

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology



#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.



Welcome to The Family Café Questions & Answers Book for 2018!

Navigating the service delivery system and finding resources has always been a challenge for persons with disabilities and their families. For over 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 20TH Anniversary Family Café attracted an extraordinary 11,840 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, including author and speaker Steve Browne sharing lessons learned from raising a daughter with cerebral palsy, athlete and disability activist Mia Ives-Rublee discussing her activism, and Michah Fowler, star of TV's Speechless, talking about disability representation in the entertainment industry.

Our Exhibit Hall was busy again in 2018, with more than 100 public and private vendors, including several self-advocate owned Micro-Enterprises. The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association hosted an adaptive sports demonstration, and our friends from The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST) returned to host an Assistive Technology Room. Additionally, The Family Café once again hosted The Annual Governor's Summit on Disabilities, where Governor Rick Scott offered insight into the state's priorities for Florida's disability community.

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 20th Anniversary 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 21st Annual Family Café, June 7-9, 2019, at the Hyatt Regency Orlando. Online registration opens on Valentine's Day, 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, on Twitter @TheFamilyCafe, and on Instagram @thefamilycafefl!

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The Family Café

Why doesn't the Hyatt hotel allow microwaves in their rooms? Why doesn't The Market give discounts for their food? To eat in this hotel is very expensive.

Thanks for your feedback. The Hyatt Regency does offer cash sales with less costly selections on Friday and Saturday during The Annual Family Café, as well as a 20% discount at select dining locations within the hotel. We do understand that meals can be difficult to afford, and The Family Café will continue to work with the Hyatt to make eating as affordable as possible. In terms of microwaves, that is a policy set by the hotel, not The Family Café. Microwaves are available for attendee use in multiple common areas in the hotel.

I am a Chinese professional who works with people with disabilities in China. Thank you for the opportunity to attend.

You're welcome! It was a great pleasure to host international guests at The Annual Family Café, and we hope to see you again.

My question is for The Family Café. How can I advertise more in the community besides word of mouth?

Thanks for your interest in promoting The Annual Family Café! As our budget is limited, we rely on attendees to let others in their communities know how remarkable our event is. In addition to talking to other families, we encourage you to connect with us on social media on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and to help us grow our family online.

Best part of event: Parents all cut each other's kids slack since we have been there with our own kids. If a kid makes a strange noise, or runs around, or flaps his arms, nobody minds, as long as the kids are safe. Kindness is the key.

Thanks for your observation. We do our best to create a family-friendly atmosphere where everyone is welcome, regardless of age, disability, or unique behavior. It's wonderful to hear that you have found our efforts to create that kind of space to be such a highlight of the event!

Put more signs to direct us to the rooms.

Thanks for that suggestion. We have several strategies to help people navigate the space at The Annual Family Café. In addition to the signs we place throughout the event area, we also have volunteer Room Monitors available to direct you. You can identify them by the aprons they wear. You can also find a map of the hotel in two places: the inside of the program, and in our smartphone app. Please also feel free to ask for help from any of the staff or Board of Directors of The Family Café, all of whom wear chef coats, or any hotel personnel.

Had a hard time signing up on the internet. I have AOL and AT&T; couldn't do it. They gave me a code but couldn't connect. Had to register through the mail.

Since 2017, The Family Café has used an online registration system that allows site visitors to create an account, both for security and so your contact information is saved for future years. Certain email providers, such as AOL and AT&T, can sometimes treat system email from The Family Café as spam. To avoid this, you can add familycafe.net to the "white list" of acceptable domains in your spam filter. If you get stuck and need someone from The Family Café office to manually reset your password, you can give us a call at 850/224-4670.

Congratulations on 20 years. Good job to all the staff, especially Lori and Jeremy. Here's to another 20. Sad to see the duck family retire. Good luck Joan, John and David Verity for all your help. You are loved and will be missed.

Thanks! The Verity family, which received this year's "Silver Spoon" award, has been a fixture at The Annual Family Café for years, and we will definitely miss them too. Theirs is just one of the hundreds of families that make The Annual Family Café so special year after year!

Who is Guido?

"Guido" is The Family Café's mascot, who can be found in our logo, on the cover of each year's Annual Family Café program, and on our website. He even makes an appearance at the dance on Saturday night at The Annual Family Café! The current version of Guido has been part of the family since we redesigned our logo back in 2005. To us, he symbolizes hospitality, friendship, and love!

Was my first time at The Family Café and I loved it. Thank you!

Awesome! We love to welcome new people to The Annual Family Café. We hope to see you again next year!

I have been here since the first Family Café and I am amazed at being part of the 20th! More food choices will be good next time. I'd also like more of chance to meet and greet and talk between parents in small groups. Call it "Café Rooms" for small talks. Thanks and congratulations!

Wow! It's amazing that you've been with us for 20 years! Thanks for your suggestions. In terms of food choices, we work with the hotel to offer low-cost cash sales at lunchtime on Friday and Saturday, and we're always on the lookout for sponsors that are willing to provide food. We also agree that connecting with other families facing similar circumstances is one of the great things about The Annual Family Café. That's why we include "roundtable sessions" organized by disability topic area, like the Mental Health Roundtable or the Cerebral Palsy Roundtable. If you would like to host a roundtable session, we encourage you to submit a proposal to our Planning Committee.

I think this is probably the best convention we've had. Only wish there were more days to go to more workshops.

Thanks so much! We do our best to improve every year. Hopefully 2019 will be even better!

Is there a way you all could try to get the food prices down? It costs too much money at the hotel. You all should go to a food place outside of the hotel and see if you all can get them to work with you all ok?

Thanks for that suggestion. We work with the hotel to provide low-cost dining options. At last year's event, there were special cash sales during lunchtime on Friday and Saturday, as well as a 20% discount at select dining locations within the hotel. Unfortunately, since it is an important source of revenue, the hotel does not allow outside food providers on site. We understand that food costs at the hotel are a barrier for some attendees, and we will continue to work with the hotel to contain costs for our attendees.

Why can't people that were living in Florida and moved to another state still come to The Family Café? Do you know if they have Family Café in that state?

The Annual Family Café is the largest statewide cross-disability event in the nation, and no other state has a comparable event. At this time, there are no plans to expand to other states. Attendees from states other than Florida are welcome at the event, and there is no registration fee for individuals with disabilities and their families. As state funding supports the financial assistance program, recipients must live in Florida in order to qualify.

Do you think that a popular movie could be shown in a room for those that can't stay in a session for different reasons?

Thanks for that suggestion. We try to schedule a variety of activities throughout the event so everyone is able to find something that interests them. We do have limitations in terms of the available space, however we will share your suggestion with our Planning Committee.

We reserved our room direct with Hyatt and paid out of pocket. We requested an accessible room with two beds and a roll-in shower. Got a regular room and unable to use the bath at all for our son in a wheelchair. When I asked the front desk, they said accessible rooms were handled by The Family Café. What do I need to do next year to get an accessible room? (FYI we checked in Thursday night.)

Generally speaking, it's not accurate to say that all accessible rooms are handled by The Family Café. There are some available for reservations. That said, you can imagine that an event like ours quickly exhausts the ability of the hotel to provide rooms with roll-in showers, as there is a limited number of them. The best approach is to make your reservation as early as possible.

I enjoyed helping out one of the speakers this weekend and I made new friends as well.

Thanks for volunteering to help out! The Annual Family Café is a great place to connect with people and make new friends. We're happy that happened for you this year.

I liked playing and learning in the Morgan room. Thank you for having it here.

Our pleasure! Our friends from the M.O.R.G.A.N. Project do a great job with their sensory room. We're happy to hear that you enjoyed experiencing it.

I learned a lot this weekend and I liked all the vendors that came this year. I hope to see you all next year.

That's wonderful to hear! We do our best to put together an informative, engaging event. We hope to see you again next year!

Wonderful opportunity for Chinese visitors working on disability issues. This is a fantastic event! Hope you keep inviting us and our colleagues from China who are sponsored by US Dept. of State. Thanks!

We were very happy and honored to welcome international guests into The Family Café family at this year's event. We would love to have you back!

As a liaison officer escorting a group of visitors from China invited by the US State Department on their International Visitors Leadership Program, this conference was an amazing opportunity. Our 9 visitors work on "Disabilities in China" and this conference allowed them to see how "Disabilities in the US" are being handled. Because of the variety of breakout sessions, they had the opportunity to focus on their area of professional interest. Thank you!

That's great to hear. We believe that what The Family Café has done to bring together people with disabilities and their families with a wide array of information and resources is truly unique. We were very happy to have international guests on hand to see how we bring people together for collaboration, advocacy, friendship, and empowerment at our event. We hope they can bring some of our Family Café magic back to China!

You rock!!

No, you rock!

Where are the family restrooms?

The Family Café makes family restrooms available for attendees in two different locations at the event. You can find them by referring to the event program or smartphone app, or by asking any Family Café representative onsite.

How can I help the siblings of children with special needs? Because they are also affected, especially with lack of attention, while being responsible for the brother or sister who is special.

The issue of challenges facing siblings of children with disabilities has drawn an increasing amount of attention in recent years. This year's event included a session called "How Having a Sibling Affected My Childhood," and next year's Annual Family Café is likely to address this issue further. We will definitely share your request for more resources on this topic with our Planning Committee. In the meantime, you may find this article on Sibling Issues helpful: https://www.parentcenterhub.org/siblings/.

Great job. My 1st year. Thanks!

Thanks! We love to welcome new people into The Family Café family. We hope you'll be able to join us again next year!

What kind of changes is your organization making to support public services? For the disabled individuals become independent?

Here at The Family Café, we strongly support the independence of individuals with disabilities. The intent of The Annual Family Café is to bring together information and resources that will help people with disabilities to live independently in the community and have meaningful, fulfilling lives. One way we've promoted this idea is through the Employment Expo in our Exhibit Hall, where attendees can speak with employers about the job search process, and what they look for in employees. We also feature Micro Enterprises, which are small businesses that are owned and operated by people with disabilities. We very much believe in independence and self-direction for people with disabilities, and our hope is that our attendees find information and resources that can help them develop that independence at The Annual Family Café.

Can you do cancer breakouts?

Thanks for that suggestion. While technically cancer would qualify a disease as opposed to a disability, its effects can certainly be disabling for those in treatment. We will share your suggestion with our Planning Committee.

More sessions on ESA / Therapy / Service Dog rules, laws, etc.

Thanks for that suggestion. We have had multiple sessions on service animals over the years, and are likely to do so again in future. Last year's sessions included "Pets and Service Animals in Disaster," "Think Pawsitive: Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and Places of Public Accommodation," and "Assistance Animals for Persons with Autism, Developmental, or Intellectual Disabilities." We will certainly share your suggestion with our Planning Committee.

Enjoyed Family Café. Lots of information on different disabilities.

Thanks! We do our best to include information on as many different types of disabilities and related issues as we can. If you have any suggestions about topics you would like to see addressed, please let us know!

Congratulations on 20 years! Thank you so much! I don't know what we would do without The Family Café. You give us so much. This particular conference seemed very smooth to me, too. Looking forward to the next 20 years. More power to you!

Thanks so much! It's been our pleasure to connect individuals with disabilities and their families with information, resources, and networking opportunities over the last two decades, and we look forward to continuing for decades to come.

Thank you for a very informational weekend. I learned a lot of important things.

Our pleasure! It's great to hear that you got a lot out of this year's event. We'll look forward to seeing you again!

Volunteering help?

We are always on the lookout for volunteer help! If you are interested in volunteering at The Annual Family Café, please make sure to indicate that on the relevant part of the registration form. We also send out an email to recruit

additional volunteers in the weeks before the event. You can help out as a room monitor, directing attendees to breakout sessions; at the registration desk, getting people checked in; or at bag stuffing, putting together materials for attendees on the afternoon before the event opens.

Is there a way to get presentations from presenters you couldn't attend?

Yes! We include the contact information for every presenter in the event program, and in the event smartphone app. If you would like more information or a copy of the presentation from a session that interested you that you weren't able to attend, please reach out the presenter. The 2018 program is on our website at https://www.familycafe.net/images/stories/pdffiles/20th_FamCafe-Insides-LO-RES.pdf.

Great family weekend. I had trouble figuring out the map to locate sessions. Elevators could be marked more clearly on the maps please.

Thanks for that feedback. If you need to find an elevator, or anything else at the hotel, there are several resources available. There is a map in the back of the printed program, and an interactive, searchable version of that map in our smartphone app. You can also use the interactive kiosks located throughout the convention area. If you need help from someone, don't be afraid to ask a room monitor volunteer, who you can identify by the Family Café aprons they wear, or a member of The Family Café team, all of whom wear chef coats.

The Agency for Health Care Administration

Why doesn't Medicaid or Medicare cover the costs for wheelchairs? Will they ever?

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.

Medicaid will reimburse for a wheelchair when it is medically documented that a wheelchair is necessary to meet a recipient's physical needs. Certain wheelchairs, such as customized wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, and motorized scooters, do require prior authorization.

In Florida, most Medicaid recipients are required to enroll in a Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) plan. Recipients may contact their MMA plan directly to request assistance obtaining Medicaid covered services, including wheelchairs. Recipients can also contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055 for assistance.

Is there anything being done about the quality of home health aides and at home nursing care for children who require an aide/nurse? There is a high demand and short supply with low pay so many children are not getting the quality of care they deserve.

In Florida under the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program, most Medicaid recipients receive their medical services through a health plan. The health plans must meet strong quality standards.

If you are not satisfied with the quality of care your plan is providing, please contact your health plan directly. You can also contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055 to report a complaint about your care.

I am really concerned about the current situation with Medicaid and the services children with disabilities. My 9 year old daughter with Down syndrome has gone more than a month without ABA therapy, and of course the therapist is unable to work as well. I understand that paperwork is important, but is it a strong cause to pause any child's development?

We are sorry to hear about your experience. Under the Florida Medicaid program children have access to all medically necessary services, including applied behavioral analysis services. If any you are having difficulty accessing services, please contact the Florida Medicaid Helpline at 1-877-254-1055 or file a complaint on the Agency's website at www.flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/complaint.

Please note that there have been no cuts to funding or coverage for behavioral analysis services, and this service is still available.

When will the state offer services offices in Southwest Florida? Over a million Floridians live here, but the closest service offices for many state services are over 120 miles away (3 plus hours of drive time, each way).

In Florida under the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program, most Medicaid recipients receive their medical services through a health plan. You can contact your health plan directly to request assistance obtaining Medicaid covered services. No direct services are provided to Medicaid recipients from the Agency for Health Care Administration offices. Please contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055 if you would like to speak to a Medicaid representative about your services.

If you are in need of assistance with State services other than Medicaid you will need to contact the State agency responsible for those services directly. Additional information, including the contact information for the different State agencies, can be found on the State's official website www.myflorida.com.

I have a 33 year old daughter with an ID and slight Cerebral Palsy. We are looking to move to Florida. She has a Medicaid waiver in CT. How do I go about looking into services for her before we move to Florida? I am sure the services are the same, right?

Not all states offer the same Medicaid coverage. States are allowed to set their own rules regarding Medicaid coverage as long as they stay within federal guidelines. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency responsible for determining Medicaid eligibility in Florida. For information regarding Medicaid eligibility in Florida, please contact the DCF at 1-866-762-2237 or look online at www.myflfamilies.com. For information about the Medicaid waiver for people with intellectual disabilities, please go to www.apdcares.org and read about the iBudget waiver.

What are the new proposed changes to Medicaid?

Florida is not changing its Medicaid program. In fact the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program has produced the highest program quality scores in the program's history, and it is continuing. 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.

I wish Medicaid would support the costs of service dogs. Do you think this is possible?

Medicaid programs are established by federal and state laws and regulations. The Agency would need to receive direction from the Florida Legislature to include the coverage of service dogs through the Medicaid program.

