

SERVICES THAT YOUR CHILDREN CAN RECEIVE IN FLORIDA.

WHAT ARE THEY?

1. SSI- Supplemental Security Income (Not Social Security)

SSI pays monthly benefits to people who are blind or have a disability and who do not own much or have a lot of income. SSI is not just for adults. Monthly benefits can also go to children who have a disability. Disabled means you have a physical or mental challenge that keeps you from working and is expected to last at least a year or to result in death. When deciding if a child is disabled, the Social Security Administration looks at how his or her disability affects everyday life. People who get SSI usually get food stamps and Medicaid, too. Medicaid helps pay doctor and hospital bills. SSI is not based on past earnings. Instead, eligibility is based on earnings and resources of the adult (18 years or more) or based on the earnings and resources of the parents of children who are younger than 18 years of age. You may also be contacted by Florida's vocational rehabilitation agency and they may offer you help so that individuals can return to work. If you refuse to accept these services, your SSI benefits can be stopped.

For more information about SSI, visit:

<http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income/>

2. APD Agency for Persons with Disabilities (Formerly DD- Developmental Disabilities Program; formerly DS - Developmental Services)

Their mission is to promote opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities to be a part of and participate in the same valued experiences and life events as do other citizens of Florida. Some of the initiatives of the DD Program include:

- Support to families
 - Coordination with special education and local education agencies
 - Community based employment opportunities including supported employment
- This program provides supports and services that make it easier for people to live, work, and play in places of their own choice.

For more information on APD visit: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/apd/>

3. Medicaid

A Federal/State Program designed to provide medical assistance to persons with low income that qualify and cannot obtain medical coverage. Persons who receive SSI from the Social Security Administration are automatically eligible to receive Medicaid in Florida.

Federal Medicaid site: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/>

State Medicaid site: <http://www.fdhc.state.fl.us>

Children receiving services through Medicaid Waiver can also receive Medicaid without qualifying for SSI based on parents' income.

For more information on SSI, visit:

http://www.ssa.gov/SSA_Home.html

4. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

A. Part C of IDEA

Part C is part of the federal law of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" IDEA, which provides funding for services to children from birth to 3 years of age. These services are designed for infants and toddlers (0 to 36 months) who have disabilities, developmental delay, or are at risk of developing a disability.

B. Part B of IDEA

Part B is part of the federal law of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" that provides additional funds to schools to serve children ages 3-21 who have disabilities. Your local school system is required by law to provide a free and appropriate education to all children, regardless of disabilities.

For more information about IDEA visit: <http://www.ideapractices.org/>

5. Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver

Also known as Med Waiver, HCBS Waiver, Waiver or DD/HCBS. The HCBS Waiver program (Home and Community-Based Waiver) is funded by the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and matching state dollars. In Florida, the HCBS Waiver is administered by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The waiver program provides necessary supports and services to people who have specific developmental disabilities so that they may remain in the community and avoid placement in an institution.

http://www.fdhc.state.fl.us/Medicaid/dev_serv/index.shtml

HOW DO I QUALIFY?

For SSI: Requires the individual to have a physical or mental disability that can be confirmed medically and that results in functionally severe limitations and that these last for at least 12 months. The individual cannot be working in a job that is considered substantial work. The individual has to be a citizen of the US, a Florida resident and have a social security number. Any individual, who is eligible as a child, the month prior to turning 18 years, needs to have their eligibility reevaluated.

For APD: Individuals who are eligible must be 3 years of age or older and be diagnosed with one or more of the following categorical developmental disabilities (occurring prior to age 18) which can reasonably be expected to last a lifetime:

- Mental retardation (IQ 69 or below)
- Cerebral Palsy
- Autism
- Spina Bifida
- Prader Willi Syndrome

Children ages three to five with medical, biological, psychological, psychosocial, and/or environmental factors which significantly increase the likelihood of developmental disability are eligible to receive a variety of early intervention services and are served under the category of high risk. For more specific information, please contact the APD office in your area (listed in this document).

Part C: To qualify, the family must go through the intake process which will include evaluations and the writing of a Family Support Plan (FSP). Services are not based on income.

Part B: In order for children to qualify for exceptional student education, which is funded under Part B, the child will need to be evaluated by their school district.

