



DAY TO DAY: PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT

EASY WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD EVERYDAY

What is a Personal Care Assistant (PCA)?

- A Personal Care Assistant (PCA) provides a family with in-home assistance. They come to your home to assist your child with daily life activities.
- The activities that PCA's help with include, but are not limited to: bathing and grooming, dressing, physical activity, taking medications, eating, and toileting.
- PCA's can help with further development of the activities listed above and can help your family learn how to better support your child's development.
- PCA's can be hired from PCA agencies, or PCA's can be a family member. There is no official license required.
- PCA's are not babysitters, but they can provide supervision while you do work at home, such as laundry or cooking.



Insurance information

- Insurance will cover a pre-determined number of hours of PCA care.
- You can qualify for a PCA through MassHealth primary or secondary
- Your application will be reviewed, and insurance will determine how many hours of PCA support you will receive.
- The number of hours insurance covers varies for each family.
- The number of hours you receive is based on:
 - Medical assessments
 - Occupational Therapy assessments
 - Physical Therapy assessments

Questions to ask when interviewing PCAs

- Do you have experience working with children with special needs? Do you have experience working with ASD?
- Why do you want to be a PCA for my child?
- If my child is facing a difficulty, how will you help him/her?
 - Use examples of how your child would react to a difficult situation.
- What can I do to help the transition for you and my child?

How do I get access to a PCA?

- Anyone with a diagnosis of a chronic, medically disabling condition have the right to a PCA. There is no age requirement.
- Fill out an application for a PCA, available through TILL, PCA agencies, and MassHealth
- After you apply, the PCA agency will evaluate your need for PCA services through in-home observation, medical history, and assessments by specialists
- After receiving your hours from the insurance company, you will be able to find a PCA
- You can choose a PCA from a PCA agency, or a family member can take on the role of a PCA.
 - A PCA cannot be a parent, legally responsible relative, or your surrogate (or parent/foster parent if the MassHealth member is a minor)
- If you decide to hire a PCA from an agency, be sure to interview the PCA and make sure they will work well with your child. It is okay to interview more than one PCA!
 - See more about interviews in the "Communication" section
- You are the manager of your PCA. However, if you do not feel capable of managing a PCA, you can hire a surrogate.



The Autism Program
AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER



DAY TO DAY: PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT

EASY WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD EVERYDAY

Communication With Your PCA

- Give your PCA a background on your child. What you share is up to you, but make sure your PCA knows your child's:
 - Diagnosis
 - Medical history
 - Education history
- Introduce your PCA to your family. Explain the typical family schedule during the time that your PCA will be working.
- Set guidelines and expectations.
 - What would you like your child to work on with your PCA?
 - Is your PCA allowed to bring outside resources to work with your child?
- Explain or show how you typically help your child.
- Explain any changes that occur in your child's life to your PCA. PCA's work closely with your children and these changes can impact them too.
- Ask your PCA to tell you what they did with your child everyday.
- Create a book about your child. This can include your child's favorite movies, games, books, and foods.
 - These can help the PCA's get a better understanding of your child and your family. If you can, include pictures!
 - This book can also be a useful resource for family friends, teachers, and other caregivers working with your child.
- Be involved with the PCA and your child during the first few PCA visits. Showing your child that you trust the PCA will help your child learn to trust them, too.



Local PCA Agencies:

- Boston Center for Independent Living
 - Web: <http://bostoncil.org/index.htm>
 - Phone: 617-338-6665
- United Cerebral Palsy of Metro Boston
 - Web: <http://www.ucpboston.org/>
 - Phone: 617-926-5480
- T.I.L.L., Inc.
 - Web: <http://www.tillinc.org/index.html>
 - Phone: 781-302-4883



Resources

- MassHealth online guide to getting a PCA:
 - <http://www.massresources.org/masshealth-pca.html#pca>
- MassHealth handbook for PCA services:
 - <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/memlibrary/pca-consumer-handbook.pdf>
- Finding a PCA with and without MassHealth
 - <http://www.findpca.org/State-Resources/Massachusetts.aspx>
- TILL PCA Resource Page
 - http://www.tillinc.org/personal_care.html
- Autism Insurance Resource Center:
 - <http://disabilityinfo.org/arica/>

For more information visit:

<https://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program>



The Autism Program
AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER