I took my son to the pediatrician for his annual checkup. The nurse asked my son to pee in a cup. As I waited outside the bathroom door, my son called to me to get him another cup. I couldn't imagine that this might be necessary so I asked him why. He replied, very naturally, "Because this one is full."

As an advocate for other parents, I have also had opportunity to observe the antics of both families and school districts, and all these folks provide me with hours of amusement. Unfortunately, this amusement has not been accompanied by large amounts of money (and sometimes no money) so I don't know how long I can afford to continue laughing about this.

Anyway, if you believe that this subject matter is NOT APPROPRIATE for humorous treatment, please do not read any further. Oh, and by the way, you'd better not call me. I doubt we would hit it off.

### Parents

There are 2 kinds of parents of disabled children: moms and dads. There is a very important distinction between these types and one could never be confused with the other.

### Moms

As moms, we are usually seen as crazed lunatics, a characterization I consider to be grossly unfair. We are actually crazed obsessive lunatics and consider it an unpardonable offense for anyone to discuss anything with us other than those matters that concern our disabled children.

Moms of disabled children invariably find one another, primarily because no one else can tolerate us. I am always amused when people describe my son as being "perseverative." At least he lets go after a while, while I can go on and on long after anyone has demonstrated any ongoing interest in my subject matter. The friendships formed by moms serve the necessary purpose of allowing us to feed our obsession by constant discussion of our favorite topic at all sporting events or any other work related or social occasion where conversation is present. (We try to refrain while in theaters, for example).

Moms are easily identifiable because they are always engaged in one of the following activities:

- talking on the phone to another mom of a disabled child;
- reading the Catherine Maurice book;

- spending hours of time online where they communicate with other moms and obtain vast quantities of information about their child.

Of course, these activities necessarily take Mom away from spending any actual time with her child, or other children if she has them. But she is happy because she is convinced that what she is doing is even more valuable.

### *Dads*

Dads play an interesting role in this milieu. They do not feel the same need to spend every waking hour of their lives focusing on this child because, after all, they never thought anything was different about this child anyway. They are always telling people that they were just exactly like that as a kid.

Mom knows this to be true because she has always secretly told everyone in the universe that the child's disability had to come from his father's family.

Dad is pretty happy to let this child do as he pleases. Dad does not mind when Johnny is brushing the turtle's teeth because Johnny is GENERALIZING the skills he has learned in school, and besides, it's football season. Of course, Dad is in serious trouble with Mom because he has failed to notice the trail of toothpaste plastered in every upstairs room, all of which will now be used to decorate Dad's pillow.

As parents, we all know the financial commitment we must make in order to pay for all the services our child requires and which will never be covered by insurance no matter how many times we switch companies. I am amazed, however, at the money families will throw at the many varied and sometimes esoteric therapies, some of which were developed for no other purpose except to give us something else to throw our money at. These include things like:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Miller Method</li><li>• ABA</li><li>• DTT</li><li>• AIT</li><li>• Welk Method</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DDT</li><li>• ZZ Top</li><li>• Swimming with Dolphins</li><li>• Running with Bulls</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fast Forward</li><li>• Ass Backward, and</li><li>• The Lawrence</li></ul> |
|---|--|---|

This last therapy involves teaching the child to communicate through really geeky music and dance. It has been around for years but is only now being rediscovered, primarily in New Jersey and California.

### **Kids**

Poking fun at kids with disabilities is a chancy thing. But some of the things these guys do are hilarious. I remember a recent episode involving my son when I received the dreaded CALL FROM SCHOOL. This is every parent's worst nightmare because we know it means our child has done something horribly inappropriate such as emerging from the locker room into the swim area without a bathing suit. In this instance, the principal called to inform me that my 12-year-old son had cornered an 8-year-old girl in the coatroom.

"Oh no," I thought, "Here it comes-sexual harassment, lawsuits, humiliation (again)."

She then told me that my son got into this child's face and told her that she "must vote for Al Gore." Though I did not want to diminish the gravity of this offense, I burst out laughing. This is expected behavior for my son who loves the election process. Besides, I was relieved because his speech was protected by the First Amendment. I especially like it when kids respond, in kind, to the way they are treated in school. One client, a child with somewhat limited communication skills, was coming home every day from school with notes such as:

Johnny said "shit" 5 times today and "Goddammit" to his aide 10 times.

Of course the parents think this is a hoot and encourage Johnny because they know he is ably expressing their own beliefs that this child's teachers have the combined brain activity of an eggplant.

Another child, Ben, also with very limited communication, was still able to eloquently express his feelings about his teachers and class as revealed in the following series of notes:

12/1 Ben attempted to bite 5 times and scratched the teacher 5 times.

12/2 Ben tore the teacher's clothes and hit her 5 times.

12/3 Ben punched the teacher's lights out today and wrestled his aide to the ground with a bear hug.

12/4 Ben won the National Boxing and Wrestling Titles today. Please do not send him to school tomorrow.

Actually, Ben is my hero. He loves the opera, the three wise men, Emeril ("Bam" says Ben), and country music. He also went through a Stooges period. Despite his deficits, Ben is the cultural elite of his family.

One thing we all know is that these kids all run circles around us. As my son frequently says to me when he knows he is in trouble, "But Mom, it's not my fault. I have a disability." Yeah.

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# Know Your Rights

For People Working with Immigrant Families:

<https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/>

The Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF) Campaign is dedicated to providing community-facing materials on public charge to better equip immigrants with what they need to know to make the best decision for themselves and for their families. More materials for service providers and advocates can be found at our Special Resources Page. Once you go on this webpage you click on the links and get the information on these subjects.

- Public Charge: Does this apply to me?  
(How public charge will impact you based on your immigration status, and what you should do)
- KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! Public Charge Messages for Community Members  
(Top messages to share with immigrant communities on the recent changes to public charge)
- Should I Keep My Kids Enrolled in Health & Nutrition Programs?  
(Use this guide to help answer commonly asked questions about how to make good decisions for your family and their health)
- You Have Rights – Protect Your Health  
(An overview for mixed-status families when it comes to going to the doctor or enrolling in health insurance)
- 10 Facts About Access to Health Insurance for Immigrants and Their Families  
(The ACA marketplace open enrollment period presents a great opportunity to make sure immigrants and their families understand what recent threats mean for them as they seek health coverage. - CLASP, NILC, and NHeLP)
- Immigrant Sponsors and Public Benefits  
(Frequently asked questions on access to public benefits for immigrants with sponsors)

# Upcoming Events

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## Sensory-Friendly Story for Middle-Elementary: Taunton



March 7, and 21, 2020

April 11 and 25, 2020

*M is for Museum* is a new initiative to encourage early literacy in future historians by providing a sensory-friendly space to hear a story. Books will be middle-elementary level, there will be a station for coloring, and Legos and fidget boxes will also be available.

- \* Families of all ages are welcome.
- \* Drop in on one, a few, or all story times.
- \* Held at the Old Colony History Museum.

**For more information visit** [www.oldcolonystorymuseum.org/event/m-is-for-museum-4/](http://www.oldcolonystorymuseum.org/event/m-is-for-museum-4/) or contact info@oldcolonystorymuseum.org 508-822-1622

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## All Abilities Resources, Recreation & Camp Fair: Taunton



March 14th, 2020, 12- 3 p.m.

Free and open to the public.

Hosted by the Taunton Public Schools and Taunton Special Education Advisory Council. For ALL students, ALL abilities and ALL ages. There will be vendors to match every students' needs and interests, including therapeutic and adaptive programming, athletics, arts, music, scouts, dance, and more.

- \* Meet dozens of area camps, disability services, transition planning agencies, recreational facilities, after school programs, community resources, and other family friendly vendors.
- \* Many vendors will have registration forms, applications, and financial assistance info on hand.
- \* Students may participate in a variety of activities and watch program demos.
- \* All guests are entered to win a Chrome Book and two way handheld radio set. Additional raffle prizes and tickets will be available for purchase at the event to benefit Taunton SEPAC.

**For more information** contact the Taunton SEPAC, [TauntonSEPAC@gmail.com](mailto:TauntonSEPAC@gmail.com).

## Free One Day-Long Meditation Retreat at Friends Academy



March 7, 2020 - April 4, 2020 at 9am

Friends Academy will host a series of day-long meditation retreats one Saturday per month from October through May. These silent retreats for adults are free and open to the public.

Enjoy Friends' beautiful wooded North Dartmouth campus and experience the benefits of meditation practice. We'll provide the support you need to unwind, unplug, relax, and reconnect with yourself.

## New Bedford Indoor Farmers Market

Every Saturday, Local Food, Year Round!  
First Unitarian Church In New Bedford  
71 8th St, New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740

The Indoor Season of the New Bedford Farmers Market will kick off November 2nd. Join us every week for local produce, baked goods, honey, meat and more. Learn to Love Local with Coastal Foodshed during cooking demonstrations and free tastings, showing you how to utilize the delicious and nutritious food found at the Farmers Market.



