

Get it Forever Together Notebook Contents

Cover Page for Notebook front

Welcome letter

Thank You to GIFT donors

Dividers – 2 options

1. by year
2. by categories: IEP, Evaluations, Medical Info, Therapy Notes, School Work, Report Cards/Tests, Communication, Resources, Information, Others
3. Can be modified to fit your needs or parents needs.

Under RESOURCES Tab:

1. Cover sheet to replace one in front: Records For: _____ Dates: _____ to _____
2. Instructions from Education Law Advocates
 - a. They use the Year model for organization
 - b. I use the Categories, same instructions, just different way to organize
3. File Record Table of Contents
 - a. .Can use in front of notebook or in front of each section
4. FERPA on education records
5. GA Special Education Parent Rights – short form
6. School Records Request Process – from our office
7. Release of Confidential Records
8. Shepherd Center's Benefits Navigator Info
9. SSI Info, how to apply, etc.
10. Medicaid Info – Includes Deeming Waiver info
11. Checklist for helping child with homework
12. Communication tips by Jane Newman
13. Websites and Local Support phone and email list
14. Working with your PTA, by Stacey Ramirez
15. Parent to Parent of GA handout
16. Helpful Numbers of Local Organizations
17. Navigator Team Membership Form
18. Understanding the Medicaid Waiver booklet
19. Information for Applicant – Steps to filing out the MRWP application
20. MRWP Application
21. CARE Notebook info from online resource

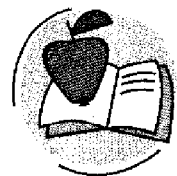
Include in back pocket: various brochures, Parent Mentor, Navigator Team, Walton Interagency Council, Transition Brochure, Newsletter, Agency brochures, etc.

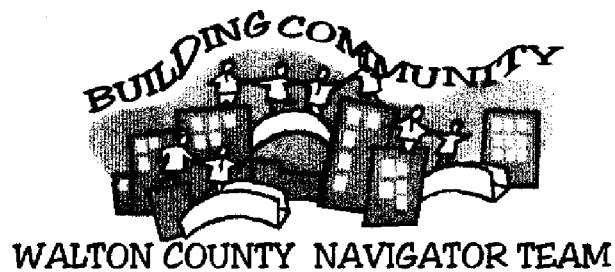


Get It Forever Together

***Organizing your child's records for
school and for life***

**Presented by
The Walton County Navigator Team
www.waltonnavigators.eboard.com**





August 9, 2008

Welcome to the Get It Forever Together Workshop!

We are glad you are able to join us tonight and take a step towards organizing important records for your child with special needs. We hope that when you leave, you will be able to continue to build a file system that will be a valuable way to keep important documents together as your child progresses through school and through life.

Depending on your child's needs, this document binder will provide you the information required to help your child receive Social Security benefits, Medicaid benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation, or support as they enter college or technical school. It will also help you to look back each year to see the annual progress your child has made or suggest maybe areas that still need work as you write a new IEP.

In the following pages, you will be guided how to organize each portion of your child's records including IEP records, Evaluations, Medical information, Therapy notes, School notes/work, Communication, Resources and Information. There will also be instructions that you can follow independently with past and future records.

We recommend using one binder for each Elementary, Middle and High School. If your child has a large file, break it into 2-3 year binders making sure you document the years or grades in each binder.

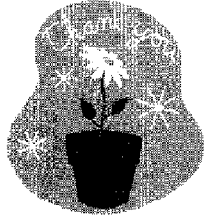
We hope you gain a great deal of knowledge and confidence through this workshop. You are your child's best Advocate. You know your child better than anyone else. You can carry this binder with you to IEP meetings, teacher conferences, medical appointments, etc. and feel more empowered when you know where everything is located.

Thank you again for joining us!

Walton County Navigator Team

Be a Part of the TEAM! Walton County Navigator Team meets monthly at the Walton Career Academy (old Monroe Area High School). You can visit us on the web at www.waltonnavigators.eboard.com to learn more or contact one of our Team Members and let them know you want more information!

*A special Thank You to the following donors,
without them, this workshop could not have been possible*



Meketa Swords, Children's Pastor and Volunteers

Lighthouse World Outreach Center

609 Gene Bell Road

Monroe, GA 30655

<http://www.lighthousewoc.org>

770-267-4365

Pastor Mark Coffman and Volunteers

LifeBridge Christian Church

3734 Rosebud Road

Loganville, GA 30052

<http://www.lifebridgechurch.us>

770-972-9779



KC Office Supply

1306-A W. Spring Street

Monroe, GA 30655

770-267-2535

Multitude Ministries, Inc.

The King's Catering Company

P.O. Box 1103

Monroe, GA 30655

770-656-6579



**Walton County Dept of Education
for Exceptional Students**

Dr. Suzanne Carter, Director

Teresa Johnson, Parent Mentor

200 Double Springs Church Rd.

Monroe, GA 30656

www.walton.k12.ga.us

770-266-4501

Records for

Dates:

to

Education Law Advocates, P.C.

Organize Your Child's Records and Reap the Results

Pop quiz!

Question 1: What is one of the easiest ways you can become a better advocate for your child?

Answer: Get organized!

Question 2: Where's the best place to start getting organized?

Answer: Your child's educational records.

ADVANTAGES OF ORGANIZING YOUR CHILD'S RECORDS

We can't count all of the advantages of getting your child's records organized. But here are just five of the biggest:

1. **Instant credibility.** You will be the "go-to" person for your child's records. You will know those records better than anyone else on the IEP team. And school personnel will respect you for it.
2. **See the forest and the trees.** Sometimes, we miss the "big picture" What was our child's reading level four years ago? What is it now? What evaluations have been done in the last five years? How did she score on the PSSA's? How have her goals changed in the last two IEP's? Reviewing and organizing your child's records will give you the "big" picture and the "little" picture – and you need both!
3. **Knowledge is power.** Facts are king! We love facts. Facts about your child's strengths. Facts about your child's weaknesses. Facts about your child's programs. Facts about your child's IEP. You need facts to make winning arguments. An argument that is not built on facts is a little like the house the little pig built out of straw – and we know what happened to him! Reviewing and organizing your child's records will put the important facts where they belong – at your fingertips.
4. **Self-Confidence!** Dealing with teachers and administrators can be intimidating. After all, they are the education "experts," right? Well, as adults, we know that, like in every profession, some educators are good; some are not. Some educators want to help; some do not. But know this: You are the expert on your child. No-one knows him as well as you. Organizing and knowing your child's records will give you the confidence you need to deal effectively with the team.
5. **Getting What Your Child Needs.** This is the "bottom line." Through organizing your child's records, learning what they say, and being able to produce a record quickly when needed, you will increase your chances of getting the services your child needs. Isn't that what this is all about?

A WORD OF ADVICE

If you have lots of your child's records scattered around, getting organized can seem overwhelming, like cleaning up a messy garage or basement. You think: "Ugghh! It's too big a job!"

We understand. But remember: Your child is counting on you to be a good advocate. Getting organized will make you a better advocate. It could mean the difference between getting and not getting the services that your child needs. What is more important than your child's education and future?

As you follow the steps below, keep in mind the "80/20 rule." That "rule" says that, in general, we get 80% of our results in any project from about 20% of our effort. So keep that mind. Focus on the main things. Do the best you can. But it doesn't have to be perfect.

And most important: Get Started Now! Don't put it off!

GETTING STARTED

We like the method of organizing the file proposed by Pete and Pam Wright, and the following steps in getting organized are based in large part on their method. For more information on their approach, you can consult their book entitled "Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy" (FETA), a book that we highly recommend to parents, or go to their FETA website, www.fetaweb.com.

Of course, if you have a method *that works*, stay with it. But most parents either don't use *any* method of organizing their child's records or the one they are using isn't really working.

So here is how to get – and stay – organized:

Step 1: Organize What You Have!

Most parents already have lots of their child's records around the house. They may be in folders or notebooks or inside envelopes or on your night table or behind the TV or just loose: IEP's, evaluations, third-party reports, letters, report cards, medical records, homework. Get them all and put them in one place. You're on your way!

Once you have everything in one place:

- **Sort the records by year.** Don't waste time reading them now! There will be plenty of time for that after you get the records organized. For now, just go through the records and sort them into piles by year. You can put each document in a folder labeled by year or a "mail slot," or whatever. Put aside documents you don't need. You may want to save a few samples of your child's homework from prior years, for example, such as a short essay he prepared. But you'll be overwhelmed if you try to keep all of it.
- **Date each document.** Date each document in the lower right corner. You know, "11/05/99," for example. Make the date small but big enough to read. *Use a pencil.* You might have to erase a date sometime.
- **Sort by date.** Now, start with the first year for which you have records. Put those records in order, starting with the oldest record for that year on top. Do the same for the second year, and so forth, until all of the records are sorted by date.
- **Put your records into 3-Ring Notebooks.** Hole-punch each document and put it into a 3-ring notebook. Use tabs to separate each year's records in the notebook. Label the tabs by year *neatly*. You need to be able to find what you are looking for *quickly* and *effortlessly*. So be neat!

Step 2: Read for the "Big Picture"

Now you're ready to read through the records. Begin at the beginning! This is the story of your child. What could be more interesting or of more importance? But don't get bogged down. A psychological evaluation, for example, may contain lots of terms and numbers with which you are unfamiliar. Don't get stuck! You are reading to get the "big picture." So just skim through the reports, where necessary, to get a sense of what they are about. If your attention begins to flag, it's time to stop. Come back to it when you are ready.

Step 3: Get the Missing Records

Most parents have accumulated lots of their child's records. So we recommend getting starting right away with filing and reading what you have. But as you file and read the records on hand, be alert for what you don't have: the comprehensive evaluation performed three years earlier; the reading specialist's report; the IEP from two years' earlier; whatever they may be. Then do the following:

- Make a list of doctors, evaluators, therapists or others who may have additional information on your child, with their contact information.
- Send a letter to each of them requesting your child's records.
- Send a letter to your child's school principal and special ed director requesting a copy of her entire file. Ask for everything, and include examples of the documents you want. **If you would like a sample letter to the school requesting records, email us and we will send it to you.** Some parents have had success taking the letter to the school office and offering to make the copies there for the school clerk. However you get them, get them.
- Always keep the original records that you receive from the school in a separate container so you will know exactly what the school provided to you. Make a copy of any important additional records received from the school that was not in your 3-ring binder. Then sort the new documents by date, write the date in pencil on the lower-right corner of each document, read through them, and insert them by date in your 3-ring binder. Follow the same procedure with new documents you receive from other sources.

Step 4: Create a Master Document List

You're in the home stretch! Now, it's time to create your master document list. That's like a table of contents or index – with some additional detail that you will add. It looks like this:

Date	Source	Type	Notes
1/15/04	Smith	Psychological Evaluation	Independent reading level grade 3; reading comprehension: grade 4; strengths: expressive language, reading fluency, math
5/15/04	Freedom Elementary	IEP	Goal: Wilson Reading Training, 30 min./3xweek; No short-term objectives

A format like this is simple to create in Word – Tables. That allows you to easily insert other entries later in the proper chronological order by simply creating a new row within the table. But if you are not comfortable with the word processor, you can accomplish the same thing using paper and a ruler. But make it neat!

Start at the beginning of your 3-ring binder. Note the date, source and type of your first document. Then go to the second document, and so on until you finish. Don't fill in the "Notes" column yet.

After you have listed all of the documents in your master document list, go back and take another look at each document. Under "Notes," insert a brief note of what you think is most important. Don't get bogged down in details. Just do the best you can. When you are finished, insert your master document list at the front of your 3-ring binder.

As you receive new information, insert it in your binder. Update your master document list regularly. Review it from time to time and before important meetings.

Step 5: Take a Bow!

When you finish, congratulate yourself! Do something nice for yourself. You've accomplished something very important.

So now you're organized! You're more knowledgeable about your child and her records. You're better able to identify and advocate for the services your child needs.

You're empowered!

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Section: _____

[illegible]

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal statute designed to protect the privacy of students and parents. FERPA deals with privacy and confidentiality, parent access to educational records, parent amendment of records, and destruction of records.

FERPA applies to all agencies and institutions that receive federal funds, including elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities. The statute is in the United States Code at 20 U.S.C.1232. The regulations are in the Code of Federal Regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 99.

What are education records?

“Education records” are broadly defined as:

those records, files, documents, and other materials, which (i) contain information directly related to a student; and (ii) are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution. 20 U.S.C. §1232g(a)(4)(A). See also 34 CFR §99.3.

Education records include “all instructional materials, including teacher’s manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any applicable program shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the children.”

The transcript of a hearing is an education record for purposes of Section 504. Due process decisions are education records. Tapes of IEP meetings are education records as are IEPs. Letters between parent and school are education records.

Personal notes and memory aids that are used only by the person who made them are not educational records. But if notes are shared with or disclosed to another person, notes are educational records.

What are the parent's rights to inspect and review education records?

Parents have a right to inspect and review all educational records relating to their child. This right to “inspect and review” includes the right to have copies of records and to receive explanations and interpretations from school officials. Agencies must comply with requests to inspect and review records within forty-five days. Destruction of records violates the parents’ rights of access.

Copies of records must be provided to the parent if failure to do so would prevent the parent from exercising the right to view records. Schools may charge reasonable copying fees unless the fee would “effectively prevent” the parent or student from exercising the right to inspect and review the records. Fees may not be charged for searching and retrieving records.

What about test protocols and answer sheets?

Completed test instruments or question booklets containing information that identify a particular student, whether or not the name of the student appears on the booklet, constitute "education records" subject to the FERPA requirements. In cases where a question booklet includes both the questions and the student's responses, the question booklet is an education record subject to FERPA.

The Office for Civil Rights determined that the test protocols used by a psychologist to prepare a report are educational records and must be produced to the parents.

An educational agency is required to respond to a reasonable request for an explanation or interpretation of a student's answer sheet. Because answer sheets are usually related to a student, answer sheets fall within the definition of education records that a parent has the right to inspect and review. As a parent, you have a right to access to your child's answer sheet and an explanation or interpretation of that answer sheet.

On October 2, 1997, the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U. S. Department of Education issued a memorandum about parental access to test protocols. For the full text of this letter, follow the link to the **FERPA Memorandum** at the end of this article.

When may records be disclosed?

Schools may release records without consent to "other school officials, including teachers within the educational institution or local educational agency, who have been determined by such agency or institution to have legitimate educational interests."

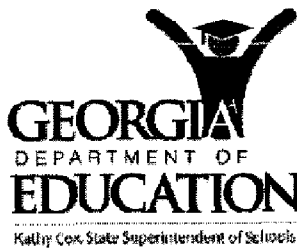
In health and safety emergencies, schools may make disclosures without consent. Law enforcement agencies and monitoring agencies have access to confidential records. The agency must maintain a log of all disclosures without parental consent. Consent for disclosure must be signed and dated and must include specific information about the recipients of information.

FERPA Links

FERPA Memorandum: Access to Test Protocols and Answer Sheets from LeRoy Hooker.

[References: *Wrightslaw: Special Education Law*, pages 283-287, 34 C.F.R. Part 99, pages 289-299; *Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy*, pages 185-189]

This page printed from: <http://www.fetaweb.com/04/ferpa.summary.htm>



Special Education: A Parents' Guide to Understanding Rights and Responsibilities

This guide is designed to help you understand your rights and responsibilities regarding special education. It should not be used as a substitute for the full version of the Parents' Rights outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rules of the Georgia State Board of Education pertaining to Special Education (see Rule 160-4-7-.09 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS/PARENTS' RIGHTS.) To view the full version of the Georgia Parents' Rights please go to the Georgia Department of Education web site at www.gadoe.org. Select curriculum, then special education. You will then select parent and educators partnerships to find a comprehensive listing of parents' rights. The full version of these rights is available in multiple languages.

<p>RECORDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have a right to look at your child's education records. You may also have the records interpreted or explained to you. You may request to have something in the record changed or removed if you feel it should not be in your child's record. You have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant written material to your child's record. You may ask for and receive copies of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or any of your child's records. The school system may charge a fee for the copies but may not charge a fee for searching for and retrieving documents. With your written permission, you may have a person acting on your behalf inspect and review the records. 	<p>EVALUATION PROCEDURES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child has the right to a full and complete evaluation to determine if he/she has a disability and is in need of special education and/or related services. You have the right to have your child assessed in all areas of the suspected disability. The school system must test your child according to procedures outlined in IDEA and Georgia Special Education Rules. Evaluations must consist of more than one test, and those tests must be given in the language that the child normally uses, unless it is not possible to do so. Your child will have a re-evaluation consideration no more than once a year, unless the parent and school agree otherwise, and at least once every three years. You will be involved in the decision about eligibility and what programs and services your child needs during the re-evaluation.
<p>CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child's educational records are <u>private</u>. You can ask to have copies of only your child's records. School employees involved with your child may see your child's records and do not require your permission. No one else may see the results of your child's records without your permission. 	<p>LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have the right to have your child taught in classrooms and participate in all school programs and activities with other children without disabilities, of the same age and grade, to the greatest extent appropriate for your child. School system personnel must make accommodations and modifications so that your child can participate in all school programs and activities to the greatest extent appropriate.
<p>INDEPENDENT EVALUATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you disagree with the school's evaluation, you may have your child tested by a professional evaluator not employed by the school system, at public or private expense. <u>Upon request</u>, the school system <u>must provide</u> you a list of <u>independent</u> evaluators so that you may choose one to test your child. <u>The school district must consider the results of an independent evaluator.</u> The IEP team uses the results of the test to determine if your child has a disability or needs special education. 	<p>SURROGATE PARENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the school cannot find the child's parents or the child is a ward of the state, the school system will assign a surrogate (substitute) parent who will represent the child regarding the child's rights and interests for any evaluation, meeting, or educational decisions for special education services. Surrogate parents will receive special training and will act as the parent by giving consent and participating in IEP/other meetings. The surrogate parent has the same rights and responsibilities as a parent in special education in matters relating to a student.
<p>NOTICE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must be notified of your parental rights. You must be invited to attend meetings about your child such as eligibility, re-evaluation, or IEP meetings. You are to receive copies of all documents about your child's 	<p>PRIVATE SCHOOL PLACEMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you decide to place your child in a private school, you must inform school officials at the last IEP meeting you attend of your intent and explain your concerns about the public program. The school system is not required to pay for the private school if the

