

The
21st
ANNUAL

FAMILY CAFÉ



FEATURING THE GOVERNOR'S
SUMMIT ON DISABILITIES



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS BOOK

JUNE 7-9, 2019 ♦ ORLANDO, FLORIDA



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Welcome to The Family Café Questions & Answers Book for 2019!

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 21st Annual Family Café attracted an extraordinary 12,842 people. They had a chance to attend more than 220 educational sessions on a wide array of topics. The event also included a series of three keynote addresses, including legendary disability rights advocate Judy Heumann discussing her journey and the path forward, advocate, entrepreneur, and star of TLC's *The Little Couple* Bill Klein sharing his keys to success, and Dave Clark and Doug Cornfield talking about Dave's baseball career as a player with polio, and the difference we can make by simply being kind to each other.

Our Exhibit Hall was busy again in 2019, with more than 140 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 was fortunate to continue its tradition of connecting attendees with our state's key policymakers, with Senate President Bill Galvano attending The Annual Governor's Summit on Disabilities on Friday, and newly-elected Governor Ron DeSantis joining us on Sunday morning.

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 help families to engage with the agencies that serve them through "Pink Cards." At The 21st Annual Family Café, we invited attendees to share their questions and comments by filling out Pink Cards, which we in turn shared with the relevant State Agencies. We collected their responses, and 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 22nd Annual Family Café, June 5-7, 2020, 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](https://www.facebook.com/TheFamilyCafeFL), on Twitter [@TheFamilyCafe](https://twitter.com/TheFamilyCafe), and on Instagram [@thefamilycafefl](https://www.instagram.com/thefamilycafefl)!

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The Family Café

What is the most economical way to start a special needs trust?

Providing for the future financial stability of a family member with a disability is a challenge for many Floridians, and The Family Café has always made an effort to provide information on financial planning through its “Smart Money” track of sessions at The Annual Family Café. Sessions in the Smart Money track at The 21st Annual Family Café that addressed special needs trusts included *ABC’s of Special Needs Trusts and Guardian Advocacy* by The Law Offices of Hoyt & Bryan; *Your Dependent With Special Needs: Making Their Future More Secure* by MassMutual Special Care; *Getting It All in Order* by Special Needs Lawyers, PA; *Simplifying the Legal Process: How to Smoothly Transition Your Child into Adulthood* by Kaufman and Lynd, PLLC; *Provide Financially for Your Child and Plan Your Retirement Too? Not Impossible!* by The Eppy Group; and *The ABCs and 123s of SNTs* by Guardian Trust. Descriptions of those sessions, as well as contact info for the presenters, can be found in the event program online at https://www.familycafe.net/images/stories/pdffiles/21st_FamCafe_2019_WEB_compressed.pdf. We encourage you to reach out to these knowledgeable individuals for expert information on starting a special needs trust.

Additionally, you may also be interested in the tax-free savings options available through the ABLE Act. To learn about ABLE United, Florida’s qualified ABLE program, visit www.ableunited.com.

How can I get a job?

Meaningful employment is an essential part of life in the community, not just for people with disabilities, but for every American. For people with disabilities, there are several employment resources available, and The Family Café has been fortunate to be able to partner with those agencies through The Annual Family Café. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation exists to help Floridians with disabilities to find and maintain employment. Visit www.rehabworks.org to learn about VR and find your local program office. Another state agency that promotes employment is CareerSource. Learn about their Abilities Work program at abilitieswork.employflorida.com. Finally, The 21st Annual Family Café included a track of sessions on employment. Reviewing those sessions and contacting the organizations that delivered them could be helpful too. Find the 2019 program

online at https://www.familycafe.net/images/stories/pdffiles/21st_FamCafe_2019_WEB_compressed.pdf.

Is anyone working on covered parking for wheelchair access spots at malls, airports, grocery stores, etc.? If it is storming out, you can't get out of your car without getting yourself or your assistant soaked. Also, adult changing tables – what is happening on that?

Despite positive strides made through the Americans with Disabilities Act, accessibility for individuals with disabilities remains an issue of concern. At this point we are not aware of any organized efforts to provide covered parking for people with disabilities in public or private parking lots. If this is an issue that you feel should be addressed, we encourage you to contact your legislator to begin the conversation. There is an ongoing effort to pass legislation to make adult changing areas available. You can learn more about that at www.universalchangingplaces.com.

Do you have any jobs in Tampa open?

Despite the size of The Annual Family Café, The Family Café is a small organization with only six full-time employees. Our office is located in Tallahassee.

If you are looking for information on employment in the Tampa area, we encourage you to contact CareerSource Tampa Bay at www.careersourcetampabay.com.

I am very angry that when I got a handicapped parking placard (temporary) that my driver's license number was displayed on the sticker with the placard number and expiration date. The preamble to the state constitution guarantees equal rights for all. This and the ADA should protect handicapped Floridians from having to publicly display our driver's license numbers in the age of identity theft. This is also in violation of the Driver Privacy Protection Act of Florida and the US 18USC.2721, Florida Statute 199.0712(2).

Thanks for bringing this issue to our attention. Since this issue may require statutory changes to address, your best route may be to contact your legislators to make them aware of your concerns. You can find your Florida House member at

www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/representatives.aspx and your Florida Senate member at <http://www.flsenate.gov/senators>.

The Florida agency responsible for authorizing disabled person parking permits is the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV). Find out information on disabled person parking permits at www.flhsmv.gov/motor-vehicles-tags-titles/disabled-person-parking-permits/ and contact the agency at <https://www.flhsmv.gov/contact-us/>.

Who can you contact high up in the SSI system when local office and head won't contact you and is wrongly taking SSI and taking repayment? Is there a complaint hub?

Given your question, it seems that you have already attempted to resolve this issue through your local social security office. Anyone can find their local office by entering their zip code at secure.ssa.gov/ICON/.

If your issue can't be resolved locally you can contact the national Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213. Additional information on how to contact SSA and FAQs about benefits are at <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/contact/>.

I'm interested to be part of the 2020 Family Café planning if needed.

Much of the planning for The Annual Family Café is undertaken by The Family Café Planning Committee. This body, which includes a range of partners and stakeholders from the disability community, selects presentations for inclusion in the conference agenda, helps to identify keynote speakers, and provides leads to help fill the exhibit hall. The group meets monthly by conference call, and once face-to-face for a day-long presentation proposal review meeting in January. If you're interested in being a part of the Planning Committee, contact our office at info@familycafe.net.

How do I volunteer at The Annual Family Café?

The Family Café relies on dozens of volunteers to help us make The Annual Family Café run smoothly. If you're interested in helping out, please let us know by marking the appropriate box on the form when you register. You can volunteer to help prepare materials for attendees at the pre-conference bag stuffing, serve as a

Room Monitor to direct attendees to sessions throughout the conference, or help out with getting people checked in at the Registration Desk. We're also happy to have volunteers to do language interpretation. If you sign up to volunteer when you register, The Family Café will contact you several weeks before the conference to let you know about the details.

What does it take to become a vendor/exhibitor next year?

There is no better place for organizations seeking to establish contact with thousands of Floridians with disabilities and their families than the Exhibit Hall at The Annual Family Café. It brings together a remarkably large audience of people with disabilities and their families, all of whom are searching for solutions to improve their quality of life. The Exhibit Form for The 22nd Annual Family Café in June, 2020 is available on our website at <https://www.familycafe.net/images/stories/pdf/files/22nd-exhib-form.pdf>. It includes all of the details you need to know.

How do we get the word out to all Floridians about The Family Café? There are so many people who never heard about Family Café. We do tell everyone we see.

The Family Café largely relies on word of mouth to spread the word about The Annual Family Café and everything it offers. If you would like to help out, we encourage you to talk to people in your community about The Family Café and everything we do to empower people with disabilities. Oftentimes a personal testimonial from a trusted friend can be the most effective form of outreach.

It would also be helpful if you were to follow us on social media, and share our posts across Twitter (twitter.com/thefamilycafe), Facebook (www.facebook.com/TheFamilyCafeFL/), and Instagram (www.instagram.com/thefamilycafefl/), to bring that grassroots word of mouth strategy into the digital age.

How many years in advance do you book the venue? What is the process to solicit workshop ideas?

Typically large events like The Annual Family Café involve multi-year contracts with hotel locations. The 22nd Annual Family Café in June, 2020 will be the second

year in a three-year agreement with the Hyatt Regency Orlando, which has hosted the event since 2016.

Breakout sessions at The Annual Family Café are selected by our Planning Committee. The process begins in the fall when the Presentation Proposal Form is published, and presentations are selected in January. Anyone can submit a proposal for consideration for The 22nd Annual Family Café at www.surveymonkey.com/r/22ndAF CPPF. The deadline for submission is Friday, January 10th.

I was looking for the company that provides visual online for \$36 a year. I forgot the name of the company.

If you are looking for a particular exhibitor or presenter from The Annual Family Café, the best strategy is to look through the event program. Contact information for every exhibitor and presenter is available there. View the program from The 21st Annual Family Café in June, 2019 at https://www.familycafe.net/images/stories/pdffiles/21st_FamCafe_2019_WEB_compressed.pdf.

Why don't you contact some of the nonprofit costumer clubs to come to the event? 501st Legion – Star Wars. Costumers with a Cause – Superheroes/princesses. They volunteer to come out to events like this.

Thanks for that suggestion. We have made some efforts to bring “cosplay” groups to The Annual Family Café, including reaching out to the 501st Legion. While we have been able to bring some characters and superheroes to the event over the last couple of years, like Anna and Elsa from *Frozen*, Spiderman, and Wonder Woman, we haven't yet been able to draw a larger group to participate. If there's anything you can do to bring one of those groups to The Annual Family Café, please do let us know. In the meantime, we'll keep trying to get them to join us.

How do I become a volunteer or presenter for the next Family Café?

The Family Café relies on dozens of volunteers to help us make The Annual Family Café run smoothly. If you're interested in helping out, please let us know by marking the appropriate box on the form when you register. You can volunteer to help prepare materials for attendees at the pre-conference bag stuffing, serve as a Room Monitor to direct attendees to sessions throughout the conference, or help

out with getting people checked in at the Registration Desk. We're also happy to have volunteers to do language interpretation. If you sign up to volunteer when you register, The Family Café will contact you several weeks before the conference to let you know about the details.

The Family Café is also seeking proposals from anyone interested in presenting at The 22nd Annual Family Café. You can find the Presentation Proposal Form online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/22ndAFCPPF. The deadline for your proposal to be considered for this year is January 10, 2020.

Please invite them!

- Center for Independent living**
- Communication Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**
- Florida Association of the Deaf**
- Lighthouse Central Florida**
- Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**
- Florida Deaf-Blind Association**

Thanks very much for those suggestions. We will definitely put all of those groups on our list for 2020. If there's any group in your community that you feel would be a good fit for The Annual Family Café, please don't hesitate to talk to them about the event, or to share their contact information with The Family Café office by emailing us at info@familycafe.net or calling 888-309-CAFÉ (2233).

Is there something like this focused more on the elderly?

We are not aware of a single statewide event for the elderly population that would be similar to The Annual Family Café. We do recognize that many older people develop or live with disability issues, and we do our best to address their needs through our cross-disability event.

For additional resources for older Floridians, we would recommend that you contact the Department of Elder Affairs (elderaffairs.state.fl.us/).

I may eventually like to be a speaker and share my own autistic spectrum story.

We would love to have you! The Annual Family Café includes an entire track devoted to self-advocacy, and our Planning Committee definitely values the stories and lived experience of presenters with disabilities. If you're interested in presenting at The 22nd Annual Family Café in 2020, you can find the Presentation Proposal Form online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/22ndAFCPPF.

What opportunities exist in Florida for disability self-advocates to present/assist on the fields in which they are expert? As a disability self-advocate who specializes in hand writing interventions and remediation, I am especially interested in knowing of opportunities for disability self-advocates in this field.

The Family Café definitely supports efforts by self-advocates to share their unique knowledge with other people living with disabilities, and we do our best to provide a platform for that type of exchange at The Annual Family Café.

In terms of sharing specialized knowledge outside of The Annual Family Café, that would depend on the type of knowledge. As you mentioned hand writing interventions, you may be interested in contacting the Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) office in your area. These offices, which are operated by the Department of Education, provide resources and support parent involvement for school districts throughout Florida. Learn more and find your local FDLRS at www.fdlrs.org/.

Noticed there were a lot of disability-owned businesses at the event. I have a disability and own a business. Where can I find out more information about micro-enterprises?

Each year at The Annual Family Café, we include a number of micro-enterprises in the Exhibit Hall to highlight the innovative ways in which entrepreneurs with disabilities are developing their careers through small business. In order to qualify as a micro-enterprise, a business must be owned and operated by a person with a disability, employ fewer than five people, and have annual revenue not exceeding \$35,000. The Micro-Enterprise Application Form for The 22nd Annual Family Café in June, 2020 can be found online at www.familycafe.net/images/stories/pdf/files/22nd-micro-form.pdf.

I would like someone to contact me by phone or email, I have serious reservations about one of your presenters preying on parents of individuals with autism.

Thanks very much for sharing your concern. We rely on honest feedback from attendees to maintain the quality of our presentations, so we always want to hear about any reservations an attendee may have about a particular presentation.

You can reach our office at info@familycafe.net or 888-309-CAFÉ (2233).

Why were there no presentations by small business owners? I was looking for information to start/expand my business.

Thanks for sharing that observation, which we will share with our Planning Committee. Although last year's agenda did not include a presentation on that topic, the event did feature an Employment track, and the Exhibit Hall included several micro-enterprises owned and operated by people with disabilities. We will examine the possibility of including a session on small business ownership in 2020.



The Agency for Health Care Administration

Why do the politicians just give “Lip Service” and say they care about disabled but limit funding that causes neglect of our population? I mean the Medicaid expansion.

Medicaid in Florida focuses on serving 3.8 million of our vulnerable residents with the greatest needs, such as children, pregnant women, elders, and people with disabilities. We are working hard to ensure that the \$29 billion in taxpayer dollars that is spent each year to provide critical Florida Medicaid medical and long-term care services is producing the best outcomes for the people we serve. Medicaid expansion pertains to services for non-disabled individuals.

Why wasn't Medicaid expansion ever mentioned the whole conference?

Medicaid in Florida focuses on serving 3.8 million of our vulnerable residents with the greatest needs, such as children, pregnant women, elders, and people with disabilities. We are working hard to ensure that the \$29 billion in taxpayer dollars that is spent each year to provide critical Florida Medicaid medical and long-term care services is producing the best outcomes for the people we serve. Medicaid expansion pertains to services for non-disabled individuals.

What is the legislature doing about access to disability Medicaid without consideration of income?

Earlier in 2019 the Legislature directed the Agency for Health Care Administration to seek federal approval for a program called Working People with Disabilities for adults with developmental disabilities who receive services under Florida's Medicaid waiver programs. This program would increase the income limits for people with disabilities who are enrolled in the State's 1915c waivers who are working and earning income. We hope to implement this in early 2020.

Can a person who is over 18 and just been diagnosed with ADHD get services from Social Security?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) determines Social Security Disability Income benefits. They would be the best ones to work with you on your specific

situation. Their toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213. The SSA can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

What is the email and phone number and name for the new head of Medicaid who took over for Justin Senior? What is the complaint email or site?

Governor Ron DeSantis appointed Mary Mayhew as the Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration. Beth Kidder is the Deputy Secretary for Medicaid. For help with Medicaid complaints or issues, call the Florida Medicaid Helpline at 1-877-254-1055 or go online at www.flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/complaint.

Can we go back to straight Medicaid as an option if the managed care Medicaid program is not working for our disabled kids with chronic illness like Cystic Fibrosis? Case management is poor and we can't get services we need.

We are sorry to hear about your experience. Florida Medicaid is committed to ensuring children have access to all medically necessary services. If you are having difficulty, 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.

How long is the Med waiver waitlist? My daughter has been on the waitlist for 10 years.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) operates the Developmental Disabilities Individual Budgeting (iBudget) Waiver and maintains the waitlist for the waiver. People are prioritized for waiver enrollment based on criteria that are in law and rule. For information about the Medicaid waiver for people with intellectual disabilities, please go to www.apdcares.org and read about the iBudget waiver. You can also find the address of your local APD office by visiting <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/application/> or calling 1-866-273-2273.

I keep hearing that there is a way that a parent can be paid to care for their adult child with disabilities. If this is so, how do we go about applying for this? Or how do we go about getting this help?

There are two ways in Medicaid that a person can be paid to care for a family member. For people on the iBudget waiver, it is called Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+). For people on the Long-Term Care managed care waiver, it is called Participant Direction Option. In either option, the person enrolled on the waiver must live in their own home, family home.

People on iBudget waiver can talk to their waiver support coordinator about Consumer Directed Care Plus or contact their local APD office by visiting <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/application/> or calling 1-866-273-2273.

People on the Long-Term Care managed care waiver can talk to their case manager about Participant Direction Option or contact their LTC plan. The contact information for the LTC plans can be found through the following link: Plan Contacts for Recipients (https://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/statewide_mc/pdf/SMMC_Plan_Contact_Information_External.pdf).

How do I get my 21-year-old son proper therapies through Medicare if they don't care about "maintenance"? All they want is improvement and that is not what all of our population is about.

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.

If you are having difficulty accessing services through Medicaid, 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.

Any state/federal resources for people that are not qualified for Medicaid benefits?

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

How can we stop managed care in Florida?

The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration is responsible for the Medicaid program and for the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program (SMMC). The SMMC program has produced the highest program quality and performance scores in the Medicaid program's history. SMMC has two program components:

1. Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) and Long-Term Care (LTC)
2. Dental

A person eligible for Florida Medicaid can be enrolled in both the MMA and LTC program or just the MMA program. Individuals on the iBudget waiver program can choose whether or not to get their medical services from a Medicaid managed care plan. Everyone receiving dental services from Florida Medicaid must get their dental services from a dental plan.

In addition, during the 2019 Session, the Legislature directed the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, with the Agency for Health Care Administration, to develop a plan to redesign the iBudget waiver program. This plan can be found at: <http://apd.myflorida.com/docs/Waiver%20Redesign%20Plan%20Final.pdf>. The plan does not recommend moving iBudget services into managed care.

Is diabetes considered a disability according to Medicaid/Social Security?

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

DCF may determine someone disabled if they have a condition that has affected (or is expected to affect) their ability to work for at least 12 full months, or result in death. Children may be considered disabled if they have a medical condition severe enough to be considered a disability for an adult.

DCF uses the same rules as the Social Security Administration (SSA) to determine disability. SSA's toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213. The SSA can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

How can we better inform people who are new to the process for services of the definitions of the numerous cross-agency terms used? Is there a glossary of acronyms for the Agency that serves Medicaid and Medicare folks?

The Agency does not have a glossary of acronyms that we can provide. However, if you or someone you know is having difficulty understanding an acronym or accessing services through Medicaid, 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.

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

Why does Florida deny Medicaid to people with low wages? I thought you were there to help. Need the help!

Eligibility criteria for Medicaid are set in federal and state laws and rules. Medicaid is for low-income people who also meet other criteria, such as being a child, pregnant, a parent of a dependent child, an elder, or a person with a disability. Each category may have a different income standard. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency responsible for determining Medicaid eligibility. For questions about appealing a Medicaid eligibility determination, please contact DCF at 1-866-762-2237.

At what age can you apply for Medicare? How about when you have a disability? What age then?

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.

When can you support the cost of peer to peer support? In most other states it is a billable service under Medicaid.

Florida Medicaid pays for certified peer specialists under the community behavioral health services provider type. Recovery peer specialists must be certified by the Florida Certification Board and work under the supervision of at least a bachelor's level practitioner or master's level certified addiction professional. Please see the [Community Behavioral Health Services Handbook](#) for more information.

Why is AHCA not more served throughout Florida? Why did Florida not chose to support Medicaid expansion?

Medicaid in Florida focuses on serving 3.8 million of our vulnerable residents with the greatest needs, such as children, pregnant women, elders, and people with disabilities. We are working hard to ensure that the \$29 billion in taxpayer dollars that is spent each year to provide critical Florida Medicaid medical and long-term care services is producing the best outcomes for the people we serve. Medicaid expansion pertains to services for non-disabled individuals.

Does AHCA pay for the usage of medical marijuana for people with disabilities?

No, due to federal regulations, Florida Medicaid cannot pay for medical marijuana. The Food and Drug Administration has not approved marijuana for any medical use. The Drug Enforcement Agency classifies marijuana as a Schedule I drug, which means that it has no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.

What can Florida Medicaid do to draw down more federal matching dollars from DC?

Governor DeSantis has directed unprecedented state agency collaboration for all Florida agencies, and Florida's health care agencies, including the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, are working together to ensure that available federal dollars are drawn down for any eligible health care service. There is a specific focus on behavioral health services and services provided to Floridians living with disabilities.

There need to be more sessions on both the Medicare and Medicaid programs and what they provide.

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

Does Medicaid or Medicare pay for medical marijuana use?

Due to federal regulations, Florida Medicaid cannot pay for medical marijuana. The federal Food and Drug Administration has not approved marijuana for any medical use. The federal Drug Enforcement Agency classifies marijuana as a Schedule I drug, which means that it has no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.

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 role does the Agency have over all these managed care providers and programs? Please make sure that APD does not fall into or go under managed care!

Individuals on the iBudget waiver program can choose whether or not to get their medical services from a Medicaid managed care plan. Everyone receiving dental services from Florida Medicaid must get their dental services from a dental plan.

In addition, during the 2019 Session, the Legislature directed the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, with the Agency for Health Care Administration, to develop a plan to redesign the iBudget waiver program. This plan can be found at: <http://apd.myflorida.com/docs/Waiver%20Redesign%20Plan%20Final.pdf>. The plan does not recommend moving iBudget services into managed care.

What exactly does ACHA do now that everyone is in Managed Care?

The Florida Agency for Health Care ensures that Florida's Medicaid program complies with all state and federal laws and rules, determines what services are covered and sets payment rates (within federal and state guidelines), assists Medicaid recipients and providers with the program, and many other functions. One of the most important tasks is to monitor the contracted Medicaid health plans. This includes ensuring that the plans are meeting all the requirements as specified in their contracts. For additional information please see the Agency's SMMC website located at http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/statewide_mc/index.shtml.

The Agency is also still responsible for administering the Medicaid program for those individuals who are not enrolled in the SMMC program who remain in the fee-for-service delivery system.

What is the reason why the state of Florida did not go for those enhanced Medicaid enhancement dollars from the federal government?

Medicaid in Florida focuses on serving 3.8 million of our vulnerable residents with the greatest needs, such as children, pregnant women, elders, and people with disabilities. We are working hard to ensure that the \$29 billion in taxpayer dollars that is spent each year to provide critical Florida Medicaid medical and long-term care services is producing the best outcomes for the people we serve. Medicaid expansion pertains to services for non-disabled individuals.

How will the “Medicaid for all” ballot initiative change the Waiver services if it were to pass?

The Agency for Health Care Administration has not completed a formal review of the “Medicaid for all” ballot initiative. Our understanding is that this has been withdrawn from the process of qualifying for the 2020 ballot. We will continue to closely watch state and federal health care debates for how they may impact the Florida Medicaid program.

Don’t put the APD into Managed Care!

During the 2019 Session, the Legislature directed the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, with the Agency for Health Care Administration, to develop a plan to redesign the iBudget waiver program. This plan can be found at: <http://apd.myflorida.com/docs/Waiver%20Redesign%20Plan%20Final.pdf>. The plan does not recommend moving iBudget services into managed care.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities

How long is the Medicaid waiver waitlist? My daughter has been on the waitlist for 10 years.

Individuals are enrolled on the waiver based on the waiting list category prioritization identified in Florida Statutes. Over the last six years, the Legislature has allocated money to take more individuals off the list. As of September 2019, there are 21,436 individuals on the waiting list.

I keep hearing that there is a way that a parent can be paid to care for their adult child with disabilities. If this is so, how do we go about applying for this? Or how do we go about getting this help?

Information about Consumer-Directed Care Plus (CDC+) program 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.

How do I get my 21-year-old son proper therapies through Medicare if they don't care about "maintenance"? All they want is improvement and that is not what all of our population is about.

Medicare provides funding for therapies, such as physical, occupational, and speech therapies, including maintenance. For more information, please visit <https://www.medicare.gov/>.

Are there state/federal resources for ABA therapy?

State Plan Medicaid: Children under the age of 21 who have access to State Plan Medicaid may receive ABA Therapy through that plan if determined medically necessary. For more information on ABA Therapy provided through State Plan Medicaid, please visit the Agency for Health Care Administration's (AHCA) website: <https://ahca.myflorida.com/>. APD consumers on the iBudget Waiver who are 21 years old or older may receive ABA Therapy through the iBudget Waiver if determined medically necessary in accordance with the iBudget Waiver Handbook. Stephan A. Geller Autism Act: Children needing ABA Therapy may qualify under the Steven A. Geller Autism Coverage Act to receive the therapy through their health insurer. More information is available in Florida Statutes, Chapter 641, Sections 627.6686 and 641.31098. Florida Public School System: Information and contact information is available of the Florida Department of Education website: <https://app4.fldoe.org/ESEContacts/Default.aspx>. Florida Center for Autism and Related Disorders: This group provides information and resources concerning autism. To find a location near you, visit: <http://www.florida-card.org/map.htm>. APD Resource Directory: 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 need more training on CDC+ program. How or where do we find training?

There is training available on our website. In addition, we offer online skype trainings for an array of CDC+ topics. Since we are transitioning to a new trainer, the skype trainings will not be available for the month of October, 2019. We hope to have those back up and running by November, 2019. However, the other trainings are posted online and are available at any time. Training information is located at <http://apdcare.org/cdcplus/cdctraining.htm>.

How can we better inform people who are new to the process for services of the definitions of the numerous cross-agency terms used? Is there a glossary of acronyms?

The APD glossary of acronyms is available online here: <http://apd.myflorida.com/docs/Glossary%20of%20Terms%20and%20Acronyms.pdf>.

I have a loved one with a disability and my nephew sits at home all day. He does not have access to social interactions with peers. How do I help/encourage his parent about how vital it is to seek out programs that are beneficial to his development? What steps can I take to help him?

If he is still attending school, you could consider consulting with school personnel for guidance. Also, 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/>.

My 27-year-old son is in a group home. I live too far for services: companion, behavioral, etc. I have to work, we don't get enough hours to assist with him. I'm told by companions and behavioral folks they don't get paid enough to come out this far. Is there any other assistance for folks like me?

The APD Ombudsman may be able to assist you. Please send your question to apd.info@apdcares.org and the Ombudsman will contact you.

My 27-year-old son had a situation of mental, physical, and financial abuse within a group home. We called APD. Investigator came out. We've asked for an update but still no clue two years later. Who can help us?

The APD Ombudsman may be able to assist you. Please send your question to apd.info@apdcares.org and the Ombudsman will contact you.

How about more adult programs for special needs in Broward County near Plantation?

If the individual receives services from APD, they may want to reach out to the local APD office for assistance in exploring options. If the individual is an APD client on the iBudget Waiver, they are encouraged to contact their Waiver Support Coordinator to explore options. 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/>.

Can you get respite services for your child with ASD without being on the Med waiver? Are they ever going to change the requirements for the Med waiver for ASD? What services are available for kids who are level 2 who don't qualify (meet 4 out of 6) and who don't have Medicaid? Eloper and highly aggressive, feeding tube dependent.

An individual must be determined eligible for APD in order to receive services through APD. Respite services may be available to APD clients who are not on the iBudget Waiver on a short-term basis to alleviate a crisis. Individuals on the iBudget Waiver may receive respite supports if medically necessary in accordance with the iBudget Waiver Handbook. 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 aren't there more programs for our adult children? My child has to struggle to get funding every year to get program approvals. Programs are also very limited or far away. We really need some work-related programs to teach our children adult skills.

APD is dedicated to supporting employment of people with disabilities. Learn more about programs at <http://apdcares.org/customers/supported-employment/> or contact the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

My autistic 43-year-old son has been on Med waiver 3+ months now. The ABA assessment/provider list given to me by APD is outdated. Most on the list don't participate any longer or only assess young children. How do I find someone to assess and provide therapy for my son?

If the individual is on the iBudget Waiver, the individual should first contact their Waiver Support Coordinator for assistance. If the individual is on the CDC+ Program, they should first contact the CDC+ Consultant for assistance. If the issues is not resolved, the Waiver Support Coordinator, the CDC+ Consultant, or the individual can contact the local APD office for assistance.

My 43-year-old autistic son is an elopement risk. How can I get a tracker for him that won't cost an arm and a leg? I don't think a wrist or ankle device will work. He would remove them. However, Angelsense has one to go in his shoe I think might work, but it's pricey. I use Verizon Smart Family on our phones, but it is not specific enough.

The Florida Center for Autism and Related Disorders may be able to provide guidance or resources to assist you. To find a location near you, visit: <http://www.florida-card.org/map.htm>. There may be some options for trackers through the local police department.

Where on the APD website can I find the application for one on the waitlist to apply for crisis? Where on the website can I find a list of supporting documentation for crisis application for a person on the waitlist? Where can I access my child's category/listing? APD case manager? Case manager's supervisor? Name, number, email, etc.

Information about applying for the waiver and crisis criteria is online here: <http://apdcares.org/customers/application/>. Please call your regional office for more individual questions. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

Is there online information about CDC? I wasn't able to attend the class.

Information about Consumer-Directed Care Plus (CDC+) program 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.

How can we collaborate on an organization to encourage and support more primary care providers?

This may be a question for the Florida Department of Health as primary care providers fall under their purview.

When are the support coordinators going to get a raise? There is the same amount of work for someone under 18 as for someone over 18, so why do the support coordinators make half the money for underage?

APD implemented an 18% rate increase for WSCs in 2015 based on legislative appropriation. Age no longer determines the type of WSC services. However, there are different contact requirements for Limited and Full Support Coordination. The rate for Limited Support Coordination services is lower because there are lesser requirements for WSCs.

What can you do or where can you go if you don't have anyone to take care of your child when you are gone? What happens to your child?

The APD Ombudsman may be able to assist you. Please send your question to apd.info@apdcares.org and the Ombudsman will contact you.

How do I get a lawyer to help me with trust issues?

The following resources may help you locate a lawyer to meet your needs: Florida Bar Association Find a Lawyer Referral Service (850) 561 -5844 or (850) 561-5775. If you are an individual with a disability, Disability Rights Florida may be able to assist or provide a referral. You can contact them at 800-342-0823 or email them at http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/contact/intake_form/.

What other programs are in Orlando for teen self-advocacy?

Visit Florida SAND's website for a list of local self-advocacy groups: <https://www.flsand.org/copy-of-local-groups>.

What programs are there for self-advocacy?

Visit Florida SAND's website for a list of local self-advocacy groups: <https://www.flsand.org/copy-of-local-groups> or Self-Advocates Being Empowered (SABE) at <https://www.sabeusa.org/>. In addition, the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council offers a course called Partners in Policymaking (PIP). More information on PIP is available at <https://www.fddc.org/node/3035>.

Why do we have to have home visits to get Medicaid long-term care services? We had Medicaid for 25 years and never needed or got home visits. Medicare is our primary and LTC. It isn't even paying for anything. They come every three months – ridiculous! Besides, the contracted workers are rude, not knowledgeable, not helpful, always late, some harass us, some told us my child wasn't sick. This is a waste of government funds. Also, they expose us to illness when they come to our home while they are sick. Our child is compromised due to Cystic Fibrosis and transplant!

APD does not manage the Long Term Care Waiver. The Department of Elder Affairs is responsible for this federal program through an interagency agreement with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA). A directory of contact information for the Long Term Care Waiver is available at http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/cares/CARES_Directory.pdf.

I have what is considered an invisible disability. You may look at me and not realize I have anything going on with me. But I do. I struggle every single day of my life. Fibromyalgia rages inside my body, the chronic fatigue is overwhelming, ADHD brings about its own chaos, and the other related disorders wreak their own havoc as they please. I am not able to function on a day-to-day basis when I don't know what my body will decide to do or not do that day. Yet, with all this dysfunction going on every day, I have not discovered how to really get the help I need. No understanding of what afflicts me exists, there is no empathy, and in actuality, because I still look considerably "normal" I might mistakenly be treated as if I were mentally ill just because I do things a different way. It's the way I've learned to do things myself over time that works for me since I have not gotten help from anywhere yet. So my questions are: Where can I finally find the help I need? Where can I qualify for the protections I need against discrimination, from being taken advantage of, from being punished unjustly? How can I finally obtain social security disability (I have applied and been denied or I don't get through the initial part of the process before I have to stop)?

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. Disability Rights Florida may be able to provide guidance or a referral. You can contact them at 800-342-0823 or email them at: http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/contact/intake_form/. APD provides to individuals with developmental disabilities. More information is available at <http://apd.myflorida.com/>. If you feel you may qualify for services, information on how to apply is available at <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/application/>.

How do I get more services for my special needs child? He has not been diagnosed with anything yet and would like to get started on it.

Please speak with your child's physician about your concerns.

Why is there no reciprocity in Florida for out of state guardianship? It is a long, expensive process and it is an unnecessary hurdle to have to repeat it here. Why does APD ask for a blood test to prove Down syndrome? In fairness there is also an either/or doctor can certify, but seriously why? Why does APD accept an application signed by someone who has been proven to not understand but not his/her guardian (from another state)?

Florida Statute 744.1098 Change of ward's residence.—

(1) PRIOR COURT APPROVAL REQUIRED.—A guardian who has power pursuant to this chapter to determine the residence of the ward may not, without court approval, change the residence of the ward from this state to another, or from one county of this state to another county of this state, unless such county is adjacent to the county of the ward's current residence. Any guardian who wishes to remove the ward from the ward's current county of residence to another county which is not adjacent to the ward's current county of residence must obtain court approval prior to removal of the ward. In granting its approval, the court shall, at a minimum, consider the reason for such relocation and the longevity of such relocation.

(2) IMMEDIATE COURT NOTIFICATION REQUIRED.—Any guardian who wishes to remove the ward from the ward's current county of residence to another county adjacent to the ward's county of residence shall notify the court having jurisdiction of the guardianship within 15 days after relocation of the ward. Such notice shall

state the compelling reasons for relocation of the ward and how long the guardian expects the ward to remain in such other county.

The second part of this question appears to be an individual issue and APD is following up.

On the APDcares.org site, under CDC+ is a training slide presentation for Personal Care Service for the under 21 client. I appreciate the assistance that has been in applying for this much needed service for my daughter. The one clarification I would appreciate further assistance with is when the client is out for summer school. EQ Health wants an extended request form done closer to the time period, but CDC+ requires a new BCW and PP submitted. Please give the proper forms and steps to address those summer months.

The new BCW would be sent within a few days of the PCA determination being received by CDC+. We don't always receive these determinations, so we always suggest the parent or consultant send us the determination letter once they receive a copy so we can verify receipt in our system or ask EQ to re-transmit the determination to us. The new budget would go into effect on the date indicated on the EQ Health determination. For example if EQ Health approved PCA to begin 9/1, the new budget with PCA would begin 9/1. If the 9/1 date has passed, we would make an adjustment to the 9/1/19 deposit to show the new budget. If a PP is not received by the effective date of the new budget, we would not withhold that budget, the new budget would still take effect the date of the determination. As far as needing more supports during the summer, the Rep is responsible for ensuing appropriate funding is available for the time additional assistance is needed. This is why we allow for savings. If they know they need an additional three hours per day during the summer months, then they would need to ensure enough funds are being held back each month to accommodate the additional hours for the three months of summer.

I am a 49 year old mother of two adolescents with conditions. Unfortunately, I don't have a retirement plan because since my son was born fifteen years ago I have only been given temporary employment and they don't offer benefits. I have applied on countless sites for the past 11 years but full-time is the only employment that offers benefits and my children have no one to watch them if I work all day. How can I make it work to pay for the care of my two children?

If they are under the age of 21, they should be receiving services through the school system.

Affordable housing is a key component in being able to live independently. All APD services in the world will not help if it is impossible to find somewhere to live. What can the APD do to help? You nickel and dime us on services costs (to our detriment) but no one seems to mind that our rent is twice as much as it should be! (Don't say you DON'T do housing either!)

Please contact the Florida Housing Corporation or the Florida Housing Search: <https://www.floridahousingsearch.org/>.

Will the Agency "speak up" and support an increase in service provider rates? It is the right thing to do.

On June 21, 2019, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed his "A Bold Vision for a Brighter Future Budget" that demonstrates his commitment to helping vulnerable Floridians, including those served by APD. The budget includes \$28.7 million in recurring funds for increases in Residential Habilitation provider rates to increase the pay of Direct Care workers. All Residential Habilitation service rates have been increased by 5.75% effective Monday, July 1, 2019. This uniform rate increase has been applied to any service plans currently in the iBudget system for Fiscal Year 2019-2020. Waiver Support Coordinators were to provide the service authorizations to providers no later than July 1, 2019.

How often does the Agency take a comprehensive look at the people on the waiting list to see who is really in need and who is just keeping their options open for services?

Individuals are enrolled on the waiver based on the waiting list category prioritization identified in Florida Statutes. APD staff reviews the waiting list annually for eligibility.

What is APD doing to specifically increase the numbers of qualified providers in the State of Florida? What can we do to encourage more?

APD is continually looking for qualified providers to serve our customers. Our regional offices consistently reach out to develop high quality providers for our customers.

Why doesn't the Agency allow us to be more flexible with the service provided under the iBudget?

If flexibility is a priority for you, you may wish to consider the Consumer-Directed Care Plus program: <http://apd.myflorida.com/cdcplus/>.

How do we get more family involvement in the discussions made at a high level at APD? Is there a family focused group or advisory board in the Agency?

The mission of the Family Care Council Florida (FCCF) is to educate and empower individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, partnering with APD, to bring quality services to individuals with dignity and choice. Learn more at <http://www.fccflorida.org/>.

Will we be able to see what the agency is proposing related to the redesign prior to the legislative session?

Yes, the proposed redesign plan is on the APD website at apdcares.org.

Does the state regulate the waiver service coordinators?

Yes. Regulations pertaining to WSCs can be found in the iBudget Waiver Handbook, incorporated by reference into AHCA Rule 59G-13.070, Florida Administrative Code. There are state regulations pertinent to WSCs. There are also federal requirements as part of the approved federal waiver program.

Is there a website to see if there are any complaints or disciplinary actions against a particular service coordinator?

No, there is not a website for this. If you have concerns about a WSC, please call your regional office: <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

I am told that people in crisis will get services regardless of the waitlist. What then constitutes a crisis? Waiting

Information about applying for the waiver and crisis criteria is online here: <http://apdcares.org/customers/application/>. Please call your regional office for more individual questions. Here is a list of APD regions broken down by county: <http://apdcares.org/region/>.



The Department of Children and Families

How do I get a lawyer to help me with trust issues?

