

The 19th Annual
FAMILY CAFE.

Orlando



**Featuring the
Governor's Summit
on Disabilities**

Questions and Answers from The 19th Annual Family Café

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology

Services Provided



#Here2Help

What is AT?

Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities.



www.faast.org
1-844-FL-FAAST
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Welcome to The Family Café Questions & Answers Book for 2017!

Navigating the service delivery system and finding resources has always been a challenge for persons with disabilities and their families. For nearly twenty years, The Family Café has been there to help. Since 1998, our mission has been to provide persons with disabilities and their families with information, training, support and opportunities to network with other families, professionals and public policy makers.

The primary place where that mission has been realized is at our signature event, The Annual Family Café. This year's 19th Annual Family Café attracted an extraordinary 10,398 people. They had a chance to attend more than 200 educational sessions on a wide array of topics. The event also included a series of three keynote addresses, with the first including a discussion of civic engagement led by former Governor and US Senator Bob Graham, the second entailing a conversation about mental health and recovery with self-advocate and author Erin Callinan, and the third sharing an inspirational message from Ms. Wheelchair America 2014 Jennifer Adams. The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association hosted an Outdoor Adaptive Sports Demonstration, and the Exhibit Hall featured more than 100 public and private vendors, including several self-advocate owned Micro-Enterprises, as well as an Employment Expo to promote employment among people with disabilities. The Family Café was also excited to co-host an Assistive Technology Room with our partners from The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST). Additionally, The Family Café once again hosted The Annual Governor's Summit on Disabilities, which featured both Governor Scott and Senator Bill Galvano. They offered insight into the state's priorities for Florida's disability community. Representatives from various State Agencies were also on hand to answer questions about their programs and priorities.

Of course, The Family Café recognizes that no matter how informative The Annual Family Café is, it can't answer every family's questions in three short days. That's why we have always helped families to engage with the agencies that serve them through "Pink Cards." At The 19th Annual Family Café, attendees shared their questions and comments by filling out Pink Cards. The Family Café in turn obtained written responses from the relevant State Agencies. The end result is ***The Family Café Questions & Answers Book***.

This book has been designed as a resource to address the concerns of Floridians with disabilities and their families. Although every situation is unique, *The Family Café Questions & Answers Book* can serve as a quick reference guide and a great starting point for anyone seeking information. If you need to know more than you can find here, we encourage you to contact the relevant state agency, and to make your needs known, and your voice heard!

We hope you will join us for The 20th Anniversary Annual Family Café, June 15-17, 2018, at the Hyatt Regency Orlando. Online registration opens on Valentine's Day, Wednesday, February 14th. Until then, feed your need for information with *The Family Café Questions & Answers Book*! And remember, we are always available online at FamilyCafe.net, on Facebook at Facebook.com/TheFamilyCafeFL, and on Twitter @TheFamilyCafe!

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The Family Café

To reduce printing costs you might ask on the application if the individuals have the app on the phone.

Thanks for that suggestion. Since we first made our smartphone app available in 2015, it has become increasingly popular with our attendees. We have certainly noticed that a growing number of attendees rely on the app instead of the printed program. It would be difficult to reliably determine how many registrants would use the app ahead of time, as some people register then don't attend, while others register on-site. That said, we are definitely considering reducing the number of printed programs we produce as a result of the app's popularity.

Why don't you have a service dog info panel? I have a service dog. It was my first year and a lot of people were asking me. I would love to help with that. I am an experienced trainer for service dogs.

The Annual Family Café has included sessions on service dogs in previous years, and is likely to again. The sessions that are included in the agenda depend on the presentation proposals that The Family Café Planning Committee receives. It happened that there weren't any proposals regarding service dogs submitted last year. Previous years have featured several.

If you would like to submit a presentation proposal, we would certainly encourage you to do so. You can find information on submitting a proposal at familycafe.net. Proposals must be received by January 12, 2018. Our Planning Committee meets in January to select sessions for inclusion in The Annual Family Café agenda.

Great, great conference. Suggestions:

- 1. All speakers have microphones**
- 2. Much bigger rooms for APD sessions.**
- 3. More or longer sessions from government agencies**

Thanks for your suggestions. While it would be great if every breakout session could have speakers and microphones, unfortunately we do not have the budgetary resources to provide sound amplification for all of the more than 200 breakout sessions.

We do make an effort to place more popular sessions, such as those featuring state agencies like the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, in larger spaces. The

challenge is that there is a need to schedule more than twenty sessions in each time slot, so it can be difficult to find multiple larger rooms, and it can also be hard to know which sessions will be most popular.

The Family Café has always provided a forum for interaction with the Governor's office and various state agencies that serve people with disabilities at The Annual Governor's Summit. This event, which is always held on the Friday evening at The Annual Family Café, is a great place to connect with state agency leaders and have your voice heard.

Just want to say thank you for all the good stuff that I learned on this Family Café conference. I hope to see you again next year.

Thanks very much! The Family Café and our Planning Committee work hard to put together an informative event. It's great to hear that you learned valuable information by attending this year.

It was very good. My kids love it. We thank you. Hope to see you next time in 2018. PS once again thank you Lori, Niki, Jesse, and Jeremy for all the work you have done for us. May God bless.

Thanks very much for your positive feedback! It's great to hear that you and your kids enjoyed the event. It's our pleasure to do the work we do to connect, inform, and empower people with disabilities.

No questions. I had a wonderful time and learned a lot more things.

Thanks for your positive feedback! It's wonderful to hear that you found the event both engaging and informative. We hope to see you there again!

Too many simultaneous sessions we wanted to attend, but could only pick one. More self-advocacy sessions. Want more information on Medicaid services through APD and AHCA.

Thanks very much for your feedback. With so many sessions to choose from, we appreciate that it can be difficult to decide which one to attend in any given time slot. Please remember, if there was a session you wanted to attend but were unable to, you can always contact the presenter directly for information. That's why we include their contact information in the program.

In terms of your specific content suggestions, The Annual Family Café always includes an Advocacy Track. That means that there is at least one advocacy session in every breakout session time slot throughout the course of the event. We also make an effort to bring state agencies like APD and AHCA to the event to discuss their programs, including Medicaid. Generally speaking, the content of the agenda depends on the nature of the presentation proposals submitted to the Planning Committee. That said, we will certainly share your suggestions about specific content with them.

All material needs to promote and spell out the meaning of CAFÉ initials. We were confused and bewildered about the meaning of the name. I've wondered about a food service connection. You are losing an opportunity to promote collaboration, empowerment, and advocacy. We signed up and received the conference program, but nowhere was C.A.F.E. explained! Also, the mascot "Guido" emphasizes a food service connection which obfuscates the mission and purpose of The Family Café. Suggestions: unveil a new logo for The 20th Annual Family Café. Emphasize the collaboration, advocacy, etc.

Thanks for that feedback. The name "Café" is indeed an acronym, for Collaboration, Advocacy, Friendship, and Empowerment. Those are the values that define The Family Café as an organization, and guide our work on behalf of people with disabilities. While we are clearly not in the food service business, the culinary theme is intended to refer to the notion of families gathering around the table to share their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences in a friendly space. The Annual Family Café is intended to recreate the kind of comfortable space for informal dialogue that you might find in a friend's kitchen in an entire meeting space.

We definitely appreciate your insight that the organization should consider creating some type of messaging to explain the Café name, clearly lay out the values that drive us, and explain the kitchen table metaphor that gives us our identity. We will share your feedback with our board and staff.

A friend of mine is on the Florida Youth Council. I love what they do but when are they going to get some more funding so they can do even more? Any grant opportunities for them?

It's great to hear that you appreciate the work the Florida Youth Council does to promote youth leadership development among our state's future leaders with disabilities. Their work was initially funded through a federal grant which came to a close in 2010. Since then, The Family Café has continued to maintain the FYC

and supported their work despite the lack of a specific funding stream. Our staff is always on the lookout for grants and funding opportunities that match up with the FYC's mission. Whether or not we are able to find a new, dedicated funding source for the FYC, their essential work as part of The Family Café's effort to promote leadership and advocacy within the disability community will definitely continue.

I know you can't always control the people who speak or present information, but some really could put you to sleep. You go looking for information and get someone reading a PowerPoint. I swear I almost fell asleep twice and others keep you so engaged and you want more. The actual people presenting (in some cases, not all) could be a lot better.

Thanks for your feedback. The presentations included in The Annual Family Café are selected from proposals submitted to The Family Café Planning Committee. As part of the proposal process, potential speakers are asked to provide information about their expertise in the topic that they are addressing. It should also be noted that presenters are volunteers, in that they are not compensated by The Family Café for their participation.

If there were particular sessions that you found to be less than engaging, it would be helpful if you could share that specific information with the Planning Committee, so they can be aware of it if the same presenter submits a proposal for a subsequent year. You can send your feedback via email to info@familycafe.net.

I think it could be free food the weekend for The Family Café.

It would be great if we were able to include meals for all attendees as part of The Annual Family Café. Unfortunately, that would be extremely costly. Because we want to make the information and resources that can be found at The Annual Family Café available to as many people as possible, we prioritize funding our financial assistance program, which covers the cost of the hotel stay for a number of families that are selected through a lottery process.

We have been fortunate to have some food provided by the host hotel at various times during the event over the last two years, and it's possible that the hotel may provide some food again in the coming year. The Family Café also works with the host hotel to identify low cost meal options and restaurant discounts for attendees. However, although we would love to be able to provide meals, we simply do not have the financial resources that would be needed to do so.

Do you offer seminars for typical siblings?

Issues related to siblings of young people with disabilities have gained increasing attention over the past several years. Although The Annual Family Café didn't include any sibling sessions in 2017, it has included several in recent years. The exact content of The Annual Family Café varies from year to year, as sessions included in the agenda are selected from proposals submitted to the Planning Committee. Whether or not a topic is addressed in the agenda to some degree depends on what proposals are received for consideration. That said, when there is a strong demand for information on a particular topic, The Family Café makes an effort to seek out presenters with the relevant expertise and invite them to appear at the event. We will definitely share your interest in including sessions for siblings with the Planning Committee, and discuss the need to find presenters to address that topic in 2018.

Could more financial assistance be available?

The Family Café is always looking for additional funding for financial assistance. The organization has a strong relationship with a number of state agencies, as well as key supporters in the legislature, and is fortunate to have relatively consistent state funding. We also pursue funding from private sources, including event sponsors. Despite our fundraising success, the demand for financial assistance still exceeds the resources available. The Family Café will continue to make an effort to identify new sources of revenue in order to support the financial assistance program to the greatest degree possible.

How do we get Family Café in other states?

Over the years, The Family Café and its Board of Directors has periodically discussed the possibility of developing an Annual Family Café in states beyond Florida. The success of the event in Florida is very much connected to the relationship between The Family Café's leadership and state agency partners. In order to bring The Family Café to another state, it would be necessary to cultivate similar working relationships with key partners there, and that would require a significant investment of time and effort. Because The Family Café has a small staff, and devotes its available resources to making The Annual Family Café successful each year, there are currently no plans to bring the event to states beyond Florida in the near future.

Does the location change for The Family Café?

Yes and no. The Annual Family Café has always been held in the Orlando area, due to its central location, and the amount of hotel and meeting space available there. However, the event has been held at a variety of hotel properties in the Orlando area over the years. In past, some attendees have asked about holding The Annual Family Café in a city other than Orlando, but with its location in the middle of the state and its variety of large hotel properties, Orlando is the ideal location.

Great opportunity to get together. Are there any regional events (Panhandle area) or regional groups to help prepare people to attend The Family Café? Many of my coworkers would benefit from attending but don't because they don't understand the benefits.

The Family Café does not currently host any type of regional events to promote The Annual Family Café. As our organization has a limited budget for marketing and promotion, we have always relied on word of mouth to help families find out about our event. We also look to our state partners, particularly the Department of Education, to spread the word about The Annual Family Café. If you feel that there are people in your community that would benefit from attending The Annual Family Café, we encourage you to talk to them about your experience attending. We would also be happy to provide you with registration brochures to distribute in your town!

Is there any way that Family Café could spread this wonderful organization to doctors and hospitals, especially where you know there are people/places that could benefit from all this info? Many people I know have never heard of Family Café! I am spreading this wonderful organization.

First of all, thanks so much for spreading the word about The Annual Family Café. We rely on people who have been a part of The Annual Family Café to let other know about it, so we really appreciate you sharing about your experience. Because The Family Café has extremely limited resources for marketing and promotion, it is difficult for us to reach all of the people that might benefit from attending, or all of the organizations that serve the people with disabilities and families we seek to empower. Much of the work that we do to promote the event happens through email and social media. If there are particular physicians, hospitals, or organizations that you believe should know about The Annual Family Café, please share their contact information with our office so we can add them to our electronic mailing list and social media accounts.

How did The Family Café get started?

The Family Café began in 1998 when a small group of families that included children with disabilities realized that it was a real challenge to find the information and resources that they needed. That collective experience generated the simple idea that The Family Café is based on: Why not bring together all of the information and resources that families are seeking, together with the people that need it, in a single family-friendly location where people can network with each other, and find what they need to make a difference in their lives? That idea led directly to The 1st Annual Family Café, which attracted about 1,200 attendees. The Family Café's founders built on that success, and the event has grown and improved steadily over the years. The Annual Family Café has grown to routinely attract more than 10,000 registered attendees, and we are looking forward to celebrating our 20th anniversary in 2018.

My family and I had a great time at The Family Café. I had an opportunity to speak to members of agencies that my child needs services. The Morgan room was great. Birth to 5 years events were awesome. I also enjoyed the Women's Conference. Hope you will bring it back next year!

Thanks so much for your positive feedback! We make a real effort to put together the best event possible, and it's our hope that there is something of value for every single attendee. We hope you will be able to join us again next year!

Do you think you can try and bring the individuals that will be running for office to the next Café? A nice way to introduce them into our community.

That is an excellent idea, and something that we have pursued in previous election years. It can be difficult to get candidates for office to agree to appear at The Annual Family Café in an election year, but we certainly plan on extending the invitation. The Family Café has always been supportive of increased engagement in public policy by people with disabilities, and that will continue regardless of which candidates appear at The Annual Family Café. In 2017, we were pleased to have former Senator and Florida Governor Bob Graham on hand to talk about civic engagement. With our state electing a new Governor and a US Senator in 2018, we will be sure to focus on encouraging people with disabilities to make their voices heard and their issues known.

How can I be more involved with The Family Café? Such as volunteering and assisting with planning.

Thanks so much for your interest in helping out with The Family Café! There are multiple venues where you can do so. Prior to the event, you can participate on our Planning Committee. This body is composed of a variety of partners from the disability community, and is also open to individuals and family members. We would love to have you be part of it. There are also a number of ways to volunteer at the event. You can sign up to help out with stuffing conference bags to be handed out at registration, working at the registration desk getting people signed in, or directing attendees to session rooms and supporting presenters as a room monitor.

Thank you Family Café staff and volunteers. This event is so awesome! My favorite part is just connecting with other families. I would love to see the 501st and Rebel Legion become involved. They are volunteer Star Wars cosplayers who come to charity events and please the crowd. I think our families would love this opportunity!

Thanks so much for your positive feedback! It is our intention to create a space where families can connect, so it's great to hear about that happening for you. Thanks also for your suggestion about getting one of the Orlando area Star Wars cosplay groups to come to The Annual Family Café. We did make an effort to get them there in 2017, but unfortunately it didn't work out. We will try again in 2018 for our big 20th anniversary celebration!

What does The Family Café staff do the rest of the year? And how many staff are at The Family Café?

That's a great question! Even though it seems like The Family Café just pops up for a few days each June, our staff is actually hard at work throughout the year.

The Family Café currently employs four full-time staff. We work on a number of projects throughout the year; some of them are tied directly to The Annual Family Café, while others are not. One of our employees is the Youth Advisor that is responsible for everything the Florida Youth Council does. The FYC has their own Annual Youth Summit, which brings together about 200 youth with disabilities for training and networking each August. In October, the FYC participates in celebrating Disability History and Awareness Weeks. Then there's the monthly FYC newsletter, *The Noodle*, the ongoing video blog project where FYC members share their experiences on YouTube, and maintaining the FYC website at floridayouthcouncil.com. The Youth Advisor also coordinates the Council's participation in The Annual Family Café, particularly with the Youth Track, and assists with administrative work in our office.

Another staff member that works on a specific project is the Director of our FFAST Northwest Florida Demonstration Center. FFAST is the Florida Association for Assistive Services and Technology, and their mission is to connect Floridians with disabilities with assistive technology that can help them in daily life. FFAST operates Regional Demonstration Centers throughout the state, and The Family Café has a grant to operate the RDC serving Northwest Florida. Our RDC Director spends time doing assistive technology demonstrations, meeting with individuals to assess their needs, and refurbishing computers and equipment. Of course, he also helps out with a number of administrative tasks, and aspects of The Annual Family Café.

The Family Café is also fortunate to hold two different federal grants from SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The first of those is for something called a Statewide Family Network for children's mental health. Basically, that project tasks The Family Café with providing information and resources regarding children's mental health, and helping families to have a greater role in shaping the system of care. That project entails ongoing work with the Department of Children and Families to partner on their family involvement efforts, and also supports parts of The Annual Family Café such as last year's Family-Run Organization pre-con, the Mental Health Track, and keynotes that address mental health.

The second SAMHSA grant is our organization's one activity that is national in scope. It supports a National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC) for mental health. Under this project, we provide something called "technical assistance" to independent grass roots organizations that are run by people with mental health conditions in two regions comprised of fourteen states. That means we help them to create sustainable organizations that represent the voice of the mental health community. We help with things like board development, strategic planning, fundraising, partnership development, and everything else it takes to get a nonprofit up and running, and make it sustainable. The TA Center also provides information on its assigned subject area, which is supported education. That has to do with giving people with mental health conditions the knowledge and support they need to participate in higher education and get a degree, so they can enjoy the same sense of fulfillment and economic benefit as their typical peers. The project has its own website at cafetacenter.net. In terms of staff, The Family Café's Program Director is responsible for directing the TA center, and works closely with a consultant that has expertise in organizational development who is contracted to work on the project.

Beyond those programs, there are a few things that happen on an annual cycle. At The Annual Family Café, we distribute Pink Cards so attendees can submit questions and comments about Florida's service delivery system. The Family Café collects those Pink Cards, and distributes the questions and comments to the

relevant state agencies. We then collate their responses to put together the Questions & Answers Book that is published in early December. Another part of our annual cycle is our "Let's Talk!" Legislative Conference Call series. Every year during the regular legislative session, The Family Café hosts weekly conference calls where an expert guest speaker talks about what's going on at the Capitol, and fields questions from callers about how legislative action might impact people with disabilities.

Finally, and probably most importantly, there is all of the work that goes into making The Annual Family Café come together. Our Family Café Planning Committee, which is made up of state agency partners, partner organization representatives, and family members meets on a monthly basis. Event planning is really a nine month process that begins with the release of the Presenter Proposal and Exhibitor forms in early October. In January, the Planning Committee comes together to select presentations for inclusion in the agenda. During this time, we are also getting everything ready for registration to officially open in February. That includes designing and publishing the registration brochure, and putting together the online registration form. In mid-April, we send out letters and emails to attendees to inform them of their financial assistance and registration status. Of course, there is a lot of work that goes into managing registration, doing the financial assistance lottery process, and generating those notifications. We also go through a similar process with presenters and exhibitors, as they require communication about their presentation time slots, exhibit hall spaces, etc. Once the attendee letters go out, we spend a lot of time working with the hotel to make sure that the reservations are taken care of. Of course, there are a lot of other pieces that have to come together between March and June, including designing and printing the program, getting the agenda into the smartphone app, arranging for AV and signage, organizing the two pre-cons that happen on the Thursday before the event, getting our three keynote spots filled, and coordinating the Annual Governor's Summit on Disabilities with the Governor's office and state agency leadership.

So, as you can see, there's a ton of work that goes into The Annual Family Café, and a lot that we do beyond our signature event. We have three different grants, the Florida Youth Council, and connect Florida families with timely information year round. And we do all of that with only four people!

My daughter has been coming here a long time. She's now 22 years old and she wants to know how she can work for Family Café or be a volunteer.

It's wonderful to hear that your involvement in The Annual Family Café has been so longstanding. We love to see people that come back year after year! In terms of volunteering, there are multiple venues where you can do so. Prior to the event, you can participate on our Planning Committee. This body is composed of a variety of partners from the disability community, and is also open to individuals and family members. We would love to have you be part of it. There are also a number of ways to volunteer at the event. You can sign up to help out with stuffing conference bags to be handed out at registration, work at the registration desk getting people signed in, or directing attendees to session rooms and supporting presenters as a room monitor.

Would like to know if The Family Café would ever consider doing a potluck dinner on Friday or Saturday night in large hall. I would be glad to help serve and clean up.

Thanks for that suggestion. We definitely appreciate that finding affordable dining options is an issue for many of our attendees, and we always work with the host hotel to provide discounts and low-cost options. There would likely be some challenges with hosting a potluck dinner at the event, as most attendees are in hotel rooms and don't have access to their home kitchens. Additionally, The Annual Family Café attracts thousands of attendees, so serving that many people would be a challenge. We would also have to find a space to host the potluck, and most hotels have rules regarding bringing in outside food, as banquet service is one of their most reliable revenue streams. Nonetheless, we will discuss your idea with the Planning Committee and figure out what might be possible.

Would like to know if you can have a breakout session on how to eat healthy on a gluten free diet.

Thanks for that suggestion. The Annual Family Café has included sessions on healthy eating in previous years, and we will advise our Planning Committee that there is a demand for information on this topic so they can take that into account as they set the agenda for 2018.

I would like to know why there weren't more seminars geared toward siblings. There were plenty of classes for my parents and ones for my brother, but barely any for me. I like to be involved with my family and things we do, so classes like that would really benefit me and others. If this idea interests you and your team, please contact me! I would 100% be up to helping out. Thank you for hosting this event, me and my family learned a lot and had loads of fun!

Thanks so much for not just pointing out that there is a need for sibling sessions, but also being willing to address the topic yourself! We are definitely aware of the demand for information geared toward siblings. In fact, that topic has been addressed multiple times in previous years. It just so happened that we didn't receive any presentation proposals addressing this topic in 2017. If you're interested in hosting a sibling session at The 20th Anniversary Family Café in 2018, we would definitely encourage you to submit a proposal. You can find the presentation proposal form on our website at familycafe.net.

Will The Annual Family Café ever visit Miami-Dade County, Miami, or Brevard County?

Over the years, we have received feedback from attendees representing various parts of the state about the possibility of having The Annual Family Café in a different location. The event has always taken place in Orlando, because of its central geographic location, and the availability of hotel and convention space there. Additionally, while hosting the event in South Florida would be convenient for those in that part of the state, it would make it difficult for people from Northeast Florida and the Panhandle to attend.

As usual this event was very well put together; classes were great. The information that I learned from these classes is well used in my day-to-day care for my son. Thank you again for the opportunity to go to Family Café yearly.

Our pleasure! It's really wonderful to hear that you are able to apply the knowledge and information you take away from The Annual Family Café in your day-to-day life. That's exactly the outcome we hope to see!

The event was really good and helpful. I would like that every year we can experience the same. Thanks for all that you gave to us.

Our pleasure! We do our best to strike the right balance between having the event be similar every year, while also including new content and improving it.

This was completely wonderful. I wish there was more time to get into the 1 hr. classes because many were at the same time I wanted to witness.

Thanks for your positive feedback! With more than twenty sessions in every time slot, it can be a challenge to decide which to attend. Remember, if there's something that you thought was interesting but weren't able to attend, you are welcome to contact the presenter directly for more information. That's why we make sure to include their contact info in the program.

I was wondering if this year was a smaller turnout than in the past. There were not a whole lot of speakers to choose from as in the past!

Attendance at this year's Annual Family Café was roughly similar to what we experienced in 2016. If you're referring to the number of presenters on hand, that number was also similar to the previous years. It's possible that it may have seemed less busy at certain times as the hotel meeting space is relatively spread out, and attendees tend to come and go from the event freely.

Why isn't Walmart involved with disabilities?

Thanks for that question. The Family Café works throughout the year to attract various sponsors, including large for-profit businesses like Walmart. Unfortunately they have not been responsive to our attempts to engage them in The Annual Family Café. If you would like to see them supporting or participating in the event, we would encourage you to contact them directly. An appeal from an engaged advocate can be more effective than a request coming from our office!

Why not fewer, better quality seminars? Having attended 2 years we still feel out of the loop. Perhaps find ways to include new individuals and families.

Thanks for your feedback. Our Planning Committee does its best to select presentations that are of high quality and address topics that our attendees want to learn about. If there were specific sessions that you found to be less than great, please share that information with our office so we can make our Planning Committee aware of it. The best way to do that is with an email to info@familycafe.net. In terms of new families, The Annual Family Café always attracts a mix of people that have attended regularly for many years, and others that are there for the first time. We try to make everyone equally welcome. If there's something you think we could do better to make new attendees feel better connected, we would love to hear about it!

How do I apply to be a speaker at next year's conference?

The Family Café is currently accepting presentation proposals, and our Planning Committee selects presentations for inclusion in our agenda at their annual face-to-face meeting in January. If you are interested in hosting a presentation, you can find the presentation proposal form on our website at familycafe.net. The deadline for submission is January 12th.

The event was awesome.

Thanks! You're awesome!

Is there going to be a closer way to get myself in and out of the complex? We had a larger problem getting in and out with the cars and stuff we need. Other than that this is my number one event to be at next year if you want me back.

Something to think about for next year, maybe me bringing the ramps and cars to the event and let the children and parents race in the building. We can do it on the back wall of the room. Just something to think about for next year.

Thanks for your feedback. Physical access to the hotel and the meeting space can be a challenge. We work with the host hotel to make the entire event as accessible as possible, given the layout of the hotel.

Thanks also for your idea about setting up some type of indoor racing. We would require more detail about that to determine if it was something feasible for The Annual Family Café. If you would like to have that discussion, you can contact our office at info@familycafe.net.

The Agency for Health Care Administration

I love going to The Family Café. It is a great place to meet other families that know what it is like to have a family member with a disability. You can share experiences and information with other families. I share my experiences with those who have been getting services through APD or AHCA. We share best practices and policy. A great venue to learn. Wish there were groups year-round that we could get involved with—teach others or learn new stuff!

Thank you for your comments. The Agency for Health Care Administration staff always looks forward to participating in this event to share information and give updates on the services that we provide for those with disabilities and their families.

What can we do to get a quicker response from Social Security Administration? We recently spent 7 ½ hours at our local office in Polk County to give our income information and called back almost a month later and our paperwork had not even been looked at yet. They also told us that they overpaid and we owed money back, even though we put our income in every month. We filled out a waiver and still haven't heard anything about that and it's been close to a year ago. Are there any plans to raise the income level so families like ours can keep Medicaid without fear of losing it?

I'm sorry to hear about your experience. The Social Security Administration (SSA), however, is a federal agency over which the State of Florida has no authority. SSA's toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213. The SSA can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The SSA is a federal agency responsible for determining Social Security benefits. If an individual is eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), they are automatically eligible for Medicaid.

I want to get married but can't afford to lose my SSDI. Is there a way to do this?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is the agency responsible for determining Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits. SSA's toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213. The SSA can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

My concern is about appealing Medicaid.

Eligibility criteria for Medicaid are established by federal and state laws and regulations. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency responsible for determining Medicaid eligibility. For questions about appealing a Medicaid eligibility determination, please contact DCF at 1-866-762-2237.

If your question is related to appealing the denial or reduction of Medicaid services, most Medicaid recipients in Florida are required to enroll in a Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) plan. Recipients may contact their MMA plan directly to request assistance with appealing a denial of Medicaid covered services. The contact information for the MMA plans can be found through the following links:

MMA Standard Plans

(http://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/statewide_mc/pdf/mma/MMA_Standard_Plan_s.pdf)

MMA Specialty Plans

(http://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/statewide_mc/pdf/mma/MMA_Specialty_Plan_s.pdf).

I keep hearing that the new health care bill is going to be cutting parts of Medicaid. I have a son that is medically fragile and physically impaired. He has Medicaid as his secondary medical coverage. How is this going to affect families like ours? His primary insurance denies most of what he needs to survive and things such as therapy.

Florida is not changing its Medicaid program, in fact the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) program has produced the highest program quality and performance scores in the program's history. However, Medicaid programs are established by federal and state laws and regulations. It appears you may be referencing proposed Federal legislation. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

Doctors' orders should hold more weight when determining Medicaid coverage, i.e. ordinarily vitamin supplements are not covered but in a patient with a documented deficiency they should be. Especially vitamins like D, B12, etc.

Florida Medicaid pays for services that are medically necessary. Children under age 21 can receive services that are not on the list of Medicaid-covered services if they meet certain conditions. If you or your child is under age 21 and enrolled in a Medicaid health plan, please contact the plan for information on how to request a special services coverage determination. If you are on fee-for-service Medicaid, please have your doctor follow the instructions for Multi-Specialty Services Authorization Request at <http://www.ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/childhealthservices/chc-up/index.shtml>.

In addition, under the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program, most Medicaid recipients receive their medical services through a health plan. The MMA plans offer expanded benefits beyond those currently covered by the traditional fee-for-service Medicaid program. Many MMA plans offer a monthly amount that can be used on over the counter medication and supplies, which would help pay for these vitamins. Details regarding the scope of covered benefits may vary by health plan. The Agency has posted a list of the expanded benefits offered by plan on our website: http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/statewide_mc/pdf/mma/Expanded_Benefits.pdf.

Could you please have more information on medical marijuana for kids with disabilities?

Due to federal regulations, Florida Medicaid cannot provide coverage for medical marijuana. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved marijuana for any medical use and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) still classifies marijuana as a Schedule I drug. Questions about medical marijuana should be referred to the Florida Department of Health.

What effects can we expect to see from the Florida state budget cuts to Medicaid? This looks like it will have a large impact on services for persons with disabilities. I wonder what the already-stressed system and families will do in response. Especially with \$618 million in tax cuts largely to businesses.

With regard to the Florida Medicaid program, there has not been a state cut in the budget that will cause recipients to lose services or cause issues with access to services.

What can be done to improve our health insurance coverage? We pay for senior citizens and citizens with disabilities, yet underprivileged children have very little coverage. Very poor dental coverage.

Florida Medicaid provides a comprehensive dental health service package for children under the age of 21.

For adults, Florida Medicaid reimburses for acute emergency dental procedures to alleviate pain or infection, dentures and denture-related procedures including:

- Comprehensive oral evaluation
- Denture-related procedures
- Full dentures and partial dentures
- Incision and drainage of an abscess
- Radiographs necessary to make a diagnosis
- Problem-focused oral evaluation

In addition, Managed Medical Assistance plans offer expanded dental benefits above the services outlined above. Recipients may contact their MMA plan directly to request assistance with obtaining Medicaid covered services. Recipients can also contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055 if they need assistance.

For questions relating to services covered by Medicare, please contact Medicare by calling 1-800-633-4227.

What is happening to Medicaid? Please do not eliminate the services of Medicaid or create a new plan. We live by our Medicaid and cannot afford to live and survive without it.

Florida is not changing its Medicaid program, in fact the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program has produced the highest program quality and performance scores in the program's history. However, Medicaid programs are established by federal and state laws and regulations. It appears you may be

referencing proposed Federal legislation. The Agency is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

Don't take "Obama Care" away. For the first time I have health care. Okay, it may be expensive, but fix the cost without destroying the program. Insurance companies are making a killing off our broken bones and spirits.

It appears you may be referencing proposed Federal legislation. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

How much money do children with disabilities receive when parents receive SS or SS1 and Medicaid?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is a federal agency responsible for determining Social Security benefits. SSA's toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213. The SSA can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Love The Family Café. Fourth year coming. Great meetings. Always learning new things. However, I am a bit worried that the state is going to eliminate the ACA and look towards block granting Medicaid. Please stop and consider the lives you will be disrupting.

It appears you may be referencing Federal legislation that proposes moving to a block grant system to fund Medicaid programs. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

Drop attempts to repeal the ACA. Instead try working together, through regular order to address any weaknesses in the health care system.

It appears you may be referencing proposed Federal legislation. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

Medicaid through the ACA protects children and families with very high medical expenses. Don't eliminate/repeal the program, enhance it.

It appears you may be referencing proposed Federal legislation. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

Don't mess with the Medicaid program. Families with pre-existing conditions need a way to get health insurance.

Florida is not changing its Medicaid program, in fact the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program has produced the highest program quality and performance scores in the program's history. However, Medicaid programs are established by federal and state laws and regulations. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

I would like to know more on Medicare and SSI.

Medicare is a federal program that is different than state Medicaid programs. For questions relating to services covered by Medicare, please contact Medicare by calling 1-800-633-4227.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is a federal agency responsible for determining Social Security benefits. SSA's toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213. The SSA can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

I need to find free speech therapy for my daughter who is 33 years old. Medicaid does not cover it for her age.

Regarding speech therapy services, Florida Medicaid reimburses for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device evaluations for adults. In addition, under the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program, most Medicaid recipients receive their medical services through a health plan. The MMA plans offer expanded benefits beyond those currently covered by the traditional fee-for-service Medicaid program. These benefits include additional outpatient hospital services which can include speech therapy. Details regarding

the scope of covered benefits may vary by health plan. The Agency has posted a list of the expanded benefits offered by plan on our website. The expanded benefits list may be accessed through the following link:
http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/statewide_mc/pdf/mma/Expanded_Benefits.pdf

There may also be local community resources that can benefit you. United Way 211 Community Resource Directory has a list of local health resources on their website that may assist you in finding services. United Way 211's website may be accessed through the following link:
<http://www.referweb.net/211communityresources/>

Why won't the administration at AHCA be willing to have a sit down with a few folks to discuss healthcare in Florida. I mean healthcare and the Medicaid system.

The Agency consistently receives feedback and meets with many stakeholders including provider and recipient advocate groups as well as state and federal lawmakers about the Florida Medicaid program. We will need additional information to be able to fully address this question.

I heard that Florida's low-income pool does not ensure a single Floridian. What? Did I hear this correctly?

The Low-income Pool program is not an insurance program. Its purpose is to provide government funding for "safety net" providers (including hospitals) for the costs of uncompensated care for low income individuals who do not have insurance.

If Florida had a block grant or applied per capita caps on Medicaid spending, wouldn't this cause significant cuts to the spending and threaten coverage for all Medicaid enrollees?

It appears you may be referencing Federal legislation that is being proposed. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

The highest rate of spending on Medicaid is for seniors and the ones with disabilities. Those who really need the service. This program is federally matched. Why this is a great return or match of the federal support to the states. Why are we continually trying to alter this program? It is for the truly needy.

Florida is not changing its Medicaid program, in fact the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program has produced the highest program quality and performance scores in the program's history. However, Medicaid programs are established by federal and state laws and regulations. The State is carefully watching the federal health care debate and how it may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities

I am interested in all services available for teens to help them with their social skills. We receive APD services, but there is nothing for kids to do outside of the group home. No community services

There are various resources to help individuals with disabilities. The APD Resource Directory is one place you can look by visiting <http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/>.

If we take people off the wait list each year, how many do we add? Director Palmer tells us every year that the legislature has provided relief and funding for the wait list, but we are still on the list, waiting for services. How many are left on the list anyway?

Individuals are taken off the waiting list based on level of need. Over the last five years, the Legislature has allocated money to take more individuals off the list, but every day children are born with developmental disabilities. As of October 25, 2017 there are 20,957 individuals on the waiting list.

I hope the governor doesn't cut funds for people. He sounded so sincere; but it seems that services are not here. That they are going away. Providers are closing up shop! Not enough money to pay staff a livable wage. You either take it or leave it. They left it! What do we do now? No community supports.

APD had another successful Legislative Session with many positive measures being approved in the state budget to help people with developmental disabilities.

APD received a budget of \$1.3 billion on July 1, 2017. This is a significant financial commitment to individuals with developmental disabilities in Florida.

I love going to The Family Café. It is a great place to meet other families that know what it is like to have a family member with a disability. You can share experiences and information with other families. I share my experiences with those who have been getting services through APD or

AHCA. We share best practices and policy. A great venue to learn. Wish there were groups year-round that we could get involved with—teach others or learn new stuff!

The Family Care Councils (FCCs) are groups of volunteers who advocate for people with developmental disabilities and their families. They are a great network of individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as parents, siblings, grandparents, and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who qualify for APD services. To connect with your local FCC, please visit <http://www.fccflorida.org/local-councils.html>.

How come transportation is such a huge problem? Taxis don't want us—Uber is great, but the real problem is getting help to pay for it on your plan.

APD is taking a leadership role in a very important issue that affects many people with disabilities—transportation or the lack of reliable transportation. Director Palmer is chairing the Transportation Task Force that the Legislature created this past spring.

The Transportation Task Force is required to submit a transportation study to the Legislature in December and has come together to make recommendations for improvements.

We need respite providers! We also need APD to be able to pay for it and put it on our iBudget plan!

APD covers respite services for individuals under 21 through the iBudget waiver. For individuals over the age of 21, respite can be provided as part of Personal Supports. Individuals and families who need this service can work with their Waiver Support Coordinator to locate a provider and have the service authorized on their cost plan.

The Family Care Council has been around for 20 years. The best kept secret. Families should know more about this program/council.

The Family Care Councils (FCCs) are groups of volunteers who advocate for people with developmental disabilities and their families. They are a great network of

individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as parents, siblings, grandparents, and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who qualify for APD services. To connect with your local FCC please visit <http://www.fccflorida.org/local-councils.html>.

I'm asking for a parent not at the conference. Would you be offering in the future any workshops or information for children with Spina Bifida? Does APD or DOH offer services for those with Spina Bifida? She is in elementary school and needs additional resources and general health care.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities serves individuals with developmental disabilities as defined in Florida Statutes, Chapter 393. This includes individuals who have Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, autism, intellectual disabilities, Prader-Willi syndrome, Phelan-McDermid syndrome, and children ages 3 to 5 who are at high risk of having a developmental disability.

Need more sessions/workshops for people with physical disabilities.

APD provides informative presentations at The Family Café related to people with developmental disabilities. Thank you for your suggestion on presentations you'd like to see in the future from APD.

Do you offer housing assistance for the whole family that is ADA accessible? We are served by APD.

APD provides services and supports to assist eligible individuals with developmental disabilities. This may include referrals for housing or environmental modifications to their homes to make their living arrangement accessible. APD maintains a Resource Directory as an informational service to help individuals with disabilities learn about available resources and organizations in their respective areas. This is a good starting point for researching housing options. The Resource Directory can be found online at: <http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/>

Any idea when we will see reimbursement for certified community health workers?

The Department of Health website provides information about the Florida Community Health Worker Coalition. Please visit:
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/community-health-workers/fl-chw-coalition/>

Would like to know how or who I can talk to about starting a family support group with special needs adults receiving in my area because we need it. More and more families in my county are moving to our area.

The Family Care Councils (FCCs) are groups of volunteers who advocate for people with developmental disabilities and their families. They are a great network of individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as parents, siblings, grandparents, and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who qualify for APD services. To connect with your local FCC, please visit <http://www.fccflorida.org/local-councils.html>.

Nice to see APD giving CEU's but there are far more educational seminars that they should be giving CEU's for, i.e. several years ago I went to project search seminar and brought back to our area and the program has impacted several hundred lives.

Thank you for your suggestion about CEUs.

More funding for disabilities services under the waiver.

APD had another successful Legislative Session with many positive measures being approved in the state budget to help people with developmental disabilities.

APD received a budget of \$1.3 billion on July 1, 2017. This is a significant financial commitment to individuals with developmental disabilities in Florida.

Is there an online resource for group homes and for independent living with supports?

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Resources website managed by Delmarva helps individuals with developmental disabilities find a provider that best meets their needs. Please visit it at <http://www.flddresources.org/>

Same as in years past . . . why is funding for programs like Med waiver and Medicaid being decreased while those that need it increase year after year? If it is going into somebody's pocket they should be ashamed of themselves! Please help in identifying these idiots so we can vote them out of office tout-suite.

APD's budget has increased over the past five years, helping Floridians with disabilities live, learn, and work in their communities. Funding for the Medicaid waiver has not decreased.

Is there any reason why we can't have more than one session on APD services since that organization serves so many people? Some sessions were in line with the same time APD was.

APD would like to provide everyone positive, informative presentations at The Annual Family Café. Thank you for your suggestion on additional presentations you'd like to see in the future from APD.

Barbara Palmer should have a booth—Meet n' Greet. More than a one-hour session filled to the gills.

APD would like to provide everyone a positive, informative experience at The Annual Family Café. Each year, we host a booth in the Exhibit Hall, and staff are present throughout The Annual Family Café to assist with questions. Director Palmer spends time at the booth as well.

Respite/child care for parent to attend the APD sessions.

APD maintains a Resource Directory as an informational service to help individuals with disabilities learn about available resources and organizations in their respective areas. We encourage you to access this directory to look for respite options. The Resource Directory can be found online at:
<http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/>

Why doesn't the state form an adult training program that is based more on continuing developmental skills and life skills modeled after the BLAST program offered in the high school instead of the traditional work ADT programs currently offered? Learning and progressing does not stop at 22 years old. A structured day and learning is needed to continue growth and not lose skills already learned. Needs do not stop at age 22.

Adult Day Training Services (Life Skills Development Level 3) are training services intended to support the participation of recipients in valued routines in the community. Similar to the BLAST program, these services can include volunteer work, training in daily living activities, self-advocacy, adaptive skills, social skills, and employment skills. These services established by each Adult Day Training program must be meaningful to the individual receiving services. The agency is exploring ways to improve these services and create a more meaningful, age-appropriate, person-centered, and community-inclusive service. If you have any ideas or thoughts you would like to share with the agency on ways to improve these services, please contact us at APD.info@apdcares.org.

Suggestions: more info on waiting list and waiver program. More sessions on resources. More sessions on where to get help. More sessions for adults with disabilities. Longer sessions on legal needs, guardian advocate trusts, etc.

APD would like to provide everyone positive, informative presentations at The Annual Family Café. Thank you for your suggestion on presentations you'd like to see in the future from APD.

CDC+ needs more sessions to allow networking. Services over 21 years old get different—would like sessions on the changes.

CDC+ usually holds several trainings per month. All CDC+ training material is located at our website at <http://apdcares.org/cdcplus/cdctraining.htm>. CDC+ staff is always available to answer questions and provide technical assistance. The phone number to call is 866-761-7043. Additionally, there are Peer Support Groups around the state. The contact information for those groups are located on our website here: <http://apdcares.org/cdcplus/participants/>

Thank you Governor Rick Scott for the PALS Program.

The Arc Gateway Program for Adult Learning and Support (PALS) is a two-year post-secondary program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities made possible by an appropriation from the state of Florida. It is a wonderful program that allows students the opportunity to go to college, learn new skills, explore new careers, prepare for employment, and ultimately gain more independence. For more information about the program, please visit <http://www.arc-gateway.org/pals/>.

- 1. What websites are available to train individuals on requesting correct documentation on appeals?**
- 2. When will AHCA and APD update their PCA for CDC+ minors? Medicaid is rejecting applications based on extra needed documentation of plan of care. Yet a half-inch space is allotted on the official form, then you are asked for specifics. Why not have those questions on the form?**
- 3. When a guardianship is needed, this is a needed service for a client on CDC+. Savings should be allowed to be used.**

PCA forms are maintained by eQHealth Solutions, not CDC+. They can be found here: <http://fl.eqhs.org/HomeHealthPCSPPEC/FormsandDownloads.aspx>. The money allocated to consumers in CDC+ comes from the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver. If AHCA makes Guardianship a Medicaid-allowable expense, then CDC+ could allow that as an expense.

A child's application for "waivers" is being ignored for years. Applications submitted in person, electronically, via Medicaid renewals and never receiving a decision.

When an application for services is received, it is reviewed to determine eligibility. Sometimes, follow-up information needs to be submitted to assist with the eligibility determination.

Furthermore, not every person who applies for services through APD is found eligible. If you have a specific issue you would like to discuss with APD staff, please email APD.info@apdcares.org.

Please don't cut CDC funds for myself. I need all my funds to live.

All CDC+ consumers are Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver participants. Individuals can choose CDC+ as an option for their service delivery. Their budget is calculated through the waiver based on the needs and goals of the consumer. Once their budget has been determined, the services the consumer has chosen and the dollar amount that has been determined for those services is listed in the iBudget annual cost plan. CDC+ looks at what is allocated on the iBudget cost plan and transfers the services and dollar amounts listed onto a budget calculation spreadsheet. This spreadsheet automatically calculates the fees associated with CDC+ and the monthly CDC+ budget amount. If the consumer's budget isn't enough because of the fees involved with being enrolled in CDC+, then the best option would be for them to stay on the iBudget waiver and receive their services there. The CDC+ fees would be the only reduction that CDC+ could make to someone's budget. Otherwise, the budget is decided by the iBudget waiver.

I feel that we need more resources for adults with disabilities, especially for adults with autism.

APD is constantly working to improve existing services. Your feedback is very important to us. Suggestions or questions can be submitted to our agency email at APD.info@apdcares.org.

How do we get service providers brought to Collier County—across the board we have almost nothing.

Please check the Suncoast Region's tab on APD's website for the services listed as critical needs. If you need a service not on this list, please contact your region with concerns. Additionally, you may contact your region for information on their provider recruitment practices.

Are there any groups within The Family Café or other advocacy groups for the siblings of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

The Family Care Councils (FCCs) are groups of volunteers who advocate for people with developmental disabilities and their families. They are a great network of individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as parents, siblings,

grandparents, and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who qualify for APD services. To connect with your local FCC please visit <http://www.fccflorida.org/local-councils.html>.

Are you cutting funds for people with disabilities, and by how much? We need more services for adults with disabilities. What services are you going to provide for the adults on top of what's already provided (new services/choices)?

Why don't you stay around for questions during The Annual Family Café? Previous governors always stayed around and mingled with the attendees but you always leave! Makes me feel like you don't care about any of us when we make up a good portion of your state!

On July 1, 2017, APD received a budget of \$1.3 billion, which is a significant financial commitment to individuals with developmental disabilities in Florida. This is the fifth year with a budget increase for APD. Funding for the Medicaid waiver has not decreased. Governor Scott and Senator Galvano stayed after the Governor's Summit on Disabilities to take photos and answer questions of attendees.

How come Barbara Palmer never has a big enough room so everyone can listen to what she has to say? You have wheelchairs and carriages and walkers that you just can't maneuver in a small room. She is one of the most important people to listen to.

APD would like to provide everyone a positive, informative experience at The Annual Family Café. Each year, we host a booth in the Exhibit Hall, and staff are present throughout The Annual Family Café to assist with questions. Director Palmer spends time at the booth as well.

More information on CDC+. Additional info about independent living options and the expenses associated with that.

Information about CDC+ is located on our website at <http://apdcares.org/cdcplus>. The CDC+ Welcome Packet is a good place to begin to learn about CDC+ and to locate the instructions on how to apply to participate in the program. The CDC+ Rule Handbook explains the Medicaid rules regarding the CDC+ program. You can

find it here:

http://apdcares.org/cdcplus/docs/CDC_Plus_Program_Handbook_2015.pdf

Individuals who enroll in CDC+ can only live in their own or their family's home per CDC+ regulations. They cannot live in a group home or assisted living facility. If the individual lives independently, they can use their budget to pay staff to provide the supports and services they need. Their Social Security and/or wages would be used to pay their rent/utilities. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has subsidies to assist someone with these housing costs.

Can we get more information on programs or funding on how to apply for services/therapy dogs for people with autism or autism spectrum disorder? The ones that were here are very expensive.

Requirements and costs for service and therapy dogs may vary, depending on the organization. The Autism Speaks website provides some information on several service dog organizations at: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/resource-library/assistance-dog-resources>.

I would have liked if my providers and service coordinators and my child's school knew about this event so we could have more notice about the event. I would like to get there early next year to hear Governor Scott speak. Please keep me up to date with what's coming up on The Family Café's calendar. It should be part of the service plan or IEP.

The Family Café organization coordinates and promotes the annual event. As a partner, APD promotes The Annual Family Café through our monthly newsletter *The Champion*, our social media accounts, and on our website.

What happens once he is 18? Is there help for single mothers who can't work due to taking care of sick kids? Info on Mitochondrial Disorders?

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities serves individuals with developmental disabilities as defined in Florida Statutes, Chapter 393. This includes individuals who have Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, autism, intellectual disabilities, Prader-Willi syndrome, Phelan-McDermid syndrome, and children ages 3 to 5 who are at high risk for having a developmental disability.

If you feel your son would qualify for APD services, please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county:
<http://apdcares.org/region/>

I want to be able to find out more about the Family Care Councils. Are you recruiting people to be on these? How do I go about applying?

The Family Care Councils (FCCs) are groups of volunteers who advocate for people with developmental disabilities and their families. They are a great network of individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as parents, siblings, grandparents, and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who qualify for APD services. To connect with your local FCC please visit
<http://www.fccflorida.org/local-councils.html>.

Rumor has it that all WSC must insist that their clients sign up for a managed care provider. I thought that APD clients were exempt from Medicaid Managed Care organizations and if chosen, one can stay on regular Medicaid for services.

The Florida Medicaid Managed Care program is optional for individuals served through the iBudget Waiver. <https://www.flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/>

Respite services need for my iBudget. How can I get my child into the Big Brother/Big Sister for children with disabilities. Disability & social media & YouTube.

If you feel your child would qualify for respite services, please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county:
<http://apdcares.org/region/>.

You can find more information about the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization by visiting their website at <http://www.bbbs.org/>.

APD's social media pages are all easily accessible from our webpage at the top right of the screen.

PCA under 21 through CDC+ requires a client's representative to complete all forms and gather the appropriate doctor and supervisor's signature, THEN submit the request through their support coordinator. The support coordinator becomes the administrator in eQHealth's rulings. If further information is requested, EQH will only acknowledge and send request to the CDC+ support coordinator. Denials are only sent to the CDC+ support coordinator. Why is this policy and procedure which isolates the client, the representative, and the parents from receiving information in place?

AHCA and eQHealth Solutions established this process when they began to allow CDC+ consumers to bring their State Plan PCA into CDC+ to self-direct that service. The other alternative is that consumers must choose an AHCA-approved PCA provider who works for an agency that provides home health care, as individuals do when they are on the iBudget waiver. This service is only available to persons under the age of 21.

I need to find APD speech therapy for my daughter who is 33 years old. The Medicaid does not cover it for her age.

Medicare can cover medically necessary speech therapy. For individuals over 21 on the iBudget waiver, speech therapy can be accessed through the waiver when needs exceed coverage through the Medicare.

The Department of Children and Families

What can we do to get a quicker response from Social Security Administration? We recently spent 7.5 hours in our county to give our income information and called back almost a month later and our paperwork had not even been looked at yet. They also told us that they overpaid us and we owed money back, even though we put our income in every month. We filled out a waiver and still haven't heard anything about that and it's been close to a year ago. Are there any plans to raise the income level so families like ours can keep Medicaid without fear of losing it?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is a federal agency which operates from a national headquarters with local offices available to service citizens. Information on applications and benefits can be found by logging in to a created my Social Security <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>. If you need to schedule an appointment at your local office, this can be done by calling them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Generally, you'll have a shorter wait time if you call during the week after Tuesday. If you still need additional help, you may write to the Office of Public Inquiries. Please include your Social Security number or claim number whenever you write to them.

Social Security Administration
Office of Public Inquiries
1100 West High Rise
6401 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21235

The Florida Department of Children and Families does oversee eligibility for Medicaid in the state of Florida. Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) with the SSA are automatically eligible for Medicaid through that program and referred through that agency. For recipients of other Social Security benefits, eligibility is based upon a number of factors, including income. The income limits are based upon percentages of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for each program; FPL is determined by the federal government and is adjusted periodically by that entity.

I would like to know if you can have breakout session on coping with anxiety and bipolar disorder.

The Department of Children and Families' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health is happy to provide a presentation on coping with anxiety and bipolar disorder. We will work with the Family Café, who organizes the conference.

For information about bipolar and anxiety disorders, you may be interested in the following resources:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/mental-disorders/bipolar-disorders>
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/mental-disorders/anxiety-disorders>
- National Institute of Mental Health
 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>
 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>
- International Bipolar Foundation
 - <http://ibpf.org/>
- Mental Health America
 - <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
 - <https://www.nami.org/>

What progress has/can be made as far as needs of non-elderly adults with physical disabilities (non-DD)? For example: housing, modification, etc. Best sources of resources.

The Department of Children and Families seeks to ensure all residents who are in need are served to the best of our ability. Florida residents who have been determined disabled by the Social Security Administration or through our process of Disability Determination Decision are eligible for Medicaid due to this determination and can apply for this benefit at <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>. Within the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) we also have specialized deductions for medical costs for residents who are elderly or disabled.

The Office of Homelessness coordinates the services of the various state agencies and programs to serve individuals or families who are homeless. Information regarding lead agencies this office works with can be found at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/homelessness/local-community-providers-service>.

Additional resources can also be found at the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) at their website <http://apd.myflorida.com/>. The APD works in partnership

with local communities and private providers to assist people who have developmental disabilities and their families. APD also provides assistance in identifying the needs of people with developmental disabilities for supports and services.

Community resources are also available by contacting the United Way's 2-1-1 service line in your area by telephone or at <http://www.211.org/>.

Great conference. Very informative. Have mortgage brokers for help with disabled purchasing a house when you have a mental illness.

Thank you for your comments. The Family Café organizers will take your suggestion for Mortgage Broker at the next Annual Family Café into advisement.

I would like to see more information about living with bipolar disorder.

The Department of Children and Families' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health is happy to provide a presentation on living with bipolar disorder. We will work with The Family Café, who organizes the conference.

For information about bipolar disorder, you may be interested in the following resources:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/mental-disorders/bipolar-disorders>
- National Institute of Mental Health
 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>
- International Bipolar Foundation
 - <http://ibpf.org/>
- Mental Health America
 - <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
 - <https://www.nami.org/>

We need a safe place for young children and teens to be placed in crisis. A place that is appropriate, caring, and helpful—not to be locked up in a psychiatric prison.

I would like to know where resources are to help children with mental health issues in crisis. My son has been diagnosed with Asperger's since

age 7. At age 10, he was diagnosed with Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. He also has mitochondrial disorder and hypermobility syndrome, which causes decreased strength, endurance, muscle and joint pain, and weakness. Because of severe reactions to medications he is limited in what he can take. When having seizures he may become agitated and aggressive. He is now 14 and bigger than me. I am on my own and needed to call for help. Instead of assisting me with de-escalation, he was Baker Acted and locked up, my rights removed for three days. Only able to visit for one hour per week on Wednesday. He was verbally abused, put in inappropriate groups discussing rape and drugs. He came out further depressed and suicidal—feeling there was no hope.

Teenagers who become aggressive due to mental health or intellectual disorders can present a challenge to the system of care. When the police are called, they have limited options and sometimes limited training about what to do. Some police departments have officers who have had special training called crisis intervention training (CIT). Asking for a CIT-trained officer when you call for help may be helpful.

When someone with a mental health disorder presents a potential harm to others, they are viewed as meeting the criteria for the Baker Act. This is meant to be an immediate way to keep them from hurting someone or themselves, not a long-term solution. When a person needs to continue in treatment to address a mental health or intellectual disorder, a referral or follow-up appointment to community-based services and supports should be made prior to discharge.

Children may be eligible for Medicaid or other types of health insurance. If your child has Medicaid and is enrolled in a Medicaid health plan or another type of health insurance, please contact the health plan for assistance in accessing behavioral health services.

The department funds behavioral health services for children who do not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, through regional Managing Entities. If your child does not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, or the type of service they need is not covered by your insurance, please contact the Managing Entity in your area for assistance in accessing behavioral health services. Information about how to find the Managing Entity in your area is available on the department's website at: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/substance-abuse/managing-entities>.

I would love to see training for kinship parents.

Thank you for your comments. The Family Café organizers will take your suggestion for the next Annual Family Café into advisement.

What are the alternatives to Baker Act when one is suicidal?

The intent of the Baker Act is to keep people with mental health disorders from harming themselves or someone else when they are not willing or able to agree to be evaluated. Sometimes, the Baker Act is the best way to keep someone who is contemplating suicide safe. However, if the person is willing and able to agree to a voluntary evaluation, finding a qualified professional to conduct an assessment and recommend a course of treatment is an alternative.

To locate a service provider in your area you can work with your health insurance plan. The department funds behavioral health services to individuals who do not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, through regional Managing Entities. Information about how to find the Managing Entity in your area is available on the department's website at:

<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/substance-abuse/managing-entities>.

Here are some other resources for suicide prevention that may be of interest:

- **If You Are in Crisis:** Call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to anyone. All calls are confidential.
- For additional crisis information and numbers to call visit:
<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/mental-health/suicide-prevention/crisis-support-information>
- To learn the warning signs and the risk factors visit:
<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/mental-health/suicide-prevention/about-suicide>
- Visit NAMI Florida (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
<http://www.namiflorida.org/suicide-awareness.php>
- Other strategies for suicide prevention include:
 - Means reduction and having a conversation with the suicidal person about storing any firearms and/or lethal medications elsewhere during the period of crisis, or locking them up with the key with a trusted friend, or similar actions.
 - Talking to their loved one, asking the question about suicide in a non-judgmental way, and really listening.

I enjoy coming to The Annual Family Café every year. The guardianship meetings were very helpful. I wish there were more handouts at all of the meetings.

Thank you for your comments. The Family Café organizers will take your suggestion for the next Annual Family Café into advisement.

How much money do disabled children receive when parents receive SS or SSI?

The Social Security Administration determines benefits for those applying for disability and the amount for which each person is eligible. For further information regarding benefits for dependent children please see www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10085.pdf.

If I apply for SSI for my daughter, will they count it as income for me?

Regarding public assistance programs administered by the Department of Children and Families, payments from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are counted differently in each program.

- Under the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) benefits from SSI are counted in full as included income.
- Under the Family Medicaid program, however, SSI benefits are considered excluded income and not counted for that program.
- Under the Temporary Cash Assistance program, SSI recipients are not eligible for this benefit for themselves so their needs, income and assets are not counted as part of the family group in that program.

Why are grandparents who care for their children unable to get kinship assistance, just to help care for their grandkids just like foster care? I feel the grandparents who will should get some kind of help. They kept the kids from going to foster care.

Kinship Caregivers (Grandparents) who are caring for a relative without involvement from a Child Welfare Agency and their local court are not eligible for the Relative Caregiver Program benefits.

However, the Department of Children and Families' Economic Self-Sufficiency office assists in providing temporary financial assistance to families without Child Welfare Agency and local court involvement through the Temporary Cash

Assistance (TCA) program. Benefits are available contingent upon passing the program's eligibility requirements. Online applications can be submitted through the ACCESS Florida system at <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>.

Please see general information surrounding the Temporary Cash Assistance Program:

The TCA program provides cash assistance to families with children under the age of 18 or under age 19 if full-time secondary (high school) school students, that meet the technical, income, and asset requirements. The program helps families become self-supporting while allowing children to remain in their own homes. Pregnant women may also receive TCA, either in the third trimester of pregnancy if unable to work, or in the ninth month of pregnancy. Parents, children, and minor siblings who live together must apply together.

A person must pass all eligibility requirements to get TCA benefits. Some of the eligibility rules are:

- Time Limits – Cash assistance is limited to a lifetime total of 48 months as an adult (except for child only cases, which have no time limit).
- Work Rules – Some people must participate in work activities unless they meet an exemption. Regional Workforce Boards provide work activities and services needed to get or keep a job.
- Income and Deductions – Gross income must be less than 185% of the Federal Poverty level and countable income can't be higher than the payment standard for the family size. Individuals get a \$90 deduction from their gross earned income. Individuals receiving benefits also get an additional earned income deduction as an incentive to get and keep a job.
- Citizenship – Individuals must be U.S. citizens or qualified non-citizens.
- Residency – Individuals must live in the state of Florida.
- SSN - Individuals must provide a Social Security Number or proof they have applied for one.
- Assets – A family's countable assets must be equal to or less than \$2,000. Licensed vehicles needed for individuals subject to the work requirement may not exceed a combined value of \$8,500.
- Relationship - A child must be living in the home maintained by a parent or a relative who is a blood relative of the child.
- Child Support Cooperation – The parent or the caretaker relative of the children must cooperate with child support enforcement to identify and locate the parent(s) who do not live in the child's home, to prove a child's legal relationship to their parent and to get the court to order child support payments.
- Immunization – Children under age 5 must be up to date with childhood immunizations (shots).

- Learnfare – Children age 6 to 18 must attend school and parents/caretakers must attend school conferences

Hoping next year there will be a vendor and/or breakout sessions on devices for non-verbal adults. Also more info on mental disabilities. We need to know what services are in our area. What does the department provide for mental health in a small rural community in Port St. Lucie?

The Department of Children and Families' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health is happy to provide a presentation on mental health issues. Please contact The Family Café, who organizes the conference, if there is a specific topic or type of information would be helpful to you.

If you have Medicaid and are enrolled in a Medicaid health plan or another type of health insurance, please contact the health plan for assistance in accessing behavioral health services.

The department funds behavioral health services for adults who do not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, through regional Managing Entities. If you do not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, or the type of service they need is not covered by your insurance, please contact the Managing Entity in your area for assistance in accessing behavioral health services. The managing entity for Port St. Lucie is Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network. They can be reached at (561) 203-2485. For more information here is a link to their website: <http://sefbhn.worldsecuresystems.com/index.html>.

Finding out about bipolar was important to me. Our community does not provide any services for my foster child. He has so many mental health issues that he is just trying to cope with. We need services!

Most children in foster care are eligible for Medicaid. If your foster child has Medicaid and is enrolled in a Medicaid health plan or another type of health insurance, please contact the health plan for assistance in accessing behavioral health services.

The department funds behavioral health services for children who do not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, through regional Managing Entities. If your foster child does not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, or the type of service you need is not covered by your insurance, please contact the Managing Entity in your area for assistance in accessing behavioral health services. The Managing Entity for Citrus County is Lutheran Services Florida. They

can be reached through their Access to Care line at (877) 229-9098. For more information, here is a link to their website: <https://www.lsfnet.org/>.

Please see below for educational materials that help caregivers and youth learn about Bipolar Disorder from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

- Understanding Bipolar Disorder, Caregiver: Get the Facts
 - <https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA16-5007/SMA16-5007.pdf>
- Understanding Bipolar Disorder, Young Adults: Get the Facts
 - <https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA16-5008/SMA16-5008.pdf>

Would like a representative of DCF to attend next year and answer a few questions, hold a session or two.

The Department of Children and Families' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health welcomes the opportunity to participate in The Annual Family Café activities and a representative from our office typically participates in this event. Please contact The Family Café, who organizes the conference, if there is a specific topic or type of information that would be helpful to you.

I have issues. I am on many medications for my health. I have bipolar. I do not like to disclose or tell anyone about my health. I have lost or alienated my "friends" because I know that they do not get or understand me. I feel like I am fading away. Why don't we have resources for teens? It's hard to deal every day. My parents are great but I need help. There are no programs!

You are not alone—there are others out there going through the same things you are. Mental health conditions are common among teens and young adults. One in five young people live with a mental health condition—half develop the condition by age 14 and three quarters by age 24. <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults>

Mental health services and supports are available and the earlier you access them the better. Many teens and young adults live full lives with a mental health condition. More and more teens and young adults are speaking out about their experiences and connecting with others. Check out Ok2Talk at <http://ok2talk.org/> to see what others are saying.

Here are some educational materials that help parents and teens learn about Bipolar Disorder from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and other online resources.

- Understanding Bipolar Disorder, Caregiver: Get the Facts
 - <https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA16-5007/SMA16-5007.pdf>
- Understanding Bipolar Disorder, Young Adults: Get the Facts
 - <https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA16-5008/SMA16-5008.pdf>
- Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
 - <http://www.adolescenthealth.org/Resources/Resources-for-Adolescents-and-Parents.aspx>
- Family support is very important for those affected by depression or bipolar disorder. The DBSA Family Center is a central place for a wide variety of family-focused resources and information. For more information, please visit:
 - http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=help_family_center
- To locate a behavioral health provider in your area you can work with your health insurance plan. The department funds behavioral health services to individuals who do not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, through regional Managing Entities. Information about how to find the Managing Entity in your area is available on the department's website at:
 - <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/substance-abuse/managing-entities>.

How do I become a foster grandparent? The DCF Statewide website is too confusing to access. Small print. Too many graphics and such. I cannot find help. Not mobile phone friendly.

Foster Grandparents programs are funded by the Corporation for National and Community Services and local elder support agencies. These programs are not administered through Department Children Families (DCF). The programs provide a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving children and youth in their communities, through tutoring and mentoring.