Governor Scott should listen and keep Medicaid in Florida. He should not just come to The Family Cafe and just say a few words about Medicaid and then never make a promise not to hurt us by moving the program around. There is no explanation for cuts to the neediest people.

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.

In Florida under the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program, most Medicaid recipients receive their medical services through a health plan. If you are a Medicaid recipient in need of services you may contact your health plan directly to request assistance obtaining Medicaid covered services. Recipients can also contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055 if they need assistance.

We need more providers of therapy services in our state. Why is there such a provider of services shortage in our state? Is the pay that bad?

In Florida under the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program, most Medicaid recipients receive their medical services through a health plan. Under the SMMC program the Agency contracts with health plans to furnish services to Medicaid recipients. The health plans are then required to contract with a sufficient number of providers, as outlined in the health plan contract, to serve their enrollees.

Recipients may contact their health plan directly to request assistance obtaining Medicaid covered services, including therapy services. Recipients can also contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055 if they need assistance.

Medicaid and Medicare: Transitioning services. Medicaid and waiver are the payer of last resort, but what services does Medicare cover for HCBW clients?

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.

What type of Medicaid or Medicare services does AHCA offer veterans?

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.

In regards to Medicaid there are no services offered only for veterans. Generally speaking, an individual must meet specific requirements in order to be eligible for Medicaid. Each group has specific age, income, and asset limit requirements. People can be eligible for full or limited Medicaid benefits.

If you would like to speak to someone about general Medicaid eligibility requirements and whether you qualify, please contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at 1-866-762-2237. You may also apply online at www.myflfamilies.com.

Please do something to provide medical coverage to Floridians with no insurance and no money for coverage. Some of our most medically needy citizens have no way to get care. In Southwest Florida, medical collections total \$747 million.

Eligibility criteria for Medicaid are established by federal and state laws and regulations. The Federal Government or the State Legislature would have to pass a bill to make changes in who gets Medicaid.

Generally speaking, an individual must meet specific requirements in order to be eligible for Medicaid. Each group has specific age, income, and asset limit requirements. Persons may be eligible for full or limited Medicaid benefits.

If you would like to speak to someone about general Medicaid eligibility requirements and whether you qualify, please contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at 1-866-762-2237. You may also apply online at www.myflfamilies.com.

The consumer financial protection bureau reports 1 in 5 U.S. residents have medical debts on their credit reports, and 1 in 4 adults in Southwest Florida. Please expand Medicaid services.

Eligibility criteria for Medicaid are established by federal and state laws and regulations. The Federal Government or the State Legislature would have to pass a bill to make changes in who gets Medicaid.

Generally speaking, an individual must meet specific requirements in order to be eligible for Medicaid. Each group has specific age, income, and asset limit requirements. Persons may be eligible for full or limited Medicaid benefits. If you would like to speak to someone about general Medicaid eligibility requirements and whether you qualify, please contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at 1-866-762-2237. You may also apply online at www.myflfamilies.com.

Does Medicaid support equine therapy?

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. Some MMA plans cover equine therapy services. 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/EB Chart Revised 1 01618.pdf

If your adult child gets accepted for SS Disability can you still keep your child on Medicaid? Is there an age limit of 21 or 26? Can he stay on my insurance until 26 before being on Medicaid?

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency responsible for determining Medicaid eligibility in Florida. For information regarding Medicaid eligibility in Florida please contact DCF at 1-866-762-2237. You may also apply online at www.myflfamilies.com.

It is stressful when a computer assigns four different children to four different insurance plans. Or it randomly changes the insurance of one of the children. Can Medicaid prevent this from happening?

There are many reasons why children in the same family might be assigned to different plans, but Medicaid tries to keep families in the same health plan whenever possible. Every person has 120 days after enrollment to change to a different plan. Choice counsellors are available to assist recipients with selecting a plan that best meets their needs. Recipients may go online to http://www.flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/ or can reach the Call Center toll-free at 1-877-711-3662 to talk to a choice counsellor. In-person visits are available for recipients with special needs, but they will not be available prior to enrollment via the Express Enrollment process. However, in-person visits will be available for recipients with special needs during the 120 day change period if requested.

Why is it so hard to get on KidCare and to remain on the program? What has changed?

Eligibility for the Florida KidCare program has not changed. If you would like to speak to someone about KidCare eligibility requirements and whether your child qualifies, please contact the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation at 1-888-540-5437.

When you do not agree with a medical ruling with Medicaid, is there a complaint line or a manager to discuss the situation with? It is always easier to talk about the issues you have than to write them down and hope someone understands the problem or the program.

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: http://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/statewide_mc/pdf/mma/MMA_Standard_Plans.pdf and

http://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/statewide mc/pdf/mma/MMA Specialty Plans.pdf.

Once you have worked with your health plan, if you are still not satisfied, you can request a Medicaid Fair Hearing at 1-877-254-1055.

What is the difference between KidCare and Medicaid?

Florida KidCare includes both Medicaid for children and the state's children's health insurance program (CHIP) for uninsured children who do not meet the income and eligibility requirements for Medicaid. If you apply for Medicaid and do not qualify, we will automatically send your application to be reviewed for CHIP eligibility. The same happens if you apply for CHIP eligibility, and it looks like you might qualify for Medicaid. We will look at both programs to make sure you enroll in the program for which your child qualifies. You can apply for Medicaid or CHIP for your child at https://floridakidcare.org/.

How can I find a dentist who accepts my Medicaid?

In Florida, most Medicaid recipients are required to enroll in a Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) plan. Recipients may contact their MMA plan directly to request assistance obtaining Medicaid covered services, including dental services. Recipients can also contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055.

Does your agency have service offices where we can go and talk to someone face to face? The toll free line to call only to leave a message that no one returns does not work.

The Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) makes every effort to quickly respond to complaints and issues about Medicaid and the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) program. The Agency has established a unit to specifically handle complaints and issues. Please call 1-877-254-1055, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, to talk to a Medicaid representative. Recipients may also submit a complaint through the Agency's website at: http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid. Click on the "Report a Complaint" button on the right side of the page and then fill out the complaint form.

Does Medicaid pay for hearing aids? For the elderly? Or just for kids?

Florida Medicaid covers hearing aids for adults and children. In Florida, most Medicaid recipients are required to enroll in a Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) plan. Recipients may contact their MMA plan directly to request assistance with obtaining Medicaid covered services, including hearing aids. Recipients can also contact the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055 if they need assistance.

We need a question and answer session with Medicaid programs like the Department of Education does for the ESE students/parents.

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 went to one session and it was about the possible harmful changes to the state's application for Medicaid. The lady from Disability Rights stated that we do not have to make such drastic changes, and now I am worried. What changes are being proposed without any input from the ones you serve? I can't find this letter or plan that was sent to the feds. I have looked on the website and found nothing. Please post.

There are no major changes being proposed to Florida Medicaid. In 2018 the Florida Legislature directed the Agency to eliminate retroactive eligibility for non-pregnant adults. No Medicaid services are being reduced as a result of this amendment. In addition, neither the eligibility requirements nor the application process for enrollment has been modified. 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.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities

What is going on with the APD waitlist in getting more people off? It is insane to have a waitlist and shows discrimination. Those on the waiver receive all the services they need, and sometimes the most needed are neglected because they have the limited resources/knowledge of services. What can we do to get people off the APD waitlist?

Individuals are enrolled on the waiver based on the waiting list category prioritization identified in Florida Statutes. Over the last five years, the Legislature has allocated money to take more individuals off the list. As of September 2018, there are 21,886 individuals on the waiting list.

A few years ago, CDC+ had planned on updating the web site for registered consumers to include the consumer's purchase plan, budget and monies left over for approved items, etc. Is that update still in the works? Thank you!

CDC+ has been working on enhancements to our systems. In August, we saw the roll-out of the payroll submission enhancements. Through this enhancement, CDC+ Consumer/Representatives are able to see the Service and number of Units that have been authorized. They can also see the amount of units that have been submitted against that authorization for the month. CDC+ has other enhancements that will be coming in the future.

Can we start adding more focus on adult disabilities after childhood? There are so few resources for adults who become or are disabled. Is there any way APD can provide more outreach and services for those adults who are aging?

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

Is there anything being done about the quality of home health aides and at home nursing care for children who require an aide/nurse? There is a high demand and short supply with low pay, so many are not getting the quality of care they deserve. I am on the CDC+ program. I cannot find folks willing to serve in this very important role.

If you are having issues, please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/.

I would like to know more about benefits available for those with Cerebral Palsy. I am a client of APD and would like to know about transportation options. My support person says that our county does not share transportation with the disabled. Why not?

Please send your question to <u>APD.info@apdcares.org</u>, and your message will be forwarded to the agency's ombudsman.

Transportation for special needs adults and children is being ignored. What solutions are being considered by the different agencies with APD being the driving force? I heard last year that the Governor and Director Palmer were in charge of some action plan to increase options available to the state to improve transportation issues. Whatever happened to this report? After a year of studying this simple issue, you should have some concrete answers.

APD is continuing to work to improve transportation for people with disabilities in Florida. The agency is utilizing funding provided by the Legislature to make improvements based on recommendations that were submitted by the Transportation Taskforce chaired by Director Palmer.

I am really concerned about the current situation with Medicaid/APD and the services for children with disabilities. My 9 year old daughter with Down syndrome has gone more than a month without ABA therapy, and of course the therapist is unable to work as well. I understand that paperwork is important, but not a strong case to pause any child's development. Get it together APD! Get it together!

If you are having issues with behavioral services through Medicaid, please contact the Agency for Health Care Administration's recipient help line at 1-877-254-1055. In addition, please send your message to APD.info@apdcares.org, and it will be forwarded to the agency's ombudsman.

I receive services from APD, DCF and AHCA. My question is, when will the state offer service offices in Southwest Florida? Over a million Floridians

live here, but the closest service office for many state services are over 120 miles away (3 plus hours of drive time each way).

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.

Is there any financial assistance to get service animal training for a dog to detect seizures and anxiety/behavior episodes? I am on the waitlist for APD services.

Requirements and costs for service and therapy dogs may vary, depending on the organization. Search online for your local service dog training organizations and ask them if they know of funding sources that could help offset costs. You may also want to reach out to charitable organizations such as the Able Trust Foundation or local Rotary Club to see if they could provide financial support for such services.

I have to work. My 42 year old autistic son stays home alone those 3 days. How can I have a personal assistant come check on him during work days? APD says talk to Medicaid. He is not on any waiver list. He should be! He is at risk because he wanders around the community. There has got to be some way I can work and he can be safe. Thank you APD!

APD's ombudsman will reach out to you personally about this issue.

Where can I find HELP for my son who is 32 years old and wants to find a social activity group for those with high functioning disabilities? He is a three time survivor of cancer and has a disability. He loves art, movies, camps, etc. He is very outgoing as well. APD says the only thing they can offer is a group home.

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/. Also, if you're interested in coordinating with other people with disabilities, visit https://www.flsand.org/.

Where can I go for support, group fun sessions, group activities in my community, etc.?

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 am a client of APD CDC+ waiver. Can I get a service dog with my funding? I learned today that someone here got a service dog with the help of APD. I want a service dog to assist me with my needs.

Services and Goods approved through CDC+ are approved on an individual basis. The request would need to be submitted in for review so that a determination could be made.

Is there a website of a list of service providers in Florida? Especially for group homes, and villages and adult day training?

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

I would like to see and talk to more service providers next year. My support person from APD should be required to attend. I end up knowing more than she does.

APD would like to provide everyone positive, informative presentations at The Annual Family Cafe. Thank you for your suggestion.

We need to learn more about what APD services are out there for those with autism. Why doesn't APD provide more for those with autism? There are no providers!

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

Could you provide us with more information on autism and sensory disorders? I just found out my niece has them, and she receives care from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. I need a few ideas on how to help her with it.

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/.

We need more service providers of therapy services in our county. Most therapists will not contract with the schools, only working with the hospitals. Most don't take Medicaid. We have a huge shortage of providers and a large need for services!

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

Why isn't there much help for single moms with disabled kids? I have a support coordinator with APD. She is useless and does not know anything about housing or making our home handicapped accessible. Need bath bars, etc. I want someone to help when I need help. My support coordinator does not know the system.

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/. The waiver support coordinator works for the customer. Anyone who believes a waiver support coordinator is not meeting their needs should call their regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/.

I am a person with autism. I have an IEP and a support plan from APD. I would like to understand these plans. My parents try but they are confused.

Please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/.

Presently APD is burning good providers out by making them jump through hoops with paperwork. This infringes on their ability to provide direct services. There is massive duplication in requests from APD. Our children continue to need services and supports, and no test or hoop presented by APD will cure them.

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.

Please tell me more about the initiative that providers had to increase their daily living wages. Does APD support this drive? If not, why? I heard a lot about it and I believe the Director stated on Friday night that the raise did not go through for the providers.

APD strives to ensure that providers are compensated properly. Rate changes are determined by the Florida Legislature.

Medicaid and Medicare has transitioning services for APD. So APD would be the payer of last resort? What do these services pay for if you are an HCBS client?

The iBudget waiver handbook identifies services covered for individuals on the waiver. To see more information, visit http://apdcares.org/ibudget/docs/iBudget%20Waiver%20Handbook%20June%202018.pdf

Can an outside person make a deposit to a trust account if they are a beneficiary of APD and Medicaid?

Trust accounts have individual parameters depending on the trust. Medicaid eligibility requirements are determined by the Department of Children and Families. Learn more at http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access-florida-food-medical-assistance-cash/.

I would like to know more about the CDC+ program.

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.

I want to join the Family Care Council. How do I do so?

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/.

What is available for SLE, lupus, fibromyalgia syndrome, and osteoarthritis? I am receiving services from APD, but have all this too. I have severe bone-on-bone pain. The arthritis and lupus associations are too far from my hometown and my worker says she cannot help me with this. I live at home, but may need to go into a nursing home due to excessive pain.

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 options. The Resource Directory can be found online at:

http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/. Also, you may find it useful to contact organizations that provide services and supports that apply to your diagnosis.

I would like to know more about the services provided by APD for youth with Cerebral Palsy.

This information is available at http://apdcares.org/docs/app%20eligl%20info.pdf. Medicaid is the primary resource of individuals under the age of 21. 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/.

I need more information on transitions into adulthood and the changes I can expect for my very profound 20 year old. We currently receive services from APD. This is not a school-related issue, but how Medicaid, Medicare, HCBW services change as she ages. How to get a new PCA, therapies, budgeting on the CDC+ waiver, etc.

Please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/.

Let me know how I can help the APD provide therapy to the siblings of an adult who gets services. The whole family needs to be involved . . . especially after the parents die.

Please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/.

How can we continue to move the process along for the "Pay Fair for Care" campaign in the next legislative session? The shortage of direct care staff due to turnover, caused by low wages, is a serious crisis that cannot be ignored. Thank you!

APD strives to ensure that providers are compensated properly. Rate changes are determined by the Florida Legislature.

I am an individual with executive dysfunction among other related disorders (fibromyalgia, ADHS, gastrointestinal issues, etc.) I am seeking more information that specifically address these, and more importantly, HELP. I have been told that my conditions are not considered a disability, although they affect my everyday major and minor life functions, including the ability to work and deal with family issues at the same time. I have a child with a disability that I have to also attend to constantly. Since I do not get SS disability and am therefore not officially disabled, and because I have a full use of my limbs and am not using any assistance

devices, even the entities geared toward the disabled cannot provide me with help/information. All I want is for this disabling condition to be recognized as a valid disability with the state and APD. What else can I do?

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/.

We need more awareness of the ABA therapist and how they do not comply with the APD support plans.

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.

What are the changes to the possible services under the new federal changes of Medicaid/Medicare proposed by Congress? Will APD be making any programmatic changes?

APD will monitor any federal changes closely and will keep stakeholders apprised.

I would like to have the Agency discuss more options and services provided for Down syndrome

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.

Why can't state agencies, such as APD, DCF, or DOE, provide handicapped placards for the people they serve? For example, the DMV does not recognize autism and other disabilities that the state does recognize. Not all disabilities are physical. Virginia and New York both allow people with autism, etc. to get handicapped placards.

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.

We need an updated acronyms list. This is especially important for persons new to the APD system.

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.

I need more information about the CDC+ program. I need to get more information about having a daughter who would like to still live at home.

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.

APD needs to host a discussion around what services they provide for people with autism. Need to provide this information to families.

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

Is APD ever considering a change to the statute that defines a disability and the proof of it?

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.

When are the new changes to CDC+ going into effect?

CDC+ has been working on enhancements to our systems. In August, we saw the roll-out of the payroll submission enhancements. Through this enhancement, CDC+ Consumers/Representatives are able to see the Service and number of Units that have been authorized. They can also see the amount of units that have been submitted against that authorization for the month. CDC+ has other enhancements that will be coming in the future.

Since my adult son with autism wanders and does not have an ankle band because of the APD cost, how can I let law enforcement know he is autistic? How can I protect him from being arrested for not being able to speak? Thank you!

Contact your county Sheriff's Office for more information.

My adult child wanders more and more now. Ankle bands are not a permitted cost of APD and are very expensive. Is there any way we can work with the state to get them free or use APD to purchase so our kids remain safe.

Please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/.

Are there any resources or information that can be provided at this event in the future to help with adults with disabilities that are elderly or aging? I receive services from APD for my aging son. Need more though. Social issues.

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

Why is the list of conditions for APD so limited? 22q11.2 (AKA DiGeorge syndrome) is considered a debilitating conditions by SSI, and until recently was considered terminal. Now we are the first generation of 20 somethings, but we fall through the cracks as not "normal" but also not learning disabled either. With the many health issues we need a hand up but may not be able to support ourselves for the long term. Some won't be able to at all!

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.

Is there a "Governor's Order" available to expedite appeals cases for a special needs child erroneously banished out of the state due to medical conditions? The judge was transferred and attorney disbarred and imprisoned last June.

Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.215(g) – on the trial court level, a chief judge has a duty to expedite certain cases that include dependency, terminations of parental rights (TPR), and families and children in need of services (CINS/FINS) cases.
Fla. R. App. P. 9.146(h), involving appeals in dependency, TPR and CINS/FINS cases, entitled "Expedited Review" – "court shall give priority to appeals under this rule."

Why does it take so long to be accepted or denied as a member of the Family Care 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/.

Why hasn't APD informed consumers and caregivers of The Family Café? I have worked for several years under APD and never knew about The Family Café!

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.

APD has very poor transportation vendors that receive payment from Medicaid and APD. My daughter had very sad experiences and now, due to her health, vendors don't take her. She needs to use a provider which cost her roughly \$1,800.00 a year. However, they don't take Medicaid. The

service to and from the ARC has been 90% good. However, the cost has been a hardship for her. Is there a way I could purchase tickets and submit the receipts to my waiver support coordinator for reimbursement?

APD's ombudsman will reach out to you personally about this issue.

Is there an APD website for services and providers? I mean especially adult day training.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Resources website managed by Qlarant helps individuals with developmental disabilities find a provider that best meets their needs. Please visit it at http://www.flddresources.org/. 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 options. The Resource Directory can be found online at:

http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/.

We would love for you to be able to shorten the wait time for kids that are on the APD waiting list.

Medicaid State Plan is the primary resource for children under age 21. If you're in a crisis situation, please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/.

When transitioning from Early Steps to APD services, decisions should be based on priorities or severity of disability for children.

Medicaid State Plan is the primary resource for children under age 21. If you're in a crisis situation, please contact your local office. Individuals are enrolled on the waiver based on the waiting list category prioritization identified in Florida Statutes. Over the last five years, the Legislature has allocated money to take more individuals off the list.

Would love to see APD or someone do sessions on housing options and explain funding for ICF, Group Homes, etc.

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

Sessions should provide more legal supports from APD. Let us know what our rights are and how we can respect the system as it respects us also.

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

Next year, we would like to have Director Palmer field some questions from the session she provided. Love to hear her answers.

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

Why did the med waiver cut services for the already limited help for cystic fibrosis? We already couldn't get most services before. And why do some people in different cities get more help than others?

For information about Florida's Adult Cystic Fibrosis Waiver, contact the Department of Health (DOH)'s Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program (BSCIP) Central Registry toll free number 1 (800) 342-0778 or visit http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/adult-cystic-fibrosis/index.html/.

As stated in the presentation, some areas of the state get enhanced funding for services and some other areas provide more or different services for APD. What is this?

Under the iBudget Waiver, a rate differential exists for Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Monroe counties due to higher cost of care in those areas.

Just once, I would like the APD staff to do a session that was just a question and answer session. We would bring you our questions, and you would work with us to answer them. This system of care is confusing.

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

What is APD's policy for reporting abuse?

APD has a zero tolerance policy for abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Anyone who suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation should contact the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE, TTY 1-800-955-8771, http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline/.

APD needs to provide trainings to support coordinators. We are often the last to know about the community resources. We are so bogged down with paperwork that community development gets lost. We have NO clue! Sad but true.

If there's a specific subject you'd like to receive training about, please contact your regional office. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: http://apdcares.org/region/. In addition, APD offers monthly webinars for WSCs. For a list of scheduled trainings, please visit http://apdcares.org/waiver/support-coordination/.

How come Florida has the highest number of ICF beds in the nation?

For information about ICFs in the state of Florida, contact the Agency for Health Care Administration or visit

http://www.fdhc.state.fl.us/medicaid/Policy and Quality/Policy/behavioral health coverage/bhfu/Intermediate Care.shtml/.

I think APD should work more strongly with the trust division. Trusts are becoming ambulance chasers. We need state oversight. APD should research the bad and the good trust companies.

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.

After all these years of increased funding from the legislature . . . how come I am still on a waitlist for services? Are there still tiers? This is crazy!!

Individuals are enrolled on the waiver based on the waiting list category prioritization identified in Florida Statutes. Over the last five years, the Legislature has allocated money to take more individuals off the list. As of September 2018, there are 21,886 individuals on the waiting list.

Does APD recognize the military? Many families in the military need services but do not know about APD. We know about DOE and the school.

Florida has military portability for waiver enrollment. The 2014 Florida Legislature authorized individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of 393.065(1), F.S., to receive home and community-based services in this state if the individual's parent or legal guardian is an active duty military service member and, at the time of the service member's transfer to Florida, the individual was receiving home and community-based services in another state. This law became effective on July 1, 2014. For more information, contact your regional APD office or visit http://apdcares.org/docs/military-ad.pdf.

How come the state agencies do not talk or share literature as kids transfer from one agency to the other? Wouldn't it be smart, and a cost saving measure, if they could just transfer to another service without the hassle of an application? The diagnosis does not change. Just the forms.

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.

Why doesn't APD fund respite services anymore?

APD offers respite services.

With all the hurricanes and crazy weather across the state, or nation even . . . I think the state would be smart to highlight disaster preparedness more. Especially with the support coordinators! What if the "BIG ONE" hits this summer?

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.

APD should require families to learn more about health and healthy lifestyles. Mainly folks are just "couching" all day long. Wouldn't it be nice to promote health!

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.

APD needs to educate families on the power of guardianships and selfdetermination of each client. What do you provide for information for each client?

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.

Does APD provide services to those with epilepsy?

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. Some individuals have epilepsy but must have a developmental disability to qualify. 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 options. The Resource Directory can be found online at:

http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/.

Why do you need 2 doctors to confirm a diagnosis for APD services? I mean does the diagnosis really change from doc to doc?

Professionals who can determine eligibility vary depending on the diagnosis. The criteria can be found online at http://apdcares.org/docs/app%20eligl%20info.pdf.

I think APD should offer some support to siblings who have a brother or sister with a developmental delay. I mean helping us to cope now with our sibling seems to be a heck of a lot cheaper than therapy or institutionalization later in their life. Think about it!

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 options. The Resource Directory can be found online at: http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/.

I think that APD could be a bit more creative in supporting therapeutic programs for the people they serve. Not all just want or need the traditional therapies. What other services/therapies would you be able to fund? Horse therapy, water therapy, music therapy, etc.

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 options. The Resource Directory can be found online at: http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/.

I want to be independent and have more control over my services. I am afraid if I try too hard to be independent that APD will determine that their services are no longer needed. I am in college, and doing quite well. I just need PCA services. Getting a PCA to come to my place is rough. Some days they don't get there in time, other days they don't come at all. It is hard to get around when your daily basic needs depend on someone else who does not really care enough. My struggle is real.

Please email <u>APD.info@apdcares.org</u>, and your message will be forwarded to the agency's ombudsman.

You should support family to family networking more. I mean the FCC was a great idea, but most districts have taken the money for their own personal use. APD does not monitor or demand that the districts spend the small amount of money the way it was intended to be handled. The founders of this program should be sickened! Give the program back to the families.

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.

Does APD state office hire folks with disabilities? I never see one at this event that have a disability. A disability that APD represents.

Absolutely! APD supports hiring individuals with disabilities.

The Department of Children and Families

When will the state offer service offices in Southwest Florida? Over a million Floridians live here, but the closest service offices for many DCF state service are over 120 miles away (3 plus hours of drive time, each way).

The ACCESS program has a number of service center locations in Southwest Florida. You can locate the service center nearest to you on our website at https://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/map.shtml. We also work with Community Partners throughout the state that can assist Floridians in obtaining benefits and may be located closer than one of our service centers. A list of these partners can be found on our website at https://access-web.dcf.state.fl.us/CPSLookup/search.aspx.

My son is on the Medicaid waiver, receives SSDI, SSDA, Medicaid, food stamps and Medicare. What are his income limits to receive all services? I was told that it is \$5,000 for Medicaid, food stamps and \$2,000 for SSI. What can he have in his account excluding the ABLE account?

The income limits are program specific and generally driven by the specific type of benefit requested. For all programs, the department uses income remaining after a variety of disregards have been applied and a variety of other program specific factors. The income and asset limits for the Food Assistance and Medicaid Programs are included in the links attached below.

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/ssifactsheet.pdf

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/esspolicymanual/a 09.pdf

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/fafactsheet.pdf

I am in desperate need of help with my daughter who has self-injurious behaviors. Is there any help available to help me deal with these issues? She needs mental health services. She is 20.

The department contracts with seven Managing Entities (ME) around the state to manage the behavioral health system of care in their contracted area and provide services and supports through a network of contracted providers. The MEs are

listed below, along with their help line numbers for each Entity and the counties they serve.

The Managing Entities

- Big Bend Community Based Care 850-747-5755 extension 1744, https://www.bigbendcbc.org/
 Serving Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Taylor, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington counties.
- Broward Behavioral Health Coalition 877-698-7794, https://bbhcflorida.org/
 Serving Broward county.
- Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. 813-740-4811, https://www.cfbhn.org/
 Serving Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Highlands, Hendry, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota counties.
- Central Florida Cares Health System 407-985-3560, http://centralfloridacares.org/
 Serving Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties.
- Lutheran Services Florida 877-229-9098, https://www.lsfnet.org/
 Serving Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lake, Lafayette, Levy, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Union and Volusia counties.
- South Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. 888-248-3111, https://sfbhn.org/
 Serving Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.
- Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network 561-203-2485, https://sefbhn.worldsecuresystems.com/
 Serving Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties.

As a low income parent of two very "handicapped" children and 2 children on the ASD, the lack of services or help for housing, food, and general insurance I can get because I receive an adoption subsidy astounds me. I have children that would remain in the state's care had I not taken them in to my home. Why should an adoption subsidy be held against me as "income"?

For Family Medicaid, the income rules are based on the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) regulations established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Under these rules adoption subsidy payments are not treated as income when determining the Medicaid eligibility of an adoptive parent. The rules governing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps, are also set in federal regulation. These regulations require that parents and their

children (under the age of 22) be considered a single group and their income used to establish eligibility and payment level.

We adopt special needs children with a variety of challenges, from blindness to autism. Would you please provide us with some information on what DCF can provide for kids with special needs who have been adopted?

Post Adoption Services are available to families who have adopted through the Department of Children and Families. The adoptive family may request temporary case management support, information and referral assistance and related post adoption services. For assistance in identifying your local Post Adoption Specialist to request such services, please contact the Adoption Information Center at -800-96-Adopt.

I wish the state (DCF) would pay for service dog training and adoption for our foster kids who have experienced trauma.

Post Adoption supports and services are offered to families throughout the state to address the trauma that children may experience. Additionally, Florida has several trained Adoption Competent Therapist who have a unique understanding of core adoption related issues that may occur in a family unit. To access these services, please contact the Adoption Information Center at 1-800-96-Adopt.

Please help with more information on reactive attachment disorder.

When diagnosed correctly, reactive attachment disorder (RAD) is uncommon; therefore, it is important to ensure you seek assistance from professionals with the expertise to assess and treat accurately. The following resources provide information and assistance in finding services and supports:

- The Association for Treatment and Training in the Attachment of Children (ATTACh) provides information on their website about reactive attachment disorder: http://www.attach.org/
- The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry provides an overview of RAD and resources for parents
- The report of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children's (APSAC) Task Force on Attachment Therapy, Reactive Attachment Disorder, and Attachment Problems can be found at the following link: https://depts.washington.edu/hcsats/PDF/AttachmentTaskForceAPSAC.pdf

You can contact the Central Florida Cares Health System for information on training and services available in your area. Their phone number is 407-985-3560, and their website is: http://centralfloridacares.org/

Is there a Governor's order available to expedite appeals cases in Florida for special needs children erroneously banished out of the state due to medical conditions? Judge was transferred and attorney was disbarred permanently and imprisoned last June.

We are not aware of any Governor's order that addresses expedited appeals. Each custody situation is unique.

When working and having SSDI and SSA, and also work wages, can DCF actively count the survivor benefits towards your income as well as towards SGA? Also, can a pool trust count as an income and asset trust? If so, DCF is not aware of this fact. What is the best way to educate them on their own rules? Regulations and statutes?

Disability payments received from the Social Security Administration (SSA) as well as wages are countable income for the purposes of determining Medicaid eligibility. As related to trusts, attached are several links with information about our disability related Medicaid programs and trusts.

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/esspolicymanual/a 22 3.pdf http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/qualified income trust factshee t.pdf

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/ssifactsheet.pdf

Why are handicapped placards not available for people with autism and other disabilities that are not physical? Virginia and New York both allow people with autism to get handicap placards.

Thank you for your advocacy for persons with disabilities that are not physical in nature. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is responsible for disabled placards. Florida law dictates the types of disabilities and issues that make an individual eligible for a disabled placard.

Why can 2 people on Social Security not be able to get married? If we are on food stamps, the benefits go away?

The rules governing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps, are set in federal regulation. These regulations require spouses be considered a single group when determining eligibility and the income of each member be used in the income calculation used to establish eligibility and payment level. Individuals who live in the same household and purchase and prepare their meals together are also required by regulation to be considered a single group when determining eligibility, regardless of marital status.

Can you please provide me with more information on coping with bipolar, PTSD, and depression for both adults and children? What type of training do you offer the community? Or what type of services are you providing?

General information about these diagnoses, to include signs, symptoms, and treatment can be found on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website at the following link: https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/mental-disorders/bipolar-disorders.

Please contact the Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. for information on training and services available in your area. Their phone number is 813-740-4811, and their website is https://www.cfbhn.org/.

The state of Florida has a growing homelessness epidemic. Our children are being totally "lost" in this nightmare. For example, St. Matthew's House receives no state or federal funding, but they provide 1,000 homeless children (plus hundreds of adults) with safe lodging and food. Sadly, Collier County has some of the most expensive real estate in the state! What is being done on the state level to help these forgotten children?

Children experiencing homelessness may be assisted by local homelessness Continuums of Care, the Department of Education Homeless Education Program, and/or the child welfare system.