Contact your local bar association and request the names and phone numbers of attorneys who specialize in Trusts. Also ask for attorneys who work pro bono.

What other programs are in Orlando for teen self-advocacy?

Zebra Coalition LGBTQ+ Housing and Support Service
www.zebrayouth.org

Covenant House Opening Doors for Homeless Youth
www.covenanthousefl.org

<http://www.selfadvocacyonline.org/find/>

<http://lighthousecfl.org/Teens>

<https://www.arnoldpalmerhospital.com/childrens-services-and-community-engagement/child-life/arnold-palmer-hospital-young-adult-programming/teen-leadership-council>

PALS-UCF CARD TAG (Teen Asperger's Group)
<http://www.pals-ucfcard.org/tag-teen-aspergers-group>

Orange County Schools Student Advocacy
[https://www.ocps.net/departments/school choice/student advocacy](https://www.ocps.net/departments/school%20choice/student%20advocacy)

How do I begin: My 19-year-old has been denied for HELP her entire life. I invested all my retirement savings determined to help her be her best self. Now, at 19, SSI still denies her claim telling me she can work. I have filed a complaint with Congress, why are honest citizens required to go broke supporting our kids?

The Social Security Administration is a federal agency which operates from a national headquarters with local offices available to service citizens. Information on applications and benefits can be found by logging in to a created *My Social*

Security account at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>. If you need to schedule an appointment at your local office, this can be done by calling them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Generally, you'll have a shorter wait time if you call during the week after Tuesday.

If you need assistance from the state of Florida, an online application may be submitted from any computer with an internet connection at <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida>, at one of our Customer Service Center which can be located at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/map.shtml>, or at one of our community partner sites which can be located at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/access/CPSLookup/search.aspx>. Once a completed and signed application is returned the department can evaluate a case for eligibility for benefits.

What is the impact if a parent becomes disabled and goes on SSDI and has a disabled child on SSI?

Disabled children who are currently receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits may have their benefits affected by any new income in the household, including Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits claimed by their parents. Information from the Social Security Administration regarding this may be found at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/>.

Florida Prison reform – what is your plan for Florida to reduce time? Need more faith-based prison for women in Florida. What is your plan to help youth getting felonies? Need program.

Contact the Department of Corrections.

What can I do to help advocate for a brother with schizophrenia? How do I notify and educate police that he has mental health issues so that he is not harmed by law enforcement?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is an advocacy group run by family members of individuals with mental illness. There are affiliates throughout the state. NAMI may have information on discussing his issues with law enforcement.

This link has information on the affiliates: <https://www.nami.org/Local-NAMI?state=FL&lstd=799>

If law enforcement must be called for assistance, explain the current mental health crisis, and request a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained officer. These officers have specialized training on responding to individuals with mental health and substance use disorders.

Need more information on how to apply for benefits from working and retiring. I'm turning 60 this year and have hearing and mobility problems.

An individual can see if they are eligible for food assistance, temporary cash assistance, and/or Medicaid by visiting the department's online web site at <https://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/> and selecting "Am I Eligible?" A series of questions will be asked about the household circumstances to determine potential eligibility for assistance. To receive benefits, an individual must submit an application so staff can make an eligibility determination. An individual may submit an online application using the same website address or by completing and submitting a paper application. A paper application is available online at: <https://eds.myflfamilies.com/DCFFormsInternet/Search/DCFFormSearch.aspx> or an individual can call the department's Customer Call Center at (866) 762-2237 to have a paper application mailed. The online application is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The department has community partners throughout Florida that are ready to assist applicants in applying for public benefits. A list of participating community partners is available online at: <https://access-web.dcf.state.fl.us/CPSLookup/search.aspx>. Applying applicants will receive a notice of eligibility determination within 30 days (90 days if a disability determination is needed) from the date the application is received by the department.

If the individual is under age 65 and has no children, you must be disabled to qualify for Medicaid. You may be disabled if you have a condition that has affected (or is expected to affect) your ability to work for at least 12 full months. If the individual is applying for Medicaid based on their disability, they must apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). If Social Security Administration (SSA) determines you are disabled, we accept their decision and will automatically consider you disabled. If you do not have a disability determination from Social Security, we will work with the Division of Disability Determinations (DDD) to have them evaluate your condition based on medical information you provide. Another option to receive Medicaid coverage is if an individual receives Supplemental

Security Income (SSI) from SSA. Individuals who receive SSI are automatically entitled to Medicaid coverage and an application is not required. For more information about Social Security, call 1-800-772-1213 or visit them online at <http://www.ssa.gov>.

Are you for or against psychologists prescribing medication? Why?

Current state law, Florida Statutes Chapter 490, prohibits psychologists from prescribing medication because they are not MDs.

Can a special needs lawyer set up a trust before someone with a will dies? What if I inherit too much and lose my services?

Questions regarding legal issues should be addressed to legal counsel. Assistance with legal questions could be obtained through your local legal services-legal aid organization which provides free or low-cost legal services to persons with low incomes. For your living area this organization would be Three Rivers Legal Services, at <https://www.trls.org/>. All public assistance programs must adhere to established income and asset limits. Policy information regarding our programs can be found at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/program-policy-manual.shtml>.

How do I figure out where to go for DCF services in my area? The website does not get it for me.

The Department of Children and Families contracts with seven Managing Entities (ME) around the state to administer the behavioral health system of care in their area for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. MEs provide behavioral health services and supports to eligible individuals through a network of contracted providers. Eligible individuals are adults with serious mental illnesses or who are in a mental health crisis and children with an emotional disturbance, mental illness, or who are in an acute mental health or emotional crisis. The MEs are listed below, along with their help line numbers for each Entity and the counties they serve.

- 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.

Without specifying what types of services you are interested in accessing, it is hard to provide department contact numbers to you. However, the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS) has both a searchable database of health and community services across the state of Florida and a phone service reachable by dialing 211. If your local telephone service provider does not connect you when you dial 211, simply use (866) 728-8445. The corresponding website link is: <http://my211florida.org/>.

Is the state getting more money to deal with the opioid problem? How is it being spent? What type of services are offered?

The Department of Children and Families received a federal State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to fund services for individuals with opioid use disorder. This is a two-year grant, funded at \$50,056,851 per grant year from September 30, 2018 – September 29, 2020. The department also received a supplemental award as part of this project in the amount of \$26,129,676, to be spent by September 29, 2020. The goals of the SOR grant are to increase access to evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services to individuals with opioid use disorder who are uninsured, underinsured, or indigent. The department plans to achieve these goals by:

- reducing numbers and rates of opioid-related deaths,
- preventing prescription opioid misuse among young people,
- increasing access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and associated services among individuals with opioid use disorders, and
- increasing the number of individuals and organizations providing MAT and recovery support services.

Additionally, SOR grant funds are utilized to purchase naloxone, the life-saving medication that can reverse an opioid overdose, to be provided to community-based organizations that hand out the medication for free directly to people who use drugs or are otherwise at risk of experiencing an overdose as well as to their peers and loved ones that may witness an overdose.

To find the nearest Naloxone distributor in your area, please visit: [iSaveFL/Locator](#).

Kids that have lived through hurricanes like Michael are dealing with a lot of daily trauma and upset. What is DCF doing to help them with the daily trauma?

In response to Hurricane Michael, the Department of Children and Families in coordination with First Lady Casey DeSantis and FBBCBC, received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for a Crisis Counseling Program called Project HOPE (Helping Our People in Emergencies). Project HOPE operates teams who provide outreach in communities that were impacted by the storm to connect people to resources and help them manage disaster-related stress. The teams operate within schools, day care centers, after school programs, faith-based organizations, and other programs that serve children, to talk to them about their experience and how to cope with it.

Additionally, DCF received a grant and installed telehealth portals in 63 panhandle public schools connecting more than 35,000 students with mental health counseling and support.

For more information on Project Hope, please visit <https://lmccares.org/services/project-hope/>.

If you or someone you know someone who needs assistance, please call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990.

What role does DCF have in housing migrant children? I have heard that the conditions at the Homestead facility are poor. Who is responsible?

The housing of migrant children is the responsibility of the federal, not state government. Although the Homestead facility is now closed, when it was open the department had no role in the placement of children there, or the licensing of that shelter as it was on federal property (i.e., the department had no legal jurisdiction under federal law).

The facility in Homestead is a federal facility on federal land. The Department of Children and Families does not have any involvement with children placed there or any jurisdiction to license the facility. Unaccompanied alien children are in the custody of the federal government and served through the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of Refugee Resettlement at HHS. Information on that program is available here: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/ucs>. Refugee Services at Department of Children and Families manages a small program for unaccompanied refugee minors, which includes only children with specific documentation of status that confers eligibility, including refugees, asylees and Special Immigrant Juvenile status. None, therefore, are undocumented. The Department of Children and Families assists four types of immigrant populations of which Congress determines which groups are eligible for benefits and services provided through the Refugee Services Program.

- Refugees
 - Unaccompanied refugee minors are provided services equivalent to youth in foster care and services oriented toward the special needs of refugee youth (i.e., ESOL, cultural identity and adjustment, family tracing and trauma treatment services”). Information on the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program is available through the Office of Refugee Resettlement’s (ORR) website here: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/urm/about>
- Asylees
- Cuban/Haitian Entrants
- Foreign Victims of Human Trafficking

If someone has a disability AND a behavioral health issue, can they access DCF services? If so, what are those services? What is available?

Many insurance plans and Florida Medicaid cover behavioral health services. Please contact your health plan to discuss available services.

For individuals who are uninsured or underinsured, the Department of Children and Families contracts with seven Managing Entities (ME) around the state to manage the behavioral health system of care in their contracted area. MEs provide services and supports through a network of contracted providers for adults with serious mental illnesses or who are in a mental health crisis and children with an emotional disturbance, mental illness, or who are in an acute mental health or emotional crisis. Services include behavioral health assessments, individual and family therapy, group therapy, psychiatric evaluation, medication management, supported housing, supported employment, case management, and many more.

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

- 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 does “Adult Protective Services” do? Is that who should I contact if I am worried about an adult with a disability being mistreated?

The Adult Protective Services (APS) Program is responsible for preventing further harm to vulnerable adults who are victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-

neglect. Florida statutes require any person who knows or who has reasonable cause to suspect any abuse of vulnerable adults to report that information to the Florida Abuse Hotline. In addition, the APS Program supports adults with disabilities (18 through 59 years of age) who need assistance to remain in their homes and/or in the community.

If you suspect a vulnerable adult is self-neglecting or is the victim of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation, you will need to file a report with the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE). If a report is accepted, an adult protective investigator will contact the alleged victim within 24 hours.

Is it true that some parents have had to relinquish custody of their kids to get them help from DCF? Why is that?

The Department of Children and Families' policy does not permit parents to relinquish their children to obtain services.

It seems like some areas of the state have more resources than others. How does DCF make sure every region gets the same funding?

This answer addresses how behavioral health resources are allocated in Florida. The Florida legislature appropriates state funds and authorizes the use of federal grant funds to the Department of Children and Families. The department contracts with seven Managing Entities (ME) around the state to manage the behavioral health system of care in their contracted area. Each region is not always funded the same amount; some regions are large geographically, while others are large in population size. For example, the Northeast region has 18 counties, while the Southern region has two counties. Funds are allocated to the MEs based on a number of factors, including number of counties served, population, and need. Entities such as county governments or health care providers can submit legislative budget requests for funding programs and services as well. These factors can account for differences in resources between regions.

I have heard that DCF doesn't have enough investigators to follow up reports of abuse. What do you do to make sure that every abuse report is investigated fully?

The Department of Children and Families investigates every allegation of abuse, abandonment or neglect that meets statutory criteria. The work of Child Protective Investigators (CPI) is challenging, and the department has put in place several

measures to ensure that we are constantly recruiting the right people for this important work. Using caseload-shifting reporting measures and the CPI TIGER teams, the department can ensure that investigations are commenced timely and children are seen immediately.

I am considering becoming a foster parent. How does DCF support foster parents? What is the process of becoming a foster parent like?

Foster parents throughout the state of Florida are supported by both their local licensing agencies, their local Foster and Adoptive Parent Associations, and the Department of Children and Families. Support to foster parents can include:

- help with obtaining supplies for children in their home,
- ongoing case management assistance to help with coordinating services for the children placed in their home, and
- ongoing foster parent appreciation events.

The licensing process for becoming a foster parent is designed to help licensing agencies assess families to determine the most appropriate placements for the children in care (e.g., a foster parent may already have special medical training for infants with disabilities because they are a nurse, etc.). This process of assessing includes training components and home evaluations to adequately prepare the foster parents for handling the needs of children placed in their care.

The process of becoming a foster parent varies by CBC so it is best to contact them for their process. The list of CBCs can be found on the Departments Website, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/foster-care/how-do-I.shtml>. Some steps in the process may include inquiry process, background and application screening, home visits, and trainings.

How do I successfully apply for public benefits?

To apply for public assistance benefits, an online application may be submitted from any computer with an internet connection at <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida>, at one of our Customer Service Center which can be located at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/map.shtml>, or at one of our community partner sites which can be located at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/access/CPSLookup/search.aspx>. Once a completed and signed application is returned the Department can evaluate a case for eligibility for benefits.