<p>education program and can have them explained to you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copies will be in your native language, Braille, or explained in sign language. If needed, the school system will provide a translator or interpreter. 	<p>school system offered a free appropriate public education to meet a child's educational needs that have been identified through the educational evaluation and are included in the IEP.</p>
<p>COMPLAINTS, MEDIATION, HEARINGS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When you request a due process hearing, you have the right to participate in a resolution session that provides an opportunity for parents and school systems to resolve any issues in a due process complaint so that the parents and systems can avoid a due process hearing and provide immediate benefit to the child. ▪ You have the right to ask for mediation or a due process hearing if you disagree with what the school has planned for your child. ▪ The school system can also ask for mediation or a due process hearing. ▪ The parent and the school system must both agree to try mediation before mediation will be scheduled. ▪ You or the school system may file a formal written complaint with the Georgia Department of Education to conduct an investigation about any concerns, problems, or disagreements. The complaint can be faxed to the Division for Special Education Services at 404-651-6457 (fax) or mailed to the division at 1870 Twin Towers East, 205 Jesse Hill Jr., Drive, SE, Atlanta, GA 30334 ▪ Forms to file a Complaint, Mediation or Due Process are located on the Special Education page on the GaDOE web site (see instructions above). They are under "Dispute Resolution" in the middle of the page under choices for "Information and Downloads." ▪ If you do not have access to a computer, please call 404-656-3963 or 1-800-311-3627 and a form will be mailed to you. 	<p>INTERIM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school system must follow certain procedures when students with disabilities exhibit behaviors that cause the IEP team to find other settings and/or ways to educate the child. ▪ Schools may remove students to alternative programs when there is a potential danger to the child, students, or school personnel. ▪ Regardless of the setting, the school district must continue to provide a free appropriate public education for your child. ▪ The setting must enable your child to continue to receive services that will allow him/her to meet the goals and objectives in his/her IEP. ▪ Disciplinary actions occur for violations involving drugs, alcohol, weapons, or other school rules violations. ▪ These rights protect you, your child, and the school system.
<p>CONSENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school cannot test/evaluate or re-evaluate your child without your permission/consent. ▪ The school cannot place your child in special education or change your child's program placement without your permission/consent. ▪ The school system cannot release your child's records without your permission/consent. ▪ You have the right to <u>not</u> give your permission/consent. 	<p>CONTACTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When you have concerns about your child's education, it is important to tell the school principal or special education director. ▪ If you need further help, there are parent or advocacy groups from whom you may obtain help. Ask the school for information or a list of names. You also can contact Parent to Parent of GA which keeps an active list for referrals. Call 800-229-2038 or go to www.parenttoparentofga.org ▪ You may also contact the Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports at 404-656-3963 or 1-800-311-3627 or go to the Georgia Department of Education web site at www.gadoe.org to find other helpful resources.
<p>PARENT PARTICIPATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You must be given opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding your child's special education. ▪ You must be invited to any meeting that is held to discuss your child's disability, evaluations, reevaluations, placement of your child, and his/her IEP and its contents. ▪ You are entitled to have IEP meetings held at a time and place mutually convenient to you and other members of the IEP Team. ▪ You have the right to excuse or not to excuse a member of your child's IEP Team from attending an IEP meeting. The school district cannot excuse a required member without your permission. 	<p>LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:</p> <p>Dr. Suzanne Carter Director, Walton County Department of Education for Exceptional Students 200 Double Springs Church Road Monroe, GA 30656 770-266-4501</p>

School Records Request Process

1. Contact the Walton County Department of Education for Exceptional Students at 770-266-4501 to let them know you want to request a copy of your child's records.
2. You will need to fill out a Release of Confidential Information form at our location:

Walton County Board of Education
200 Double Springs Church Road
Monroe, GA 30656

The DEES office is located on the 2nd floor, you will be required to sign in at the receptionist desk prior to coming to our office.

3. You will need a photo identification card to be copied for our records along with your signed release form.
4. Depending on the size of the records requested, you may wait for them to be copied or you may be asked to return in 1-5 days after the request.

While every effort is made to accommodate your request in a timely manner, the DEES office stays continuously busy with over 1,300 students on IEPs in our county schools. We appreciate your patience as we do our best to serve your child and the other students in WCPS.

RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

I, _____, have requested from Walton County Board of Education, confidential records on my child, _____, to be released to _____.

TYPE OF MATERIAL TO BE RELEASED:

_____ Psychological Data

_____ Educational Evaluations

_____ Individual Educational Plan

_____ Eligibility

_____ Gifted Records

_____ Hearing/Vision Reports

Parent Signature

Date

_____ Picked up by Parent

_____ Faxed to School or other Agency

_____ Mailed to School or other Agency

**Shepherd Center's Benefits Navigator
A Work Incentive Planning Assistance Project**

Economic Independence for People with Disabilities

Shepherd Center's Benefits Navigator Project is a **free** service that serves 50 counties in Georgia. Our project works with people who are between the ages of 14 and 65 who are eligible for Social Security benefits based on a disability.

Our goal is to provide information to assist you in making informed decisions when you work and have Social Security benefits at the same time.

We cannot help people apply for Social Security benefits and we cannot go to Social Security to assist in the appeals process.

Project Directors

Sally Atwell, MS, CRC, LPC
404-350-7589
sally_atwell@shepherd.org

Curtis L. Rodgers, MS, CRC, LPC
404-350-7598
curtis_rodgers@shepherd.org

Toll Free 1-866-772-2726

Useful Internet Resources

www.ssa.gov
www.benefitsnavigator.org

Counties served by project.

Shepherd Center, Inc. Benefits Navigator

866-772-2726

Service Areas

Baldwin, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Bleckley, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Crawford, Crisp, DeKalb, Dodge, Dooly, Dougherty, Douglass, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Greene, Gwinnett, Hall, Hancock, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Laurens, Lee, Macon, Madison, Monroe, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Rockdale, Spalding, Twiggs, Walton, Washington, and Wilkinson Counties

Georgia Rehabilitation Outreach Program GROUP

866-489-0001

Service Areas

Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Baker, Banks, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Bryan, Bulloch, Burke, Calhoun, Camden, Candler, Catoosa, Charlton, Chatham, Chattahoochee, Chattooga, Clay, Clinch, Coffee, Columbia, Colquitt, Cook, Dade, Dawson, Decatur, Early, Echols, Effingham, Elbert, Emanuel, Evans, Fannin, Floyd, Franklin, Glascock, Gilmer, Glynn, Gordon, Grady, Habersham, Haralson, Harris, Hart, Heard, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Jefferson, Jenkins, Johnson, Lamar, Lanier, Liberty, Lincoln, Long, Lowndes, Lumpkin, Marion, McDuffie, McIntosh, Meriwether, Miller, Mitchell, Montgomery, Murray, Muscogee, Pickens, Pierce, Pike, Polk, Quitman, Rabun, Randolph, Richmond, Schler, Screven, Seminole, Stephens, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Tattnall, Taylor, Telfair, Taliaferro, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Toombs, Towne, Troup, Truetlen, Turner, Union, Upson, Walker, Ware, Warren, Wayne, Webster, Wheeler, White, Whitefield, Wilcox, Wilkes, and Worth Counties.

Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries Social Security (PABSS)

800-537-2329

Service Areas – All Georgia Counties

P&A systems will assist individuals with disabilities who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits in obtaining information and advice about receiving vocational rehabilitation and employment services. The program will also allow grant recipients to provide advocacy or other related services that beneficiaries with a disability may need to secure or regain gainful employment.