Can special needs court cases be expedited on a Florida docket to get a child returned to their home state or residence to continue receiving treatment? Is there a "Governor's Emergency Order" available for 2nd district pending appeals?

To send a dependent child to another state, the case has to go through the process under the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC). There is an expedited process under the ICPC if the case meets certain factors. Why can't we talk to DCF staff when we have time, not just when they arrange a time for you to call? Also if they make a mistake on our income and report it wrong, and it is high enough to decrease your food stamps, Medicaid or public assistance say they are "sorry" and no retro payment is available.

Applicants and recipients of the Food Assistance, Cash Assistance and Medicaid Programs can speak to department staff directly by calling our Customer Call Center at 1-866-762-2237 or by visiting a local service center, which are located at https://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/map.shtml. Staff at the call center or a service center should be able to address your concerns. If you believe an incorrect decision has been made on your case, you may ask for a supervisor to review the case. Should this review determine your case is correct and you still disagree you may request a hearing in writing, verbally with our Customer Call Center, or online at https://www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/ig/fair-hearing-request-form.shtml.

I have been chasing (for 6 months) a family care giver rate of pay for my 4 grandchildren who I have court approved temporary custody of. Dept. of Revenue keeps sending notices of my non-compliance or they are closing the case due to not being able to find one of the parents (they said for the past 2 years). I have only received public assistance rate of help for 4 children of \$436 per month for 4 months last year. DCF says Dept. of Revenue "has to push the button." Dept. of Revenue says DCF needs to implement it first???

When seeking Temporary Cash Assistance as a relative caregiver, applicants must cooperate with child support enforcement to identify and locate the parents, to prove a child's legal relationship to their parent and to get the court-ordered child support payments. Referrals for this cooperation are sent to the Child Support Enforcement office with the Department of Revenue. If that office determines the caregiver has not cooperated, a request for a sanction is sent to the Department of Children and Families and can only be removed when notice is received from the Child Support Enforcement office that cooperation has taken place.

If you are self-employed why aren't you allowed "overhead expenses or supplies" deducted from your gross income for food stamps, Medicaid or other public assistance?

The Food Assistance, Cash Assistance and Medicaid Programs all allow selfemployed individuals to claim business expenses as deductions to gross income when determining the amount of countable income used to establish eligibility or benefit amount. If you have business expenses that have not been considered, we encourage you to contact our Customer Call Center at 1-866-762-2237 and report the expenses for evaluation.

How is DCF assisting with the opioid crisis? We only hear about the services at an overdose situation. Please do more PSA for the public.

Through the Florida Partnerships for Success (PFS) Grant, the department is funding a targeted awareness campaign focused on overdose recognition and response and how to access naloxone across the state. As part of this campaign, the department is creating a website to serve as a statewide resource for prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Through the PFS and State Targeted Response (STR) Grants, the department is also funding the implementation of school-based prevention programs in middle and high schools in 14 high-need communities throughout the state.

Trying to become a foster parent. Are there any foster parent associations or support groups out there for me to ask questions about the services? I used to be one in New York, and wanted to know what I need to do to be licensed in Florida. It has been several years since I was a foster parent.

Information regarding becoming a State of Florida Foster Parent can be found at: http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/foster-care.

Information regarding foster parent support groups can be found on the Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Association page, which also includes a link about who to contact if interested in becoming a foster parent for each local area. There are separate links for the local associations and community based care agencies that provide information. The website for Florida FAPA is: http://floridafapa.org.

Please let us know what we are doing for the children with behavioral health issues. How are we reaching out to them before it is too late? My niece was left with her mother who sold her back to her parents for \$400. She was hooked on drugs and needed the money. Rehab and therapy are not working for the mother. She has decided she would rather take drugs at this point. I do not want to worry about her. The state needs to provide some counseling to the kids in a situation like this. The child is not

included on her grandparent's insurance. Not allowed. Sad. Kids saw way too much and need care and attention. Beyond love.

There are a variety of funding sources for behavioral health services, including Medicaid and private insurance. In addition, behavioral health services are provided by the department through Managing Entities to individuals with no insurance or who are underinsured.

Children with behavioral health issues can be identified by any individual who has contact with them, such as teachers, coaches, and family members. If your niece has a Dependency Case Manager, her grandparents can request services and supports from the case manager. If there is no Dependency Case Manager, her grandparents can contact the Managing Entity for the area where they live.

The department contracts with seven Managing Entities (MEs) around the state that are responsible for providing an array of behavioral health services and supports through a network of contracted providers. The names, help line numbers and counties served for each ME is listed below.

The Managing Entities

- Big Bend Community Based Care 850-747-5755 extension 1744, https://www.bigbendcbc.org/
 Serving Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Taylor, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington counties.
- Broward Behavioral Health Coalition 877-698-7794, https://bbhcflorida.org/
 Serving Broward county.
- Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. 813-740-4811, https://www.cfbhn.org/
 Serving Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Highlands, Hendry, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota counties.
- Central Florida Cares Health System 407-985-3560, http://centralfloridacares.org/
 Serving Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties.
- Lutheran Services Florida 877-229-9098, https://www.lsfnet.org/
 Serving Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lake, Lafayette, Levy, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Union and Volusia counties.
- South Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. 888-248-3111, https://sfbhn.org/
 Serving Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

 Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network – 561-203-2485, https://sefbhn.worldsecuresystems.com/
 Serving Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties

What is this system of care?

The System of Care is a framework for providing behavioral health services that coordinates between all agencies that are involved with the individual and fully involves the individual and family in designing a plan for services. Ideally, the behavioral health services available in a community will include a continuum of behavioral health services. More information about systems of care can be found on the Florida Children's System of Care website at the following link: http://www.socflorida.com.

What are we doing about the opioid crisis?

The State Targeted Response (STR) grant provides funding to increase access to medication-assisted treatment and recovery services for those who are uninsured or underinsured at no cost. Treatment agencies provide services through the STR grant to provide comprehensive care for those with an opioid use disorder. Treatment outreach has expanded by integrating emergency departments and treatment providers using peer support services. The department is also funding overdose reversal training and distribution of Naloxone, the reversal medication. Additionally, the department has developed training programs focusing on medication-assisted treatments as well as addressing opioid use disorder in the child welfare system.

More than 30,500 naloxone kits have been distributed among 67 providers enrolled in the department's Overdose Prevention Program. Enrolled providers are required to make available free, take-home naloxone kits directly to individuals at risk of overdose and to friends and family that may witness an overdose. Providers enrolled in the program include substance abuse and mental health treatment providers, homeless service organizations, harm reduction programs, hospital emergency departments, federally qualified health centers, and other community-based organizations. The department also partnered with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Police Chiefs Association, and Florida Highway Patrol to provide 5,000 naloxone kits to law enforcement agencies throughout the state to equip officers responding to overdoses. At least 1,340 lives have been saved through naloxone access efforts. School and family-based programs are also being implemented at middle and high schools in 14 communities throughout Florida, and have provided primary prevention services to 2,539 students.

Recognizing the need for enhanced collaboration between hospitals, treatment providers, and other community-based organizations that provide services to individuals with substance use disorders, seven pilot programs are being implemented at hospital emergency departments in Florida. The goal of the pilot programs is to connect individuals who are in the hospital due to an overdose (or other medical complications resulting from opioid misuse) to Certified Peer Recovery Specialists and engage individuals in on-going treatment and recovery support.

The Department of Education

Why is it so hard to get help or equipment for a child with special needs in the schools? Why do you have to fight so hard to get these benefits?

The individual educational plan (IEP) team meeting is the place to start when asking for additional help or equipment for your child with special needs. The IEP describes what your child can already do, what your child needs to learn in order to reach educational goals and identifies the kinds of help and support that will be provided to your child. The IEP team decides which special services and supports your child needs in order to make progress. You, as a parent, are an important member of the IEP team, and may ask for a meeting at any time if you believe it is important to consider changes in your child's IEP plan. This includes asking for your child to receive additional help or equipment.

A student in our autism group was told he could not stay in school until the age of 21 even though he deferred to a special needs diploma. His school told his mom that the law changed and they don't have to keep teaching him because he recently started reading at 18. We think he can learn more, and no one here has heard anything about the law to keep him in school changing from the age of 21. How can the school do this? Without schooling until 21, some students will end up wards of the state or in group homes, which will cost more than school costs.

Both federal and state laws provide for a free and appropriate public education (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 or if he earns a standard diploma and defers receipt of the diploma, as described in Rule 6A-1.09963, Florida Administrative Code, he can receive services to support transition goals through the age of 21. For more information and to view the rule, go to the Florida Department of State's website at 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 individual educational plan (IEP) meeting. School districts offer a wide

variety of programs for students who are aged 18-22; extended transition programs allow students to gain skills needed to move successfully from school to life. These programs are generally designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. With your consent, outside agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation (http://www.rehabworks.org/) or the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (http://apdcares.org/), should be included in the discussion if they will be assisting in providing services after high school. This should be discussed at his IEP meeting, as this is an IEP team decision.

You stated your interest in your son continuing education; you and your son may consider inclusive college options. 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. For more information, go to the Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education and Intellectual Disabilities' website at http://www.fltpsid.info/.

In addition, section 1004.6495, Florida Statutes, the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Act, established the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities 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. For more information, go to the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities' website at http://fcsua.org/.

We need help for tutoring. Are there any grants available for the district to apply for? Our child is high functioning autistic, but still needs extra help. The school says they cannot find any funding.

You communicated that your child is in need of extra help. You can request an individual educational plan team meeting to discuss the areas you believe your child needs additional assistance in. There may be additional supports that are available within the school day.

In addition, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) serve students with disabilities. For locations of the 21st CCLC access programs, go to the Florida Department of Education's Program Map website at http://florida21stcclc.usf.edu/index.php?map.

The schools need to provide more supports and information or training to teachers about ADHD. Our kids deserve better trained teachers.

All Florida teachers are now required to earn at least one semester hour or 20 inservice points related to teaching students with disabilities during each certification
renewal period. Many no-cost face-to-face and online training programs, as well as
other resources, are made available to teachers to fulfil this requirement. For
additional no-cost resources related to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, go
to the Florida Department of Education's Other Health Impairment website at
http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/ese-eligibility/other-health-impairment-ohi.stml.

We need more IEP information provided to us, and not just the 504. My daughter is diagnosed with ASD, CARD, and ADD. She has been refused an IEP, even though a doctor filled out the proper forms for her to get an IEP!

A medical diagnosis alone does not automatically qualify a student with a disability for educational services; however, you may request an individual evaluation be done by the school district at any time. It is best to make your request for an evaluation in writing and keep a copy of the letter.

You must give your written permission before your child can be individually evaluated. Once you have given your written permission for the initial evaluation, gathering information and evaluating your child should be done within 60 calendar days (not including school holidays and breaks).

After the evaluation is finished, the school will invite you to a meeting and the evaluators or other school staff will explain the evaluations and discuss the results with you. An eligibility staffing will be held, which you will be invited to participate in. If your child is found eligible for exceptional student education services, a team, including you, will work together to develop the individual educational plan.

Depending on the student, individuals with a medical diagnosis may not be found eligible for educational services but could benefit from a Section 504 plan.

If you do not agree with the decision made after an evaluation there are various options available to you to resolve disputes. To view these options, go to the Florida Department of Education's Dispute Resolution Systems website at http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/dispute-resolution.

Why isn't each school more inclusive of students with disabilities? Our principal stated that if we wanted our child included in regular education classes, he would have to transfer to another school. Now, what is the

sense of a community or neighborhood school if I cannot have him in classes with his peers and friends in the community where we live? Part of the educational process should be for him to ride the bus, eat lunch, share classwork to his best ability, and have educational fun just like his peers. This segregation in schools has to end. When they finally do graduate or leave the school system, we cast them out into the world. We don't segregate.

A student's least restrictive environment (LRE) is unique to the needs of individual students. If you feel that your child's needs are not being met, it is your right to request an individual educational meeting team meeting at any time to discuss this. For more information related to LRE, the Florida Department of Education's website at https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7540/dps-2016-13.pdf and the Florida Inclusion Network's website at http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/.

Please, can there be clarification for children eligible for the Gardiner Scholarship because they are hospital/homebound? Do they have to qualify for hospital/homebound, or will they remain eligible as long as they receive the scholarship? Is this because it is a FAPE issue? Also the enrollment first requirement seems inappropriate, and in many cases dangerous, for certain children who need hospital/homebound.

Once the Gardiner Scholarship has been awarded, the parent must annually renew participation in the program. For additional information, go to the Florida Department of Education's website at http://fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/gardiner/.

We need summer programs, year round school services. There are not enough providers or therapists in the summer months. Our son falls behind in the summer and it takes months to bring his progress back to the point where he left off. Why can't the schools have summer school?

A student with a disability receives extended school year services (ESY) if the individual educational plan (IEP) team finds that the student needs specific services beyond the regular 180 day school year. ESY is required if the IEP team has reason to believe that the provision of a free appropriate public education for an individual student would be jeopardized without such services. Extended school year services are determined for each individual by the IEP team and may be different than those services provided during the regular school year.

I have high-functioning autistic boy that wants to meet friends but has a really hard time. We are in need of classes geared for any kind of socialization activities to help him meet other children like them.

School programs for all students fall under the purview of local districts. According to section 1003.02, Florida Statutes, district school boards are charged with the operation and control of public K-12 education within their school district. The district school boards must establish, organize and operate their public K-12 schools and educational programs, employees and facilities. Their responsibilities include staff development, public K-12 school student education including education for exceptional students. To find your local district ESE director, go to the Florida Department of Education's Exceptional Education Student Services Contacts website at http://app4.fldoe.org/EESSContacts/.

In addition, you may want to contact the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD). CARD provides support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism spectrum disorder and related disabilities. To find the center serving your area, go to the CARD's website at http://florida-card.org.

Can a non-ESE teacher teach access point curriculums? I have heard it is possible to do access points in general education, but what does that look like on the IEP? What does it look like in the general education classroom?

Students participating in access points can be instructed in the general education setting by a general education teacher, with the support of an ESE teacher. For specific information related to the least restrictive environment and scheduling methods, see the technical assistance paper, "Least Restrictive Environment Considerations Related to Individual Educational Plans," at https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7540/dps-2016-13.pdf. For more information, go to the Florida Inclusion Network's website at http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/ and the CPALMS's website at http://www.cpalms.org/page24.aspx.

Do the schools work with Vocational Rehabilitation? It seems that I learned how a VR counselor should be working with the transitioning youth, but our teachers and administrators do not work with VR program. Why not?

Yes, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the schools work together to support transitioning youth. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm) is increasing the number of

students who gain employment experiences while in school. Under WIOA, VR will provide pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) including: job exploration counseling, work readiness training, self-advocacy training and peer mentoring, postsecondary educational counseling and work-based learning experiences. VR and school districts work collaboratively to support students.

As a parent, you may request that VR attend your child's individual education plan team meeting.

My doctor says that my child needs therapy, but the school has not provided. I have a doctor's note, but they still say it is not educationally relevant. How can this be true? Health and wellbeing are educationally relevant. It should be applied to the IEP.

In the educational setting, related services such as occupational, physical and speech therapy are provided only if these related services are needed to assist a student with a disability to benefit from specially designed instruction as identified in the student's individual educational plan (IEP). The IEP team, not a diagnosis or one individual, determines whether the student needs these related services in the school setting. In a clinic or hospital setting, services such as occupational, physical or speech therapy are provided to patients if the doctor refers the patient for therapy and is not based on educational need.

What is Child 21? I have a very young child with a CP. The lady told me to call the district office and get her evaluated for Child Find. What is this? Does she mean I call the school to arrange?

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) Child Find, in coordination with the school districts, locates children who may be eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and provides screening to determine if they should be evaluated to determine eligibility for exceptional student education services.

Child Find services help to promote general public awareness of programs and services available for young children who have or are at risk of developing disabilities. Service coordination for diagnostic screening, placement, training and support is also provided.