To apply for food assistance, temporary cash assistance, and Medicaid, please visit: www.myflorida.com/accessflorida.

I am having trouble finding child care in my community. Does DCF have information about child care? What about resources to help cover the cost?

The department provides resources for families to assist with one of the most important decisions a parent makes, which is choosing quality child care for their child. The resources are located at this link <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/parent-resources.shtml>.

For help with the cost of child care, there are 30 regional Early Learning Coalitions that offer support to families. To find the coalition in your area, you can visit this link: <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/coalitions>.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Samantha Wass de Czege at (850) 717-4374.

I heard about a kind of service called “peer support” in a session at The Family Café. What is peer support? How do I access it?

Peer support services are provided by someone with experience living with behavioral health or substance use issues. They can provide support, advocacy, education, and motivation to an individual or family struggling with similar issues.

Family Run Organizations such as the Federation of Families and affiliates of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) may have peer support programs.

Here is a link to the NAMI Florida website. The website has a link for NAMI Affiliates. <https://namiflorida.org/>

Here is a link to the National Federation of Families website with a map of affiliates. <https://www.ffcmh.org/our-affiliates>.

The Department of Children and Families contracts with seven Managing Entities (ME) around the state to manage the behavioral health system of care in their contracted area for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. MEs provide services and supports, including peer support services, to eligible individuals through a network of contracted providers. Eligible individuals are adults with serious mental illnesses or who are in a mental health crisis and children with an emotional disturbance, mental illness, or who are in an acute mental health or

emotional crisis. The MEs are listed below, along with their help line number and the counties they serve. The ME for your area can provide information on accessing peer support services. However, if you have insurance or Medicaid, please contact your health plan.

- 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.

Suicide is a major problem in my community. What is DCF doing to address the suicide crisis? Especially among teens?

The Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention (SOSP) is under the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health at the Department of Children and Families. Florida has a statewide plan that includes 7 goals and 11 objectives that stakeholders can work towards. SOSP is working with the Department of Health to begin discussing at-risk populations, which includes teens. The SOSP works with the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council which meets quarterly to discuss suicide prevention efforts. SOSP also maintains a suicide prevention website with resources and a calendar that includes trainings as well as activities that focus on suicide prevention in Florida. For more information, please visit our website:

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>.

If you know someone who is thinking about suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 right away.

I live in a rural area and have trouble finding services. What are you doing to make help available in rural parts of the state?

The Department of Children and Families funds services to eligible individuals who are uninsured or underinsured through contracts with seven Managing Entities (ME) around the state that manage the behavioral health system of care in their contracted area. Eligible individuals are adults with serious mental illnesses or who are in a mental health crisis and children with an emotional disturbance, mental illness, or who are in an acute mental health or emotional crisis. MEs provide services and supports through a network of contracted providers. MEs are responsible for addressing the specific needs of communities served in their geographic area, including rural areas. Many services are available through telehealth or in home when transportation to a provider is an issue. These strategies are intended to increase access to services for rural communities.

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

- 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.worldsecur systems.com/>
Serving Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties.

Additionally, the Economic Self Sufficiency Program, within the Department of Children and Families, has a variety of methods for individuals to apply for and obtain assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program, and the Medicaid program. To receive assistance in applying for these benefits, the service center nearest to you can be located 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>. Phone inquiries can be made to our Customer Call Center at 1-866-762-2237.



The Department of Education

How can the Governor open doors for the mid-level functioning autistic to be able to attend university or post-secondary education without bias as to their inability to socialize or difficulty to adjust to new environments? Universities tend to have this bias in the selection process based on IEPs or psychological reports. This defeats the open access policy for all types of disabilities.

Students with disabilities are welcome on all campuses of State Universities and State Colleges. As students with disabilities graduate from high school and begin postsecondary education, they transition from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This transition affects the types of services provided and the responsibilities of both students and postsecondary institutions.

If students wish to receive accommodations while enrolled, they should contact the student disability office at that college or university. For more information please visit the college system website at: <http://fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/academic-student-affairs/disability-support-services.stml>.

Why, if the government is giving money to programs for special needs, do we, the parents from the AWA program (adults with disabilities) in Seagull High School in Fort Lauderdale, have to beg for money every year to keep our wonderful program alive? The parents and teachers have to travel to Tallahassee every year in order to get some help. Please listen to our needs. It's a wonderful program for our adult children.

Governor DeSantis recommended and funding was approved for \$800,000 for the Broward County Public Schools Adults with Disabilities for the Fiscal Year 2019-20. You can find the complete appropriation list at: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/18797/urlt/FY2021BR.pdf>.

What services, including school, are available for persons with communication disorders? What is the appropriate testing to use in school to properly reflect the level of performance in nonverbal students?

There are a variety of services and supports available to students with communication disorders. These services range from consultation between the

speech language pathologist (SLP) and general education teachers regarding the communication needs of the student to direct services, including support in using assistive technology or language therapy. The communication needs of the student determine the services provided to the student.

Non-verbal students can be assessed using any of the following: hearing and vision screening, student observation, teacher interview about the communication skills the student currently uses (e.g., gestures or vocalizations), teacher or parent checklists, parent input regarding the student's communication skills and child development, standardized assessments that are normed for non-verbal students, assistive technology evaluations, oral examination, and a review of the student's medical history. The evaluation would include the components needed to gather all of the pertinent information in order for the team to assess the student's level of communication performance and to be able to write individual educational goals for the student to improve communication skills. You can find more specific information at: <http://fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/ese-eligibility/speech-impairment-si.stml>.

Why does the DOE allow teachers to use whatever apps they want? I have six teachers and six different apps to get homework from. It's confusing.

District Superintendents and School Boards are charged with operating their school districts. This would include any technology utilized. Please contact your school district office to discuss concerns over applications. You can find more information on Florida Statute at: <http://fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7567/urlt/1BTOC.PDF>.

We need more oversight of school district abuses in the IEP process. Violating timelines, ignoring parent concerns, not providing data or evaluation reports timely to parents. Poor data collection.

You as a parent may request an IEP meeting at any time. If there is a disagreement, or when you believe that the school is not meeting its legal obligations, there are various options available to resolve these disputes. Information about these options can be found at the following webpage: <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/dispute-resolution/>. It is usually to everyone's advantage to try to resolve differences or correct any noncompliance concerns in the least adversarial manner and closest to the school level. This saves time, preserves relationships, and can result in better outcomes for the student as well as their family.

We need actual services for OT and PT, counseling, and behavior/sensory therapies. They are being replaced by consults only expecting classroom teachers who are not qualified to provide these.

Services such as occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and counseling are based on the needs of the student and are reflected on the IEP. You as a parent are a part of the IEP team and can voice your concerns regarding the amount of direct service for OT and PT your child receives. The IEP team decides what supports and related services are needed. For more information on related services please visit the department's website at: <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/ese-eligibility/occupational-physical-therapy-ot-pt-as.stml>.

Please can parents be more involved before legislation or regulations are written? You may not be able to see things from our point of view.

Please can we discuss better language in the statute so parents can actually obtain an IEP for their children without fear of automatic reduction of funding over an inadequate IEP?

Please review the narrow language and interpretation of the phrases "specialized summer program" and "specialized after school program." Narrowly applying this as meaning ONLY special needs programs turns back the clock on inclusion for our kids. Many of our kids need these programs other than summer or after-school.

Legislation is prepared, proposed and passed by legislators. Please contact your local legislator regarding new legislation or changes to current legislation.

Before an education related rule is sent to the State Board of Education for approval there is time allowed for public input. You can find all rules and sign up for e-mail notification regarding when new rules will be discussed or current rules amended at: <https://www.flrules.org/default.asp>.

Please can our children have access to the arts, PE, and job/career activities that could be taught by professionals in the field? Auto mechanics, carpenters, artists, musicians, chefs, etc. Many of these professionals do not have degree programs or licenses.

Many students with disabilities participate in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in middle and high school and efforts are currently in progress to expand opportunities in that area. It is encouraging that the number of students with disabilities earning industry certifications is increasing. For example, over 1,100 more industry certifications were reported in 2017-18 than in 2016-17 for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities also have access to graduation pathways that allow them to substitute related CTE courses for one math, one science, English 4 and one social studies course in high school. Additionally, recent legislation created the Career and Technical Education Graduation Pathway for all students. More information about this new pathway may be found at: <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/pathways-option.shtml>.

Thank you for being here! Do you see the FL DOE expanding public school inclusion or continuing to expand McKay for private placement? Can we accomplish both?

The Legislature, not FDOE, would be responsible for initiating expansion of any school choice options. That said, each year since 2005, we have seen both new programs as well as expansions to existing programs as it relates to all choice options. For more information on school choice please visit our website at: <http://fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/>.

My kids have aged out or graduated, but increasingly friends' children are being graduated out of high school at 18-19 even though the law says they can stay until age 21 or they are ready for post-secondary education. These are severe kids that require 24/7 supervision. APD is not prepared to take them early, Seminole County says "Sue us!" Most parents can't afford to hire an attorney. I hear it is not the only county doing this – how is that allowed?

Transition services are provided through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and a provision of free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The student's post-school goals identified in the individual educational plan (IEP) should drive the annual goals, supports and services to help facilitate movement from school to post-school.

Deferral of the diploma is available to students who have a current IEP and have met the requirements to receive a standard diploma but require additional transition services or programs.

If you believe that the school is not meeting its legal obligations, there are various options available to resolve these disputes. Information about these options may be found at the following webpage: <http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/dispute-resolution/>.

My daughter is 9yrs old. She has ASD in a Gen Ed classroom. She is on standards and going to the 3rd grade. Is there anything for her where I can get help her to prep for the SAT? She is a visual learner and I find when things are broken down with pictures this seems to help her some.

Ask your school or district if they have test prep or practice materials for the SAT-10 assessment. The state does not provide practice test items or fact sheets on SAT-10. They do provide this for the Florida Standards Assessment at <http://www.fl DOE.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/fsa.shtml>.

We have had situations here in south Florida with non-verbal ASD children being mistreated and abused. How can we go about getting cameras in classrooms?

The school district superintendent and school board are charged with making policies and decisions such as placing cameras within classrooms. You can contact the school board office, the superintendent's office, or both to share your concerns. For a list of school district safety officers please go to FDOE website at: <http://fl DOE.org/safe-schools/>.

What is the difference between the Gardiner Scholarship Program and The McKay Scholarship Program?

The main difference is the administration of the program, student eligibility and approved expenditures. The McKay Scholarship funds can be used towards tuition and fees at an approved private school. The Gardiner Scholarship offers a bit more flexibility and can be used towards several services or products, including private school tuition and fees, select home education materials, approved therapies and services and assistive learning devices. Additional information can be found online at <http://www.fl DOE.org/schools/school-choice/>.

How can I get my son into the Gardiner Scholarship Program? My school says they don't offer this program in Lake County. Is this nonsense true?

The Gardiner Scholarship Program is available to students 3 to 4 years of age, private school students and home education students that have a qualifying disability. This program is not part of the schools district. You can apply for the Gardiner Scholarship Program through one of the approved Scholarship Funding Organizations below. You may also want to visit our website for information, www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

A.A.A. Scholarship Foundation
Phone: 888-707-2465
info@aaascholarships.org

Step Up for Students
Phone: 877-735-7837
info@stepupforstudents.org

I liked how many sessions were for the parents of teens who are deaf/blind. I was just wondering if these presenters would offer more support for these teens directly in the school setting. Such a hard age and rough disability to have to endure.

The Division of Blind Services of the Florida Department of Education offers many services to students of all ages and their families. Details can be found on their website at <http://dbs.myflorida.com/>. In addition, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Students Services funds several discretionary projects designed to help school districts, schools, and students who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a visual impairment. These include auditory/oral education programs at both the Clarke School and the Debbie School, the Resource Materials and Technology Center for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired. Other BEESS projects work to increase the number of qualified teachers and educational interpreters in Florida. A full list of projects, including contact information, is available at: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7567/urlt/IDEADisGrantProDesc.pdf>.

How can parents form a separate PTA/PTO for special education at the school? Separate means maybe better than equal.

Most school districts have an ESE parent advisory committee in place. Reach out to your district ESE department and ask for the committee contact. If your district does not have such a committee express interest in creating one. You can find

your district ESE director's contact information at the following link:
<https://app4.fldoe.org/ESEContacts/Default.aspx>.

Where can I find out more about the CARD Centers?

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) provides services to individuals with autism and related disabilities, to their families, and to the professionals who work with them. The Florida State Legislature allocates funds that are administered to the seven regional CARD sites through the state's Department of Education. The program has grown to include several branch offices. To determine which CARD site serves your area please visit CARD's website at <http://florida-card.org/index.htm>.

With all the mass shootings in schools, etc., are there any enhanced programs in the school to reduce behaviors? Any techniques to offer the schools, teachers, parents and students to reduce the community stressors? Teaching ways to de-escalate tempers, and to influence cooperative behavior?