Foster Grandparent volunteers serve at thousands of local organizations that:

- Help children learn to read and provide one-on-one tutoring
- Mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers
- Care for premature infants or children with disabilities
- Help children who have been abused or neglected

Some foster grandparent programs around Florida are:

- Community Support Services of Alachua County
<http://www.alachuacounty.us/Depts/CSS/FosterGrandparents/Pages/FosterGrandparents.aspx>
- Miami Dade <http://www.miamidade.gov/socialservices/foster-grandparents.asp>
- North Florida <https://eldercarebigbend.org/foster-grandparents>
- Southwest Florida <https://www.drpipecenter.org/foster-grandparents>
- Orlando <http://volunteersforcommunityimpact.org/programs/>

If you have a biological grandchild that you are interested in be placed in your home, Florida does not currently require you to become licensed for your grandchild to be placed in your home. You can become an approved relative caregiver without obtaining a foster home license.

Florida Administrative Code 65C-13 provides information on becoming a licensed foster parent. Listed below is a summary of requirements to become a licensed foster parent in the state of Florida.

- Attend an orientation.
- Complete at least 21 hours of foster parent training.
- Have a child abuse and criminal background check.
- Be financially able to provide for your present needs and family emergencies
- Participate in a home inspection.
- Have enough physical space in your home to accommodate children
- Be willing to work in partnership with everyone involved in the child's life to meet the child's needs
- Meet with a licensing counselor for an in-depth home study to determine if your family meets requirements

For more information about becoming a foster parent in your local area, please contact 407-317-7000.

Please have more sessions on coping alternatives or skills for mental health (all ages).

The Department of Children and Families' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health welcomes the opportunity to participate in The Annual Family Café activities and a representative from our office typically participates in this event. Please contact The Family Café, who organizes the conference, to request these topics be included next year.

My son was diagnosed with mental health issues. My husband and his doctor now say he will never be able to “control” his behavior or go to college or hold a job. I say, No! He can still be whatever he can be—just do it at a different pace. We need to talk more about his ability to do things—not just say your future is over! He is only 17.

Recovery from mental health disorders is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives and strive to achieve their full potential. Please visit <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/recovery/index.html>

Mental health conditions are common among teens and young adults. One in five young people live with a mental health condition—half develop the condition by age 14 and three quarters by age 24. <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults>

Mental health services and supports are available and the earlier you access them the better. Many teens and young adults live full lives with a mental health condition. More and more teens and young adults are speaking out about their experiences and connecting with others. Check out Ok2Talk at <http://ok2talk.org/> to see what others are saying. You are not alone—there are others out there going through the same things you are.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) <https://www.nami.org/>, is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

NAMI Family Support Group is a peer-led support group for family members, caregivers and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness. Participants gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar circumstances.

Why aren’t more speakers with physical or mental disabilities? Where was the mental health program staff from DCF?

First question would need to be addressed by organizers of The Annual Family Café.

The Department of Children and Families’ Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health welcomes the opportunity to participate in The Annual Family Café activities and a representative from our office typically speaks at the event. Please contact The Family Café, who organizes the conference, if there is a specific type of presentation, topic, or type of information that would be helpful to you.

Would love to learn how to become a trained guardian for special needs families and the elderly. Are there courses, and if so, where can I learn more about this program?

For more information on guardianship services for the elderly, please visit the Department of Elder Affairs' Office of Public and Professional Guardians at <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/spgo.php> or you can contact them via phone by calling 850-414-2381 or by e-mail at OPPGinfo@elderaffairs.org.

If you are interested in being a Guardian for an abused child in dependency court, you can go to <http://guardianadlitem.org/become-gal/gal-volunteer-application/>. Once you fill out the form, someone will contact you within a few days. You can review the "about us" section to learn more about our program.

For more information on the Florida Guardian Ad Litem Program please visit their website at <http://guardianadlitem.org/> or you can contact them via phone at 850-922-7213.

Wonderful! It was great to have such extensive mental health sessions at this year's event. The keynote was wonderful! Thank you for having and supporting our families with mental health issues. So little attention has been given to our needs.

Thank you for your comments. We appreciate your positive feedback.

What happens to kids in foster care after they age out of the system? Do they get any supports? Especially us with a disability?

Thank you for your inquiry. Florida has several different programs designed to provide services and support to former foster youth, to include youth with a diagnosed disability. If a young adult is between the ages of 18-28 and either aged out of Florida's foster care system, were adopted or were placed with a court-approved guardian after spending time in foster care, the young adult MAY be eligible for assistance, services or tuition fee exemptions.

If you would like to learn more, feel free to contact Florida's Independent Living Resource Center at 1-844-ILYOUTH or 1-844-459-6884. The Resource Center can help navigate the network of programs and services available.

We should have the agency who serves us with mental health issues more “present” at the event. No one from DCF was at the exhibit area—need to get resources to families.

The Department of Children and Families’ Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health welcomes the opportunity to participate in The Annual Family Café activities and a representative from our office spoke at the event. However, we did not have a display in the exhibit area. We will discuss this with The Family Café Planning Committee for next year.

I have many anxieties and need help. I need counseling so my family can be more relaxed with my issues. Life is hard when you have a diagnosis.

To locate a counselor in your area, you can work with your health insurance plan. The department funds behavioral health services to individuals who do not have Medicaid, or another type of health insurance, through regional Managing Entities. Information about how to find the Managing Entity in your area is available on the department’s website at: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/substance-abuse/managing-entities>.

You and your family may also find support through NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness at <https://www.nami.org/>. NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

NAMI Family Support Group is a peer-led support group for family members, caregivers and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness. Participants gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar circumstances.

How do you pick the speakers? This year’s keynote who spoke about being bipolar was the best. Please continue to have a strong presence with mental illness issues and coping!

The Department of Children and Families does not organize the speakers. Please contact The Family Café, who organizes the conference, if there is a specific type of presentation, topic, or type of information that would be helpful to you.

I would like to know more on SSI.

The Social Security Administration is responsible for the administration of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The SSI program pays benefits to

disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. SSI benefits also are payable to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits. Information regarding this program, eligibility requirements, and how to apply can be found at <https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/ssi.html>.

The Department of Education

How can the children in schools (inclusive setting) with cognitive delays get the help they need when the school only provides minimum care for academic needs?

A student's academic needs should be addressed within their individual educational plan (IEP) and met within the least restrictive environment. If you feel that your child's academic needs are not being met, it is your right to request an IEP team meeting to address those concerns.

What are my child's (under age 5) rights concerning ESE (Exceptional Student Education) services?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the rights of parents in documents called Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities. As a parent, you are entitled to these rights to ensure that you have an opportunity to be a partner in the provision of services for your child. These rights include a description of the rights that apply to children with disabilities enrolled in public schools and to those enrolled by their parents in nonprofit private schools. A summary of the Early Steps, IDEA, Part C Procedural Safeguards for children, birth through age 2, can be found at the following link: http://www.floridahealth.gov/AlternateSites/CMS-Kids/home/resources/es_policy/Attachments/8_ProceduralSafeguardsSummary_English.docx.

The IDEA, Part B Procedural Safeguards for children, ages three through five, can be found at the following link: <http://fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf>.

In addition, a child with a disability who is eligible for ESE and is at least three years of age, consistent with the requirements of section 1003.571, Florida Statutes (F.S.), has the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This statute can be found at the following link: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2017/1003.571>.

What do they think low vision is in order to be able to get services?

Eligibility for ESE services for students who have a visual impairment is guided by Rule 6A-6.03014, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). The full text of the rule can be found at the following link:
<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?id=6A-6.03014>.

A student must meet medical eligibility and have a demonstrated need for services to be determined eligible as a student with a visual impairment. The medical eligibility portion of the rule indicates that the school must then perform certain assessments to gauge educational need for services if the eye medical professional indicates and certifies a student has ONE of the following:

- A visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best possible correction,
- A peripheral field so constricted that it affects the student's ability to function in an educational setting,
- A diagnosis of visual impairment after best correction, or
- A progressive loss of vision that may affect the student's ability to function in an educational settings.

If one of the above criteria is certified by a certified/licensed eye medical professional, then the following assessments should be performed by the school or district to determine if there is a need for services:

- Functional Vision Evaluation (which includes assistive technology, compensatory skills, career education, recreation and leisure, sensory efficiency, self-determination, social skills, and independent-living skills included in Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C. [Student Performance Standards: Special Skills])
- Learning Media Assessment
- Orientation and Mobility Screening

What happens to school education once he is 18 years old? Is there help for single mothers who can't work due to taking care of sick kids? Information on Mitochondrial Disorders?

Both federal and state laws provide for FAPE for students with disabilities, who have not earned a standard diploma, through the age of 21. Therefore, if your son earns a special diploma (this option is only available to students who began ninth grade prior to the 2014-15 school year) or if he earns a standard diploma and defers receipt of the diploma, as described in Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C., he can

receive services through age 21. More information about the rule can be found at the following link: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.09963>.

Exactly when services end is decided by the school district. Some school districts end services on the 22nd birthday, others at the end of the semester in which the student turns 22, and others at the end of school year in which the student turns 22. This decision is not made student by student. Each district must state their policy in their Exceptional Student Education Policy and Procedures.

Arrangements for your son's continued services should be discussed at least yearly at his IEP meeting. School districts offer a wide variety of programs for students who are aged 18-22, and you and your son need time to review all options and choose the best programs. With your consent, outside agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation or the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, should be included in the discussion if they will be assisting in providing services after high school.

In regard to your question pertaining to help for single mothers, resources can be found through the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (known as FDLRS) Parents Services at the following link: <http://www2.nefec.org/fdlrs/parent/>; and the Family Network on Disabilities (FND) at the following link: <http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/>.

Information on mitochondrial disorders, can be found on the Florida Department of Health's website at the following link: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/newborn-screening/nbs-disorder.html>. Additional information can be found on the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation's website at the following link: <https://www.umdf.org/>. Also, the Florida Department of Health has information on the Women, Infant, and Children program, a federally funded nutrition program.

Are there any teen groups in my area? There are no social groups or activities for young people with disabilities. No organized activities. Would love to see some start up at school—like a club with other students, so we can all be like one school.

There are many programs and organizations that offer programs for young persons with disabilities. Please see the following list and contact information:

The Centers for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD)
Contacts: <http://card.ufl.edu/about-card/find-your-card/>
Website: <http://florida-card.org/>
Phone number: 407-823-6011 or 888-558-1908

The Family Network on Disabilities (FND)
Website: <http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/youth-advocacy/>
Phone number: 727-523-1130

Project 10
Website: <http://project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=183&PageCategory=State%20Transition%20and%20Related%20Projects%20Contacts&PageSubCategory=None>

The Family Café's Florida Youth Council (FYC)
Website: <http://www.floridayouthcouncil.org/>
Phone number: 850-224-4670

Last, you may want to speak with your school's guidance counselor about school clubs.

Can mobile phone apps be used as tools or assistive technology in the classroom settings instead of using a note taker? Can I use my phone as a recording device? Is this allowed?

The cell phone, with an array of options for apps, can be a low-cost, readily available source of assistive technology; however, like all assistive technology, what is appropriate for each student is determined by the IEP team through the problem-solving process. The IEP team must also consider the district's policies and procedures for compliance with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act when using any device for recording within a classroom.

People with intellectual disabilities must be allowed to experience college, live on campus, audit classes, and apply for financial aid. Why can't they?

Currently, several universities and state colleges have Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) programs. TPSID programs are designed to support students with intellectual disabilities who seek to continue academic, career and technical, and independent

living instruction at an institution of higher education. Additional information is available at the website of the Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education and Intellectual Disabilities, at the following link: <http://www.fltpsid.info/>.

In addition, s. 1004.6495, F.S., the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Act, established the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (Center) at the University of Central Florida. The Center will administer \$8 million in funding to increase program options, and to provide funding for students with intellectual disabilities attending comprehensive transition programs. The purpose of the Center is to provide support to students, families and institutions of higher education so that students with intellectual disabilities have opportunities for on-campus college experiences that lead to employment opportunities. More information may be found at the following link: <http://fcsua.org/>.

I cannot participate in PE at school. So I get an F or I sit in the hot sun and watch feeling stupid and such. Why can't I just get a free pass on PE? In middle school I got one.

Section 1003.455, F.S., gives students in Grades K-8 several waiver options for the physical education requirement, including one that allows a parent to request in writing for the student to enroll in another course other than physical education. I am guessing this is the "free pass" the student was referring to.

The physical education waiver options included in s. 1003.4282, F.S., is more stringent for students at the high school level. A parent can no longer request another course instead of PE at the high school level, and there are no medical or ESE waiver options included in the statute. In addition, if this student is not eligible for a waiver at the high school level, the school or physical education teacher should be adapting the general education curriculum to meet the needs of this student. All physical education activities have options for adaptations in order for all students, even those with physical or intellectual disabilities, to participate and be successful.

For more specific information please contact the Office of Healthy Schools at 850-245-0813.

How can I get a reading tutor, or more help with this, as a service in school for my child who is going to 4th grade?

The IEP team, which a parent is part of, decides what supports are needed for the student. You may want to consider reviewing s. 1008.25, F.S., K-20 Education Code Assessment and Accountability. This statute addresses public school student progression, student support and reporting requirements. You can find this information at

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1008/Sections/1008.25.html.

In addition, below you will find situations that specifically pertain to reading and a student's need for remediation or change in accommodations with IEP goals written for reading.

If an active IEP is in place, parents may request an IEP team meeting to review the accommodations and services that pertain to reading. The IEP team can review data (such as classroom work samples and assessments, diagnostic reading assessments data, and district or statewide assessment data) to ensure that the accommodations and services are appropriately matched to the student's individual needs.

If an IEP is not in place, parents can request a parent conference with the reading teacher to discuss the collected data (such as classroom work samples and assessments, diagnostic reading assessment data, and district or statewide assessment data) that reflects a student's need for intervention. In reviewing the data, identify the weaknesses that need to be addressed. Talk to the teacher about the strategies in place and possible strategies and interventions that could be put in place for the student. If there is evidence of a weakness in a specific area, make sure that these areas are being addressed by the teacher in small group, through the multitiered system of supports process or another strategy that would ensure success for the student.

For more specific information please contact the Just Read Florida Office by phone at 850-245-0503 or email at JustRead@fldoe.org.

Why won't the state start creating school and curriculum programs geared to children with autism? These children learn differently therefore changes must be made to existing school programs. Perhaps a better school system could start by mandating that every university or college required to all education majors to take a minimum of 15 credits in special education. With the increase of learning disabilities nationwide it would be smart to start at the college level to require those requirements.

I heard that Puerto Rico is doing it. If a territory of the USA can do it, why can't we?

According to s. 1003.02, F.S., school districts have local control, which means that the district school board and superintendent make decisions on operations including curriculum utilized.

Regarding teacher preparation, the current law (s. 1004.04, F.S.) requires teacher preparation programs to include in their “uniform core curriculum” (program of study) “strategies appropriate for the instruction of students with disabilities.” In addition, certified Florida educators are required to take a one-hour teaching students with disabilities course to renew their certification.

I never got a clear answer about how to get a service training to be allowed in my child’s school. I thought it was against the law to not allow a service animal to go with their owner/partner? Why aren’t dogs allowed at my school? They just want to use an aide instead of the dog. Why is bringing a service animal to school such an issue? I know elementary aged kids don’t really follow “dog” rules—but if you need a service animal, tough! Deal!

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) provides guidance for the use of service animals by students with disabilities regarding the required components for local school boards to modify local policy, practices, and procedures for a service animal to accompany a student to school. The “Updated Guidelines for the Use of Service Animals by Students with Disabilities, 2015” (DPS: 2015-60) and the accompanying template can be found on the FDOE Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services’ (BEESS) website at the following link: <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/technical-assistance-papers-memos-note.shtml>.

What is a 504? At school?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights statute prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. An individual is considered disabled under Section 504 if the individual has a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities.

As applied to public schools, Section 504 guarantees access to a FAPE and prohibits discrimination by denying participation in public education or the benefits offered by public school programs because of a student's disability. FAPE is documented on a Section 504 plan identifying the services and accommodations that are necessary for the student to access instruction and participate in educational and school-sponsored extracurricular activities. More detailed information on Section 504, can be found in FDOE's online introductory course to Section 504 at the following link:

<http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/section504/504course/index.html>.

The United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, which provides compliance oversight for Section 504, clarifies the requirements of Section 504 in "Protecting Students with Disabilities: Frequently Asked Questions about Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities," which can be found at the following link: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>.

Gardiner Scholarships—why are we prohibited from paying cash or using a handwritten receipt for items purchased for our children's education?

Gardiner Scholarship—dances, swim, art, music, PE, drama, cooking, etc. lessons—we should be allowed to justify the expertise of individuals who are not currently licensed Florida teachers, i.e. college professors, professional musicians, drama coaches, professional athletes, Red Cross certified swim instructors, etc.

Gardiner Scholarship—why are repairs to devices or equipment denied yet maintenance agreements are eligible expenditures? P.S. Geek Squad Protection Plans are not warranties but are being denied.

Questions concerning the administration of the program should be directed to Scholarship Funding Organizations. A list of scholarship funding organizations can be found at the following link: <http://fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/sfo/>.

Why are our children who use the Gardiner Scholarship excluded from participation in specialized programs with children that don't have disabilities?

Private schools are not licensed, accredited, regulated, approved or controlled by FDOE. Policies that concern the day-to-day operation, classroom policies, and more are the responsibility of the private school and outside the purview of the department. More information can be found at the following link: <http://www.fl DOE.org/schools/school-choice/>, or contact the office by phone at 1-800-447-1636.

DOE Legislative Question, Gardiner Scholarship, in particular: If a word or phrase is not defined in the statute, does its regular meaning apply? Also, are any of the clauses in FS 1002.385 specifically intended to defeat things like IDEA? (Except perhaps the relief of the FAPE mandate for public schools)

Questions pertaining to the intent of legislation should be directed to your representatives in the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives. The School Choice office and FDOE are mandated to operate within statutory guidelines. More information can be found at the following link: <http://www.fl DOE.org/schools/school-choice/>, or contact the office by phone at 1-800-447-1636.

DOE Legislature Question/Gardiner Scholarship: Where can we find legislative intent? We would like more access to why certain phrasing was used, etc.

In order to ascertain the intent of an act of the legislature, you may wish to contact your representative. More information can be found at the following link: <http://www.fl DOE.org/schools/school-choice/> or contact the office by phone at: 1-800-447-1636.

I recently applied for a temporary teaching certificate to teach in subject areas: Business Education and Marketing. The temporary teaching certificate is good for three years. I have two questions:

1. Can a teacher with a temporary license bill or teach Gardiner recipient students?

Section 1002.385(4)(h), F.S., states that part-time tutoring services must be provided by a person who holds a valid Florida educator's certificate or an adjunct teaching certificate, or who has demonstrated mastery of subject area knowledge

pursuant to s. 1012.56(5), F.S. To teach in a private school accepting scholarship students requires, as stated in s. 1002.421(2)(h), F.S., a baccalaureate or higher degree, at least three years of teaching experience, or expertise that qualifies that individual to provide instruction in subjects taught.

2. What are the greatest Business education needs in the 6-12 grades for disabled students?

Consumer/business statistics for private programs are not collected or analyzed by FDOE.

The Gardiner Scholarship: How do I find out more about it? How does one go about using the scholarship? Is it available everywhere in the state? Regardless of your child's age or disability?

The Gardiner Scholarship Program provides eligible students a scholarship that can be used to purchase approved services or products in order to design a customized educational program for the student. Scholarships can be used for specialized services such as speech or occupational therapy, instructional materials, tuition at an eligible private school, contributions to a college prepaid account and more. The program is directly administered by state-approved nonprofit scholarship funding organizations. More information on eligibility and providers, can be found on an FDOE web page at the following link: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/gardiner/>.

I would like to homeschool my son. He is bullied so much at school. How do I sign up or certify myself to do so? Is there a special curriculum for this? It seems that it would be easier to have trainings available to schools about how to eliminate bullying.

There is no prescribed curriculum by the state or school districts for a home education program. Any parent who complies with the record keeping and reporting requirements outlined in s. 1002.41, F.S., may choose home education for their children. More information on home education can be found at the following link: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/other-school-choice-options/home-edu/>.

In addition, FDOE's Bureau of Family and Community Outreach's Office of Safe Schools works directly with school districts to implement the Jeffrey Johnston

Stand Up for All Students Act (s. 1006.147, F.S.). For more information on district requirements on the topic of bullying, contact the Office of Safe Schools at 850-245-0847.

The Department of Health

How do you go about getting help for a child whose medical needs are undiagnosed when insurance won't cover it?

Many times, getting medical needs covered depends on different factors. Please contact your local CMS area office to talk to someone who can help you. Area office contact information can be located at:

http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/cms-plan/contacts/_documents/cms-directory-website-apr162.pdf

I'm asking for a parent not at the conference. Would you be offering in the future any workshops or information for children with Spina Bifida? Does APD or DOH offer services for those with Spina Bifida? She is in elementary school and needs additional resources and general health care.

Information concerning Spina Bifida can be found on the Department of Health's website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/people-with-disabilities/bright-expectations/conditions/spina-bifida.html> and www.FBDR.org (Florida Birth Defects Registry.)

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities' website has information about applying for services: <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/application/>. For more information about Agency for Persons with Disabilities Spina Bifida services in Tallahassee, Florida, please contact Lynne Daw, Northwest Regional Operations Manager, at (850) 487-1992.

The Department of Education has information related to Orthopedic Impairments on their website: <http://fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/ese-eligibility/orthopedic-impairment-oi.shtml>

Additional Spina Bifida information can be found on the following websites:

The Arc

The Arc website provides information to help children and families with Autism, Down syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and many other intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc is an advocate for individuals with intellectual

and developmental disabilities, providing support and services for affected children and families.

Florida Chapter website: <http://www.thearc.org/Page.aspx?&pid=298>

March of Dimes

MOD works to assure that babies are born healthy. Through research, outreach, education, and advocacy, MOD addresses issues such as prematurity, low birth weight, and birth defects. <https://www.marchofdimes.org/>

Trying to find information on the CMS website is maddening. Small print—moving to another link. Very frustrating way just to find services.

Thank you for your feedback. The Department of Health is always looking for ways to improve our communication to the public and will review our website for opportunities for improvement.

There wasn't a representative who knew or talked about immunizations or the Zika Virus. I know that I am not the only one who is concerned.

Thank you for your feedback. The Department of Health will consider this topic for future Family Café events. Your child's doctor should be able to answer questions about immunizations and the Zika virus. Additional information is listed below.

The immunizations schedules for all age groups can be found at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>

The Vaccines For Children (VFC) Program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services buys vaccines at a discount and distributes them to grantees—i.e., state health departments and certain local and territorial public health agencies—which in turn distribute them at no charge to those private physicians' offices and public health clinics registered as VFC providers. Children who are eligible for VFC vaccines are entitled to receive those vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The website for Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program is: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/index.html>

VFC vaccines are available from most pediatricians and clinics in Florida and at all county health departments. <http://www.floridahealth.gov/public-health-in-your-life/county-health-departments/CHDlisting.html>

Zika virus:

Resources, educational materials, and tools available related to Zika virus prevention, diagnosis and treatment for women, men, children, and families are available through the Florida Department of Health (DOH) website and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website.

Information can be obtained by accessing the links below:

www.ZikaFreeFL.com

<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

<https://www.zikacareconnect.org/>

I called 2-1-1 for help. They were automated and offered no help. Please don't use automated phone services for health concerns.

Thank you for your feedback. The Department of Health will provide feedback to the Orlando 2-1-1 line.

Bright Expectations is the Department of Health's website providing resources and information on developmental disabilities for pregnant women, health care providers, parents, and families. Please access the Bright Expectations website at www.brightexpectations.com.

On this website, information can be found for general resources and hotlines. One of these resources is the Family Health Line, a statewide free hotline offering counseling information and referrals about pregnancy, infant and toddler issues. The goal of the hotline is to improve the health status of Florida's pregnant women and their children by providing callers with information on helpful community resources and answering basic questions about pregnancy, breastfeeding, childbirth education and other pregnancy-related concerns. For more information about resources in your community, please call the Family Health Line at 1-800-451-2229.

How can I find services for my son? He is premature and very slow in his development. Cannot get my pediatrician to refer to services. I found resources here at the conference and want to know if I can just call Children's Medical Services for help or do I need a school or doctor to refer?

Florida's Early Steps Program serves infants and toddlers, age birth to 36 months, with developmental disabilities or delays. Anyone, including parents, can make a referral by calling 1-800-218-0001 or visiting www.earlystepsdirectory.com for more information. You do not need a referral from a doctor or school.

My granddaughter is 2 years old. She has some apparent issues and needs to be referred to a doctor. My son-in-law says she will outgrow these obvious behaviors. I say no! How can we get a referral to a doctor?

Florida's Early Steps Program serves infants and toddlers, age birth to 36 months, with developmental disabilities or delays. Anyone, including parents or grandparents, can make a referral by calling 1-800-218-0001 or visiting www.earlystepsdirectory.com for more information. One of the focus areas of the program is improving social/emotional development.

While at the hotel our entire family had to sleep in our "family bed." It was great to all be together in one bed for the stay. I know you say never sleep in bed with your children, but this was such a great experience. It was safe too!

The Florida Department of Health follows the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations on safe sleep practices for infants. Bed-sharing is not recommended for children under the age of one year. When babies bed-share (sleep in the same bed with one or more people), there is a higher risk for entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation. Babies can get trapped between the bed and the wall, fall out of bed, be suffocated by pillows or blankets, or have another person roll on top of them. Bed-sharing increases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (commonly known as SIDS).

Always place your infant alone, on their back and in a crib, bassinet or portable crib. For more information, please visit:

<https://healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx>

<http://www.marchofdimes.org/baby/co-sleeping.aspx>

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sts/about/Pages/faq.aspx>

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/infant-safe-sleep-environment/index.html>

I am a new father and need to finally give up smoking for the health of my newborn (and me/my wife). How can I get the patch, or supports to help?

The Quit Your Way Program provides tobacco users free resources to assist them quitting tobacco. Quit Your Way contains the following options: Phone Quit, Web Quit, or Group Quit and each provides nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in the form of patches or gum to help with nicotine cravings. In addition to the free NRT, each option assists in quit date planning, educates about tobacco use triggers, and provides help if there is a relapse.

If the tobacco user does not want a program, only the free NRT, the user can visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com and click on the Quit Your Way button and navigate through to the More Quit Tools tab. Here, the user can find the Individual Service that fits their need and complete a reduced registration process. For more information, call 1-887-U-CAN-NOW (1-877-822-6696) or visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com.

What ever happened to the school nurse program? We used to have school nurses who would help with basic health concerns. They used to be full-time, now they are shared between the district schools and are not available for health screenings or medication distribution, even when it is on a child's IEP.

School Health services are mandated by Section 381.0056, Florida Statutes (F.S.), to promote student health through a variety of preventive and day-to-day health services to students in the public school system. All 67 counties provide these services. The Basic school health services program is the bedrock of school health services in Florida and provides the governing framework under which all other school health service programs operate. Core services of the Basic school health

services program are: nursing assessments, health counseling, referrals and follow-up for suspected or confirmed health problems; individualized health care plan development; in-school care management for chronic and acute health conditions; assistance with medication administration and health care procedures; vision, hearing, scoliosis, and growth and development screenings; first aid and emergency health services; communicable disease prevention and intervention; and emergency preparedness.

Florida's Basic School Health Program is a registered school nurse (RN) managed program that addresses day-to-day student health needs, emergency health needs and in-school management of chronic and acute health conditions like diabetes, asthma, allergies and epilepsy. In-school care management helps to ensure that student health conditions do not prevent students from attending school. Under the guidance of RNs, the county-level school health programs are implemented by county health departments, school districts and public-private partners with services provided by RNs, licensed practical nurses, health aides and trained school staff. Registered school nurses are pivotal members of Florida's educational system and help students to reach their full academic potential.

Due to increasing numbers of students with health conditions requiring health services during the school day, the School Health Program works on ensuring that standards of care and efficiencies are implemented. Over the past ten years (2005-2006 to 2015-2016), while reported student health conditions increased by 68.75% (438,545 to 740,041), the number of registered school nurses (RN) providing school health services increased by only 16.23% (992.7 to 1,153.89). To ensure the continued provision of safe school health services while addressing increased caseloads, RNs must follow safe nursing practice according to Florida's Nurse Practice Act (s. 464.001, F.S.). This includes development of individualized healthcare plans, and training, delegation and monitoring of care provided by licensed practical nurses, health aides, and school staff.

Parents are encouraged to contact their local school district and/or county health department directly to inquire about the school health service program in their schools. The contacts there can provide clarification for the issues raised in your question. Below are web links to the statutes that mandate the program and program contact information.

Resources:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/school-health/index.html>

School Health Services Program – Florida Department of Health Program Office:
Amy Riggen, BSN, RN, NCSN – School Health Program Administrator
Amy.Riggen@flhealth.gov 850-901-6939

We need additional specialty services in our area for HIV families.

The HIV/AIDS Section provides funding for HIV care and support services throughout the state of Florida. This includes Ambulatory Outpatient Medical Care, Medical Case Management and a variety of other services through the Ryan White Part B program, medications and health insurance premium and cost sharing assistance through the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), and housing assistance through the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. Different combinations of services are available in different areas of the state depending on the HIV epidemic, care providers and funding resources available in the area. The HIV/AIDS Section staff, and local partners are always interested in developing relationships with new/additional providers, especially in areas where there are limited resources for the populations served. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to find qualified specialty providers, especially in rural areas, who are willing and able to serve individuals living with HIV. However, the Department of Health continues to work to increase the number of providers available to our clients throughout the state.

Each area of the state has an HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator (HAPC), who works out of a County Health Department (CHD). Please visit www.floridahealth.gov to find your local contact.

Does CMS pay for cochlear implants for children?

Children's Medical Services Managed Care Plan pays for all medically necessary services that are covered in the Medicaid Benefit Package, including Cochlear Implants. Note, there are eligibility requirements for children to be part of the CMS Plan.

What is Project SHINE? How can I find out more about this program?

Florida Youth SHINE (Striving High for Independence and Empowerment) is a youth run, peer driven organization working hard to change the culture of Florida's

child welfare system. Florida Youth SHINE is proudly supported by Florida's Children First. Florida's Children First is a non-profit child advocacy organization dedicated to fighting for the rights of Florida's at-risk children. Additional information can be found on the Florida Youth SHINE website at <https://www.floridayouthshine.org/>.

Why is CMS income-based and Early Steps not? KidCare isn't? Healthy Start isn't! Why?

The Florida Department of Health oversees various federal programs serving pregnant women and children with special health care needs. Some federal programs require income be taken in to consideration when determining eligibility, while others do not. Please see the following information regarding each program's eligibility requirements:

Florida Healthy Start Program is a comprehensive maternal and infant health care program that provides education and referrals to pregnant women, women with children under the age of three years, women who have had a recent loss (miscarriage, stillbirth, infant death), and women who have recently had an infant placed out of the home by adoption or removal by Department of Children's and Families. The goal of the Healthy Start Program is to reduce infant mortality, reduce the number of low birth weight babies, and improve health and developmental outcomes in Florida.

Early Steps Program is a federal entitlement program available to all infants and toddlers (birth to thirty-six months) in the state who meet Florida's eligibility criteria. The child's established condition or developmental needs determine if the child meets the eligibility criteria. The family's income is not a factor in determining eligibility for the program.

The Children's Medical Services Managed Care Plan serves as a Specialty Plan, so necessary covered services are funded through Medicaid and the federal Children's Health Insurance Program (KidCare). Members must meet federal/statutory Medicaid and Kid Care requirements, including financial requirements, to be on the Plan.

Healthy Start is provided to all participants at no cost. Healthy Start is funded through the Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Title V Block Grant funds, State of Florida General Revenue and through the Agency for Health Care Administration's Healthy Start MomCare Waiver following Sections 383.011 and 409.975, Florida Statutes.

I have a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and need help!

The Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program's purpose is to provide all eligible residents who sustain a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury the opportunity to obtain the necessary services that will enable them to return to an appropriate level of functioning in their community. Please call the central registry number at 1-800-342-0778 and to submit a self-referral to determine if you are eligible for our services. You can also learn more about our program at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/brain-and-spinal-cord-injuries/>.

Another potential resource to assist those with traumatic brain injuries is the Brain Injury Association of Florida which can be reached at 1-800-992-3442 or visit their website at <http://www.byyourside.org/>.

The paperwork/surveys for KidCare and CMS are confusing. Don't have access to a computer. Cannot work one well and cannot see anyone to help.

If you need assistance with surveys and any other Children Medical Services Managed Care Plan related issues, please do not hesitate to call the customer service numbers at 1-866-376-2456 or 1-866-209-5022. We appreciate the feedback and will determine if we can make them more family friendly.