To locate the Child Find specialist for your district, go to the FDLRS's website at http://www.fdlrs.org/child-find.html or call the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services at 850-245-0475 and ask for the FDLRS Child Find telephone number for your school district.

Why does the system push for a special diploma? I do not want my child on a special diploma track, but they are pushing us to sign off on it. Don't we have a choice?

Florida no longer offers a special diploma. Florida law (section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes) requires that all students who entered into grade 9 in the 2014-15 school year or after work toward a standard diploma. For more information about the requirements for a standard high school diploma, see the technical assistance paper, "High School Graduation Options for Students With Disabilities," at https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7322/dps-2015-34.pdf.

We need to have behavioral supports available at schools. In my day we had trained guidance counselors who watched out for or provided assistance to the school. To families, teachers AND students. Any chance that with the new supports/monies this year that this old fashioned way of doing things would come back into vogue?

During the school year, schools screen all students to see which students may be in need of additional support. For the students needing more support, a school-based team uses a problem-solving process to plan interventions and monitor progress. This process is called the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework. Any student who may need behavioral supports can have these needs addressed through the MTSS process as well as within their individual educational plan.

School districts are also required to create a plan to help establish or expand school-based mental health care and are required to annually develop and submit this plan outlining the local program and planned expenditures to their district school boards for approval. Plans must be focused on delivering evidence-based mental health care treatment to children and include the following: provision of mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of such diagnoses; coordination of services with a student's primary care provider and other mental health providers caring for the student; and direct employment of service providers or a contract-based collaborative effort or partnership with one or more local community mental health program, agencies or providers. For more information on the MTSS process, go to http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/Parent-Guide-MTSS.PDF.

We need resources in schools to acquire assistive tech devices to help our son learn.

Federal and state laws require that all individual educational plan (IEP) teams must consider whether a student with a disability requires assistive technology devices and services (section 300.324(a)(2)(v) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations and Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(g)10., Florida Administrative Code). For more information, see the technical assistance paper, "Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities," at https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6801/dps-2013-65.pdf.

All districts in Florida have Local Assistive Technology Specialists (LATS) or if a small rural district, Regional-Local Assistive Technology Specialists (RLATS). These technology specialists can provide evaluation and training on assistive technology devices. To find the LATS or RLATS for your district, contact your district office or go to www.tlc-mtss.com, and use the "Contact Us" tab.

What happens when a school says a child doesn't need a 504 or an IEP but his doctor says that he does need one? Any recourse?

The local school board has statutory authority and responsibility for conducting evaluations and determining eligibility in both IDEA and Section 504. The medical and educational criteria for an educational versus a medical "diagnosis" are different. In IDEA, the disability must have an adverse educational impact. In Section 504 the impairment must substantially limit a major life activity.

Educational eligibility determinations are made by an IEP or Section 504 team familiar with these criteria. Although a medical diagnosis is one source of data for the team to consider, a medical diagnosis is neither required nor sufficient for establishing eligibility under IDEA or Section 504 (except for an Other Health Impairment category, where a physician statement about the functional impact of the health impairment is required); however, the team must consider information provided by the parent, including input from physicians, when determining eligibility. The procedural safeguards in IDEA and Section 504 provide recourse for parents when there are disagreements with district decisions. You can request the Procedural Safeguards documents from your local district. Florida's Procedural Safeguards for IDEA are posted in multiple languages at http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beessresources/presentations-pubs/index.stml#p. For more information and to view a sample Section 504 procedural safeguards, see pages 121 and 122 of the "District Implementation Guide for Section 504" at http://sss.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/sect504.pdf.

Why is having a service dog or animal such a big deal with the schools? They are trained to provide a service. If they were for the blind, no one would question us. Does DOE have a service animal policy? The principal will not quit testing us for this request.

Yes, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) provides guidance for local school boards to modify local policy, practices and procedures for a service animal to accompany a student to school. To view the FDOE's "Updated Guidelines and Template for School District Policy, Practice and Procedures for the Use of Service Animals by Students with Disabilities," go to http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/technical-assistance-papers-memos-note.stml.

Need to increase the amounts of support and services we provide for us military families. We have to navigate so many systems and communities. The schools need to be aware of our needs/issues with the schools. Bullying is tough one.

Thank you for your suggestions and for highlighting the need for a better understanding of our military families. Our office provides information and support to help school districts understand the unique needs of our students in military families. School liaison officers, military family life counselors, exceptional family member program liaisons and other community partners help educate school personnel and community service providers on the needs of transitioning military families. Also, school counselors, school social workers and school psychologists can be the go-to people to help guide students and families through their sometimes-difficult transition. In addition, bullying is not tolerated in Florida public schools. Each incident must be reported and investigated, and there are even procedures for anonymous reporting. If you have additional questions or wish to further discuss the supports available for military families, please contact Curtis Jenkins, school counseling consultant, at Curtis.Jenkins@fldoe.org or 850-245-7851.

What is the difference between an IEP and a 504 Plan? For years we had an IEP and now when we get to high school they say she only needs a 504 Plan. So what is the difference?

In many ways, IEPs and Section 504 plans are similar. Both are plans for students with disabilities that are based on federal laws that focus on children, require a free appropriate public education (FAPE), and provide procedural safeguards; however, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an entitlement,

which offers more protection, whereas Section 504 is a nondiscrimination statute, which offers broader coverage (but no federal funding). The IEP is designed to provide educational benefit, whereas a Section 504 plan is designed to provide equal access. The Section 504 plan provides accommodations and services in the general education environment so that the educational needs of an eligible student are met as adequately as peers without disabilities.

Once the team has determined that the student is disabled under Section 504 and eligible for the nondiscrimination protections, the team must then determine whether the student needs an accommodation plan in order to be educated as adequately as peers without disabilities. If a plan is needed, the student will receive services that are documented in a Section 504 plan that governs the provision of a Section 504 FAPE. If a student meets one of the IDEA eligibility categories and needs specially designed instruction, he or she should have an IEP.

For more information on Section 504, see the "Section 504 Online Introductory Course" at http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/section504/504course/index.html.

How does mental health training change in the school due to the Parkland shooting/massacre?

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, Senate Bill 7026, provided school districts with funding to establish and expand mental health services in schools. These services include group and individual counseling for students who may require assistance with a mental health issue. In addition, school personnel will be trained with an evidence-based mental health awareness and assistance training program to help them identify and understand the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness and substance use disorders and provide such personnel with the skills to help a person who is developing or experiencing an emotional disturbance, mental health, or substance use problem. To view the complete bill, go to http://laws.flrules.org/2018/3.

Does the school have a disaster/gun related plan for ALL kids? I worry that if there was a problem, not all the students would be cared for in the best way.

School districts are required to consult with the appropriate public safety agencies for emergency drills and for actual emergencies, including, but not limited to, fires, natural disasters, active shooter and hostage situations, and bomb threats, for <u>all students</u> and faculty at all public schools of the district. Additionally, the active shooter situation training for each school must engage the participation of the district school safety specialist, threat assessment team members, faculty, staff

and students and must be conducted by the law enforcement agency or agencies that are designated as first responders to the school's campus.

As indicated above, school districts are required to have a plan and involve all students in the drills and training. Because of local control, specific decision making on how and when these drills and training are conducted will be left up to individual schools and school districts, but should involve <u>all students</u> in ways that are appropriate for the needs and challenges those potentially impacted would face. For more information, go to the Florida Department of Education's Office of Safe Schools website at http://www.fldoe.org/safe-schools/.

With what happened at Parkland, how many schools are having police officers at the schools? How many schools are having teachers with guns? Guns of any type in schools are scary to me . . . just as scary as a shooter.

Senate Bill 7026 requires each district school board and school superintendent to partner with law enforcement agencies to establish or assign one or more safeschool officer at each school facility within the district. Safe school officers are any one or combination of the following:

- School resource officer certified law enforcement officer with powers and duties of a law enforcement officer, or
- School safety officer law enforcement officers employed by either a law enforcement agency or by the district school board, authorized to carry weapons and power to make arrests, or
- Coach Aaron Feis Guardian school employees, trained by their local sheriff's office, without the power of arrest and with no authority to act in any law enforcement capacity except to the extent necessary to prevent or abate an active assailant on school premises.

At this time, 25 school districts and sheriff offices have made the decision to train personnel and implement the Guardian program in various capacities within their school districts. For more information, go to the Florida Department of Education's Office of Safe Schools website at http://www.fldoe.org/safe-schools/.

What are the changes to the schools, with the new legislation from the Parkland shooter?

Senate Bill 7026 came about following the tragedy in Parkland and laid out a variety of changes for schools and school districts across Florida. The following are key elements of this new legislation:

Guardians (section [s.] 1006.08, Florida Statutes [F.S.]): Each district school board and school superintendent are required to partner with law enforcement agencies to establish or assign one or more safe-school officer at each school facility within the district. Safe school officers are any one or combination of the following:

- School resource officer certified law enforcement officer with powers and duties of a law enforcement officer, or
- School safety officer law enforcement officers employed by either a law enforcement agency or by the district school board, authorized to carry weapons and power to make arrests, or
- Coach Aaron Feis Guardian school employees, trained by their local sheriff's office, without the power of arrest and with no authority to act in any law enforcement capacity except to the extent necessary to prevent or abate an active assailant on school premises.

At this time, 25 school districts and sheriff offices have made the decision to train personnel and implement the Guardian program in various capacities within their school districts. For more information, go to the Florida Department of Education's Office of Safe Schools website at http://www.fldoe.org/safe-schools/. To view the complete statute, go to https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2018/1006.08.

School Safety Awareness Program (s. 943.082, F.S.): The Florida Attorney General's Office, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Florida Department of Education will collaboratively procure and establish a mobile suspicious activity reporting tool that allows students and the community to relay information anonymously concerning unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent or criminal activities, or the threat of these activities, to appropriate public safety agencies and school officials. The program is named "FortifyFL" and allows for the receipt of reports electronically through a tool available on both Android and Apple devices. To view the complete statute, go to http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2018/943.082.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission (s. 943.687, F.S.): This statute was created within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. This commission shall meet as necessary to investigate system failures in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting and prior mass violence incidents in this state and develop recommendations for system improvements. The commission shall submit an initial report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2019, and may issue reports annually thereafter. To view the complete statute, go to https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2018/943.687.

Office of Safe Schools (s. 1001.212, F.S.): This statute was created within the Florida Department of Education. This office is fully accountable to the Commissioner of Education and shall serve as a central repository for best practices, training standards and compliance oversight in all matters regarding school safety and security, including prevention efforts, intervention efforts and emergency preparedness planning. To view the complete statute, go to http://m.flsenate.gov/Statutes/1001.213.

School Safety Specialist (s. 1006.07(6), F.S.): School safety specialists (SSS) shall be appointed by each school district superintendent for their district and earn a certificate of completion of the SSS training provided by the Office of Safe Schools within one year of appointment. The SSS is responsible for the supervision and oversight of all school safety and security personnel, policies and procedures in the school district. To view the complete statute please, go to https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2011/1006.07.

SEDNET (Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities) (s. 1006.04, F.S.): This statute was amended to define this multiagency network to work with education, mental health, child welfare and juvenile justice professionals, along with other agencies and families, to provide children with mental illness or emotional and behavioral problems and their families with access to the services and supports they need to succeed. To view the complete statute, go to https://m.flsenate.gov/Statutes/1006.04.

Emergency Drills and Procedures (s. 1006.07, F.S.): This statute requires school districts to consult with the appropriate public safety agencies for emergency drills and for actual emergencies, including, but not limited to, fires, natural disasters, active shooter and hostage situations and bomb threats, for all students and faculty at all public schools of the district. Additionally, the active shooter situation training for each school must engage the participation of the district SSS, threat assessment team members, faculty, staff and students and must be conducted by the law enforcement agency or agencies that are designated as first responders to the school's campus. To view the complete statute, go to https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2011/1006.07.

School Security Risk Assessments (s. 1006.1493, F.S.): This statute requires a school security risk assessment at each public school using the school security risk assessment tool developed by the Office of Safe Schools. Based on the assessment findings, the district's SSS shall provide recommendations to the district school board that identify strategies and activities that the district school board should implement in order to improve school safety and security. Additionally, each SSS shall coordinate with the appropriate public safety agencies that are designated as first responders to a school's campus to conduct a tour of such campus once every

three years and provide recommendations related to school safety. To view the complete statute, go to http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2018/1006.1493.

Physical Security at Schools Funding: \$98,962,286 was appropriated to fund schools (in the form of grants) in whole or in part for fixed capital outlay associated with improving the physical security of school buildings as identified in the school security risk assessments.

Threat Assessment Teams (s. 1006.07, F.S.): Each district school board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams at each school whose duties include the coordination of resources and assessment and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students consistent with the model policies developed by the Office of Safe Schools. Such policies shall include procedures for referrals to mental health services identified by the school district when appropriate. To view the complete statute, go to https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2011/1006.07.

Mental Health Assistance Allocation: Created to provide funding to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care. School districts shall submit approved plans, including approved plans of each charter school in the district, to the commissioner by August 1 of each fiscal year. To view these plans, go to the FDOE's Mental Health Plans website at http://fldoe.org/safe-schools/mental-health.stml.

Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance: Beginning with the 2018-19 school year, the FDOE shall establish an evidence-based youth mental health awareness and assistance training program to help school personnel identify and understand the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness and substance use disorders and provide such personnel with the skills to help a person who is developing or experiencing an emotional disturbance, mental health or substance use problem. FDOE shall select a national authority on youth mental health awareness and assistance to facilitate providing youth mental health awareness and assistance training, using a trainer certification model, to all school personnel in elementary, middle and high schools. The school safety specialists shall ensure that all school personnel within his or her school district receive youth mental health awareness and assistance training.

Does DOE have any data on the number of students with IEP's or 504 plans who have voluntarily withdrawn from charter schools? This may be a good indicator of charter schools' compliance with IDEA.

Withdrawal of students with individual educational plans and Section 504 plans from charter schools is not currently tracked by the Florida Department of

Education. To explore the data that is available, go to the EDStats' website at https://edstats.fldoe.org/SASPortal/main.do.

It has been proven that music helps kids learn, so why isn't music therapy offered in the schools for our kids?

The types of services a student receives are based on the individual educational plan (IEP). The IEP team, which you are a part of, decides what types of services are needed. You can request an IEP meeting to discuss services for your child at any time.

I missed the session about the Gardiner Scholarship and the McKay Scholarship. What is the difference between these two?

The McKay Scholarship is for students with disabilities and offers scholarships for eligible students with disabilities to attend an eligible public or private school of their choice.

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.

For more information on scholarship options, go to the Florida Department of Education's School Choice website at http://fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/.

The new charter schools are popping up everywhere. Do they have to provide for our kids? Do they have to offer education for ESE students? Do they have to work on IEP? A 504 Plan?

Charter schools are public schools that operate under a performance contract, or a "charter," which frees them from many regulations created for traditional public schools while holding them accountable for academic and financial results. The charter contract between the charter school governing board and the sponsor details the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment and ways to measure success. The services offered by each charter are listed in their contract and that would include the students that are served.

You would need to contact the charter school you are interested in and see what services they offer and if the IEP or Section 504 plan can be followed as written at that school.

I think we should have a statewide parent council for ESE. If there is one, how can we join? What is their plan? Strategic plan? How are they promoting the ESE students' needs? How do we find out about them? If not, how do we create a council?

The State Advisory Committee for the Education of Exceptional Students (known as SAC) is the body that advises on exceptional student education for the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). Members are appointed to this committee by the Commissioner of Education. The committee is made up of at least 51% parents of students with disabilities. Other members include, persons with disabilities as well as agency representatives who work with persons with disabilities. Anyone can apply to be committee member. For more information, go the FDOE's SAC website at http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/the-state-advisory-committee-for-the-e.stml.