As always - We accept Cash, Debit, Credit, and Snap/EBT/HIP.

## Beginner Sewing Classes | Adults

Hosted by The Creative Sewing Studio

Sunday, March 15, 2020 at 10:30 AM – 12:25 PM



Sewing is such a fun creative, rewarding art form AND a very useful, practical skill! We'd love for you to start your sewing journey with us! Or enhance your current skills in one of our upcoming Adult Beginner Sewing Classes!

Upcoming Beginner Courses

- Thursday, February, 13, 20, 27, March 1 & 8 ~ 6pm - 7:55pm
- Tuesday, February 18, 25, March 3, 10 & 17 ~ 6pm - 7:55pm
- Wednesday, February 26, March 4, 11, 18 & 25 ~ 12pm - 1:55pm
- Sunday, March 15, 22, 29, April 5 & 12 ~ 10:30am - 12:25pm
- Wednesday, April 8, 15, 22, 29 & May 6 ~ 6pm - 7:55pm

For more info and to register please visit:

<https://www.thecreativesewingstudio.com/collections/adult-classes-list/products/sewing-100>

## Sensory Friendly Awareness Day

Edaville Family Theme Park  
5 Pine St, Carver, Massachusetts 02330  
April 25, 2020

Join us for our annual Sensory Friendly Day, everyone is welcome! Guests can participate in sensory activities, meet our sensory friendly partners, and learn all about our Sensory Friendly features in the park! General Park Admission includes this event. Please note the park and train music will be turned down during this event.

## Colorful Yoga Series

Presented by Doodles Creative Session and Project Wheel House, Inc.

Every Saturday. Always Free.  
38 Bethel St. 2nd Floor, Downtown New Bedford  
10am - 11am Every Saturday, until May 30

A fun mix of hands-on craft projects that explore creative freedom and playful games & exercises that increase self-awareness and inner calm.

Colorful Yoga is a FREE 1 hour weekly class for kids to experiment with engaging art projects, and learn yoga and mindfulness practices through a playful lesson. Bring a mat if you have it - we have a few to share.



All donations appreciated!



MONDAYS, 7PM	
TICKETS: \$3	
Free for veterans and service members.	
March 9, 2020	Moonstruck
April 6, 2020	A League of Their Own
May 11, 2020	Selena
June 1, 2020	Ferris Bueller's Day Off

### Also at the Zeiterion:

Llama Llama Live on April 5, 2020 at 2:00 pm  
The Peking Acrobats on March 27, 2020 at 7:30pm



## Special Needs Parent Support Group

Save the Date

April 16 at 11 a.m.

At the Family Connections Center

The Nemasket Group at the Pines

109 Fairhaven Road, Mattapoisett, MA 02739

RSVP: Ana Colon 508-999-4436 ext 118 or email

[anacolon@nemasketgroup.org](mailto:anacolon@nemasketgroup.org)

# massDOT Transportation Innovation CONFERENCE

Date: 4/7/2020 7:30 AM - 4/8/2020 4:30 PM

Location: The DCU Center

50 Foster St

Worcester, Massachusetts

Don't miss one of the largest Transportation Innovation Conferences in New England! Attending this event is the best way to keep up with the latest innovative methods and technologies in transportation.

- Network with Colleagues
- Choose from over 40 Breakout Sessions
- Visit over 70 Sponsors and Exhibitors
- Register for One Day or Both Days

Come learn about innovative transportation topics including: climate change and resiliency, mobility, congestion, mode choice and multi-modal transportation, project delivery and construction techniques, safety, accessibility, and transformational technology and services.

**The first floor will feature a replica of the Worcester Kelley Square Improvement Project!**

The event is open to all transportation practitioners from federal, state, and local transportation agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, transit agencies, academia, and private industry.

## Empowered Families: A Four-Part Series on Special Education

FREE community workshops offering tools to help parents, caregivers, and professionals advocate successfully for students with special needs. The series consists of three workshops and one optional IEP Clinic focused on providing training to parents, caregivers, and professionals to understand and advocate for appropriate special education services for students. Special education professionals will be available to discuss specific concerns or answer questions. It is our goal for these workshop experiences to be truly enriching and empowering.

- 3/17/20 Basic Rights in Special Education: An overview of special education laws and procedures.
- 4/28/20 An IEP for My Child: Learn about how the IEP can support students with special needs and special healthcare needs
- 5/19/20 IEP Clinic: Professionals will meet families one-on-one to review IEPs.
- 6/16/20 Introduction to the Transition Planning Process: Preparing students with special needs and for life after high school.