Please tell me why you dropped my daughter from services at CMS. I mean after a survey my daughter cannot receive services? Why?

Children need to meet financial and clinical eligibility for the Children Medical Services Managed Care Plan. Some children meet clinical eligibility criteria by the survey; others through a referral by the child's doctor. If you believe your child should still be in CMS, please talk to your child's doctor. You may call Children Medical Services Managed Care Plan at 1-855-901-5390 to obtain information specific to your family or request a clinical screen or re-screen, and to receive more information about a form that your physician can complete (the "attestation form").

The playgroup hosted by CMS was fun. You need to have more interactions with the families—understaffed. Was a great idea!

Thank you for the feedback. The Early Steps, Early Wishes event is a playgroup that was held at the conference and offered activities including face-painting, family photos, puppet shows, adaptive books and toys, story time, and free play. Each activity was staffed by Family Resource Specialists from Local Early Steps Programs and state office staff. Thank you for attending the event and hope there was an opportunity to network with other families in Florida’s Early Steps Program.

I was kicked off my CMS plan for my child. She meets the qualifications, was on CMS plan, but got “kicked” out.

A representative from the Children’s Medical Services Managed Care Plan will contact you at the information you provided to learn more about your concerns and seek to address your concerns.

I went to the Early Steps playgroup. Nice, but my question is: what is this playgroup and what services does Early Steps provide? Confused.

The Early Steps, Early Wishes event is a playgroup that was held at the conference and offered activities including face-painting, family photos, puppet shows, adaptive books and toys, story time, and free play. Florida’s Early Steps Program provides services to infants and toddlers, age birth to 36 months, with developmental disabilities or delays. Early Steps serves children in their communities where they live, learn, learn, and play. To make a referral, please contact 1-800-218-0001 or visit www.earlystepsdirectory.com for more information.

I hope the state fights to ensure that CHIP funding is continued.

The Florida KidCare Partners comprised of three state agencies and the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation also hope the program is funded at the federal level. Children’s Medical Services will continue to work with Florida Healthy Kids regarding planning needs for our members.

I enjoy coming to The Annual Family Café with my family. I went to the Early Steps playgroup and tried to find out more about this program. What is Early Steps and what population does it serve? There was no literature in the sessions. The playgroup was great!

Thank you for the feedback. The Early Steps, Early Wishes event is a playgroup held at the conference and offered activities including face-painting, family photos, puppet shows, adaptive books and toys, story time, and free play. Florida's Early Steps Program provides services to infants and toddlers, age birth to 36 months, with developmental disabilities or delays. Early Steps serves children in their communities where they live, learn, learn, and play. To make a referral, please contact 1-800-218-0001 or visit www.earlystepsdirectory.com for more information.

I would like to learn more or have more information about diabetes and children. Particularly Type II. It is a major concern with healthcare.

Until recently, young children and teens were not a public health concern for type 2 diabetes. According to the National Institutes of Health, in 2014, 1 in 6 children and adolescents were overweight. Obesity is a problem closely related to the increase in children with type 2 diabetes because it can lead to insulin resistance. Being physically active lowers the risk for type 2 diabetes because it helps the body use insulin better. In the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention, the Environmental Approaches Section works in schools throughout the state to encourage healthy eating and physical activity in school age children to reduce the chance of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes. The Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program promotes physical activity before, during and after school through physical education, school staff and family involvement. The Healthier US School Challenge is an additional strategy, promoted by the department that focuses on smarter lunchrooms. This strategy requires working with cafeteria staff and administration to modify menus to include healthier choices and less sugary foods. The Department of Health recognizes type 2 diabetes in youth as a serious issue; and will work to create additional initiatives and resources to address this population. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention at Chronic.HSFCD@flhealth.gov.

For additional information on children with type 2 diabetes, please visit:

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/overweight-obesity>

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/prevent-diabetes-kids/index.html>

http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/parents-and-kids/?loc=lwd-slabnav&gclid=Cj0KCQjwjdLOBRCkARIsAFj5-GCDd7dErJSUkW8-uiPVdctnbRkeZ8poEPABTVp7LbQGgaZvnSqmJM8aAuuvEALw_wcB?referrer=https://www.google.com/

I like to see free training offered to a young mother who has a child/children born with sickle cell disease and how to properly care for that child. Need more research on sickle cell cure. Many people don't look at this as a disability issue. I need and am willing to take any class or classes on my behalf concerning this disease because being a single mom with my first child I am truly lost. I get a little information from my child's god-parent who was born with the same issues. He always posts information about the disease but I was never interested in knowing about it until I just had my first child with sickle cell in January 2017, so it hit home. Its a lesson learned—never to scroll past an article talking about a disease because you don't know anyone with the medical condition.

The Newborn Screening Program refers all infants that screen with an abnormal sickle cell result, other than a sickle cell trait, to a Sickle Cell Referral Center to confirm diagnosis and provide treatment, if needed. The referral centers provide education and counseling regarding the disease or trait diagnosis. There are also several Sickle Cell Associations throughout the state, some in partnership with the Children's Medical Services Managed Care Plan, that provide community-based outreach coordinators to conduct educational workshops, seminars, and counseling to raise the awareness about sickle cell disease and sickle cell trait. These outreach coordinators are located in counties through the state of Florida.

For more information, please contact the Florida Sickle Cell Association at:

<http://scdaflorida.com>

Post Office Box 11982

Tampa, Florida 33680-1982

Phone: (813) 248-2888

FAX: (813) 247-1543

The Division of Emergency Management

The TEEN CERT session was great! How can we get a program like this started in my area? Would like to be able to go to this training—it is just a matter of time before Florida sees a major disaster.

Florida's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is administered through Volunteer Florida in partnership with FEMA and the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). CERT and TEEN CERT prepare Floridians to help their families and neighbors in the event of a disaster in their community. Through CERT, citizens can learn about disaster preparedness and receive training in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. With this training, Florida volunteers can provide critical support in their local communities by giving immediate assistance to victims before emergency first responders arrive on scene. CERT volunteers also support the community year-round by participating in community preparedness outreach activities and distributing materials on disaster preparedness and education.

To explore starting a program in your area, visit www.volunteerflorida.org/emergency-management

It has been a long time since Hurricane Andrew destroyed my house and neighborhood. I remember it like yesterday. Lucky to be alive. Glad you talk about getting a plan here. Most don't have one until it is too late. I have one now.

A disaster's impacts can stick with us for a long time. Making a disaster plan is an important part of preparing yourself and your family for a hurricane. You can visit www.FloridaDisaster.org/GetAPlan for information about making your family plan. You should also prepare a disaster supply kit with 3-5 days of supplies to help sustain your family after a storm. Include items such as food, water, and a flashlight in case the power goes out. You can find a list of items to get you started at www.floridadisaster.org/documents/EmergencyKit-FDEM.pdf. Every family has a unique kit—so remember to take your family member's needs into account!

I liked the Red Cross session—it was great! You need to keep talking about our resources for a disaster. It will happen.

The Red Cross, along with all our emergency management partner organizations, are important members of the State Emergency Response Team. Our team members work to keep you safe after a disaster, but you can work now to prepare! Find information to make your family emergency plan at www.FloridaDisaster.org/GetAPlan, and build your disaster supply kit. Working together we can ensure we are all prepared to weather the storm!

How can I register to be known in my local community that we have two kids with disabilities living here—in case of an emergency, who will know?

An important part of preparing your family for a disaster is understanding the resources that are available from your local government to assist you. Go to SNR.FloridaDisaster.org to register your family members who may have additional needs, such as medical or transportation needs, during an emergency situation.

The RED CROSS session was great! Thanks to them. Hopefully we will not see a real disaster in Florida.

The Red Cross, along with all our emergency management partner organizations, are important members of the State Emergency Response Team. When a disaster strikes Florida, such as Hurricane Irma, it takes all of our team to respond to and recover from its impacts. You should be part of that team too – make sure you and your family are prepared by making your emergency plan and building your disaster supply kit. Go to www.FloridaDisaster.org/GetAPlan for information on how to start the process today.

It has been a long time since any real hurricanes came to Florida. Hopefully we will be ready.

When Hurricane Irma made landfall in Florida on September 10, it became the first major hurricane to make landfall in Florida since Wilma in 2005. But Florida's emergency responders did not wait for landfall of a major storm. Our team works year round to train staff and exercise plans, to learn from past disasters and improve processes, and engage with responders around the country to further the field of emergency management. Just as we learn from each disaster, you should

too. Reflect on the impacts you felt from Hurricane Irma, and listen to what other Floridians may have experienced. What steps can you take now to ensure you are more prepared next time? Go to www.FloridaDisaster.org/GetAPlan for tips and information about building your family emergency plan.

Let's GET A PLAN! Need to see more resources at events like this to get us to always think about what we need to do.

It is important for a whole community to ensure they are prepared for a disaster. Getting a plan is an important part of making sure you are prepared. You can visit www.FloridaDisaster.org/GetAPlan for information about making your family plan today. And don't forget your disaster supply kit! You can find a list of items to get you started at www.floridadisaster.org/documents/EmergencyKit-FDEM.pdf.

Where was Professor Tinkermeister? Missed him this year . . . he was always my kids' favorite character.

Professor Tinkermeister is a great partner to help Floridians remember to make their emergency plan and stock their disaster supply kit. You can visit the Professor and his friends, and learn how you can prepare, at www.FloridaDisaster.org/kids.

The Disaster Preparedness Track was great this year. Thanks for taking it up a notch or two. The sessions were good.

Thank you for the compliment. Making sure you are prepared is very important, especially since Florida is the most hurricane prone state in the nation! You can visit www.FloridaDisaster.org/GetAPlan for information about making your family plan today. And don't forget your disaster supply kit! You can find a list of items to get you started at www.floridadisaster.org/documents/EmergencyKit-FDEM.pdf.

Would like to see more sessions about disaster prep for our population.

Disaster Preparedness is important for any population, especially when you have to make additional considerations for transportation and electricity. We can always work to improve our training. In the meantime, you can visit

www.FloridaDisaster.org/GetAPlan for information about making your family plan today.

I missed Linda Carter . . . and the Sesame Street character books from FEMA.

Linda Carter is a great partner to help Floridians remember to make their emergency plan and stock their disaster supply kit. You can find tips to prepare, and learn how to make an emergency plan and stock a disaster supply kit at www.FloridaDisaster.org.

FEMA should be at the event. Florida is a BIG state with a major population base to educate.

FEMA, along with other State and Local partners, is important to help bring awareness about emergencies and how to prepare. The Florida Division of Emergency Management works with all our partners to ensure you and your family know how you can stay safe. You can find tips to prepare, and learn how to make an emergency plan and stock a disaster supply kit at www.FloridaDisaster.org, or FEMA information at www.Ready.gov.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

What progress has/can be made as far as needs of non-elderly physically disabled adults (non-DD)? For example: housing modification, etc. Best sources of resources.

Great question! Many improvements have been made over the years in terms of service delivery to people with disabilities. The Centers for Independent Living were specifically designed to provide services and advocacy by and for persons with all types of disabilities in order to create opportunities for independence. Each Center for Independent Living provides at least four independent living core services for eligible individuals: advocacy, peer support, independent living skills development, and information and referral to assist individuals in obtaining needed services and to promote accessibility in local communities. Community advocacy services provided by centers can benefit many people with disabilities who live in a local area. Such advocacy may focus on problems with physical and programmatic accessibility in transportation, health and recreational facilities, or other basic community services. Subject to its planning priorities and funding limitations, a center may also provide the following independent living services: counseling, housing modifications and assistance in finding accessible housing, rehabilitation technology, mobility training, interpreters and readers, personal assistance including attendant care, needs surveys, education and training for participation in community activities, transportation, therapeutic treatment, social and recreation services, services to youth to promote self-esteem and self-empowerment, services for children, preventive services, and disability awareness in local communities.

For more information and to contact your local Center for Independent Living, please visit the following web site: <http://www.floridasilc.org/cil-directory/>

The provider for supported employment is not doing a good job.

Please contact your VR counselor for advice. He or she may be able to help you work with your employment specialist, or if necessary, help you find a new one that is more suitable to your needs.

Why don't you all have things about car jobs?

If you are interested in working with cars or in the automotive industry, please let your VR counselor know. You and your counselor can explore this field of work and use that information when developing your Individualized Plan for Employment to identify your job goal.

If you do not have a counselor and are interested in applying for VR services, please visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) to identify a VR office near you.

The best way to have any concern addressed or if you have any questions is to reach out to the local VR office. A VR counselor will be able to assist.

Why don't you all have things for hair dressing for people with disabilities?

If you are interested in becoming a hair dressing professional or working in the hair care industry, please let your VR counselor know. You and your counselor can explore this field of work and use that information when developing your Individualized Plan for Employment to identify your job goal.

If you do not have a counselor and are interested in applying for VR services, please visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) to identify a VR office near you.

The best way to have any concern addressed or if you have any questions is to reach out to the local VR office. A VR counselor will be able to assist.

Why don't you all have things for jobs for people over 60?

VR's purpose is to help people with disabilities enhance their independence through employment. There is no upper age limit on VR services. Individuals must simply be available and legally permitted to join the labor market prior to being determined eligible for VR services.

All VR services are based on what an individual needs in order to become employed. Any person living in Florida who has a physical or mental disability may apply for VR services. Below are the qualifications for VR eligibility.

If you reside in Florida, you may be eligible for VR services if your goal is to become employed and:

- Your physical or mental disability interferes with your ability to get, keep or advance in a job, and
- You need VR's help to prepare to get, keep or advance in a job.

If you are eligible for services, a VR counselor will work with you to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This IPE will include those services you need in order to become employed.

If you are interested in applying for VR services, visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) to identify the VR office near you. For additional job-related services, you may also want to contact your local CareerSource Center at www.careersourceflorida.com.

The best way to have any concern addressed or if you have any questions is to reach out to the local VR office. Any of the VR counselors will be able to assist.

I need work! I was diagnosed with MOD, and adult ADHD. Can VR help me?

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If you are interested in applying for VR services, visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) to identify the VR office near you. For additional job-related services, you may also want to contact your local CareerSource Center at www.careersourceflorida.com.

The best way to have any concern addressed or if you have any questions is to reach out to the local VR office. Any of the VR counselors will be able to assist.

Please have more sessions on how work affects benefits.

Thank you for your interest in bringing more information about programs like Ticket to Work and protecting your benefits while you work to The Annual Family Café. The Family Café works diligently with its national and state partners to bring sessions that are meaningful for families and youth. We will encourage our partners, like the Department of Economic Opportunity, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council to collaboratively bring information on resources and organizations promoting employment as the first and preferred option to our very next Annual Family Café. Sessions will focus on enabling disability beneficiaries to make informed choices about work, while providing information about how employment earnings can affect disability benefits and medical coverage.

In the meantime, you are encouraged to contact the Ticket Program Manager at 1-866-968-7842, and request a referral to a qualified Community Work Incentives Coordinator that specializes in benefits counseling.

For more information on the VR Ticket to Work program, please go to this link: <http://www.rehabworks.org/ticket.shtml>

I would like to find out more about finding a job. I went to the sessions and learned about career placements and Vocational Rehabilitation. The lady was great. I want to work! I want to find out more about this program!

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If you are interested in applying for VR services, visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) to identify the VR office near you. For additional job-related services, you may also want to contact your local CareerSource Center at www.careersourceflorida.com.

The best way to have any concern addressed or if you have any questions is to reach out to the local VR office. Any of the VR counselors will be able to assist.

I heard that VR will help me with my after high school life. Great! Tell me more—I want to go to college and learn a career.

All VR services are based on what an individual needs in order to become employed. Services may include training, education or placement if that is what you need to become employed. VR also offers services for students with disabilities, including work readiness training, work experiences, and self-advocacy.

Any person living in Florida who has a physical or mental disability may apply for VR services. Below are the qualifications for VR eligibility.

If you reside in Florida, you may be eligible for VR services if your goal is to become employed and:

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The best way to have any concern addressed or if you have any questions is to reach out to the local VR office. Any of the VR counselors will be able to assist.

I missed “Navigating the Transition Process and Vocational Rehabilitation.” Wish my kid’s school would use their services. I never heard of this service and want to learn more about what the counselors have to offer my 16-year-old. He needs a plan.

VR conducts regular outreach with each school, families, student and local partners to raise community awareness of available programs and services. Every school district is given VR transition brochures so they may share this information with students and families. VR transition services begin at age 14 and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available at age 15.