Answering Your Questions About Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

By Gary Dixon, District Manager, Atlanta West Georgia Social Security Office &
Catrina Hood, SSI Specialist and Parent Mentor Atlanta Public Schools

Q. What is SSI?

A. *Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). It's a needs-based program; a person's income and resources are used to determine eligibility and benefits. SSI provides monthly payments to people who are age 65 or older, disabled, or blind. SSI recipients must be residents of the United States and citizens or non-citizens lawfully admitted for permanent residency. Children under age 18 can qualify for SSI, if they meet the SSI definition of disability and SSI income and resource requirements. A portion of the parents' income and resources is used to determine the child's eligibility and benefits.*

Q. How is SSI funded?

A. *SSI is funded through the General Revenue Fund. SSI is not funded through Social Security taxes under the Federal Insurance Contribution (FICA).*

Q. What is SSIDI?

A. *SSIDI (Supplemental Security Income for disabled individuals) provides SSI for disabled people age 18 or older that meet SSI income and resource requirements.*

Q. What is SSIDC?

A. *SSIDC (Supplemental Security Income for disabled children) provides SSI for disabled children age 18 or younger that meet SSI income and resource requirements.*

Q. What is SSIAI?

A. *SSIAI (Supplemental Security Income for aged individuals) provides SSI for people age 65 or older that meet SSI income and resource requirements.*

Q. Who qualifies for SSI?

A. *Any person who is 65 or older, disabled, or blind and meets SSI income and resource requirements qualifies for SSI. Eligibility for disabled children is based on the parents' income and resources.*

Q. *If a grandparent has custody of a disabled child, will eligibility be based on the grandparent's income?*

A. *No. The grandparent's income will only count if they have adopted the grandchild. All adopted children's eligibilities are based on their adoptive parents' income.*

Q. What are presumptive SSI payments?

A. *Presumptive SSI payments are paid to disabled children and adults that the SSA presumes disabled. People with presumed disabilities can receive immediate payments for up to 6 months.*

Q. What disabilities are considered presumptive disabilities?

A. Some of the presumptive disabilities are-

*HIV infection
Cerebral Palsy (in some cases)
Total blindness
Down syndrome
Mental retardation
Terminal illness
Amputation of two limbs
Premature babies (babies weighing 1200 grams or less at birth)*

Q. What if the applicant does not speak English?

A. *Upon request, SSA will provide an interpreter at no cost. If preferred, applicants can provide their own interpreters,*

Q. What is a representative payee?

A. *A representative payee is a person, agency, organization, or institution that SSA selects to manage benefits for recipients that are physically or mentally unable to manage benefits. Before appointing a representative payee, SSA will evaluate medical and other evidence of capacity to manage SSI benefits.*

Q. Are SSI recipients automatically qualified for Medicaid?

A. *Yes. In Georgia, anyone that qualifies for SSI will receive Medicaid.*

Q. How does one apply for SSI?

A. *Applicants can call and make an appointment (1-800-772-1213) to apply for SSI. Applicants can make an in person appointment at their local Social Security office, or a telephone appointment, or visit their local office without an appointment. Visiting the Social Security office without an appointment can lead to long waits. Applicants must provide information and documents concerning their eligibility and sign an application.*

Once applicants are approved and start receiving benefits, it is important to report all changes that may affect SSI benefits. Examples of changes that can affect benefits include changes in living arrangements, changes in employment, or changes in marital status.

It is important to note that everyone has a right to apply for SSI free of charge and to have assistance completing his or her application. Also, Social Security Administration specialists are available to assist applicants, making the application process a better and more pleasant experience for disabled individuals, disabled children's' parents, and aged persons applying for SSI benefits.

Special rules make it possible for people with disabilities receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work and still receive monthly payments and Medicare or Medicaid. Social Security calls these employment supports "work incentives." Following are the rules that apply under each program. For more copies or additional materials on work incentives, contact any Social Security office or contact Shepherd Center's Benefits Navigator Program at 1-866-772-2726.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) TWP = \$640, SGA = \$900, Blind SGA = \$1500	Supplemental Security Income (SSI) FBR=\$623 Single, \$934 Couple, Threshold \$25,049
<p>Trial Work Period—A period of nine months (not necessarily consecutive) during which the earnings of a Social Security beneficiary who is blind or disabled will not affect his or her benefit. (The nine months of work must occur within a 60-month period.)</p> <p>Extended Period of Eligibility—For at least three years after a successful trial work period, a Social Security beneficiary who is blind or disabled may receive a disability benefit for any month that his/her earnings are below the substantial gainful activity level (in 2007, \$900 for people who are disabled, \$1,500 for people who are blind).</p> <p>Quick Benefits Restart—If a beneficiary's benefits have ended because of earnings from work and he/she becomes unable to work again because of his/her medical condition within 60 months, benefits may begin again without a new application.</p> <p>Continuation of Medicare—If Social Security disability payments stop because a person has earnings at or above the substantial gainful activity level, but the person is still disabled, Medicare can continue for at least 93 months after the trial work period. After that, the person can buy Medicare coverage by paying a monthly premium.</p> <p>Impairment-Related Work Expenses—Certain expenses for things a person with a disability needs because of his/her impairment in order to work may be deducted when counting earnings to determine if the person is performing substantial gainful activity.</p> <p>Subsidies and Special Conditions— refer to support you receive on the job that could result in your receiving more pay than the actual value of the services you performed. We deduct the value of subsidies and special conditions from your earnings when we decide whether you are working at the SGA level.</p> <p>Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation—If a person recovers while participating in a vocational rehabilitation program that is likely to lead to becoming self-supporting, benefits may continue until the program ends.</p>	<p>Continuation Of SSI—Working SSI recipients who are blind or disabled may continue to receive payments until countable income exceeds SSI limits.</p> <p>Continuation Of Medicaid Eligibility—Medicaid may continue for SSI recipients who are blind or disabled and earn over the SSI limits if they cannot afford similar medical care and depend on Medicaid in order to work.</p> <p>Plan For Achieving Self-Support—An SSI recipient who is blind or disabled may set aside income and resources toward an approved plan for achieving self-support (PASS).</p> <p>Impairment-Related Work Expenses—Certain expenses for things a person with a disability needs because of his/her impairment in order to work may be deducted when counting earnings to determine if a person is eligible and to figure the payment amount. For working persons who are blind, the work expenses need not be related to the impairment.</p> <p>Blind Work Expenses— Earned income that a blind individual uses to meet the expenses of working does not count when we determine SSI eligibility and payment amount. The expenses do not need to be related to blindness and include earned income used to pay income taxes, meals consumed during work hours, transportation costs or guide dog expenses.</p> <p>Students With Disabilities—Tuition, books and other expenses related to getting an education may not be counted as income for recipients who go to school or are in a training program. Student may exclude up to \$1,510 of earnings a month (\$6,100 a year).</p> <p>Sheltered Workshop Payments—Pay received in a sheltered workshop is treated as earned income, regardless of whether it is considered wages for other purposes. This enables Social Security to exclude more of the sheltered workshop employee's earnings when computing his/her SSI payment.</p> <p>Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation—If a person recovers while participating in a vocational rehabilitation program that is likely to lead to becoming self-supporting, benefits may continue until the program ends.</p>

Work Incentive information provided courtesy of Social Security Administration, 1-800-772-1213, www.ssa.gov/work.
 Handout provided courtesy of Shepherd Center's Benefits Navigator Program, 1-866-772-2726, www.benefitsnavigator.org
 Project Directors: Sally Atwell, MS, CRC, LPC; Curtis L. Rodgers, MS, CRC, LPC

A Desktop Guide To The Ticket To Work And Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 substantially expands work opportunities for people with disabilities. The provisions of the act become effective at different times in different parts of the country. Following are the provisions of the law and the status of the various programs.

<p>The Ticket To Work And Self-Sufficiency Program—Established by the new law, the Ticket Program provides a ticket to disabled beneficiaries to take to a certified provider of their choice for rehabilitation and employment services. The program is being phased in nationally over a three-year period, starting in 13 states in 2001. The 13 states are Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont and Wisconsin. For more information, call the ticket Program Manager, Maximus, Inc., at its toll-free number, 1-866-968-7842 (TTY 1-866-833-2967), visit our website www.ssa.gov/work or call our tollfree number, 1-800-772-1213. Ask for the factsheet, <i>Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999</i> (Publication No. 05-10060), or the booklet, <i>The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program</i> (Publication No. 05-10061).</p> <p>Expedited Benefits—As of January 1, 2001, if a beneficiary's benefits have ended because of earnings from work and he/she becomes unable to work again because of his/her medical condition within 60 months, benefits may begin again without a new application.</p> <p>Expansion Of Medicare—The law expands Medicare hospital insurance coverage to at least 93 months after the trial work period for most disability beneficiaries who work.</p> <p>Expansion Of Medicaid—States now have the option to expand Medicaid coverage to working individuals with disabilities using income and resource limits set by the states.</p>	<p>Disability Reviews Postponed—Effective January 1, 2001, an individual using a "ticket" will not need to undergo the regularly scheduled disability reviews. A review may be triggered by earnings, however. The following year, January 1, 2002, Social Security disability beneficiaries who have been receiving benefits for at least 24 months will not be asked to go through a disability review because of the work they are doing. However, regularly scheduled medical reviews could still be performed and benefits could be terminated if earnings were above the limits.</p> <p>Benefit Planning And Assistance—The law directs Social Security to establish a community based work incentives planning and assistance program to disseminate accurate information about work incentives. These programs are now called Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) programs.</p> <p>Protection And Advocacy—The law authorizes Social Security to make payments to protection and advocacy systems in each state to provide legal advice and services to disability beneficiaries.</p>
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Applying for Social Security Benefits

1. Call Social Security's toll free number 1-800-772-1213
2. Tell them you want to apply for disability benefits.
3. They will take information from you on the phone.
4. They will send you a package of forms to complete.
5. They will schedule an interview, either by phone or one to one at your local office.
6. Complete all forms requested.
7. Send all material back to Social Security by the requested date.
8. If you are denied benefits you have the right to appeal. It is in your interest to follow through with the appeal.
9. If you are denied a second time appeal the decision. Again, it is in your interest to appeal.
10. If you are denied again appeal the decision. This will be your opportunity to go before an Administrative Law Judge with Social Security to make your case. You may want to consider an Attorney for this appeal.

Things to remember.

1. There are two types of Social Security for people with disabilities.
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This is a needs based program. You must meet both the disability criteria and financial eligibility criteria to receive SSI. Financial criteria means you cannot have more than \$2000 in cash, checking, savings, etc. You can have \$1500 in a burial fund and a Life Insurance policy with a cash value of no more than \$1500. You may own a house and a vehicle. If you are under age 18 parents' income is considered. If you are under age 18 and fail to meet the financial eligibility but you do meet the disability criteria you will not receive SSI but you may be able to receive Medicaid. Contact the Department of Family Children Services in your County to ask if you qualify for a Deeming Waiver. If you are age 18 or over parent's income is not considered.
 - Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). This benefit is for a person who has worked and paid into the Social Security system. There is no limit on how much you can have in the bank or what you own. If you meet the disability criteria and you have paid enough into the system to be insured you will receive SSDI. Some people may be eligible for this type of benefit based on a parent's record. If a parent is deceased, disabled, or retired and receiving benefits a child who has a disability that started before age 22 may qualify on the parent's record.

Remember, during the application process Social Security is looking at how the impairment impacts activities of daily living. This is a time when we focus on the negative aspects of the disability and how it affects us. Answer the questions directly but you do not have to elaborate. If you are age 18 or over be sure you include any information that shows you need support to gain or maintain employment (job coaching, VR assessments, psychological assessments, etc.)



Key Facts

Vol. 1 No. 2, February, 2003

Benefits Assistance Resource Center
Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research
& Training Center on Workplace Supports

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME AND AGE 18 REDETERMINATION

What is Supplemental Security Income?

The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act requires that all youth who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) go through a redetermination process for their benefit eligibility at age 18. This process has significant implications for individuals with disabilities transitioning out of high school and their families. This fact sheet provides information on the potential impact of the redetermination process, how the Social Security Administration (SSA) determines eligibility for this age group, and how best to prepare students and families to successfully navigate this process.

Impact of Age 18 Redetermination

Under this current legislation, individuals who are 18 years of age who receive SSI benefits must have their eligibility reviewed as if they were applying for adult SSI for the first time, without consideration of previous disability determinations. In other words, the person can be determined ineligible for benefits at the age of 18 although there has been no change in his/her medical condition or their ability to function since being found eligible for childhood SSI benefits.

The mandatory age 18 redetermination process has substantially decreased the number of young adults found eligible to maintain SSI benefits into adulthood. Redetermination outcomes have negatively impacted young adults with certain impairments and living in certain states more than others. Young adults with respiratory, endocrine, and cardiovascular impairments are most likely to have their benefits stopped due to this process. In addition, young adults living in states in the South are more likely to be found ineligible after completing age 18 redetermination.

Impact of Age 18 Redetermination

The SSA process for redetermination at age 18 includes both the gathering of information on the



young adult and determination of eligibility under the adult criteria for SSI. The general process is as follows:

Written Notification of Redetermination

The SSA sends a written notification to the parents or guardian of the youth, informing them that the case will be redetermined.

Interview with SSA Field Office

The SSA sends a plan of action to the parents or guardian, asking them to provide information on the youth's condition, including medical records, school records, and other relevant information. The SSA also sends a letter to the youth, asking them to provide information on their condition, including medical records, school records, and other relevant information. The SSA also sends a letter to the youth, asking them to provide information on their condition, including medical records, school records, and other relevant information.

Review by the Disability Determination Service (DDS)

All the information gathered at the interview is forwarded to the DDS, a state agency that reviews medical and non-medical information to determine if the youth is disabled under the law. The DDS follows a detailed process to determine if the youth's impairment is severe by the SSA's criteria. The DDS also reviews the youth's ability to function in the community. The DDS also reviews the youth's ability to function in the community.

The DDS also examines the individual's ability to earn an income in future employment by reviewing information gathered from the young adult's teachers regarding his/her abilities. Due to the limited opportunities for community work experiences for adolescents with disabilities, the information gathered often relates more to an individual's

performance in school without consideration to their ability to perform in actual work environments. The lack of information on true work performance often leads to an inaccurate assessment of an individual's future ability to earn income.

Based on a combination of these factors, the DDS determines if the young adult will continue to be eligible for SSI benefits. If a determination for SSI eligibility is made, the individual continues to receive benefits in the adult SSI program. If the determination is made for denial of eligibility, the individual has the opportunity to file a formal appeal of the determination.

Individuals found ineligible during redetermination may continue to receive SSI benefits if they began receiving state vocational rehabilitation agency services before their 18th birthday. A provision referred to as Section 301 allows the young adult to retain benefits while he/she participates in an approved vocational rehabilitation program.

Strategies for Managing Redetermination

There are several ways that students, parents, teachers, and other professionals can work to make sure that the age 18 redetermination process is accurate and fair:

Start Planning Early

Schools and other involved professionals should provide students and families with detailed, understandable information on this issue during the earliest stages of transition planning. Specifically, the following points should be addressed early on:

- Discuss how information will be gathered that contributes to the part of the redetermination process examining the individual's future ability to earn income through paid employment.
- Develop a plan if SSI benefits are lost. This should include alternative plans for meeting the young adult's anticipated support needs for work or community living that are currently tied to SSI eligibility.
- Establish eligibility with the state vocational rehabilitation agency well before the age 18 redetermination process.

Document Work Expense

Documentation from teachers and rehabilitation professionals is used to determine the individual's potential to earn income through work. Frequently, the SSA forms only include questions related to school performance. If the student has participated in community based work experiences, supplemental documentation should be provided that states the level of performance in these settings and what supports are required to perform work activities.

Understand the Purpose of Questions

Teachers and others who provide information for redetermination should understand those questions attempting to identify prior fraud or misuse of benefits by families. They should consider the questions carefully, clearly understand what they are communicating by their responses, and be certain that the observations providing the basis for their answers are accurate.

Appeal if Determined Ineligible

All those involved in the transition process should encourage the youth and their families to file a formal appeal to SSA if redetermination results in a loss of benefits. They can also help in documenting additional evidence for the appeal process. At present, the American Bar Association provides referrals to attorneys who will help children and youth with disabilities through both the redetermination and appeals process (information is available at:

<http://www.abanet.org> or (202) 662-1000)

Develop Self-Advocacy Skills

Parents, teachers, and other professionals should provide information and training to help youth with disabilities develop the ability to advocate for themselves in their relationship with the SSA. The Work Incentives Transition Network (WITN) provides more free information on the topic of advocacy skills and the SSA at:

www.vcu.edu/rrtcweb/witn/ssi.htm

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Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Education and Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, ethnic origin, or disability. If special accommodations are needed, please contact Vicki Brooke at (804) 828-1851 VOICE or (804) 828-2494 TTY. This activity is funded through a contract (#0600-00-51200) with Social Security Administration.

There are two types of Social Security for people with disabilities: Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

SSI IS A NEEDS-BASED PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES

One must meet both the disability and financial criteria to qualify. You may not have more than \$2,000 in cash, checking or savings. You may have \$1500 in a separate burial fund or a life insurance policy with a cash value of not more than \$1500, but you may own a house and a vehicle. If you are under 18, your parents' income is considered. When you reach age 18, your parents' income is no longer a consideration.

Effective, 1-1-07, the maximum monthly income allowed to receive SSI is \$623 for an individual and \$934 for a married couple. (This is not a marriage-friendly program.)

*If an individual is eligible for SSI, they automatically qualify for Medicaid.

When you apply for SSI, there will be a 36-month look-back at finances.

PASS - (Plan for Achieving Self-Support) - Saving money while collecting SSI

A disabled SSI recipient may set aside income and resources toward an approved plan for achieving self-support which will reduce their dependency on SSI. (It has to be work-related.) "Maybe you need to go back to school to achieve your work goal. Maybe you want to start your own business. Whatever your goal, the PASS plan can help you save money, while collecting SSI benefits. You can contact your social security office to find out if a PASS plan is appropriate for you."

SSDI IS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED AND PAID INTO THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM - IT IS AN ENTITLEMENT PROGRAM

There is no limit on how much you can have in the bank or what you own. If you meet the disability criteria and have paid enough into the system, you will receive SSDI.

*If you are 18 or older and have a Medicaid Waiver, be sure that you include information that shows that you need specific support in order to maintain employment. You need to make sure that you keep those services.

*If an individual loses his/her SSI because he draws on his/her parent's retirement income, they DO NOT lose Medicaid or their Medicaid Waiver.

Trial Work Period of Nine Months Within a 60-month period

For at least three years after a successful trial work period, a disabled Social Security beneficiary may receive a disability benefit for any month that his/her earnings are below the substantial gainful activity level. (In 2007, the SGA was \$900) After that, there is a dollar for dollar reduction on SSDI.