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) provide diagnostic and instructional support services to district exceptional student education programs and families of students with exceptionalities statewide. Child Find is a program which FDLRS sponsors and offers assistance in providing awareness, outreach, information and referral, screening evaluation, service planning an initiation for non-enrolled children disabled or at risk of a disability. If the child qualifies, they will most likely be served under Federal Idea Regulation or Section 504.

For Med Waiver: To be eligible, individuals must be an Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) client and meet the requirements previously mentioned for APD, meet the level of care and level of need criteria for placement in an ICF/DD (Institutional Care Facility/Program), be a Medicaid recipient through SSI (or in the process of becoming one), MEDS-AD (Medicaid for Aged and Disabled), HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) or ICP programs and individuals must elect to receive home and community-based services.

WHO DO I NEED TO CALL?

1. For SSI:

You can call toll free **1-800-772-1213** for more information, solicit benefits or to speak with a representative in Spanish or English from the Social Security Department. If you would like for someone to help you, like a family member, a social worker, or other representative, that person can call via this number also. Use this number to make an appointment before visiting your local Social Security Office and prevent standing in long lines. The representative will give you an appointment date and address of the Social Security Office in your area. If you need an interpreter to be present the day of your appointment, the Social Security Office can provide one free of charge if you request it while making the appointment. The telephone lines are busiest during the beginning of the week and it would be better to call during the middle of the week.

2. For Medicaid: Call the Medicaid office depending on the district where you reside:

- AREA 5: Pinellas, Pasco 727-552-1191 800-299-4844
- AREA 6: Hillsborough, Polk, Highlands, Manatee, Hardee 813-871-7600 or 800-226-2316
- AREA 8: Desoto, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee 239-338-2620 or 800-226-6735
- AREA 9: Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Indian River 561-881-5080

3. A. For Part C: Call the Early Steps Program of the county in which you reside and ask to speak with the Intake Coordinator.

- Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, Hardee, Highlands: 813-974-0601
- Pasco, Pinellas: 727-892-4403 or 800-374-4334
- Sarasota, Charlotte, DeSoto: 800-764-8255 x6988 or 941-917-6988
- Lee, Collier, Hendry, Glades: 239-433-6700

- Okeechobee, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin: 772-223-5945 x4422
- B. For Part B:** Call the Child Find Program of your area through FDLRS (look for the description of this program in the pages below under "Support Services") <http://www.fdlrs.org>
- Hillsborough (FDLRS Hillsborough): 813-837-7777
- Pinellas, Pasco (FDLRS Gulfcoast)
 - Pinellas 727-462-1587
 - Pasco 727-774-2630
- Polk, Hardee (FDLRS Sunrise)
 - Polk 863-534-0950
 - Hardee 863-773-2600
- Hendry, DeSoto, Glades, Highlands (FDLRS Heartland): 800-316-7057
 - DeSoto 941-993-0144
 - Glades 941-946-0737
 - Hendry 863-674-4565
 - Highlands 863-531-0444 x228
- Sarasota, Charlotte, Manatee (FDLRS Suncoast)
 - Charlotte 941-255-0808
 - Manatee 941-721-2300
 - Sarasota 941-927-9000 x34315
- Collier, Lee (FDLRS Big Cypress): 239-377-0507
- St. Lucie, Martin, Okeechobee, Indian River (FDLRS Galaxy): 772-429-4585 or 800-358-8525
 - Indian River 772-564-5033
 - Martin 772-219-1200 x30363
 - Okeechobee 800-358-8525
 - St. Lucie 772-429-4601

4. For APD Program Office: Call the APD Office in the county in which you reside:

- SUNCOAST REGION:
 - Hillsborough: 813-558-5540
 - Manatee: 941-727-6393
 - Pasco: 352-521-1424
 - Pinellas: 727-217-7016
- DISTRICT 14:
 - Polk, Hardee and Highlands: 863-619-4100
- DISTRICT 15:
 - Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie: 561-468-4080
 - Okeechobee: 863-462-5758
- DISTRICT 8:
 - Charlotte, Hendry, Lee and Glades: 941-334-0222

- Collier: 941-643-9476 or 941-643-9475

5. For Medicaid Waiver: Individuals who want to receive benefits from the Medicaid Waiver should contact the Agency for Persons with Disabilities office in the county in which they reside (listed above). Inquire about the "Developmental Disabilities HCBS Waiver."

WHAT TYPES OF DOCUMENTS WILL I NEED?