I have a son on the spectrum with an average IQ but he is not successful in a general education setting. District staff refuse to give him the level of support he needs to be successful. When every avenue is exhausted. Why can't there be an oversight office to help? Due process is the only avenue? He has regressed 2 years in academics since we moved to Florida.

When disagreements occur between a parent and the district there are various options available to resolve these differences. The parent can do the following:

- Request a state-level sponsored facilitated individual educational plan (FIEP) for any issues related to the process of IEP development, at no cost to the parent.
- Request a state-sponsored mediation for any issues related to special education, at no cost to the parent.
- File a state complaint when alleged violations of special education requirements in state or federal regulations, at no cost to the parent or the district.
- 4. Request a due process hearing to address any issue related to identification, evaluation, placement or the provision of a free appropriate public education. An impartial hearing officer is provided at no cost to the parent through the Division of Administrative Hearings.

I learned a lot about the ESY for students. I would like to have my son in ESY programs, but my district says they do not provide it, and it is an optional program. Please explain to me how the ESY program works.

A student with a disability receives extended school year services (ESY) if the individual educational plan (IEP) team finds that the student needs specific services beyond the regular 180-day school year. ESY is required if the IEP team has reason to believe that the provision of a free appropriate public education for an individual student would be jeopardized without such services. Extended school year services are determined for each individual by the IEP team and may be different than those services provided during the regular school year. For more information, see "ESY: What's the IDEA Behind Extended School Year Services for Students with Disabilities?" at

http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070098-esyparen.pdf. For questions, contact the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services at 850-245-0475.

How come my school administration will tell me that ESY is NOT an option for ANY child? Now, I just learned differently here at The Family Café. What is the TRUTH? Please let me know about ESY and how my child can apply.

A student with a disability receives extended school year services (ESY) if the individual educational plan (IEP) team finds that the student needs specific services beyond the regular 180-day school year. ESY is required if the IEP team has reason to believe that the provision of a free appropriate public education for an individual student would be jeopardized without such services. Extended school year services are determined for each individual by the IEP team and may be different than those services provided during the regular school year. For more information, contact the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services at 850-245-0475.

The Department of Health

I just lost my CMS services. The loss is of ABA therapy (i.e., learning independent living in community). How come? I am independent and I have had CMS since birth.

There are several reasons people become ineligible. Some common reasons are either the client has aged out of the program or is no longer financially eligible. You can request a clinical rescreening at any time by calling (855) 901-5390. CMS Medicaid patients can remain on CMS Plan until they turn 21 years old and CMS KidCare members can remain on CMS Plan until they turn 19 years old. To find out if you are financially eligible for Medicaid, call 1-866-762-2237. To find out if you are financially eligible for KidCare, call 1-888-540-5437. For more information on the screening process, please visit www.cmsplanflorida.gov/eligibility-and-services.

I would like to see more screenings from the Department of Health for vision, hearing, and orthopedic issues. People with disabilities and have multiple problems. Please have these available for us at the event too.

Eye and hearing screenings for children are offered at no cost through our School Health Services Program in public schools. While not all our county health departments offer the screenings listed, health departments are a local resource to link clients to needed health care services, like these screenings, at low or no cost.

What ever happened to the 800 toll free line to call into when you just needed a single point of contact? Is this ever going to come back? Last I heard from a session last year is that the department of health was looking into re-establishing.

The Early Steps Program has both a toll-free number and website to ensure statewide resources and referral information is accessible to families, physicians, and the public. The toll-free number can be accessed by calling 800-218-0001. The website is available at www.earlystepsdirectory.com. Parents may also call CMS Plan at 1-855-901-5390 to request a clinical screening and to receive more information. To stay up-to-date on CMS Plan, please visit <a href="https://cms.com

When is DOH going to start talking about medical marijuana, especially for children with autism and others? I'd like you to address regulations,

laws, pills vs. oils, accessibility, doctors' roles, and remedies for all types of disabilities.

The Florida Department of Health, physicians, medical marijuana treatment centers, and patients are bound by <u>Article X Section 29 of the Florida Constitution</u> and <u>381.986 Florida Statutes</u>.

All rulemaking notices, notices of hearings and notices of workshops can be found in the Department of State <u>Florida Administrative Register</u> (FAR). You can also find these on <u>the OMMU website</u>.

Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers (MMTCs) dispense a variety of low-THC and medical marijuana products for the five routes of administration: Inhalation, Oral, Sublingual, Topical, and Rectal. It is the qualified physician's discretion for which form(s) and route(s) of administration they order for their patient. All available products, and their prices, are available online at each MMTC website: http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/office-of-medical-marijuana-use/medical-marijuana-treatment-centers/index.html

It is the responsibility of the qualified physician to follow the Florida constitution and statute, diagnose patients and determine if medical marijuana is an appropriate treatment. Once a qualified physician diagnoses a patient with a qualifying medical condition, the physician will enter the patient and their caregiver into the Medical Marijuana Use Registry. The qualifying ordering physicians authorized under Florida law are:

- Cancer
- Epilepsy
- Glaucoma
- Positive status for human immunodeficiency virus
- · Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Crohn's disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Medical conditions of the same kind or class as or comparable to those enumerated in paragraphs (a)-(j)
- A terminal condition diagnosed by a physician other than the qualified physician issuing the physician certification
- Chronic nonmalignant pain

Other helpful resources:

Know the Facts for Patients: https://floridahealthstory.org/stories/ommu-patients/index.html

Know the Facts for Physicians: https://floridahealthstory.org/stories/ommu-physicians/index.html

How can I get my doctors to complete the paperwork for medical marijuana?

In order to qualify to order medical marijuana for patients, a physician must have an active, unrestricted license as a physician under Chapter 458, F.S., or osteopathic physician under Chapter 459, F.S. Physicians who meet the above requirements may gain access to the Medical Marijuana Use Registry after completing the required course and examination provided by the Florida Medical Association.

More information please visit Know the Facts for Patients: https://floridahealthstory.org/stories/ommu-patients/index.html.

I see medical marijuana "shops" open up all over town. I was told that there is an application process from the Department of Health along with an application fee. This event did not talk about the benefits/lack of benefits of usage. Please let me know what the role of the department is, who I need to work with, and what doctors can subscribe. I don't want to get high, I just want it to work for my autistic child.

The Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU) is charged with writing and implementing the department's rules for medical marijuana, overseeing the statewide Medical Marijuana Use Registry, and licensing Florida businesses to cultivate, process, and dispense medical marijuana to qualified patients.

The Office of Medical Marijuana Use publishes a list of all physicians who have completed the required training. Patients and Caregivers can also now use the Medical Marijuana Qualified Ordering Physician Search tool to find a qualifying ordering physician by location and specialty.

It is the responsibility of the qualified physician to follow Florida constitution and statute, diagnose patients and determine if medical marijuana is an appropriate treatment.

More information please visit Know the Facts for Patients: https://floridahealthstory.org/stories/ommu-patients/index.html

Tell me more about medical marijuana and its benefits of usage for individuals with disabilities or mental health issues.

The Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU) is charged with writing and implementing the department's rules for medical marijuana, overseeing the statewide Medical Marijuana Use Registry, and licensing Florida businesses to cultivate, process, and dispense medical marijuana to qualified patients.

There are currently 14 approved medical marijuana treatment centers with 55 dispensing locations throughout Florida.

For more information on the steps to treatment, and qualifying medical conditions please visit: Know the Facts for Patients: https://floridahealthstory.org/stories/ommu-patients/index.html

Florida law establishes the Coalition for Medical Marijuana Research and Education the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute, Inc. More information about their research and studies can be found at: http://www.mmreboard.org/statutory-information

When transitioning from Early Steps to APD services, decisions should be based on priorities of severity of disabilities for children who now just move to the wait list for APD only.

When a child transitions from the Early Steps Program, the team, including the family, will identify options for services based on the child's individual needs and the family's priorities. This includes referrals to community and state programs. If you would like to apply directly to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, you must contact the regional office. Regional office contact information can be found at http://apdcares.org/region/. For information on services through your local school district, including referral contact information, please visit http://www.fdlrs.org/. Your Early Steps Service Coordinator can assist with ensuring your family has information on all available options.

Why isn't epilepsy a condition of CMS?

CMS Plan covers all serious and chronic conditions for those who qualify financially. You may contact us for a screening at 1-855-901-5390.

Cancer is a growing concern and now the new disability. Does the Department of Health provided assistance to those children and their families that need services, adaptive equipment, medical care, prescriptions, case management, etc. for cancer? If not, why not? If so, where do we go for more information? Maybe next Family Café should have a session on cancer. We are a growing population that is beating the disease.

CMS Plan is the Department of Health's health plan for children with serious and chronic conditions whose families qualify financially. CMS Plan covers medically necessary services for its members, including cancer treatment. You can find out more about CMS Plan by visiting CMSPlanFlorida.gov or by calling 1-850-245-4200.

How can I learn more about the services of Children's Medical Services? What can they offer our children?

You can find out more about CMS Plan by visiting <u>CMSPlanFlorida.gov</u> or calling 1-850-245-4200. The website has lots of information about the CMS Plan, including how to find out if your child is eligible.

Need to add people or exhibitors who can help with CMS Title XXI issues, such as dentists for our kids.

While CMS did send exhibitors to this year's event, we will keep your suggestion in mind for next year. Information on services can be found in the member handbook at https://ccpcares.org/enrollees/t-21-children%E2%80%99s-medical-services-(cms)/cms-enrollees-handbook or call the member services number at 1-866-202-1132 (TTY/TDD 1-855-655-5303).

Need to hear more about medical conditions such as MS. There was nothing on it this year, and we really could have used it, due to one of my children just being diagnosed with it. Usually CMS does a presentation.

While CMS did send exhibitors to this year's event, we will keep your suggestion in mind for next year. In the meantime, take a look in your member handbook at https://ccpcares.org/enrollees/t-21-children%E2%80%99s-medical-services-(cms)/cms-enrollees-handbook or call the member services number at 1-866-202-1132 (TTY/TDD 1-855-655-5303) so we can help you with your question.

I wish CMS would have had more exposure in the exhibit hall. You used to have families manning the booth, and they worked at different locations

in the CMS offices. They were local, but they could assist us younger families with the concerns we had with our children. They were always so kind and had lots of information to give us. They really let you know that they cared. This year the folks looked like they would rather be anywhere but helping us.

Thank you for this feedback! This year, the CMS Plan offered an exhibit focusing on Youth Transition information. Youth Transition is an initiative to make the transition from pediatric to adult health care for young Floridians as seamless as possible. CMS Plan representation included nurse care coordinators from the local CMS office (Orlando area) and administrative staff from the State Office (Tallahassee). We look forward to continuing to offer local or family support representation at future events.

What is available at the Department of Health for those of us who have children who suffer from lupus, fibromyalgia, or arthritis? These severe bone-on-bone diseases really take a toll on the disability. The associations of lupus and arthritis are too far from my hometown. They all refer me back to the DOH/CMS. What services do you provide?

CMS Plan is a managed care plan for children and youth who have a serious and ongoing special health care needs and whose families qualify financially. To find out more about CMS Plan, including eligibility criteria, please visit our website at CMSPlanFlorida.gov or by calling 1-850-245-4200.

The playgroup was nice. I liked the relaxed atmosphere that was provided so we could just talk and find resources for our babies. This is important to us, and I hope you do not stop doing it.

We appreciate your participation in "Early Steps Early Wishes." The event is an opportunity for children to enjoy developmentally-appropriate activities and families to network with each other. Early Steps personnel is grateful to have the opportunity to talk with families we serve during the event and learn about their experiences with the Early Steps Program.

What does the DOH offer to families about stopping smoking? I saw so many parents smoking at the event, and was wondering why they smoke. Don't they realize that smoking causes more disease and disability? Smoking in front of your sick or disabled child is not cool! So, I was wondering if DOH offers any smoking classes to parents or youngsters to quit smoking.

The Florida Department of Health's Tobacco Free Florida program offers cessation services to Florida residents ages 11 and older. Floridians interested in quitting tobacco use may choose telephone counseling, face-to-face counseling, web-based counseling, Text2Quit, an email program and Quit Guide. With these services, the participant will receive a 2-week starter kit of nicotine replacement therapy (gum, patches or lozenges). These enrollment methods are extremely beneficial to the success of the program by providing multifaceted enrollment options.

Nicotine replacement therapy is not available to anyone under the age of 18 – only to those 18 years and older and if medically appropriate. Floridians 11 years of age will receive Quitline Coaching and Floridians 13 years of age will receive Quitline Coaching and access to Web Coach. During the counseling session, the participant will develop a quit plan, select a quit date and receive tips on how to overcome the urge of tobacco and health benefits of quitting. Coaches are ready and available to help participants with addiction to any form of tobacco from cigarettes and cigars to dip and chew.

Floridians may visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com for additional information about the program, secondhand smoke, and to learn more about Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way Program and services.

What about services for children with behavior issues? Does CMS offer any parenting classes to assist parents in dealing with this everyday concern? I think it would be a nice offer to make the family feel helped/whole/cared for.

Thank you for this suggestion. Both our health plan (CMS Plan) and our other CMS initiatives are working on ways to better support children and families with special health care needs, including behavioral health. We will keep your comment in mind. There are helpful parent resources through the Department of Children and Families as well, by visiting http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/whoswatching/parenting-class.

CMS had lots of kids taken off the program last year and this year. Mine was one. I never got back on the program. I now have a new husband with a better job and we are on his insurance plan. I was helped long enough to help myself now. I wonder about the families who did not get to go back on CMS though. What happens to them? What is the update on the program?

There are a number of reasons why families could lose eligibility for statesponsored health plans, including CMS Plan. Children need to meet financial and clinical eligibility for the CMS Plan. Parents may call CMS at 1-855-901-5390 to request a clinical screening and to receive more information. To stay up-to-date on CMS Plan, please visit CMSPlanFlorida.gov.

What does DOH do to ensure family involvement within the Title XXI program?

The Department of Health Children's Medical Services offers care coordination services to help guide families through the health care system. CMS care coordinators are nurses and social workers who work with the child's family and doctors to identify needs and the resources available to meet these health care needs. Care coordinators help your family schedule doctor visits, medical tests, or procedures and may also assist in getting behavioral, developmental, and social services.

With all the changes for the ACA or Obama Care . . . what changes will my family see? I have CMS.

CMS Plan is a state program and operates outside of the federal Affordable Care Act. We do not anticipate that changes to ACA will affect CMS Plan members. To stay up-to-date on CMS Plan, please visit CMSPlanFlorida.gov.

Please tell me more about the services DOH offers for those families dealing with drug-related conditions, like those affected by the opioid crisis.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is working with the Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative to address Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). NAS is a group of conditions that occur when a baby withdraws from drugs they were exposed to during pregnancy. The goal of this partnership is to address variability in NAS management by standardizing NAS diagnosis and treatment.

Additionally, the Department partners with the Department of Children and Families in seeking to prevent and reduce substance abuse and its negative effects on health. In addition to a website with resources related to substance abuse, the DOH has a website with information on the effects of drug use during pregnancy and a website specific to a person's preconception health and focusing on taking steps now to protect the health of a baby they may have in the future.

How can I get a copy of my child's birth certificate?

The following link will assist the parents in ordering a Florida birth certificate, http://www.floridahealth.gov/certificates/certificates/birth/.

I missed the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program this year in the exhibit hall. Hope to have their participation again next year. The program is vital to our family. Any updates?

The Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program did participate in the Exhibit Hall during the Family Café conference this year, and we are so sorry we missed you! This was the first year we had our own booth completely dedicated to our program and its services, and we are looking forward to participating again next year. In the meantime, if we can be of any assistance or provide any information to you, please don't hesitate to call our office at 850-245-4045.

I got kicked off KidCare . . . put back on KidCare . . . and so it goes. There used to be reminders sent out about the program deadlines, etc. I am trying hard just to keep up. Tell me more about this program and its deadlines.