Pre-ETS services can include career counseling, work readiness training, work experiences, self-advocacy training, and postsecondary educational counseling. Ideally, these services should occur while your child is still in high school so that he or she has a smooth transition to postsecondary education and employment.

You can ask about Pre-ETS and other services during your first Transition Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meeting or at any time thereafter. The team is required to identify if VR services are needed and when VR should be invited. The school district then has to obtain permission from the parent or age of majority student (age 18 or older) so that VR Transition Staff may attend.

Please visit www.RehabWorks.org to access helpful VR and transition information. At our site you will find VR Transition Brochures, links to other transition sites and answers to Frequently Asked Questions under the School to Work Transition Program link found on the right hand side of the home page.

Why aren’t the schools telling us more about Vocational Rehabilitation services when are kids are in school? This sure would help us.

VR conducts regular outreach with each school, families, student and local partners to raise community awareness of available programs and services. VR provides every school district with our transition brochures so that they may share information with students and families about VR services beginning at age 14 and making Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) available at age 15.

Pre-ETS services can include career counseling, work readiness training, work experiences, self-advocacy training, and postsecondary educational counseling.

Ideally, these services should occur while your child is still in high school so that he has a smooth transition to postsecondary education and employment.

You can ask about Pre-ETS and other VR services during the first Transition Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meeting or at any time thereafter. The team is required to identify if VR services are needed and when VR should be invited. The school district then has to obtain permission from the parent or age of majority student (age 18 or older) so that VR Transition Staff may attend.

Please visit www.RehabWorks.org to access helpful VR and transition information. At our site you will find VR Transition Brochures, links to other transition sites and answers to Frequently Asked Questions under the School to Work Transition Program link found on the right hand side of the home page.

I had the best talk with a lady named Lucy. I just wanted to thank her; I lost her contact information. She was very helpful! Thank you!!

You are referring to Lucy Mohs, VR's Public Affairs Director. She comes to us with a wealth of knowledge about the needs of people with disabilities both personally and professionally and speaks from the heart. We are glad you enjoyed talking to her and will make sure she sees your comments.

VR, I need to learn more about this program. You had a great session and I am going to call you to help get a job! And skills through schooling.

We are glad you were able to take away new and helpful information about VR from the conference! If you are residing in Florida, you may be eligible for services provided by the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Visit us online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) for further information on how to apply at a VR office near you. For additional job-related services, you may also want to contact your local CareerSource Center at www.careersourceflorida.com.

What is the Adults with Handicap program that is offered locally by VR?

Are you referring to the Adults with Disabilities (AWD) program funded by the Legislature in the VR budget? If so, this is a program that is not part of the traditional VR service delivery program and is only available in specified parts of the state listed in the VR budget. Customers in the AWD program generally do not

have employment as a goal and many receive services in institutional or Adult Day Training settings; or in the case of seniors, in facilities serving senior citizens.

Most programs spend the vast majority of their funds on teacher/instructor salaries and benefits and instructional supplies, providing instructors at one or more community off-campus sites. The course work is mainly adult basic education (life skills), and some programs offer work skill development through programs such as horticulture, landscaping, and culinary skills training. Recreational/leisure activities are also frequently funded.

Excited to learn that VR helps us teens to get a job! Hopefully I will find a great job coach to help me gain some experience this summer working so when I graduate from high school I will be in a better place to secure a job.

We are glad you enjoyed the VR presentations and found them informative. VR is working closely with Florida's School Districts to make sure families and youth with disabilities are receiving information about VR services and programs.

For more information about VR Transition Youth services for high school students you may visit our website at www.RehabWorks.org. For additional job-related services, you may also want to contact your local CareerSource Center at www.careersourceflorida.com.

Great to learn about these services and the supports that can be offered so I can get and keep a job. It's my dream!

We are glad you were able to take away new and helpful information about VR from the conference! If you are residing in Florida, you may be eligible for services provided by the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Visit us online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) for further information. For additional job-related services, you may also want to contact your local CareerSource Center at www.careersourceflorida.com.

Thanks for all the information at the VR booth. Man, you were helpful! And kind!

Thank you so much! The VR booth was manned by our wonderful Area 3 staff from the Orlando region. We will be sure to share your compliments with them!

How do I get and keep a job? I want to work.

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The best way to have any concern addressed or if you have any questions is to reach out to the local VR office. Any of the VR counselors will be able to assist.



The 19th Annual Family Café Report Card 2017

Attendees at The 19th Annual Family Café were given the opportunity to grade their experience on the following scale:

A = Excellent **B** = Very Good **C** = OK **D** = Not So Good **F** = Poor

The table below displays average grades for 2017, along with grades from the five previous years.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
I would give the Annual Family Café Location a...	A-	A-	A	A	A	A
I would rate the hotel's accessibility a...	B+	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-
I would give the organization of the Annual Family Café a...	B+	A	A	A	A	A
I would rate the choices for breakout sessions and their ability to meet the needs of different interests a...	B+	A-	A-	A-	A	A
Overall, I would give The Annual Family Café a...	A	A	A	A	A	A

Attendees also had the opportunity to respond to a series of subjective questions about the event:

1. As a result of attending The 19th Annual Family Café, I am able/will be able to . . .
2. In general, the most helpful to me was . . .
3. I thought we could have had more of . . .
4. I thought we could have had less of . . .
5. I am interested in finding out more about . . .
6. For future Annual Family Café events, I would like to suggest. . .

Here is a sample of their responses:

As a result of attending The 19th Annual Family Café, I am able/will be able to . . .

- Share information
- Apply for APD Services
- Look at IEP differently
- Have a better understanding of Access points
- Better advocate for my child
- Found out some new uses for my son's Gardiner Scholarship
- Seek better resources for my son; seek appropriate care; help make changes with the system
- Understand how to assist and advocate for my child concerning her disability
- Get my mom to do CDC+
- Understand more ways that I can help my sister
- Help my clients find resources
- Manage my condition better
- Advocate more effectively
- Empower other folks
- Find a job with CareerSource
- Be independent
- Understand guardianship
- Network with agencies
- Start working on putting into place a medical proxy, possible look into ABLE United and be prepared for natural disasters
- To understand how to use ABLE and Special Needs trust together
- Feel more independent by attending
- Be a better parent
- Connect with other families and feel empowered
- Better inform parents about the difference between a 504 and IEP
- Know how to appeal decisions on I-Budget
- Identify IEP accommodations, advocate with more confidence, learn of low interest loan for communication devices (Horizon Program)
- Cope for a while longer. It's always uplifting to come to The Family Café!
- Understand more about Ticket to Work and SSA
- Start a business
- Understand my I-Budget algorithms. We will also become our daughter's guardian advocate. The conference was life changing for us

- Plan financial goals for my son, research new medications for bipolar, get an ID card for my son's wallet
- Better navigate the iep process for my kids.
- Find the information I need to sign my daughter up for the APD/Med-waiver
- Know where to look for or find information that I need to help my grandson and other families that I know that are seeking information
- Utilize the FFAST resources
- To gain resources that I would NEVER have access to otherwise.
- Become a Guardian Advocate
- Access Vocational Rehabilitation to get a job and training
- Access resources for my son with Down syndrome.
- Access Gardiner scholarship, purchase a reasonably priced weighted blanket, learn about Nathaniel's Hope and various other organizations
- Deal with the stress of everyday and dealing with a child with special needs

In general, the most helpful to me was . . .

- The DAD sessions
- Sensory-motor presentation
- Malverna Streeter's workshop on greatness within yourself.
- Networking with other parents
- CareerSource financial class and DIG
- Speakers on bipolar
- Exhibit hall
- The assistive technology lab
- Visual impairment lecture
- The inspiration of Lori Fahey and Jeremy Countryman
- ABLE Accounts information
- Suggestions from Disability Rights Florida
- Applying 504 law, discussing examples of case law and the outcomes
- Networking
- Information about legal issues and financial issues
- Transition to college
- Knowing that you're not in this alone and there is help
- Women Sessions on Thursday . . . The Women's Summit
- Learning to navigate more of the CDC+ website
- The bi-polar keynote
- The session on Trust and Guardianship
- The tax session by ABLE United
- How to start a business as an individual with a disability

- The inclusion standards for education FLDOE
- Got to meet other 22Q families and spend time with them
- FLDOE breakout on dyslexia
- Access standard and Social Security
- The Special Olympics booth
- Ms. Wheelchair USA
- Ability to take classes that I chose
- The free use of motorized scooters! Thank you!
- Learning more about how to deal with stress
- Meeting the directors of different agencies
- Birth-to-5 years activities
- Florida Youth Council
- Music class
- The acceptance
- APD sessions and the session that Dr. Kornberg and Dr. Siambanes gave. Also, the session on stress in marriage
- Learning about bipolar
- Military breakouts
- CP classes, IEP classes, Guardianship classes
- The state park session
- The exhibition and being able to do the archery, tennis, etc.
- Having help to find the rooms I need to get to
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Learning how to navigate through the school system
- The yoga—stress management for caregivers
- Having my son with me, being able to stay at the hotel (we would never have been able to afford it)
- Knowing I am not alone
- Disability Rights Florida, Behaviorally Challenging Students
- Found out some new uses for my son's Gardner Scholarship
- Loved the app!
- Variety of seminars to choose from
- My child was allowed to be himself without weird looks or stares.
- We really enjoyed the free oral examines by Nova Southeastern
- ABLE United and Blind Services
- Being a presenter, having a breakout session.
- Loved the APP, that was very helpful to find the sessions, times, and events!
- I loved the sensory room brought by The M.O.R.G.A.N. Project!

- Being around other families with differing abilities. It is a huge boost for me and my kids.
- Governor's Summit. Thank you Governor Scott!
- Personally the information on the graduation requirements for high school. Professionally, the information on special needs accessible parks, discussions on the resources available for special needs families
- More than breakout sessions, making connections with other families and hearing how others push through has been tremendous.
- Everything

I thought we could have had more of . . .

- Pyramid singers!
- Games for everyone to play
- Refreshments (free)/during the dance
- Introductions to each other
- Transition opportunities after age 22 and leaving high school.
- Diverse presentations
- Vendors giving away useful items
- I wanted to learn more of the equipment available for visually-impaired
- Hotel rooms
- Seminars on understanding Med Waivers
- Sibling workshops
- Internet available to instructors
- Teaching, instructing, and life skills assists for adults with disabilities
- Mental and behavior issues discussions
- Sessions regarding the deaf community and sign language
- Workshops on safety in water
- Some of the same classes on Friday and Saturday
- Sessions for independent adults
- Seminars on Sunday
- The exhibitors stay until 6 pm on Saturday to give a chance to see them when the seminars have ended
- Question/answer sessions and roundtable discussion about specific issues
- Evidence-based information. Some presenters were not as effective as others
- Time to ask questions of APD, Governor, DOH, VR, at the Summit.
- Work places representatives for companies like Walmart, Publix, Target
- Advocacy classes for adults
- Sessions that were "duplicated." I had several sessions at one session I would have liked to attend

- Fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and peripheral neuropathy for caregivers and staff serving disability community
- Homeless prevention—some counties don't have a waiting list then seniors are prioritized
- Independent living strategies
- Programs for older adults
- iPad app help and social services for autism
- More IEP advocacy classes
- Zumba!!
- Programs about service dogs
- Mental health and suicide, how to help individuals with suicidal thoughts
- Time between sessions
- Employers here that would entertain hiring young adults with disabilities
- Spanish
- Deaf and hard of hearing resources and behavioral resources
- Sessions/workshops for people with physical disabilities
- Faith based workshops
- Sickle-cell disease information and/or minority (Africa-America) who is able to share their challenges with this illness
- Grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Military retired.
- WiFi!
- Scooter rental vendors listing, given to attendees prior to the event.
- More people to do the registration process on Friday. A long line to do it.
- State Representatives
- Aging with Down Syndrome and related issues
- Sessions on learning disabilities, especially dyslexia
- Round tables
- None. Perfect

I thought we could use less of . . .

- Vendors selling
- The same presentations from last year
- Cancelled classes (guardianship)
- Distance between rooms and events
- Sessions directed toward parents
- Loud music in the hallways
- IEP and 504 meetings
- Repeated SSI and SSA info
- Volume at the dance

- Breakout sessions for younger children with disabilities
- Cell phones ringing—each speaker should remind attendees to put on silent/vibrate before starting
- Eastern religious practices for the Women's Summit
- Registration breaks at lunch. That is when people all want to get registered, but it is shut down from 11:00 to 1:00??? Stagger the volunteers to work through lunch. That would help reduce the lines.
- The number of sessions going on at the same time. I wanted to attend several that were going at the same time as another one
- APD/CDC+ breakout sessions being overly crowded. Move to larger rooms. These sessions are very popular and people leave because of no seating.
- Nothing, everything was great!

I am interested in finding out more about . . .

- Jobs for non-verbal child with autism
- Next year's event
- Autism
- Aging and the disabled population
- What happens once my son turns 18
- Health insurance and better benefits
- ADT's that are nontraditional—more based on life skills training like the BLAST programs in the high schools
- Financial issues, organizing support groups, how to deal with anxiety
- Employment, jobs, education
- Behavioral problems within assisted living facilities
- Housing for independent living or as near as independent as possible
- Services and devices for the visually impaired
- Sickle Cell disease awareness
- Transportation in community for disability
- New technology
- Transition after high school
- ABLE United. How to start a micro enterprise
- I think you should have another plan for the future
- Disability and relationships
- Disability Rights
- Volunteering at the conference
- College programs for young adults and disabilities
- SportsAbility
- Guardianship
- Why SSI and DCF do not communicate with each other better
- Why DCF cuts off Medicaid when asking for food stamps

- Spina Bifida
- How to advocate for my brother
- Helping others with CP
- Bipolar
- Employability options—besides ones presented by agencies, which was helpful
- Sensory processing disorder
- Invisible disabilities
- ASD, ADHD, sensory disorder, anything to help my child at school
- Adopting a foster child with a disability
- Service animals
- Down syndrome
- Florida Youth Council
- Transition Services
- Medical marijuana
- Employment for adults with disabilities
- CDC, Med waiver, APD, Financial Planning, Autism, Sensory Processing Disorder
- Criminal justice and people with disabilities
- Adaptive driving
- Personal stories from individuals
- Spanish programs
- Dental insurance
- Respite care
- ABLE accounts
- Healthy eating
- Fibromyalgia

For future Annual Family Café events, I would like to suggest. . .

- Kids' activities
- Lower priced cookies
- A different hotel
- The woman's symposium focus more on tangible strategies for women's empowerment and development as opposed to the abstract subject matter of this year
- I would like to see Publix get involved with donating food and snacks
- Sponsors like Beset Buy and Walmart to donate gift items
- A breakout session specifically targeting APD waiver funding and 22+ clients—services available, criteria for placement, adult therapies available, social groups, etc. for people 22+

- More on older adult options—after graduating from high school
- Bigger venues for access to any of the state agencies
- Deaf and blind info
- More financial assistance with hotel stays
- A family friendly environment and food that isn't as expensive
- More interactive things for the kids with special needs
- Extra rooms for kids to play and run in during the ½ hour breaks between sessions
- A section in the program that recommends classes for certain disabilities. Some of the names of the classes can be confusing. Example “those with autism may be interested in the following sessions”
- More legislative guest speakers from budget departments of the U.S. Congress and the State of Florida and the Senators, House of Representatives
- More sign language-related things and more service dog information!
- Same sessions at different times just in case you were not able to make the first one
- Paid hotel starting Thursday night instead of Friday
- A pot luck dinner where we can all pay something like a donation to it
- Networking opportunities!
- Disability specific breakout sessions –like one for Fragile X and Prader Willi Syndrome
- More exhibits by those with disabilities. More pictures taken of them to keep or share (photo booths, etc.)
- One more day at least to be able to see and participate in more sessions
- Sib training
- Childcare/respice
- Better parking, like free valet
- Specific diagnosis breakouts: CP, Down syndrome, bipolar, Asperger's, etc.
- More crafts and activities and teenage stuff like teenage hangouts
- More mental health information
- Diabetes and other autoimmune disorders
- Invite MD's, PT, ST, OT, and other specialists for sessions
- Yoga sessions for caregivers, young adults, with anxiety problems
- A cell phone charging station!
- Keep the sensory room. My kids love love love it.
- Please bring back the spina bifida round table.
- Make full program available online prior to conference.



**I WANT
YOU!**

**THEY
NEED
YOU!**

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