In Florida, the responsibility of operating, controlling and supervising the public schools lies with local administrators and members of the school board. This is referred to as "local control" and places decision-making in the hands of those closest to the students. The school and district staff are in a better position to make determinations as to what specific programs would be appropriate to implement to reduce some of the behaviors, stressors and concerns you mention. For this reason, if you would like specific information about programs being implemented within a particular school or school district, we suggest you reach out to your local Superintendent or the designated School Safety Specialist in your area for more information.

One of the ways in which the Department of Education is supporting schools and school districts in this effort is by facilitating communication and idea sharing, specifically in the area of promoting social and emotional skills development. Many school districts and/or schools within are using Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a means of countering some of the negative behaviors we face from day to day. SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. As you can see, many of these skills are foundational to reducing stressors, de-escalating tempers and influencing cooperative behaviors. Although

SEL is not specifically required in Florida, there is a growing number of educators and school district leaders who see the value in teaching these skills to all students as a first step in addressing many of the challenges we face in our schools and communities. If you are interested in learning more about SEL in Florida, I encourage you to explore the Florida SEL website at <http://www.floridasel.org/>. The website includes a Landscape Map which identifies many of the school districts and what they are doing in these efforts.

If I home school my child because the school is not doing a great job in teaching my child, do I get an IEP from the school? I need to continue supports and services.

An IEP is for students enrolled in public schools. Districts may provide students that are home schooled some services through a service plan. Please contact your school district for more specific information. You may also want to read the FDOE publication *Home Education and ESE Services FAQs* which can be found at: http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7709/urlt/ese_faqs.pdf.

Where in Florida are the opportunities and scholarship for my child to apply and attend college or other after high school training or job offers?

If your child has met all graduation requirements and will be deferring receipt of their diploma, school districts offer a wide variety of programs for students who are aged 18-22. Arrangements for your child's continued services should be discussed at least yearly at the IEP meeting. With your consent, outside agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), should be included in the discussion if they will be assisting in providing services after high school.

Many postsecondary options are available if your child will be graduating and exiting the K-12 setting. There are 49 technical colleges and centers with College of Education Accreditation. Florida's College System consists of 28 colleges with 72 campuses. To learn more about the Florida College System, visit: <https://www.floridacollegesystem.com/Default.aspx>. Florida's public university system includes 12 universities. Additional information about the State University System of Florida may be found at: <https://www.flbog.edu/>. Information regarding Private Post-Secondary Education is provided by the Commission on Independent Education through the link at: <http://www.fldoe.org/about-us/independent-edu.stml> or call Independent Education (Post-Secondary) 1-888-224-6684.

Postsecondary options for students with significant cognitive disabilities are available also. Postsecondary options to consider include programs with the Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education and Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities. To learn more about these programs, please visit the following websites: <http://fcihe.com/> and <http://fcsua.org/>.

Financial Aid information is available at <https://fafsa.gov/>. Scholarships, grants and financial resources for students with disabilities may be found at: <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=167>. Some students may qualify for Bright Futures. For additional information, please visit: <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/SAPBFMAIN/SAPBFMAIN>. Lastly, check with Financial Aid offices and Disability offices at the college of choice for additional information on scholarships that may be available.

What is the legal definition of inclusion? I did not make it to the session and need to know from FIN.

Inclusion is the practice of educating all students together – students with disabilities and students without disabilities – regardless of their abilities or readiness. S. 1003.57(1)(a)2., F.S., defines inclusion as follows:

A school district shall use the term "inclusion" to mean that a student is receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogeneous groups in core academic and elective or special areas within the school community; a student with a disability is a valued member of the classroom and school community; the teachers and administrators support universal education and have knowledge and support available to enable them to effectively teach all children; and a teacher is provided access to technical assistance in best practices, instructional methods, and supports tailored to the student's needs based on current research.

Inclusion is more than placing students with disabilities in a room with their peers without disabilities. With true inclusion, students with disabilities can access the general education curriculum, classrooms, and typical school activities. Rather than having the student go to a segregated setting for specialized instruction and support, the student receives the supports in the general education setting. Many leaders in the field identify the general education classroom as the optimal place where access to the general education curriculum occurs (Wehmeyer & Agran, 2006).

For additional information please view the technical assistance paper on the least restrictive environment at: <http://info.fl DOE.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7540/dps-2016-13.pdf>.

Is the extended school year policy in every school district? Is it the same in every district? My county says that they do not offer or provide. The session I went to talks as if every school county has to offer. I am assuming the presenters were correct. How can I change my school practice of not providing?

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. You can find additional information at: www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070098-esyparen.pdf

How can we get more assistive technology options in the classroom? My son needs AT, but I did not know about all the options. This is amazing! My son can now get help with the school setting. I love the AT room. Onward to my school district for assistance in securing. Thank you!

Making more assistive technology available in the classroom starts with an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meeting. All IEP teams must consider whether a student with a disability requires assistive technology devices and services (34 CFR §300.324(a)(2)(v) and Rule 6A 6.03028(3)(g)10., F.A.C.). Consideration is a discussion that takes place during the IEP team meeting using known information and evaluation results to make a decision regarding assistive technology already being used, trying different assistive technology, or discontinuing assistive technology currently in place. An IEP team should make sure they have access to information about a full range of assistive technology options and have data that supports the student's needs. Local and Regional Assistive Technology Specialists (LATS and RLATS) are available through districts to support IEP teams. State discretionary projects, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) and Technology and Learning Connections (TLC), support statewide technology specialists. For more information on assistive technology see the technical

assistance paper, "Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities"
(<https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6801/dps-2013-65.pdf>).



The Department of Health

How can we collaborate on an organization to encourage and support more primary care providers for our babies?

The Office of Children’s Medical Services Managed Care Plan and Specialty Programs works with several organizations including the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/practice-transformation/medicalhome/Pages/home.aspx>), the University of Central Florida’s HealthARCH (Advancing Resources to Change Healthcare), and the University of South Florida’s FloridaHATS (Health and Transition Services), to provide outreach, education, and support to primary care providers serving children, including children and youth with special health care needs.

What can you do or where can you go if you don’t have anyone to take care of your 5 year old child when you are gone? What happens to your child? Unless you’re at a clinic for CMS, no one helps. Why?

Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care (PPEC) may be an option for your family. PPEC centers allow Medicaid eligible children from birth through age 20 with medically-complex conditions to receive continual medical care in a non-residential setting. When approved, children can attend a PPEC up to a maximum of 12 hours per day while receiving nursing services, personal care, developmental therapies, and caregiver training. For more information about PPEC services, please visit the Agency for Health Care Administration website at: <https://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/childhealthservices/ppec/index.shtml>.

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) has great information for parents looking for child care, including a provider search. Please visit the DCF website at: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/parent-resources.shtml>.

If you are a Children’s Medical Services (CMS) Health Plan member, you may contact your CMS Health Plan care manager or customer service at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711), to get help with finding a provider or service.

How can we better inform people who are new to the process for services of the definitions of the numerous cross-agency terms used for newest families of small children in the system of care? Is there a glossary of acronyms?

Families are very important team members in the Early Steps Program. Ensuring families are aware of the terms and acronyms commonly used is essential to being fully-informed participants. The Early Steps Program has a list of acronyms posted to the website located at: <http://www.cms-kids.com/index.html>, listed under Resources.

February 1st, CMS changed to WellCare for us and all I get now is denial of payment notice. I have filed to appeal them. It's not just one area. This is not good and now we have no nurse because she wasn't getting paid either. Please help!

As a Children's Medical Services (CMS) Health Plan member, you may contact your CMS Health Plan care manager or customer service (1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711)) to get help with finding a provider or service. Your care manager can be a big help in navigating changes and solving problems.

Providers who experience issues, such as denied claims, should contact the CMS/WellCare provider relations liaison or call customer service at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711).

There are also helpful reference guides available to help providers submit "clean" claims and understand denials. For CMS Health Plan providers, please visit the WellCare website at: <https://www.wellcare.com/en/Florida/Providers/CMS-Transition-Page>.

Children's Medical Services Network medical coverage for children should not suddenly end when a child reaches 18 or 19. They are left in a medical wasteland with no coverage at a critical time.

Children's Medical Services (CMS) Health Plan helps its members get ready to become adults. Our trained care managers are here to guide members and families on subjects, such as:

- Provider choice
- Employment

- Housing
- Transportation

Our Transition Aged Youth Program includes screening, coaching, education, and tools to help families reach their goals. We help members figure out what services they need help with and create a plan to gain these skills.

For the continuation of medical care, CMS Health Plan care managers assist the member at least 12 months prior to the end of their eligibility for the CMS Health Plan. Members are encouraged to reach out to a care manager to request assistance with the transition process. If you want to speak to a Care Manager and do not have the contact information, please call CMS Health Plan customer service at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711).

There are also many options for continued health coverage outside of the CMS Health Plan. The number of options is sometimes hard to navigate. The Florida Department of Health, through FloridaHATS.org, offers a Tool Box to help you and your child understand the many options. The Tool Box and other resources are available at <https://www.floridahats.org/>.

Why was the Cystic Fibrosis Med waiver cut? We can't get the services we need!

The Cystic Fibrosis Medicaid Waiver Program was not cut, but rather moved to the Agency for Health Care Administration under the Long-Term Care Waiver. The purpose of the Medicaid Long-Term Care Waiver is to provide services to eligible individuals age 18 or older who need long-term services and supports, including individuals over the age of 18 with a diagnosis of cystic fibrosis, AIDS, or a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury. The Long-term Care Waiver is designed to delay or prevent institutionalization and allow waiver recipients to maintain stable health while receiving services at home and in the community. Individuals in the program may also be served in a nursing facility setting.

Our son with the disability "Joubert Syndrome" has Medicaid and Medicare but not dental. How does he get it?

As a Medicaid recipient, your son is most likely already enrolled in a dental plan. Beginning in December 2018, Medicaid recipients began to receive dental services in a new way. All eligible recipients are required to select a dental plan for their

dental services. Recipients no longer receive dental services through their health plan.

The Agency for Health Care Administration selected three dental plans to operate statewide and each recipient will have a choice among these three plans, which are DentaQuest, Liberty, and Dental Managed Care of North America (MCNA).

Medicaid dental services include the study, screening, assessment, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of diseases, disorders, and conditions of the oral cavity. Medicaid reimburses for dental services for recipients under the age of 21 years.

You may check your coverage at <https://flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/> or at <https://flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/dental/dentalplaninformation>.

My daughter with Down Syndrome has had SSI since 18 years old. She is 21. Why hasn't she gotten Medicare yet when some others have? I started SS last November and they told me 2 years from that until she got Medicare. How do others without a parent on SS or SSDI get Medicare sooner? We receive services now from CMS. This is maddening!

The rules governing SSI and Medicaid are sometimes complicated. In most cases, you will become eligible for Medicare after you have been receiving Social Security Disability benefits for two years. Some people with certain qualifying conditions may qualify for Medicare immediately. When you hear of others getting Medicare sooner, it is most likely based on the recipient's medical condition.

For more information about Medicare eligibility, please visit <https://www.hhs.gov/answers/medicare-and-medicaid/who-is-eligible-for-medicare/index.html>.

The managed care system with CMS/WellCare is just not working out! Please let them know that the services guaranteed under our CMS are not being offered with WellCare.

Sometimes it can be hard to know who to ask for a service. This is where your CMS Health Plan care manager can help. If you want to speak to your care manager and do not have their contact information, please call CMS Health Plan customer service at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711).

If you are not happy with CMS Health Plan or our providers, you can file a complaint. The CMS Health Plan tries to solve your issue within one business day. You can call us at any time at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711).

The KidCare application process is arduous at best. I wish as much energy was put into kids getting covered as is spent on making sure no one slips in on a technicality.

KidCare offers online or printable applications on the website at <https://floridakidcare.org/>. Only one application needs to be filled out and once you have applied, Florida KidCare will let you know which program fits your family the best.

If you need application assistance, please call Florida KidCare at 1-888-540- 5437 (TTY 1-800-955-877). Local assistance may also be available in your area. To find an insurance Navigator near you, please visit <https://health.usf.edu/publichealth/chiles/fckaf/>.

Application processing typically takes four to six weeks. Coverage will begin on the first of the month only after your child's eligibility has been determined and the first month's premium has been paid.

What are the conditions they are screening for in the newborn screening program? Do they do this with every child born in a hospital in Florida?

Florida currently screens for 54 conditions. The current condition list can be found on the website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/newborn-screening/nbs-disorder.html>. All newborns are to be screened in Florida, unless a parent chooses to opt out of screening. Please feel free to contact the Newborn Screening Program at (866) 804-9166 with any additional questions.

Where do I find information on the Early Steps Program in my community? Transportation is a challenge for me. Is there a transportation component with the Early Steps program?

Early Steps services are provided in the natural environment, which are the day-to-day routines, activities, and places that promote learning opportunities for an individual child and family (e.g., home, daycare, community settings). The Early Steps Program can pay for the cost of travel and other costs, such as tolls or parking expenses that are necessary to enable an eligible child and the child's family to receive early intervention services. Additionally, the child's Service Coordinator can assist the family in locating transportation services within their community. Further information on the Early Steps Program, including how to make a referral, can be found at www.earlystepsdirectory.com.