We are sorry you have experienced difficulty in receiving information from the Florida KidCare program. While the Department of Health does not manage notices for the KidCare program, Florida Healthy Kids Corporation does send important information periodically. It's important to make sure they have your correct contact information. You can call 1-888-540-5431 or visit www.FloridaKidCare.org for more information.

Please tell me more about type 2 diabetes. My children have this condition and they tell me that due to our eating and such that the population of kids getting this disease is growing. What can DOH do for us? Do you have classes for this?

The Florida Department of Health promotes the evidence-based Diabetes
Prevention Program and Diabetes Self-Management Education Program that are
for adults age 18 and older. However, there are resources that available for
children with Type 2 diabetes. The American Diabetes Association has materials for
youth and their families living with Type 2 diabetes. Additionally, the Juvenile
Diabetes Research Foundation has a toolkit specifically for teens and the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention has videos and tips on their website about healthy eating.

Glad to see you had a few AA meetings at this event. My adopted child is a product of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. I am new to the problem, and want to know what CMS or the DOH offer for adoptive or new parents who are trying to help their little ones with this diagnosis. We don't know how this will affect our daughter in the future. Need to know all the resources and information now.

CMS Plan is the Department of Health's health plan for children with behavioral, developmental and medical conditions. We cover all medically necessary services. Each child in our plan has a nurse care coordinator who can help link families to resources based on the child's individual needs. For more information, visit www.CMSPlanFlorida.gov or contact your area office in Orlando at 1-800-226-6530 or 1-407-858-5555.

Can you help me apply for Medicaid and CMS?

To see if you are eligible for Medicaid, call the Department of Children and Families (DCF) toll free at 1.866.762.2237 or visit www.MyFLFamilies.com. Children need to meet financial and clinical eligibility for the CMS Plan. Parents may call CMS at 1-855-901-5390 to request a clinical screening and to receive more information. To stay up-to-date on CMS Plan, please visit CMSPlanFlorida.gov.

The Division of Emergency Management

Florida has a special needs registry that no one knows about. It should be advertised in all doctor's offices, hospitals and local health centers. All service coordinators should ensure that all their clients have a plan. What are you doing to ensure the information gets out there?

We message on every major social media platform, we develop, produce and distribute multiple types of outreach materials and publications, and we are in constant contact with all stakeholders regarding changes and updates.

All segments on TV about potential weather disasters should have sign language interpreters on the screen. Why not?

The ADA requires that title II entities (State and local governments) communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities. The goal is to ensure that communication with people with these disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities. The Division of Emergency Management complies with this.

How can I find a special needs shelter in my community?

The Division of Emergency Management recommends that community residents contact local county emergency management offices to discuss shelter locations, capabilities and available features. The Division doesn't designate public shelters. County emergency managers identify and designate which facilities will be opened as public shelters and under what conditions.

Please tell me more about the Americorp program. I would like to know how my teenager can apply for service.

The link to Americorp is: https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/join-americorps

I cannot just leave my service critter at a pet shelter. We are support for each other. She helps me with my seizures. What choices do I have to make them take her? Last year, I stayed put because they would not take

her in. And, not that I would have used it, but the pet shelter was full too. Our caregiving friends need us in a disaster and we need them.

The Division of Emergency Management recommends that community residents contact local county emergency management offices to discuss shelter locations, capabilities and available features. The Division doesn't designate public shelters. County emergency managers identify and designate which facilities will be opened as public shelters and under what conditions.

Weather changes, potential attacks using bio terrorism, and the bomb are all concerns. Do we have a plan for all of this?

The State of Florida uses an All-Hazards Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). Regardless of the hazard, federal, state and local government agencies, and non-governmental and private-sector partners follow the same basic approach to emergency or disaster incident response and recovery.

What causes all the rip tide to act up?

A rip current occurs when the receding water from waves becomes concentrated in a particular area at a particular time. There are a number of things that can cause this, but the most common is a break in a sandbar, but they are also common near piers and jetties. Rip currents can form on any given day, but can be more frequent and powerful with strong onshore winds or quickly changing wave heights, which occur when ocean swells roll in from weather systems.

I was very concerned by the death of a nursing home resident in South Florida that resulted from their facility losing power and not having sufficient back up to provide air conditioning after Hurricane Maria. What is DEM doing to make sure that vulnerable people get the care they need during extended power outages that follow hurricanes?

Following Hurricane Irma, the Florida Legislature passed laws requiring every nursing home and assisted living facility in Florida to have emergency generators by June 1, 2018 to keep residents safe and also requires the facilities have an emergency plan and emergency power plan. The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DEA) oversee and enforce the rules among local facilities for compliance through various inspections, and the county emergency management agencies often help with, and are required to approve of, the emergency plans. More information can be found at http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Emergency Activities/EPP.shtml.

With climate change making hurricanes stronger and more likely, what is DEM doing to prepare for the evacuation or relocation of larger numbers of people with disabilities? I'm worried that multiple strong storms will overwhelm the shelters and resources we have available.

The Division of Emergency Management recommends that community residents contact local county emergency management offices to discuss shelter locations, capabilities and available features. The Division doesn't designate public shelters. County emergency managers identify and designate which facilities will be opened as public shelters and under what conditions. From a hurricane shelter survey program perspective, the Division strongly encourages local emergency managers to designate facilities that meet the most modern building design and construction codes and standards.

Sea level rise is a big problem in South Florida, with some areas underwater during high tides on sunny days. How is DEM accounting for sea level rise in locating shelters for people with disabilities and planning for potential evacuations?

The Division of Emergency Management recommends that community residents contact local county emergency management offices to discuss shelter locations, capabilities and available features. The Division doesn't designate public shelters. County emergency managers identify and designate which facilities will be opened as public shelters and under what conditions. From a hurricane shelter survey program perspective, the Division strongly encourages local emergency managers to designate facilities that meet the most modern building design and construction codes and standards.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Transportation for special needs clients (both children and adults) are being ignored. VR can pay for transportation services, but is not doing so . . why? What are the solutions to this problem?

Please refer to the link below for the VR Policy Manual relating to transportation services. Transportation services can be provided when there are no alternative means of transportation available to the participant.

11.12 **Transportation:** http://www.rehabworks.org/docs/manual/manual11.rtf

You can also contact the VR Ombudsman's Office for assistance at our toll free telephone number, 1-800-515-3692 (Voice/TDD). The VR Ombudsman will assist you in resolving your client-service's needs.

In recognition of the issues surrounding transportation for individuals with disabilities, the State of Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) was formed as an independent body housed administratively within the Florida Department of Transportation to seek solutions. Their mission is to ensure the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons. You may contact them at the following link: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/CTD/programinfo/publicrelations/ctdhelpline.htm with any questions you might have.

Why do VR services vary from area to area? I get each person gets an individual plan tailored to their needs, but some zones give no services. Others do what we are told are appropriate service. An example: One zone will not pay or support students that take less than 12 credit hours with no regard to if that is manageable with their disability, and other zones only require you to be successful and make reasonable progress. This can be the difference between success and failure.

To receive VR support, a student in a training program has to maintain a full academic load as defined by the educational institution they attend, except when there are substantial mitigating circumstances documented in the student's VR case record. For most colleges and universities a full load is 12 credit hours. A Student may be able to take fewer credit hours only if that person's condition keeps him or her from taking a full academic load. Reasonable progress is required for all students who receive VR support. The awarding of a degree or certificate shall be within a time frame based on individual's needs and abilities and will be

reflected in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). You can find information about VR services and requirements at www.RehabWorks.org. Information is also on the site and can be found under Chapter 13 of the VR Counselor Policy Manual. You can contact us at VREmploymentProgramsUnit@vr.fldoe.org or VRTransitionYouth@vr.fldoe.org if you have additional questions.

Why doesn't VR pay what Pell doesn't pay for kids that get the Pell Grant? Yet, they pay 100% for kids that make too much to get Pell. This seems backwards. Why can't you get assistance either way?

VR may only provide support for postsecondary training or education (e.g. university, college, career/technical schools, etc.) after maximum effort has been made to secure grant assistance from other sources to pay for the training. If a student is awarded such a grant, then those funds must be applied to the student's educational expenses (e.g. tuition, books, fees, etc.) before VR is able to assist. While there is no financial participation currently required from students or families for those portions of postsecondary training or education VR is able to support, VR is in the process of reviewing policy and procedure on Financial Participation to identify needed changes or updates. You can find information about VR services and requirements at www.RehabWorks.org. Information is also on the site and can be found under Chapter 13 and Chapter 9 of the VR Counselor Policy Manual. You can contact us at WREmploymentProgramsUnit@vr.fldoe.org or WRTransitionYouth@vr.fldoe.org if you have additional questions.

This is the best event ever, many thanks for letting me come here. Wonderful! I love the information I received about VR. My son is turning 15 this month and I am in process of complying a bunch of information about his future and I never knew about VR before. Thanks again!!

We are glad you were able to take away new and helpful information about VR from the conference and hope to see you and your son again next year! VR has information on all our programs at www.RehabWorks.org. Here, you will find helpful videos, links, and resources for you to explore.

I really need more information on transitioning into becoming an adult and changes to the services that I will be using. I would like to know what VR can do for a 20 year old who is still in school.

The VR Transition Youth Programs provide individualized services to assist students with disabilities in a seamless transition from high school to a meaningful career path. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), every

student with a disability has the opportunity to participate in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) through VR, including sponsored job exploration counseling, work readiness training, work-based learning experiences, postsecondary educational counseling, and self-advocacy training (including training delivered by peer mentors). Students with disabilities may participate in Pre-ETS without having to apply to VR or be determined eligible for services. The focus is to develop work skills, practice social skills, and acquire a network of community supports while the student is still in high school. VR provides various services and supports for individuals after high school, including training, education and placement services. Pre-ETS and adult resources are available in English, Spanish and Creole on the VR website at www.RehabWorks.org or by calling toll-free at (800) 451-4327. You may also contact us with any questions at VRTransitionYouth@vr.fldoe.org.

I would like to plan for my future without going to college. I can work, but I need assistance with the environment. I currently attend high school and have a 504 plan. In other words, I am a great student but need help in getting around. I have a PCA, and use a wheelchair. I am in honors classes. How do I find out more about VR?

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) puts a strong emphasis on VR providing employment planning and preparation services to transitioning youth at an earlier age. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available to students with a disability beginning at the age of 14 through age 21. VR offers core services such as career assessment and counseling, workplace readiness training, engagement in multiple work experiences, and postsecondary education counseling to students without having to apply for or be found eligible for VR services. Additional programs and services do not have an upper age limit and are available to those who apply and are found eligible. VR has information on all our programs at www.RehabWorks.org or by calling toll-free at (800) 451-4327. Here, you will find helpful videos, links, and resources for you to explore. If you are residing in Florida and you are interested in applying for VR services, visit the site and use the office locator to identify the VR office closest to you. You may also contact us with any questions at VRTransitionYouth@vr.fldoe.org.

Why isn't VR talked more about when we are in high school? What is stopping us from finding out more about the program?

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. A Memorandum of Agreement has been developed with Department of Education

agencies, including the Division of Public Schools, Division of Blind Services and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to provide guidance on this and related issues to the state agencies and School District faculty and staff. Transition information, including informative videos and transition resources are available to families and students at http://rehabworks.org/stw.shtml.

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) puts a strong emphasis on VR providing employment planning and preparation services to transitioning youth at an earlier age. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available to students with a disability beginning at the age of 14 through the age of 21. VR offers core services, such as career assessment and counseling, workplace readiness training, engagement in multiple work experiences, and postsecondary education counseling to students without having to apply for or be found eligible for VR services. Additional programs and services are available to those students who do apply and are found eligible. VR has information that may be found at www.RehabWorks.org under the Transition Youth Program. Here, you will find helpful videos, links, and resources for you to explore. If you are residing in Florida and you are interested in applying for VR services, visit our site to identify a VR office in your area.

What are the new and expanded services for VR this year?

VR offers a wide array of individualized services to prepare individuals for training, education and employment. Some of our newer services include Self-Advocacy Training, Youth Peer Mentoring, and Customized Employment. VR has also contracted with interested schools to deliver Work Based Learning Experiences and has partnered to deliver similar services through many new Project SEARCH sites. Whatever your needs, VR is likely to have services that will help you prepare for, get, and keep, a job. Pre-ETS and adult resources are available in English, Spanish, and Creole on the VR website at www.RehabWorks.org or by calling toll-free at (800) 451-4327. You may also contact us with any questions at VRTransitionYouth@vr.fldoe.org.

My counselor with VR is not attentive. I never see her. She takes about 4 weeks to reply to my phone messages and every time I send her an email it comes right back to me due to the security settings on the state's email system. My thing is, when I need her I cannot get her to respond. It is very frustrating.

We are sorry to hear you are having problems with your counselor. You may ask to speak to your counselor's supervisor or contact the VR Ombudsman's Office at

our toll free telephone number, 1-800-515-3692 (Voice/TDD). The VR Ombudsman will assist you in resolving your client-service's needs.

How old do you have to be to get VR services? Do you have to be in school to receive assistance?

VR services can begin Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students as young as 14 through the age of 21. However, you do not have to be in school to receive VR services and, for those not in school, there is not an upper age limit. Please visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call (800) 451-4237 (Voice/TDD) for further information regarding VR programs and to locate an office near you.

I really want a job. How can VR help me? I am out of school, and I have an anxiety disorder, so going to interviews, etc. is hard for me. I would appreciate some help.

VR is the employment agency for individuals with disabilities. Services are individualized and based your specific needs as they relate to preparing for, getting and keeping a job. Please visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call (800) 451-4237 (Voice/TDD) for further information regarding eligibility and for an office near you.

How does VR coordinate with the Social Security systems?

Florida VR has access to The Ticket Portal which is operated by the Social Security Administration. Having access to this portal provides our agency with the opportunity to receive the most up-to-date information regarding ticket assignment status.

Does VR help with writing my resume, cover letter writing, and job searches?

Yes, absolutely! Visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) for further information regarding services, eligibility, and for an office near you.

I missed the session on Ticket to Work and how it coordinates with the state agencies. Can you provide me with the handouts or a bit of

information on how these work for the employment of people with disabilities.

We can arrange for copies of the Ticket to Work - Family Cafe presentations to be delivered to you electronically. If you have questions, please contact Willette Bowers, Ticket to Work Program Administrator at (850) 245-3271 or Willette.Bowers@vr.fldoe.org.

Attending college for my son is difficult, but it is what high school grads do, so I must "get with the program" as he says. His VR counselor is absolutely NO help. She claims that VR does not assist with college. This I know to be untrue. I would like to know my son's rights with VR as we do not agree. I am disappointed in this ruling.

We are sorry to hear you are having problems with your counselor. We encourage you to speak to your counselor's supervisor or contact the VR Ombudsman's Office at our toll free telephone number, 1-800-515-3692 (Voice/TDD) if you are unable to agree on the services needed to become employed. The VR Ombudsman is there to assist you and your son in resolving any customer service needs. If a requested service is denied, you may ask for the decision in writing. Every decision letter includes a description of your rights and steps you may take to resolve the situation if you do not agree with a decision. The same information can be found in the VR Handbook of Services (pg. 11) provided when your son applied for VR services. You can view the handbook online at www.RehabWorks.org and clicking on the "VR Brochures" link listed under "Customers" on the left-hand side of the home page.

I would like to know more about the WIOA.

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) puts a strong emphasis on VR providing employment planning and preparation services to transitioning youth at an earlier age. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) including Job exploration counseling, Work-based learning experiences, Postsecondary educational counseling, Workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy are available to students with a disability beginning at the age of 14 through the age of 21. If you would like to learn more about WIOA, you are invited to visit https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm.

I went to the session on WIOA on Saturday, June 16th. I did not get any handouts and cannot remember all the services that this provides for the kids. Please send me information about this. Thank you!