**Welcome & Dinner:** 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** New Bedford Family Resource & Development Center, 128 Union Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Register online:** [fcsn.org/ptic/newbedford2020](http://fcsn.org/ptic/newbedford2020)

*Presented in English, Spanish and Portuguese!  
Free Dinner & Limited Childcare!*

## Empoderando a las Familias: Serie de tres talleres en Educación Especial

Tres talleres gratuitos para profesionales, cuidadores de salud, y padres de familia en los cuales se ofreceran herramientas para navegar el Plan de Educaciòn Individual (IEP).

- 3/17/20 Los Derechos Basicos en Educaciòn Especial
- 4/28/20 Un IEP para Mi Hijo
- 5/19/20 Clinica de IEP
- 6/16/20 Introducciòn al Proceso de Transiciòn

**Bienvenida & Cena:** 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Talleres:** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Lugar:** Centro de Desarrollo Familiar y Recurso, 128 Union Street, 3er Piso

Registraciòn por Internet: [fcsn.org/ptic/newbedford2020](http://fcsn.org/ptic/newbedford2020)

*Presentados en Espanol, Ingles & Portuguese!  
Cena y Cuidado de Ninos Gratis!*

# New Bedford Special Education Parent Advisory Council

All PAC meetings will be held at the Community Room at:

Keith Middle School  
225 Hathaway Blvd.  
New Bedford

## PAC MEETING DATES:

March 24, 2020 6:30-7:30pm  
April 14, 2020 6:30-7:30pm  
May 19, 2020 6:30-7:30pm



We **help people**  
with **disabilities**  
find **information**  
they **need.**



Looking for doctors, dentists, programs, or services for a person with a disability?

INDEX has free information for people with disabilities in Massachusetts. Visit Our Website  
[www.DisabilityInfo.org](http://www.DisabilityInfo.org)

### Search for:

- Programs and Services
- Doctors
- Dentists
- Consultants

Choose where the person lives.

Choose payment options.

Narrow your search by:

- Program Types
- Services,
- Disabilities,
- Age Groups,
- Languages Spoken

### Contact Us

800-642-0246

[info@DisabilityInfo.org](mailto:info@DisabilityInfo.org)

Follow us on Facebook or  
 @NEINDEX on Twitter!

# ACCESS DANCES!

Hosted by our friends at Better Community Living Inc.

**Where:** Poirier Post  
Corner of Ashley Boulevard and 281 Appleton Street  
in New Bedford

**Time:** 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Music by DJ Rocking Rick Brennan

- Dance patrons MUST provide their own transportation to and from the dances.
- BCL Dances have limited supervision. There is no 1-1 supervision available.
- Patrons under 21 & individuals exhibiting inappropriate behavior must be supervised by a parent or staff. Under NO circumstances will any patrons be allowed to consume alcohol during or before a dance.
- Not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen articles.
- Dance patrons must remain in the dance hall during the dance. Leaving the dance area may cost a re-entry fee of \$10.00.

ALL DANCES WILL BE ON  
THE 2<sup>ND</sup> FRIDAY OF THE  
MONTH

**ADMISSION** IS \$10.00 PP

**DANCE DATES:**

March 13, 2020  
April 10, 2020  
May 8, 2020  
June 12, 2020  
July 10, 2020  
August 14, 2020  
September 11, 2020  
October 9, 2020  
November 13, 2020  
December 11, 2020

**FOR INFORMATION AND  
QUESTIONS CONTACT:**

Tenina Ramos  
508-287-0120

# Summer 2020 Gatherings

## Newly Diagnosed Families

Tuesday, June 23, 2020  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
Lawler Library, NB

Wondering where to go from here? Come for a guided discussion with families who have older children who have been through it already.

## IEP Cheat Sheet

Tuesday, July 28, 2020  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
Lawler Library, NB

Join us for a discussion about what an Individualized Education Plan is, IEP terms, what each page is for, and more.

## Make & Take IEP Binder Workshop

Tuesday, August 25, 2020  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
Lawler Library, NB

Have too much paperwork for your child? Empty your unorganized file cabinet into a box & come let us help you get organized.