What are the differences between KidCare and Children’s Medical Services? How does one qualify for each?

Florida KidCare is the State of Florida’s high-quality, low-cost health insurance for children. The program was created through Title XXI of the Social Security Act and reauthorized in 2009. Through its four partners, the program covers children from birth through age 18. One of the KidCare partners is Children’s Medical Services (CMS) Health Plan, which is administered by the Florida Department of Health.

CMS Health Plan is designed for children who are eligible for Medicaid or subsidized KidCare and have special health care needs.

To qualify for KidCare a person must:

- be under age 19
- meet income eligibility requirements
- be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen
- not be eligible for fully-subsidized Medicaid
- not be in a public institution

To qualify for the CMS Health Plan component of KidCare, a person must:

- meet requirements for *subsidized** KidCare (listed above)
- meet CMS clinical screening requirements or have a physician attest to child's qualifying medical conditions

To request a CMS Health Plan clinical eligibility screening, please call 1-855-901-5390.

*Full pay KidCare children are not eligible for the CMS Health Plan. For more information on KidCare financial eligibility or to estimate what your KidCare monthly premium might be, please visit <https://floridakidcare.org> or call 1-888-540-5437 (TTY 1-800-955-8771).

I have a family member who has 2 kids now that she will not vaccinate. She claims that is how her brother got Autism. Now, we know this is not true, but how is she not concerned for the livelihood of her children? Schools, malls, childcare setting, heck everywhere she is either a threat or will be threatened. What can I do to tell her this is not the best decision for her family? She is a great young mother.

The Department of Health acknowledges that your family member has concerns regarding autism. Although the causes of autism are not fully understood, the

evidence does not suggest that vaccines or their ingredients cause autism. One ingredient, thimerosal, was studied extensively as a link between vaccine and autism. Research showed that there was no link between the exposure to thimerosal in vaccines and the development of autism in children. Thimerosal, which is used as a preservative, has since been removed from most childhood vaccines. Numerous studies have been done to determine if there is a link between autism and vaccines and none have shown that vaccines cause autism.

You may encourage your family member to review information regarding vaccines and autism from trusted websites, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html>) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunizations/Pages/Immunizations-home.aspx>). The U.S. recommended immunization schedules have been studied extensively for safety and effectiveness and the number of vaccines administered at once has no impact on a child's risk of developing autism. The resurgence of vaccine preventable diseases, such as pertussis and measles, can cause serious illnesses in unvaccinated children, which may result in hospitalization or even death depending on the severity of the illness.

My area was hit hard by Hurricane Michael. I lost everything. Trying to rebuild cause the land has been in the family for generations. I have 2 children with disabilities. Receive CMS services, but now all the providers we saw moved or are taking on too many clients and cannot be seen like we use to. My wife is also disabled. We do not drive. Hospitals are too far to walk. Services are not available. Especially transportation. CMS is no help. The support coordinator agrees with me, just cannot help. Can you help?

You are to be commended for your strength in continued recovery from Hurricane Michael. As a CMS Health Plan member, you have certain rights. This includes the right to receive services from a provider that is not part of our Plan if we cannot find a provider for you that is part of our Plan.

For assistance with finding a provider, getting a service in your area, or getting approval from CMS Health Plan to use a provider that is not part of our plan, please speak to your care manager or contact customer service at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711).

Please look into the ways the managed care companies are getting around the requirement that they cover all Medicaid eligible services. Sometimes instead of saying “NO” they simply make it so hard that you can never get a YES. I shouldn’t have to practically sue to get a service that they are required by law to cover.

For the Children’s Medical Services (CMS) Health Plan, you can find a list of medical services covered in the Member Handbook. You can request a copy of the Member Handbook from your care manager or call customer service at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711). You can also view the CMS Health Plan Member Handbook online and download a copy from <https://www.wellcare.com/Florida/Members/Medicaid-Plans/CMS>.

Some services are covered as medically necessary and recommended by the CMS Health Plan. You can find the definition for Medical Necessity on the Agency for Health Care Administration website at http://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/review/General/59G_1010_Definitions.pdf.

There may be some services that the CMS Health Plan does not cover, but might still be covered by Medicaid. To find out about these benefits, please call the Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254-1055.

If you are a CMS Health Plan member and need transportation to any covered services, please call 1-866-591-4066 to schedule a ride.

If there are changes in the CMS Health Plan covered services or other changes that will affect members, notification will be in writing at least 30 days before the effective date of the change. If you have questions about any of the covered medical services, please call customer service at 1-866-799-5321 (TTY 711).

What is the Department of Health doing about the Hepatitis A outbreak in Florida?

The Department of Health wants everyone to **VEST** against hepatitis A: **V**accinate, **E**ducate yourself, practice basic **S**anitation by washing your hands, and know that the Florida Department of Health and our health partners are **T**racking the virus with the goal of bringing this outbreak to an end. Specifically, the Florida Department of Health investigates every reported case of hepatitis A to make sure close contacts get vaccinated. Additionally, the Department is actively working to vaccinate those at greatest risk of contracting the disease. This includes those who are homeless or using drugs. The Department is also working with health care providers to educate and vaccinate those who are vulnerable from complications of

contracting the disease, such as those with underlying liver disease. Remember, hepatitis A can be prevented by getting vaccinated and practicing good basic sanitation. For more information about the activities, how you can get vaccinated, guides to sanitation, or tracking, consult the Florida Department of Health Website at: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vaccine-preventable-disease/hepatitis-a/index.html>.



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

My kids have aged out or graduated, but increasingly friends' children are being graduated out of high school at 18-19 even though the law says they can stay until age 21 or they are ready for post-secondary education. These are severe kids that require 24/7 supervision. APD is not prepared to take them early, Seminole County says "Sue us!" Most parents can't afford to hire an attorney. I hear it is not the only county doing this – how is that allowed? They tell me to talk with VR, and send me to appointments with a counselor.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) can help develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) when invited by either the school, the student, or a parent.

VR helps students both in school and persons who have left school. Talk to a VR counselor about services like job exploration, self-advocacy and work readiness.

Disability Rights Florida provides advocacy services on disability-related issues including access to public education. To find out more about Disability Rights Florida or submit an online form requesting assistance, visit their website at www.disabilityrightsflorida.org, or call toll free at 800-342-0823.

VR should be more responsive to people who have never worked before. This is why we went to them in the first place. We need your help!

VR offers many services that can help someone find their first job. These include exploring their skills and interests, choosing a job goal, or getting hands-on training in a real workplace. If you are interested in these services but feel that VR is not doing enough, the Ombudsman's office can help. You call them at 866-515-3692 or email at Ombudsman@vr.fl DOE.org.

Will VR be able to help me pay my bills while I am looking for a job?

VR helps people find and keep jobs. If you need help with something related to finding a job, please contact your local VR office and fill out a referral. To find your local VR office, go to http://www.rehabworks.org/office_directory.shtml.

Does VR assist or pay for needed Assistive Technology devices for school or work?

If you need assistive technology to get ready for, find, or keep a job, you can ask VR for help. VR can help you find the devices that are best for you. In many cases, VR can pay for those devices. If you are going to school to get the job that is on your VR plan, you can ask VR for help as well.

What is the difference between VR employment services and APD employment services?

VR and APD work together to help people find and keep jobs. VR provides services to help people find a job. These include guidance and counseling, training, job search, placement, and time-limited follow-up services. APD can provide long-term services to help someone stay on a job.

Will VR help me get and keep a job? Do you have job coaching available? Can you convince the employer to use a coach? To let one come and help me a bit? Much needed.

Yes! VR is here to help you get and keep a job. We do this through services like job placement and job coaching. Your counselor, job placement specialist or job coach will work with employers to explain and arrange the support you need on the job.

Will VR pay for a new service animal so I can get to work and stay productive? Or can you help me find resources or funding to get a new service animal so I can stay employed?

VR can help you find resources to get a new service animal.

Will VR help my son in a trade school environment? He wants to try to be a plumber and will need help . . . a much better fit than college.

VR works with customers to choose a job goal and training for that goal. Vocational/trade schools are a great option that VR can support, but VR will work with the customer to decide what is best.

What services does VR offer a student in high school? Never heard of VR or any of the services offered.

VR can provide services called Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities age 14-21. These services include Job Exploration Counseling, Instruction in Self-Advocacy, Work-Based Learning, Work Readiness Training, and Post-Secondary Educational Counseling. Students with disabilities (along with their parents if they are under 18 years old) can also apply for traditional VR services if the student needs or will need more help.

What kind of programs does VR have for kids with disabilities?

VR can provide many services to people with disabilities as young as 14 years old.

Why does my counselor not call and talk to my school counselor about the help I need in my classes?

VR is happy to work with schools and find the right supports for students with disabilities. VR can help develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) when invited by either the school, the student, or a parent. We can also assist with services like career exploration, self-advocacy, or work readiness.

Does VR hire people with disabilities? If so what is the % of hires who benefitted or could benefit from VR services?

Yes! VR hires people with disabilities. We are proud to report that during the last state fiscal year, VR helped 5,926 people get and keep a job.

Can VR really help me? With things in life like school and career?

Yes! VR provides many services to help persons with disabilities find, keep, or advance in a job. These include services that will help someone explore their skills and interests, choose a job goal, get job training and find a job.

Can I have VR services and APD services at the same time?

Yes. Both agencies can provide services to fit your needs.

Why is VR not talked about in the schools? For those who are in ESE or on a 540 Plan?

VR is doing more to partner with schools and school districts throughout the state of Florida. We want to educate school staff and the community about how we can help. VR can help develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) when invited by either the school, the student, or a parent. VR can assist with services like career exploration, self-advocacy, or work readiness.

Why do I keep getting a new VR Counselor? Like literally every other month!!

We know that changing VR counselors can be frustrating, but sometimes we have to move your case to a new VR counselor. You are always your best advocate in the VR process, and you can help the new counselor serve you well by staying in contact throughout the process. If you are not happy with our service, the Ombudsman's office can help. You can reach them at 866-515-3692 or ombudsman@vr.fl DOE.org.

Why does it take so long for anything to get done by my VR person? Don't they have a time schedule? If not they should!

We are sorry for any delays you may have experienced. All of our counselors have work calendars to help keep track of meetings with their customers. We suggest you contact your VR counselor and set up an appointment to make sure you get the time you need. If you are not getting what you need from VR, the Ombudsman's office can help. You can reach them at 866-515-3692 or ombudsman@vr.fl DOE.org.

Why is it so hard to get someone from VR to return my phone call?

This must be frustrating, and we are sorry you are experiencing this delay. Many of our staff work in schools or the community and can't call you back right away. If you cannot reach your VR counselor, we suggest calling their supervisor or the Ombudsman's office to help. You can reach them at 866-515-3692 or Ombudsman@vr.fl DOE.org.

Why is it every time I talk to a person from VR they do not have an answer and it takes 6 weeks to get an answer?

We are sorry to hear that. We suggest contacting your VR counselor and setting up an appointment to make sure you get the time you need. If you are not getting what you need from VR, the Ombudsman's office can help. You can reach them at 866-515-3692 or Ombudsman@vr.fl DOE.org.

Please have more sessions during the event for young adults with resources and organizations what will help with securing good jobs.

VR is on Family Café's Planning Committee and will share your requests.

How does VR help us get better education and jobs for careers in high paying jobs while trying to educate the general public about people with disabilities? How we can work and hold down a job.

You can talk to VR staff at career fairs, schools, and community events to discuss the services we offer to help individuals with disabilities find, keep, or advance in a job. These include exploring their skills and interests, choosing a job goal that is available in their home area, getting job training, and finding a job. We also have a Business Relations Team that works hard every day to teach employers about hiring individuals with disabilities, as well as help them support the employees with disabilities who already work for them.

Where are the opportunities for full-time, good paying jobs after graduation from college? With the help of VR, I now have a degree but every job I get requires experience or skills that I will not have, like being

able to lift a box and file, etc. I graduated from college, and now I am on the couch all day.

First of all, congratulations on getting your degree! You can ask your VR counselor about volunteer or on-the-job training opportunities to get the experience you need to qualify for jobs. We also offer services like self-advocacy training to help you understand your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act to get accommodations on the job.





The 21st Annual Family Café Report Card 2019

Attendees at The 21st Annual Family Café were given the opportunity to grade their experience on the following scale:

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

The table below displays average grades for 2019, along with grades from the five previous years.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
I would give the Annual Family Café Location a...	A	A	A	A	A	A
I would rate the hotel's accessibility a...	A-	A-	A-	A-	A	A
I would give the organization of the Annual Family Café a...	A	A	A	A	A	A
I would rate the choices for breakout sessions and their ability to meet the needs of different interests a...	A-	A-	A	A	A-	A
Overall, I would give The Annual Family Café a...	A	A	A	A	A	A

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

1. As a result of attending The 21st Annual Family Café, I am able/will be able to . . .
2. In general, the most helpful to me was . . .
3. I thought we could have had more of . . .
4. I thought we could have had less of . . .
5. I am interested in finding out more about . . .
6. For future Annual Family Café events, I would like to suggest. . .