For SSI:

It generally takes longer to process claims for disability benefits (from 60-90 days.) You can help shorten the process by bringing certain documents with you when you apply and by bringing them with you for your appointment:

- ✓ Social Security Number
- ✓ Names, addresses and phone numbers of doctors, hospitals, clinics and institutions which rendered services and dates of treatments.
- ✓ Medical records from your doctors, therapists, hospitals, clinics and caseworkers.
- ✓ Laboratory and test results.
- ✓ Names of all medications you are taking
- ✓ A summary of where you worked and the kind of work you did for the past 15 years.
- ✓ Birth certificate for the person who is applying for the benefits.
- ✓ A copy of the most recent W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement if person applying currently works)
- ✓ If the person applying is a child, you will also need school records related to his/her disability.

DO NOT DELAY FILING FOR BENEFITS JUST BECAUSE YOU DO NOT HAVE ALL OF THE INFORMATION YOU NEED.

They will see if you qualify or not, based on the earnings of the parents if the child is a minor (Under 18 years of age).

For other programs: Each program can ask for different documents. Call the program for which you are interested in applying and ask for the documents that they require for eligibility. If you have to make an appointment, try to find out before the appointment which documents they will ask you to have. For most programs, the documents which they will ask

for were mentioned previously. They can also ask for more specific documents of your child.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

With SSI: They will send you additional paperwork for you to fill out and they will ask for any further information that they deem necessary. They will notify you, if you were approved, via a letter in the mail indicating the amount of payment which you will receive or they will reject your application. An individual has the right to appeal this decision if they were not in agreement with the decision.

When you start receiving services, the law requires that they do an evaluation of the disability, to determine if the child continues to have the disability. Evaluations should take place:

- At least every three years for those under 18 whose condition is expected to get better; and
- At the latest, 12 months after the baby's birth whose disability is based on low weight at birth.

It is probable that they will also do evaluations for those under 18 years of age, whose conditions are thought to be life-long. Any individual who is eligible as a child needs to have their eligibility re-determined the month prior to turning 18 years old.

With Part C: After you call them and do an intake, they will do an evaluation and determine eligibility. If eligible, they will give recommendations based on the evaluation for services that the child might need. A Family Support Plan (FSP) will then be developed and the child will then begin to receive services.

With Part B: Child Find assists with screening children and youth who may need formal evaluation. Once an evaluation is done, they determine eligibility for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services.

With Med Waiver: Your APD support coordinator will help the family fill out the application. The child may be evaluated or the family interviewed by a APD psychologist. The family should develop a list of supports and services needed for the child. If the child is on SSI or Medicaid (or is in the process of applying) and meets all the criteria mentioned above, he/she may be approved. (APD will do a referral to adults payment office for Medicaid eligibility determination (HCBS).

The final determination could take up to 2-4 weeks)

If approved, the family will pick an independent support coordination agency from a list provided by APD. You have the right to interview and pick your

support coordinator. After you choose a support coordinator, they will contact the family usually within 3 weeks. Until the support coordination agency starts, the child stays on APD with services at the current level.

OTHER RESOURCES AND AGENCIES

1. Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System-FDLRS

310 Blount St., Suite 215
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-2206
850-922-3731
<http://www.fdlrs.org>

2. Family Network on Disabilities of Florida- FND

FND is a statewide alliance of families of persons with disabilities and special needs. Their mission is to provide family-driven support, education, information and advocacy. FND also provides individual assistance to families, consumers, professionals and support groups.
2735 Whitney Road
Clearwater, FL. 33760-1610
1-800-825-5736 or 727-523-1130 727-523-8687 Fax
<http://fndfl.org> email: fnd@fndfl.org

3. The Florida Directory of Early Childhood Services

Statewide-computerized resource and referral system for your children and their families. It can provide information about a wide range of services available in your community. 1-800-654-4440
<http://www.centraldirectory.org>

4. FLAIRS Network Database of Human Services

The Network is currently in a pilot project phase, with information and referral programs in five regions of the state using the Network model to collaboratively produce a consolidated database of human services covering 20 Florida counties.
<http://www.flairs.org>

This information has been compiled by staff from the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) at the University of South Florida (USF). This information is provided for your information only and general in nature. Please check with individual agencies for further information. As a policy, CARD does not lend its name to the endorsement of any specified program, practice, or model that is offered for service to people with autism and related disabilities.

Web: <http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu>

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