Subsidies and Special Conditions

If you have a waiver, you must ask the Social Security office for Subsidies and Special Conditions. They will deduct the value of subsidies and special conditions from your earnings when they decide whether you are working at the substantial gainful activity level.

Impairment-Related Work Expenses

Certain expenses for things a person with a disability needs in order to work effectively may also be deducted when counting earnings to determine if the person is performing at the substantial gainful activity level.

Medicaid: What is it?

Medicaid provides medical assistance at no or low cost to people who either cannot afford medical care or qualify due to a disability. If your child is approved for Medicaid under any of the Medicaid programs, you will receive a Medicaid card through the mail.

Most people that qualify for Medicaid due to income will be enrolled in Georgia Better Health Care (GBHC). If enrolled in the GBHC, you will choose a primary care physician or one will be chosen for you. This physician will provide medical services, determine if you need a specialist, and refer you to the hospital when necessary.

If you do not belong to GBHC, you will be responsible for finding and determining whether your service providers except Medicaid. Medicaid covers your medical providers, dentists, vision care for children, prescription drugs, and speech, occupational, and physical therapies, etc.

Please note that currently Medicaid will not pay for a service twice in one day. This is a problem because the insurance service codes used by some public schools to bill Medicaid for providing speech, occupational, and physical therapies use the same insurance service codes as private therapists. Parents and providers know these are substantially different services, but this is currently the Medicaid policy. Your alternatives are to schedule the therapies on different days or refuse to sign the Medicaid form presented by the school system. If you have already signed this form, you can send a letter resending your signature.

Medicaid can also pay *outstanding* medical bills dated up to three months prior to your application date. You must inform your social worker during the application process that you have these bills and they must be from a Medicaid provider.

If you have a primary insurance other than Medicaid, you may have a pharmacy assistant tell you that only one insurance company can be filed by the pharmacy. You need to talk with the pharmacist because unlike most secondary insurance policies you cannot simply pay the bill and file with Medicaid. Medicaid will only pay for services billed directly by the service provider. The pharmacist will know this and do both filings.

Medicaid Programs

Medicaid with or without Social Security Income

Children in families meeting the income requirements will qualify for Medicaid. If the child also has a disability, they may qualify for Social Security Income based on their disability

Does your child qualify?

- ❑ Low income – in 2000 the monthly income level was \$2,842 for a family of four. Some types of income and wealth are not considered. For example, owning a home is not considered in determining eligibility. If you think you may qualify, it is best to apply and have a qualified social worker evaluate your application.
- ❑ Social Security Income is available to children with disabilities in low-income families. If your child qualifies for Social Security, s/he will automatically qualify for Medicaid.

Application Process:

- ❑ Contact your local Department of Family and Children Services Office. Look in your telephone book blue pages for your local number.
- ❑ Request application forms for Georgia Medicaid. I suggest you ask for forms rather than going to the office in person. Going in person can lead to a lengthy wait. You can call 1-800-809-7276 on weekends, early mornings, and evenings, and apply through project Right from the Start.

Medically Needy Spend Down Medicaid

This program allows families with incomes exceeding the Medicaid income levels to spend down their incomes by subtracting outstanding medical bills from income. The program is available to children, disabled persons, pregnant women, and the elderly whose families can spend down to the Medically Needy income levels.

Does my child qualify?

- ❑ Georgia resident.
- ❑ Medical bills equal to or greater than the difference between family income and Medically Needy income level requirements. Contact your local DFCS Office for further information.

Application Process:

- ❑ Contact your local DFCS office of an application.

- ❑ Remember that only outstanding bills count. These include bills paid by local and state programs and bills paid with borrowed money, including credit cards.

Health Insurance Premium Payment Program (HIPP Program)

The HIPP Program covers premium payments for families receiving Medicaid if it is cost effective. In families with children qualifying for Medicaid, the HIPP Program would pay the entire family's premium.

Does our family qualify?

- ❑ At least one person in household is a Medicaid recipient.
- ❑ Must be cost effective.

Application Process:

- ❑ Ask your DFCS case worker for a referral.
- ❑ Referrals are sent to the HIPP Unit for cost-effectiveness determinations.

Peachcare for Kids

www.peachcare.org 1-877-GA-PEACH

Peachcare is a Medicaid program that provides healthcare through the Georgia Better Health Care providers to children without insurance from middle-income families. The health benefits include pediatric services, specialists, hospitalization, emergency room services, prescription drugs, vision, and dental care. You can visit the Peachcare website for a more detailed list of services available.

Peachcare is provide free of charge to children under age six. After age six, premiums are \$7.50 per month for one child. Premiums for families with two or more children are \$15 per month.

Does my child qualify?

- ❑ Georgia resident.
- ❑ Under 19.
- ❑ Uninsured.
- ❑ Family with income equal to or below 235% of the federal poverty limit.

Application process:

- ❑ Contact your local DFCS office for an application, or
- ❑ Apply at www.peachcare.org
- ❑ You will need:
 - ❖ Amounts and Sources of income and when received.
 - ❖ Childcare expenses.
 - ❖ Social Security numbers for all family members.

Deeming Waiver (Katie Beckett Waiver)

The Deeming Waiver is a Medicaid program designed for children with disabilities in families with incomes too high to qualify for Social Security Income (SSI) and/or Medicaid. Income is not considered in determining qualification beyond proving you cannot obtain SSI or any other Medicaid program. Even if your child is covered by insurance, you can still qualify for the Deeming Waiver. Medicaid will act as your secondary insurance.

Does your child qualify?

- ☐ Under 18 years old
- ☐ Has a disability
- ☐ Ineligible for SSI due to income or assets of parents.
- ☐ Resident of Georgia.
- ☐ U.S. citizen or alien lawfully admitted to be a permanent resident or otherwise permanently living in the U.S. legally.
- ☐ Willing to assign rights to all medical benefits from third party resources (insurance) to Georgia Medical Assistance for any medical expenses paid by the Medicaid program.
- ☐ Must have a Social Security number.

The forms sent to you by the Department of Family and Children Services will state that your "child must be chronically impaired to the extent of being a suitable candidate for nursing home care and receiving appropriate home care less costly than nursing home care." Do not panic. The real requirement is that your child's level of functioning meets the nursing home placement criteria established by the Georgia Medical Care Foundation (GMCF) for Medicaid recipients.

No, this is not splitting hairs. It turns out the GMCF's criteria is extremely broad. In fact, there are a number of children under the Deeming Waiver with diagnosis of mild ADHD; and at least one child with no diagnosis, but social interaction impairments. This I assume is a young child on their way to a diagnosis, but who knows?

The point is do not let the nursing home language put you off. The reason it's there is related to the history behind the waiver.

Originally called the Katie Beckett Waiver, the program was implemented due to the efforts of the parents of one Katie Beckett. Katie Beckett was a child with disabilities whose parents wanted to care for her at home, but due to the cost of care could not. They had too much income to qualify for Medicaid. Yet, if they had placed Katie in a nursing home Georgia Medicaid would have covered her services.

The family demonstrated that the cost of nursing home care was substantially higher than home care. Therefore, the current waiver criteria include a requirement of showing that the cost of home care is less than the cost of nursing home care.

Application Process:

- Complete application form 268.
 - Interview at DFACS. Financial information will be requested. This information will be used to confirm that your child does not qualify for any other program.
 - SSI denial letter is required. You obtain this letter by calling the Social Security office (call 800-772-1213 to find the closest SS office) and telling them you have too much income or wealth and need a denial letter. If you are close to the requirements, you should apply for SSI.
 - Your pediatrician must complete form DMA-6. Most pediatricians are very familiar with these forms. (Note this form is only valid for 30 days) Tell your pediatrician not to date the form.
 - A psychological evaluation is required for children with mental retardation (MR) or developmental delay (DD). This includes:
 - ❖ Autism
 - ❖ Blindness/Visual impairment
 - ❖ Cerebral Palsy
 - ❖ Cystic Fibrosis
 - ❖ Deafness/Hearing Impairment
 - ❖ Epilepsy
 - ❖ Head Injury
 - ❖ Multiple Sclerosis
 - ❖ Orthopedic Impairments
 - ❖ Speech Impairments
 - ❖ Spina Bifida
 - ❖ Spinal Cord Injury,
 - ❖ Or if the condition is expected to continue indefinitely and results in an impediment to independent living, learning, mobility, self care, self direction, or understanding and use of language.

Note: a licensed PhD must complete the psychological within the past year. School psychological reports can be within the past three years, if accompanied by a copy of a current Individualized Educational Plan signed by the school psychologist.

- Social Data Report 188 is required for any child with MR or DD diagnosis.

- Daily Care Plan. This is a simple plan written by the parents indicating the problem, the plan to address that problem, and expected outcomes. Each year the daily care plan must be updated.
- Additional medical information

This may sound overwhelming, but it is not. It does require a lot of paperwork, but is well worth the effort.

Where do I start?

Contact your county Department of Family and Children Services and request information and application forms for the Deeming Waiver. You need to talk with the adult Medicaid office. The children's Medicaid program does not administer the Deeming Waiver and probably won't know what you are talking about.