Here is a sample of their responses:

As a result of attending the 21st Annual Family Café, I am able/will be able to . . .

- Assist my son with daily activities
- Serve my community more effectively
- Be strong – press on
- It was all good
- Advocate and access information
- Network with more people and organizations
- Train my service dog
- Find services
- Connect with service providers in my area
- I am able to speak to representative regarding issues
- Start my own ABLE account
- Advocate for myself
- Have more knowledge of what's available to our families
- File for social security for my child
- Feel better about my disability and be a better person
- Contact someone about estate/financial planning
- Work with the school system better
- Join CDC+
- Connect with other parents and make lifelong friends
- Start the process of petitioning for Guardian advocacy
- Help my local organization
- Explore different transportation options
- Help other families navigate the system. Empower my child for independence
- Transition my son into adulthood more prepared
- Understand more about dyslexia and reading. More about how the Gardiner Scholarship work
- Apply for the Gardiner Scholarship
- Network with families and keep up to date on latest policies, scholarships, and services available
- Navigate the system I am living in
- Plan for the future of my daughter in a more positive way
- Get more information about SSI

- Find more organizations that cater to down syndrome
- Learn about deaf and hard of hearing services
- Find out a lot of information about autism
- Advocate more strongly
- Be able to go on my own and be treated like someone
- Help my dual sensory impaired teen connect with transition programs and find inclusive opportunities to engage socially
- Get my daughter a service dog
- Complete my first 504 meeting for my son.
- I am better able to navigate options in regards to medical, legal and financial concerns. My son was able to experience being a part of a larger disability community. He was able to express his joy of being accepted and experience new activities. He was exuberant and excited the entire weekend. He said it was the best weekend of his life! Amazing experience!
- Know about services of Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Better deal with my daughter's mental illness.
- Understand more that I'm not the only one with a special need child
- I understand more about the transition process, Vocational Rehabilitation and SSI.
- Find out ways to save money on our expenses and be a better advocate for my children.
- Get more information for military and special needs. I went to a presentation that explained a lot.
- Apply new technology techniques that will help my daughter with her speech delay
- Understand disability resources in the state of Florida.

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

- The Women's Summit
- Help for family organizations
- The inspirational keynotes
- Meeting one on one with government officials (at Governor's Summit)
- Financial sessions
- The information on early childhood
- The course/speech on financial planning for the future
- The advocacy session
- Understanding more details & ABLE accounts
- Dyslexia and reading breakout
- Info about children's testing and available resources
- Mental health roundtable

- The sensory room
- Sign language class
- The information about all of the available resources in the state
- Finding out more about ABLE United
- Breakout session on disaster awareness
- Equipment vendors/homeschool breakout
- Appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for social skills
- Cerebral Palsy Roundtable
- The variety of sessions
- Breakout sessions there were so many good ones I had a hard time choosing. I appreciate that than many were repeated at another time. Or they were similar topics
- Info about benefits/SSI/working/transition
- The transparency of the presenters who have a child/children with autism, they were very relatable and gave good advice and information
- Exhibitor selection – wide variety
- Vendors were good and knowledgeable
- The other families I meet. Networking 😊
- Meeting families just like mine
- Meeting agency heads to talk and get contact info and offers of help
- To celebrate + support people with disabilities + their families
- Scholarship for hotel
- The Annual Family Café program that told us the event and conferences and where they are at and what time they are
- The app for phone
- Everything. So much valuable information it was hard to get to all the tracks I wanted.
- Seeing the cooperative spirit between agencies
- Information on Mental Health issues
- Hearing motivational speakers saying yes it is possible.
- Being in an inclusive environment
- Overall sense of acceptance and encouragement of people of all levels of abilities. I was inspired by the huge undertaking of appealing to people of all different types of needs with the impressive amount of sessions available at the Annual Family Café.
- Everything

I thought we could have had more of . . .

- Time

- Time to attend more sessions. Maybe next year, offer some as “repeat” sessions or viewable via webinars for later viewing. Also, needed more time to view exhibitors
- Peer programs
- Days at event
- Time between sessions to ask one-on-one questions. Maybe start breakouts earlier and add extra time between each
- Sessions from medical professionals – e.g. a developmental pediatrician
- Empowering & uplifting sessions providing coping skills
- Self-advocate sessions
- Explanations on the “how” to do things. Especially things like SSI and SSDE enrollment
- Time for questions/answers in the breakout sessions
- Things that young adult can do in their town or community. Art. Career exploration
- Creative sessions like poetry, etc.
- Classes about laws protecting kids with Autism
- Workshops for spina bifida
- Information on prison reform
- Resources for rural areas
- Sessions on adult day programs, adult housing, activities for young adults after high school graduation unable to attend college
- Hearing impaired sessions, also auditory processing aquatic therapy
- CDC+ presentation/workshops for people on the program that need specific help
- Sessions for marriage for those with children of special needs
- Sessions for siblings of a special needs family
- More sessions on homeschooling, not just on the Gardiner Scholarship, but homeschooling in general
- Roundtable, discussion sessions
- Topics about mental health and certified recovery peer specialists
- Mental health for young adults
- Activities for young people
- Vision related sessions
- Areas we can meet as large groups + more affordable meal selections
- Microwaves in the first floor by the classrooms, so that we can make all the sessions uninterrupted
- Elevator access for wheelchairs
- Places to sit
- Affordable food
- Costumed characters

- Large group activities like the dance party on Saturday night
- Interpreters for the deaf
- Disabled parking
- Exhibitors staying on Sunday until the end.
- Sibling workshops
- Healthy food choices
- Things for kids to do.
- Better signage
- Quiet areas
- Round table discussions
- Small business owners who talk about how to start and maintain a small business.
- Would there be a possibility of having a round table session for single parents raising kids with disabilities?
- Sessions for Spanish speaking families
- Hours in the day! Ha!
- This conference was PERFECT! Can't think of a thing.

I thought we could have had less of . . .

- Walking between areas and parking
- Walking
- Singers performing next to each other and at the same time i.e. Friends and Pyramid players – one at a time
- Very loud music
- Vendors who charge for their services
- “Competing” performance groups -two groups with sound systems performing at the same time – not fair to either group, or the audience
- Cancelling speakers that do it repeatedly
- Random animals that are obviously not service or therapeutic dogs
- Vendors leaving mid Saturday and leaving it looking like no one cares – nothing to see on Sunday
- Jewelry vendors
- Sales pitches in conference
- People having sessions like a therapy session
- Elevator traffic
- I wish when the missing child was found an alert on the App would have let us know.
- Noise level in hallways – music to close together – interfering with each other's performance

- Crazy scooter drivers. At times, it was very dangerous. Maybe some speed limit signs?
- Cut opening ceremony times and other speakers to one hour
- Cancelled workshops. Several workshops we're cancelled at the last minute leaving people to scramble to make it to another workshop and with the rooms being so far apart it's hard to make it to the workshops.
- Sessions on Social Security and basic services
- Nothing really - and the Elvis / Las Vegas theme with the gold bags was really cute!
- Nothing, I think everything was perfectly balanced

I am interested in finding out more about . . .

- Other opportunities for continuing education
- diGeorges syndrome aka 22q deletion
- A list of all possible resources available in Florida. Does a centralized reference exist?
- Technology and autism
- Classes on how to prepare/help special needs navigate sex and sexual health
- Sessions that deal with the siblings who have a brother or sister with disabilities
- Raising funds for Family Café
- New services that become available
- Rare diseases
- SSI
- Adult day care
- Workforce/coach/mentors for young adult
- Mental health/substance abuse
- Jobs
- Expanding the services for the deaf and hard of hearing
- Camps & programs for adults with disabilities
- Collaboration with this organization
- Mental health for older adults. How to help them get more services even if they are 25 years old
- Visual aids/tech assistance
- Pain management for kids with sickle cell
- Independent living options for my daughter as her father and I age and eventually are unable to care for her
- How we can do this event in other states like California

- Providers – where to find them
- Advocating at the legislative level
- College programs for people with unique abilities
- Service animals
- Scholarship for schools such as Gardiner, McKay
- Presenting
- The Med Waiver waitlist
- Developing social skills in young adults w/ a disability
- College for students with IEPs
- How to prepare our children for first responder interactions
- Starting 501c3
- Transition programs & services
- Service Dogs
- Moving a loved one to Florida
- How to fund a wheelchair accessible van.
- Annual Family Café volunteer opportunities
- Invisible disabilities, chronic illness that cause temporary physical/mental disabilities
- Relationship issues surrounding people with disabilities and their family members
- Disability rights for persons in the work place, and the process to get a resolution for unfair dismissal.
- Language delays, specifically receptive language
- Autism social activities for toddlers in general.
- CDC+ program
- Ways to save money on all our expenses or track them in an easy way.
- Everything The Family Café offers and provides. Looking forward to next year and every year. Thank you for this.

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

- Can we have more classes on cerebral palsy?
- More services for the deaf and hard of hearing people at the Annual Family Café.
- Please provide better maps for the breakout sessions.
- I would like to see more information and resources on homeschooling.
- Autism roundtable needs a bigger room next year please.
- More days – since there were so much to choose it was hard to pick

- Repeating breakout sessions, longer exhibitor hours, hotel TV viewing of keynotes & handouts for every session for those that could not attend all “wanted” sessions
- Free snacks
- More dance events like Saturday night. The kids really seemed to enjoy themselves
- Breakout sessions to have more time for Q&A
- Better explanations of what the breakout sessions are.
- More scholarships
- Legislators or cabinet members who are on committees for updates after latest session an Q&A. Particularly medical marijuana
- More designated disabled parking and designated identifiable pet relief areas
- We need more aisles and wider aisles in the main ballroom and sessions to accommodate wheelchairs and people who need to sit on an end.
- Noting the booth number for the vendors in the program. Either have vendors stay until the end, or end the program on Saturday. 75% of vendors were absent on Sunday.
- A hotel with prices that we all can afford – either for the stay or for food purchase
- Autism roundtable was excellent conference. However, I think I bigger room will be really helpful to each group can have enough space to hear each other.
- Is there a way you can find more sessions for dads? They are important too
- We don't see any new deaf events in The Annual Family Café in Orlando. I would like to see The Annual Family Café improve more diversity inclusion including deaf and hard of hearing community.
- Wish there was more parking
- Can you have a session about food allergies?
- More SSI information
- Classes available more than once – cannot do multiple classes all at same time
- Can we add some stuff on mental health for adults?
- After getting into college – what should now be available to the APD consumer
- Starting micro businesses – how to/steps
- For the first time guest better directions. So much info and so many interesting sessions at same time
- Separating the musical groups more. They were too close together
- More lottery slots

- Maybe have advocate training
- Cyber and online safety for disabled caregivers and individuals
- Please don't have it so cold in all the rooms
- The theme parks should be included. Most employ staff with disabilities.
- More helper and more people to want to help at The Family Café and more super hero characters
- More funding for hotel
- A registry to be available for services, programs, & activities for each county so parents can connect in their county
- Single Parenting roundtable
- Every year it gets better and better, thanks for organizing it and getting top notch speakers.
- Please have vendors stay until time on program. Example – We planned to do tennis, however tennis & the obstacle course for wheelchair users but they were no longer there at 3PM
- Invite all Florida politicians – have roundtables – Q&A – Discussion groups
- Events for teens w/disabilities
- The organization should offer sighted guides. More available elevators, watering stations for service dogs
- Better system for speakers to cancel sessions when an emergency happens so people don't end up waiting when they could be at a different session (rooms aren't always close)
- Golf carts or shuttles to local hotels
- More on special needs trusts, wills, life insurance, long term care.
- Is there a way to add more round table evening networking opportunities maybe chaired by topic with parents/siblings/other adults? Our family is newer to state and don't really know many people yet.
- Offering more in-depth sessions that would take either a morning, or an afternoon. For those of us who've been coming for years it would be helpful to move deeper than some of these scratch the surface kind of the sessions. It would also be great to have a provider's area. To actually speed date, if you will, all kinds of providers in one place.
- ASL interpreters for booths... not only for the conferences
- Something to draw people to the exhibit hall.
- Have a quiet room for children with autism.
- More information from parents who have been through it! I want practical solutions that I can be in control of, instead of relying on schools and government for solutions.
- Keep organizing the event. It was AMAZING! I truly appreciate the opportunity to attend with the grant. My family had a great time and I learn a ton of new things

JOB HUNTING? WE SHOULD TALK.

The CareerSource Florida network of nearly 100 career centers have professional Disability Specialists and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists available to help you find the right training or land a great job.

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Join the momentum!

Take part in The Family Café's newest program,
the Family-Run Organization Movement (FROM)!

The Mission of FROM is to engage, support, empower and advocate for family, youth and peer-run organizations.

FROM will provide a wide range of supports and services, including leadership training, governance enhancement, program support, monthly collaborative forums, a program newsletter, and other resources to help organizations attain new levels of participation in the system of care.

Local family-run organizations are a critical part of the service delivery system, bringing families and youth together, connecting them with information, resources, and each other. FROM is here to help them thrive!

To join and get more information please see the FROM link at www.familycafe.net or call 850-224-4670



FROM
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"Moving families forward. From our family to yours."



See You Next Year!

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