\*Binders & Blank Forms Provided\*

All events free. Call Shanell or Tiffany at Nemasket Group for information or assistance filling out DDS forms at 508-999-4436



the nemasket group

# A Full Life Ahead

Full Life Ahead is a series of monthly workshops designed for parents and caregivers as they plan for the future of their loved one with a disability. Various workshop topics such as friendships, transition, employment, housing and financial planning are offered. The workshops and resources provided in this series will help lead to interdependent, full lives in the community for people with disabilities.

**April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Navigating DDS & the ISP  
May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Leaving the School System – what's next?  
6 - 8 pm  
at The Nemasket Group  
109 Fairhaven Rd, Mattapoisett, MA 02739**

# New Bedford Public Library Events

Lawler Library

- Loop Knitting March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; April 6, 13, 25 From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
  - Teen Advisory March 5; April 2 At 4:00 p.m.
  - TGIF March 6, 13, 20, 27; April 3, 10, 17, 24 From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
  - Winter Story March 6, 13 At 4:00 p.m.
  - Tail Wagging Tutors March 9, 23 At 4:00 p.m.
  - Video Game Club March 12, April 9 At 4:00 p.m.
  - PM Book Club March 17; April 21 At 6:00 p.m.
  - PJ Story Time March 19; April 16 At 6:00 p.m.



## Downtown Library

- Chess March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; April 6, 13, 27 From 6 to 8 p.m.
  - Story Time March 7, 14, 21, 28; April 4, 11, 18, 25 At 11 a.m.

Wilks Library

- Drop in Legos      March 7, 14, 21, 28; April 4, 11, 18, 25 At 10 a.m.

Bristol Community College In collaboration with the Bridgewater State University M.A.I.C.E.I.  
Are hosting a free workshop on

## "Understanding Social Security and other Benefits for Transition Aged Youth"

Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020

6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Bristol Community College  
777 Elsbree Street, Fall River  
G Building, Staff Lounge

Kim Melo and Elsa Jimenez, Benefits Specialists from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will explain the Social Security (SSI/SSDI) programs, MassHealth and other benefits including the Section 8 program; who is eligible, how and when to apply. Information on other services that can benefit the individual and families will be provided.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please RSVP by March 20<sup>th</sup> to Ross Hooley  
MAICEI Coordinator

Email: [RossHooley@nemasketgroup.org](mailto:RossHooley@nemasketgroup.org) or call 508-207-2906

The Brockton Public School's SEPAC and Special Education Department cordially invite all interested members of the community to attend their Annual

## Resource Fair Transition Services & Community Resources

Monday, May 18, 2020 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Brockton High School, 470 Forest Avenue, Brockton MA  
Inside the Azure Cafeteria

Who should attend?

Students with disabilities, especially those ages 14 and up, along with their parents/guardians/family members/caregivers

Who will be there?

State and local agencies and organizations that can help support you and your family, now and in the future – such as MA State Agencies, college readiness organizations, financial planning resources, social organizations, & career/employment resources

Why should I attend?

To gather important information and tools to help plan for your future after high school!

FREE ADMISSION

MULTI-LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS AVAILABLE

SNACKS



## 7th Annual 5K WALK/RUN

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020

### Fort Phoenix, Fairhaven

Registration 8:00 AM  
Walkers/Runners 9:00 AM

The first 125 registered adults and registered children (under 12) will receive an event T-Shirt. Please register by April 1, 2020 to guarantee accurate T-shirt size

Join us for a great morning of fun as we walk/run through Fairhaven with family, friends and neighbors while raising awareness and support for The Nemasket Group.

You can also support our event by becoming a "Friend" Sponsor for \$200.00. Becoming a "Friend" will allow you to post a sign on our walk/run route. Your sign can be to advertise your business, wish someone a happy birthday, happy anniversary, birth announcement, wedding announcement, a memorial for a loved one, etc. It is your sign so you choose the occasion.

We hope that you will consider being a Sponsor of this great event. For more information check out our website at [www.NemasketGroup.org](http://www.NemasketGroup.org) or contact Heidi Pina-Barnes @ 508-999-4436 x 162.

We encourage people of all abilities to participate in this fund/friendraiser.  
Friendly dogs are welcomed to join us!

**For more information and to register, go to our website at [www.NemasketGroup.org](http://www.NemasketGroup.org)**



## Sensory Friendly Event

The Nemasket Group's Family Connections Center invites you to join us at FunZ Trampoline Park for a sensory friendly event

Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.  
At FunZ Trampoline Park  
1024 Kings Highway, New Bedford, MA 02745

Space is limited and RSVP is **Required**. Restrictions apply.

RSVP by April 3<sup>rd</sup> to Shanell at 508-999-4436 x 161