While waiting for your application, find a day, not at lunchtime, when you have some time on your hands. Make some coffee. Use a phone with redial. Call your local Social Security office and obtain the above mentioned rejection letter.

If the forms confuse you, contact Medicaid or ask your service provider if they can help you. Many service providers, like Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, have social workers that can answer questions.

DEEMING WAIVER

(Previously called Katie Beckett Waiver)

Overview:

One of the most frustrating situations for parents of children with disabilities is the income limit imposed for qualification of Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The Deeming Waiver is a way for parents to get Medicaid for their child with a disability when their income is too high to qualify for SSI. This federal waiver takes the family income out of the picture and looks at the income/assets of the child. Even if a child has private insurance coverage, parents can apply for this waiver. Most private insurance policies have service limitations, out of pocket expenses, and lifetime caps. In cases where private insurance exists, the Deeming Waiver will be beneficial as secondary insurance to cover out of pocket expenses and will be helpful to have before a lifetime cap is met. As secondary coverage, Medicaid will pay for 20% of covered expenses that primary insurance does not pay.

Eligibility Criteria:

In order to apply for the Deeming Waiver the child must meet the following guidelines.

- Child must be under 18 years old.
- Child must meet Social Security disability criteria.
- Caring for child at home must be cost effective (less than nursing home cost).
- Child must be ineligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) due to income and/or assets of the parents.
- Child must meet the criteria for nursing home placement as established by the Georgia Medical Care Foundation (GMCF) for Medicaid recipients. ***NOTE:** This does not mean the child should be placed in a nursing home, simply that he/she meets the nursing home criteria for care.

How To Apply:

I. Contact your county Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Ask to speak with the **Adult Medicaid worker**, even though you are getting the waiver for a child. The **Adult Medicaid worker** is the one who handles the Deeming Waiver (General DFCS personnel are not usually familiar with the Deeming Waiver). The Medicaid worker will schedule an appointment for you, which will be long and in-depth. The Medicaid worker should tell you ahead of time what you will need to bring with you to the appointment. (If not, make sure to ask so you do not waste your valuable time). The first step in the process is to determine ineligibility for SSI. **Most** of the time, the county DFCS office can make this determination, but occasionally this is not possible. If they cannot, they will refer you to the Social Security office to apply for SSI for your child.

II. You will need to gather information and fill out forms in order to document your child's

disability. The DFCS worker will tell you about this information, give you the appropriate forms, and tell you where you can get assistance in completing the documents.

These documents include:

- **Social History:** a detailed family history.
- **Psychological Evaluation:** for children with a mental retardation or developmental delay diagnosis. This must be completed by a Psychologist (PhD.)
- **Plan of Care:** service plan that states the child's strengths, needs and recommendations.
- **DMA- 6 Form:** physician's recommendation for nursing home placement. Although the form can be filled out by the parent it **must** be signed by the doctor. This form is very important. Be sure to ask the DFCS worker to mark the areas that require the signature of the doctor. Form should be taken to the doctor that knows your child best. **Do not** have the Dr. date the form when it is signed because it is only good for 30 days from the time it is dated. It should be dated at the time all of the paperwork is completed and the application is ready to be submitted.

III. When all paperwork is complete, the DFCS worker will submit the completed packet to the Georgia Medical Care Foundation (GMCF) for approval.

* Once a child is approved for the Deeming Waiver, a review of the child's continued eligibility must be completed annually.

For More Information:

If you would like to talk with another parent that has already gone through the Deeming Waiver process, contact **Parent to Parent of Georgia** by phone to request a parent match or fill out the Peer Support Request now (be sure and note on the form that you want a match on the deeming waiver process).

Atlanta and local calling area: 770-451-5484

Macon calling area: 478-934-3694

Statesboro calling area: 912-489-1904

Toll-Free Statewide: 800-229-2038

DEEMING WAIVER INFORMATION

Thank you for choosing the Marcus Institute. Below is an introduction to the process of applying for the Deeming Waiver (Katie Beckett Medicaid).

Brief History

The Deeming Waiver is a type of Medicaid that helps to cover the costs of medical treatment and therapeutic services for children with physical or developmental disabilities. Before the Deeming Waiver, the government would subsidize care for a disabled child ONLY if the child was placed in a state institution. In 1981, the parents of Katie Beckett fought to get financial assistance while caring for their child at home. Now, the Deeming Waiver is helpful to families who make "too much" to receive financially based Medicaid, but who need expensive services for their special needs children.

How to apply for the Deeming Waiver

Because you first must prove that you do not qualify for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Disability - Medicaid program which is based on your family's income. The first step is to apply for SSI through your nearest Social Security Office. You may call them at 1-800-772-1213 to begin the application. If your child receives SSI, and, thus, Medicaid, you are finished at this point, as Medicaid (which provides the same benefits as the Deeming Waiver). If your child does not receive SSI and Medicaid through this program, SSI will send you a denial letter. This denial letter becomes a part of your Deeming Waiver Application. Make sure you do not lose it!

Next, you will gather all of the items listed in the "checklist section" below. Note: Your child's regular Medical Doctor (Primary Care Physician or PCP) must sign the DMA-6 form and the Physician Referral Form. The DMA 6 form can be downloaded from the state website:

http://dch.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/22/32/31946819DMA-6A_Form.pdf

The "care plan" needs to be filled out and can be downloaded from the following website:

http://dch.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/42/23/31944895Care_Plan.pdf It is basically self explanatory.

Call your county's office of Department of Family and Children's Services to find out if you can apply by mail, or if they would prefer for you to have an appointment with a caseworker. When you gather all the checklist items, take them to the DFCS office with the completed Deeming Waiver application. If your child is approved for the Waiver, it will be retroactive for 3 months from the date the office initially received the completed application materials.

Limitations of the Deeming Waiver

If your child is approved for the Deeming Waiver, and your child has commercial insurance in addition, you **MUST GO TO A DOCTOR WHO ACCEPTS YOUR PRIMARY INSURANCE**. Medicaid will NOT reimburse any provider who is not first paid by your commercial insurer. When scheduling a doctor's appointment or therapy services, always inform the facility of both your PRIMARY insurance and the Medicaid SECONDARY insurance.

CHECKLIST

- Child's social security number

- SSI rejection letter
- Child's birth certificate
- Proof of income (check stubs, tax return)
- Completed Social History (see attached instructions following this section)
- Bank account number and safety deposit box numbers, as well as any material assets including cars, house, boats, etc.
- A Psychoeducational evaluation, recent within the last year, which was completed by a Ph.D. **If your child is 3 years or older, this was probably done through the school system
- If your child is in early intervention, include the current Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- If your child is receiving special education services, include the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- DMA-6 Medical form completed and signed by your child's pediatrician.
- Care Plan, also signed by the physician

HOW TO WRITE A SOCIAL HISTORY

This information can be written out simply, it's not a "writing project", just a way for them to have the information all in one place.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Name:
- Birth date:
- Social Security Number:
- Address:
- Telephone Number:
- Parents:

PRESENTING PROBLEMS

- Description of the disability
- Why the child needs the Katie Beckett Waiver (the services that your child receives that are not currently covered by your insurance etc.)

FAMILY INFORMATION

- Dad- Name, age, education, occupation, health
- Mom- Name, age, education, occupation, health
- Siblings- Name, age, grade in school, health
- Who lives in the home.
- Home- type (apartment, mobile home, house)
- Location (in town, in the country, in a subdivision)
- Size (number of bedrooms, acres of land)

BIRTH AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

- Pregnancy- prenatal care, any problems, full term or premature
- Delivery- C-Section or vaginal, breech etc. Birth hospital; physician; baby's birth weight; length of hospital stay following birth.
- When child's problems were first detected
Developmental delays
Problems in feeding, movement, sleeping, health

MEDICAL INFORMATION

- Allergies
- Immunizations
- Physicians who see the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- Health problems

- Medications
- Hospitalizations
- Surgeries
- Other Medical Treatments (CT Scan, Lab Work, EKG, EEG)
- Vision
- Hearing
- Adaptive Equipment used

TRAINING/EDUCATION

- School Program- Teacher, classroom, Special Education
Goals, Support Services (OT, PT, Speech, Adaptive PE)
- Early Intervention services (if received)
- Therapies received:)Physical, Occupational, or Speech Therapy, Special Instruction, Aquatherapy, Hippotherapy.)
- How often they are given. Where they are given.
- Therapists names.

CURRENT FUNCTIONING

- Self Help (eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, grooming)
- Language/Speech (understanding what is said....number of words in vocabulary, use of 2-3 word phrases or full sentences)
- Motor Skills (using hands, sitting, walking, climbing, etc.)
- Social Skills (recognizing people, sociable, playing with others, doesn't like to separate from mom etc.)
- Cognitive (learning, how they learn best...ability to learn new things, etc.)

Note: Many of these skills may be described in terms of the child's "age level". For example, you may see something like "...is talking at a 18-24 month level" which will tell you, regardless of the child's birth age, that the child's speech is at the level of a child in the 18-24 month range.