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) puts a strong emphasis on VR providing employment planning and preparation services to transitioning youth at an earlier age. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available to students with a disability beginning at the age of 14 through the age of 21. VR offers core services such as career assessment and counseling, workplace readiness training, engagement in multiple work experiences, and postsecondary education counseling to students without having to apply for or be found eligible for VR services. Additional programs and services are available to those who apply and are found eligible. VR has transition specific information that may be found at www.RehabWorks.org under the Transition Youth Program. Here, you will find helpful videos, links, and resources for you to explore. If you are residing in Florida and you are interested in applying for VR services, visit our site to identify a VR office in your area.



The 20th Anniversary Family Café Report Card 2018

Attendees at The 20th Anniversary Family Café were given the opportunity to grade their experience on the following scale:

A = Excellent

B = Very Good

 $\mathbf{C} = \mathsf{OK}$

D = Not So Good

 $\mathbf{F} = Poor$

The table below displays average grades for 2018, along with grades from the five previous years.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
I would give the Annual Family	A-	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α
Café Location a						
I would rate the hotel's	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	Α
accessibility a						
I would give the organization of	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α
the Annual Family Café a						
I would rate the choices for	A-	A-	A-	Α	Α	A-
breakout sessions and their						
ability to meet the needs of						
different interests a						
Overall, I would give The	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α
Annual Family Café a						

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

- As a result of attending The 20th Anniversary 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 20th Anniversary Family Café, I am able/will be able to . . .

- Socialize comfortably
- Learn about my disability
- · Possibly get more benefits for my son
- Find jobs
- · Know how to get different services
- Navigate the process
- Be more informed about Vocational Rehab
- Switch to CDC+ and get my community involved in the wallet card project
- Find resources for self-advocacy
- Advocate better for my disabled child (adult)
- Know more about APD
- Take care of my finances
- Learn how to interact with people
- Learn and do more things and use my 504
- · Better equip my kids with programs they need
- Advocate better
- · Learn on how to interact with people more
- · Have a clear understanding as to how to file for the waiver and SSI
- Start a savings account for my son
- Better navigate social security regulations
- Download more educational iPad apps
- I solved several issues by being able to talk to agencies directly
- Start an ABLE United account for my son
- · Have info on service dogs
- Advocate
- ABLE United
- Keep my sanity. It's great to be able to network with other families
- Be more proactive with my brother's care
- Enroll my daughter in Pyramid
- · Learn about assistive technology and mobility for our son
- De poder conectar con mas familias como la mia y ver que hay mucho por hacer
- To talk with Gardiner Scholarship representatives
- Inform others of the wealth of services available to those families with needs
- Improve my ability to help my son with his social and executive functioning skills in a fun way

- Talk to VR with more authority knowing what they are supposed to do
- Financially plan for my son's future
- Reinstate daughter's SSI
- Help some families in my church who are still learning about all the possibilities available
- Understand, empathize, appreciate, be patient
- Incorporate technology into my daughter's care
- Get better blind services
- Assist autistic son with learning to drive
- Go to my child's IEP with questions that I did not know to ask! Thanks
- Look more into the Florida Youth Council
- Empower others as this empowered me
- Understand more about the rights of people with disabilities
- Locate much needed resources I have been searching for 7 years
- Better advocate for others, disseminate information.
- Better help my young adult with autism
- Join organizations that will benefit my family. I will be able to share the information that I learned with other parents/caregivers.
- Better help my child with executive functioning- the 4 pm breakout session on Saturday was the best one I have ever attended at a Cafe
- I will be able to advocate more effectively for my daughter!
- Received free therapeutic services for my daughter that is not income based.
- Advocate for myself and my son better. Research service dogs better when looking for a SD for my son with autism.
- · Connect with organizations that can assist me with my child's special needs.
- · Feel comfortable sending my daughter to school.
- · Get more resources for my daughter
- · Better care for my loved one with a disability.
- · Help others
- · Know more about housing options for my adult daughter
- NETWORK!
- Pass along important important information to other mother's with babies with spina bifida.
- Use apps for behavior
- Work on my son's military support system

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

- To know what is out there
- Finding out things about getting a job

- · ABLE, Mobility, Transportation, Therapy Dogs
- Seeing all kinds of people with disabilities
- The exhibit hall
- Executive functioning lecture
- Service dogs rules and understanding the difference in service/therapy/emotional support
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Scooter to get around the hotel
- CDC+ sessions
- The sensory room
- Exhibit hall
- Newborn and Early Steps sessions
- Autism roundtable
- The financial assistance for the hotel. Without this it would be difficult to attend
- Information about IEP and education. Monica was great!
- Number of breakouts available
- Getting to know others
- · The Youth Council
- Meeting new families
- Early Steps
- People in red chef coats
- The sessions on wallet card ID information
- Everything
- The session for grieving people for the lost loved ones
- Information on guardianship
- Information
- Session on dementia
- · Class on Social Security
- Sessions for men or dads
- Disability Rights
- Pop culture tied into helping disabilities such as Anime and game playing.
 Great transition for parents with teens
- People I met
- Resources I have not been able to find as a new Florida resident
- Having the names and emails of all the speakers in the book. For those breakouts I was not able to attend, I can email them and ask them to email me their PowerPoint presentations
- To meet the disability advocates and hear from them
- Learning about how having a sibling with a disability can change someone's life

- Sessions that allow small children to attend
- Networking with other families
- Fun, fun, fun
- College/post-secondary Education for Intellectual disabilities
- Having all the different resources for me to take home
- The Pink Art Party. It reminded me that I need to care for myself and see the beauty behind the flaws
- Keynote speakers
- Saber que los juegos olimpicon en Florida NOSON la unica opion para mis hiyos
- The chance to network and see what opportunities are there for people with special needs!
- VR and APD sessions
- Information regarding employment
- CDC training as my daughter receives services from APD
- Session on medical marijuana
- Vendors, FAAST
- The advice from other families
- The disaster sessions
- Everything—we always learn something
- · Info on ABLE accounts. Going to open one
- Exhibit hall
- IEP info
- The Zumba class because I got exercise
- The reinforcement that we are not alone in this journey and that we are not asking too much
- Information
- Military track
- · Staff of Family Café
- SportsAbility—enjoyed tremendously—scuba diving, paddle boarding. We live very close to the beach and enjoy being around water
- The Family Cafe App

I thought we could have had more of . . .

- Help for teens, young adults, programs for young adults in community
- More demonstrations in exhibit hall
- Down time
- Things for adults 25 and up

- Adult programs available, adult housing, transitioning after 22, and 21 through Medicaid
- Playgroups for toddlers
- Food options
- Session for single parents
- Workshops
- More kid stuff
- Duplicate sessions at different times—it was hard to pick one of three or four choices during the same time
- Arts and crafts/games outside
- Affordable food options at hotel
- Suicide prevention, mental health
- Nothing
- Activities for kids
- · Legislators and department heads with time to talk to us
- How about employers offering jobs to disabled people
- Wifi access in meeting rooms for kids
- Our stories
- Sign language class
- Door prizes
- · Family bathrooms
- Rehabilitation engineers in the event. It would be great to have them as part
 of the Annual Family Café. I believe they work out of USF
- En el programa este ano hubo menos presentadores en espanol, sabiendo que la poblacion puertorquena aumento por los cicones que el lano pasado afectaron la Isla
- · Transportation to and from garage for families with children
- Group discussion sessions based on needs, i.e. parents of kids with genetic diseases, parents with undiagnosed diseases, etc.
- Spanish vendors and presenters. It was a presenter Rest Quest page 25. I know Spanish speakers would have benefitted from my presentation—next time
- Medicaid information. Would be nice to have Medicaid representatives talk to us and be available for questions
- VR workshops with emphasis on teenagers
- Music therapy sessions
- Respite care. As a single parent, it's hard gathering information while caring for my child
- Information specifically for those with PTSD and respentation of Dept of Veteran Affairs as part of the Military Breakout. The presents of Disabled American Veterans

- · Financial management
- Nothing. It was wonderful!

I thought we could use less of . . .

- Keynote speakers. Time is needed for more sessions
- Walking
- Rain
- Speakers who didn't show at all or with little preparation
- Session related to young children
- Distance between rooms and meeting spaces
- Same-old/same-old sessions
- Personal sharing sessions
- Loud music at the dance
- Out of control dogs that were pets/ESA dogs
- Crowd
- People trying to sell items, more info
- Need better maps of how to find session rooms
- Paper waste
- Nortodos los organizadores fueron ambables para apoyar (camisas rojas) parecia que estaba enojada y quiero expresar esto
- Concurrent sessions
- Sessions for the same/similar topic at the same time (i.e. spread these out over various time slots)
- Lobby performances. It was hard to enjoy them with so few minutes in between classes
- Flashing lights
- No show presenters
- Less Social Security sessions, more mental health seminars/service dog animal training
- Sessions geared towards specific age groups.
- Options for sessions. There were alot of breakout sessions that I wanted to attend but couldn't because there was another topic that I also needed to hear.
- Downtime especially in the morning time period. Sessions should have begun earlier in the morning and run all through the day.
- Bags and programs. I register five but only need one. I think that would save some money for the organization.
- Everything was perfect.

 Many sessions were repetitive. I understand why, but there could have been a more diverse pool from which to choose.

I am interested in finding out more about . . .

- Residential communities in Florida
- CDC+ and med waiver
- Social Security Disability
- Jobs
- Adult autism behavioral therapy
- Mental health
- CDC+
- Cancer
- Aging and Down Syndrome
- How we can establish more therapies, activities, social groups, etc. in our communities. I feel after they age out nothing is available to enhance their lives.
- The wallet card for interactions with law enforcement
- Disability lawyers, motivation adults to integrate
- · Programs for siblings—especially teenagers
- Autism, Dementia, and Alzheimer's
- Helping The Family Café
- APD Med Waiver
- Epilepsy foundation
- VR services
- Housing
- I don't know
- Mv 504 and how I can use it more
- IEP
- Navigating criminal justice system
- Transportation challenges in rural areas
- I'd love if breakout sessions could be videoed so I could watch the ones I couldn't attend
- Animal service dog training
- · Programs for the deaf
- Medical equipment available
- · Sports for my son
- Art and music therapy
- Spina Bifida and services, etc.
- · Down Syndrome

- Workshops to learn sign language
- Wavier program
- · Transitioning into college or the workforce.
- ADHD and autism—how they intersect
- Service dogs
- Independent living for disabled individuals
- Autistic adults and Law Enforcement. Ways to keep our older kids safe form unnecessary force from uneducated police officers
- Transition options
- About knowing who to speak with about problem with staff at APD
- Service dogs
- Gardiner Scholarship
- Advocating to the legislature
- SSI and Guardianship from the information I got
- More in-depth ways to help with state testing
- Autism, ADHD
- Sensory friendly entertainment venues in Florida
- Getting more people to come
- · Getting people in the same counties to take part in meetup groups
- Technology that's affordable
- The next Annual Family Café to come
- FAAST, Med Waiver
- Mental health issues (depression, etc.)
- Vacationing with physical/intellectual disabilities
- Waiver—APD waiting list
- Epilepsy
- · ADHD, autism, stress for family
- Trauma and medical resources
- · Deaf and hard of hearing resources
- Doctors who diagnose autism
- Different types of therapies—equine, pet, etc.
- Services for veterans, retired military, medical Tricare, opportunities for disabled teens
- Transitioning into adulthood
- Elder, aging with disabilities
- · Early intervention, children with disabilities, and help for parents
- Cancer
- The relationship between employment and keeping the necessary benefits through APD and Medicare qualifications
- Soft skills
- Executive functioning

- Breakouts to schedule questions time—more one-on-one times
- Natural ways to make our bodies healthier
- Outdoor activities
- MS and CMS Title XXI and services for Title XXI and places or orthodontics that accept Title XXI CMS Florida Healthy Kids
- Possibility of multiple language interpretation beyond sign language

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

- More food options
- A bigger room for the autism roundtable. Moderators were great
- An MS support table, find out about MS, an MS speaker or discussion
- Events that are intended to have people mingle and connect
- Perhaps having sessions geared toward provider specific trainings/CEUs. It would be awesome to further develop a multidisciplinary approach to helping families
- Chairs in family restroom area for nursing
- · A note on the session for if they are more geared to caregivers or disabled
- Better description of exactly what the breakouts were going to cover and what level they would be (beginner, advanced)
- Career exploration and colleges with autism programs
- Breakout sessions be spaced out more (i.e.—have similar topics at different times)
- Workshops for aging people with DD. Support groups, alternatives to APD like senior centers
- More publicity—we still meet people that have not been fortunate to come see how amazing this weekend is
- The acoustics could be improved
- · More activities for older disabled guests, maybe a track so they can attend
- More scholarships
- · More advanced advocacy sessions
- · More fun activities for kids, teens, and siblings
- A check-in system for presenters, so if presenters don't show up, the people wanting to go to that session can choose another session
- So much in 2.5 days—maybe a bit longer
- More art projects for kids
- A few lined pages in the book for note taking
- More performances like Beauty and the Beast in larger rooms instead of just in hallway
- · More rooms in Hyatt under Family Café block. Not able to stay in hotel

- Signs. I had a hard time finding all the different events and where to go
- Respite care for our kids—even if we pay!
- More themes—loved the superhero theme this year!
- A session dedicated to wheelchair sports
- More conversation about racial discrimination in America today
- Try to group subjects or audience in the same areas so not running around a lot
- A phone charging station near the exhibit hall
- More handouts, please, from presenters. I took notes but printed handouts are best
- A program on Saturday night might be added for those who cannot dance, or just don't like loud noises. Just an optional activity like the Beauty and the Beast play
- A session on equine therapy
- Events till Sunday at 4 or 5 or start Thursday. There's not enough hours in the day to see everything. Or have it twice a year
- · Everything as far as the information was great
- · Provide food and more rooms for families
- More activities for children to do
- CDB and medical marijuana workshop
- Dynamic keynote speakers
- Free breakfast
- Kids loved the tennis, archery area, so I had time to go to classes since they were occupied
- WiFi in conference area (free)
- More parking
- · Legislators and department heads where we can talk to them
- · Voter registration—didn't see this year if there was?
- More personal point of view classes (what obstacles others have overcome and how they did it)
- Some sessions were English and Spanish. Please do a third color when a session is in both languages
- You always do a wonderful job
- Dar mas conferencias interactuades como la que hizo la sra Laurie LoRe-Gussak que es de Florida Disabled Outdoors Association
- · A more broad topic on stress
- · Ice cream truck, PTSD session, grief counseling
- · Karaoke activities, talent show, and more animal shows
- · A/V help in breakout rooms
- Someone to speak on Title IV-E and non IV-E, i.e. Florida's Adoption information center.

- Rare disorder information
- Session designed for individuals on how to deal with peer conflict and social situations, dating, etc.
- Employment and college
- Having homeschooling issues addressed.
- Single parenting with a disabled child
- How about a sibling hangout spot a place where the nondisabled sibling can go and just meet up with kids in the same situation, find support, and have fun, where they can just be themselves for a bit. kinda like a game and entertainment area for nondisabled siblings
- Keep up the awesome work!
- I'll forever be grateful to the Family Cafe. I had the pleasure of attending my
 first one 5 yrs ago when my daughter was 1. It was at the conference and
 specifically at the Down Syndrome round table that I realized for the first
 time that everything would be ok, different but ok. As I looked around the
 room there was lots of smiles and laughter. As a parent shared a concern,
 another parent would share a survival story involving that concern. It was
 living proof that, "I can do this." The first Family Cafe I attended was the
 turning point between existing as a Special Needs Parent and enjoying the
 journey while knowing the difficult times could be shared and survived.
- I think it would be incredibly beneficial to add networking sessions, either
 during the breakout sessions or maybe in the evening. Specifically for people
 and families to meet each other, these networking sessions could be split up
 by the different areas where people live. North central, central, panhandle,
 etc. This way people will be networking with others in their area.
- Nothing. Thought everything was excellent!







JHNE 7-9 2019

AIT THE 21ST ANNUAL FAMILY CAFE

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