Describe whether child is dependent, needs assistance, or is independent in different areas. Be sure to compare how the child is doing in relation to other children their age... The child may have made lots of progress, but still may be behind others. It is important to note how much assistance is needed and whether it is a verbal reminder, or physically assisting the child.

SUMMARY

Child; age; disability/diagnosis or areas of delay; importance of medical care and therapy in promoting development.



Print

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Checklist for Helping Your Child With Homework -- Helping Your Child With Homework

1. Show That You Think Education and Homework Are Important

- ☐ Do you set a regular time every day for homework?
- ☐ Does your child have the papers, books, pencils and other things needed to do assignments?
- ☐ Does your child have a well-lit, fairly quiet place to study?
- ☐ Do you set a good example by showing your child that the skills he is learning are an important part of the things he will do as an adult?
- ☐ Do you stay in touch with your child's teacher?

2. Monitor Assignments

- ☐ Do you know what your child's homework assignments are? How long they should take? How the teacher wants you to be involved in them?
- ☐ Do you see that your child starts and completes assignments?
- ☐ Do you read the teacher's comments on assignments that are returned?
- ☐ Is TV viewing or video game playing cutting into your child's homework time?

3. Provide Guidance

- ☐ Do you help your child to get organized? Does your child need a schedule or assignment book? A book bag or backpack and a folder for papers?
- ☐ Do you encourage your child to develop good study habits (for example, scheduling enough time for big assignments; making up practice tests)?
- ☐ Do you talk with your child about homework assignments? Does she understand them?

4. Talk with Teachers to Resolve Problems

- ☐ Do you meet with the teacher early in the year before any problems arise?
- ☐ If a problem comes up, do you meet with the teacher?
- ☐ Do you cooperate with the teacher to work out a plan and a schedule to solve homework problems?
- ☐ Do you follow up with the teacher and with your child to make sure the plan is working?

Helping your child with homework is an opportunity to improve your child's chances of doing well in school and life.



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Communication Tips

By Jane Newman

Communication is a way of transmitting ideas through writing, speech, or other means between persons or places. There are many ways of communicating. Communication between home and school supports student success.

Communication between home and school helps teachers, parents, and, most importantly, students. For example –

Students

- ❖ Gain awareness of their own progress
- ❖ Understand the teacher/school's expectations and rules
- ❖ Understand their own educational roles

Parents

- ❖ Gain awareness and understanding of school programs
- ❖ Informed of children's progress
- ❖ More involved with their children's learning
- ❖ Evaluate children's teachers

Teachers

- ❖ Achieve greater teaching effectiveness
- ❖ Understand families' views
- ❖ More effective use of volunteers

Communication tips for parents and teachers:

- ❖ Weekly or biweekly newsletters
- ❖ Progress and/or report cards
- ❖ Communication notebooks
- ❖ Parent-teacher conferences
- ❖ Parent joins an activity or a program at school
- ❖ Parent observes in the classroom
- ❖ Folder for the student's work
- ❖ Parent come to school and tells about their culture
- ❖ Extended family visit/participate at school
- ❖ Workshops and/or PTA meetings
- ❖ Parents and students talk about the school day
- ❖ Parents and students work together on homework
- ❖ Develop family projects
- ❖ Parents community members volunteer to help support the school

Websites & Local Support

Alexander Graham Bell Assoc For the Deaf	www.agbell.org	
American Association for the Blind	www.afb.org	404 525-2303
Atlanta Alliance on Development Disabilities	www.aadd.org	404 881-9977
Alliance National Technical Assistance Center	www.taalliance.org	952-838-9000
Autism Society of America GA Chapter	www.asaga.com	770 736-5519
Babies Can't Wait		404 657-2727
Brain Injury Association of Georgia		404 817-7577
Children & Adults with ADD	www.chadd.org	770 726-5519
Dept of Education, Division of Exceptional Students	www.doe.k12.ga.us	404 656-3963
Disability Information & Assistance Line		404 730-6900
Down Syndrome Assoc of Atlanta	www.down-syndrome-atlanta.org	404 320-3233
Easter Seals of North GA	www.easterseals.org	404 633-9609
Epilepsy Foundation of America GA Chapter	www.epilepsyga.org	404 527-7155
ERISA Industry Committee	www.ericec.org	
Families & Advocates Partnership for Education	www.fape.org	
Families of Children Under Stress (FOCUS)	www.focus-ga.org	770 234-9111
FRAXA Research Foundation	www.fraxa.org	
Georgia ADA Exchange		770 451-2340
Georgia Advocacy Office	www.thegao.org	404 885-1234
Georgia ARC Network	www.arcga.org	404 361-9311
GA Association of the Deaf	www.gadeaf.org	912 764-7789
GA Association of Deaf-Blind		800 255-0135
Georgia Community Support & Solutions	www.gacommunity.com	

Georgia Learning Resource Systems	www.glr.org	
	Metro east	404 325-3011
	Metro west	404 325-2697
GA Post Adoption Resources & Support	www.gaadoptionresources.org	
	866-A-PARENT	
Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities	www.ggcd.org	404 657-2126
International Dyslexia Association GA Branch		404 256-1232
Learning Disabilities Association of GA	www.ldag.org	770 727-6451
Lekotek of GA	www.lekotekga.org	
The May Institute	www.maysouth.org	
Multiple Sclerosis Society		404 256-9700
National Alliance for Mentally Ill	www.nami.org	
National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities	www.nichcy.org	800 695-0285
Parent Advocacy Coalitional for Educational Rights	www.pacer.org	
Parent Educating Parents & Professionals (PEPPAC)	www.peppinc.org	770 577-7771
Parent To Parent	www.parenttoparentofga.org	770 451-5484
Sickle Cell foundation of Ga	www.sicklecellatlaga.org	
Special Education Resources on the Internet	www.seriweb.com	
Spina Bifida Assoc of GA	www.spinabifidaofgeorgia.org	
Tools For Life	www.gatfl.org	
Understanding Disabilities/Creating Opportunities	www.ucpa.org	
United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Atlanta		770 676-2000
US Dept of Transportation – Air Travel Hotline	800 778-4838 or 800 455-9880(TTY)	
United Way Information & Resources	http://unitedwayatlanta.org	or 211

Working With Your PTA

By Stacey Ramirez

The following is a collaboration of effective goals and projects for a successful committee. Your PTA can start this committee and have a major impact on our special needs students by choosing one or more of the following suggestions.

Proposal for PTA Exceptional Children Committee

PURPOSE & GOAL

The focus of the committee will be to give the students, staff, and families of your school an opportunity to acquire knowledge and understanding about disabilities.

Our goals are to help the student, staff, and families:

- Explore and understand their own attitude toward disabilities
- Learn empathy for persons with disabilities.
- Learn respect and appropriate response to persons with disabilities.
- Learn how to reach out to other schools and the community with knowledge and understanding about disabilities.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOALS

STUDENTS:

- ✓ Disability Awareness Week. Projects denoted with (DAW) are some possibilities to enhance the week.
- ✓ Disability Awareness Bulletin board describing a different disability each month
- ✓ Supplement Media Center with children's books on different disabilities
- ✓ (DAW) Assembly with a special speaker that is high energy and fun, perhaps a puppet show
- ✓ (DAW) Short video shown to entire school on the closed circuit TV
- ✓ (DAW) Hands on activities in classroom during DAW (Have packs available that include activities with sight, hearing, and learning disabilities)
- ✓ (DAW) Proposal to Student Council to raise money for disability group (i.e.: Leukemia Fund)

STAFF:

- Proposal for principal to highlight a different disability each month at the staff meetings (7-10 min presentation to highlight how the targeted disability presents in the classroom and possible teaching strategies for the student.)
- Special Needs expert to speak in staff in-service
- Special Needs Resource and Teaching Library established and accessible by all staff members
- Provide a list of all support and advocacy groups for the different disabilities

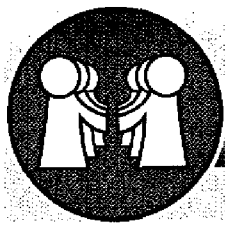
- Gift certificates to special education teachers for end of year gifts. (Reg. Ed. Teachers have up to 25 students contribute to the teacher gift, special education teacher have approx 8 students contribute.)

FAMILIES:

- ☆ Monthly article in school newsletter highlighting the same disability that is on the bulletin board
- ☆ Prior to DAW, send home a DAW worksheet. Whom do you know with a disability? (Famous, Athlete, Family member?) Send in picture of the person and fill out the form. The worksheets and pictures will be placed along the halls during DAW. Acknowledge class with most participation.
- ☆ (DAW) Word search sent home to be completed with parents. Acknowledge class with most participation.
- ☆ (DAW) Questionnaire sent home – If you had a person with a disability (ex: in wheelchair or walker) stay with you, how accessible and adaptable is your home? What are some creative ways you could help this person get around your home? Acknowledge class with most participation.
- ☆ Sib Shops – Workshops for students with disabled siblings.
- ☆ Monthly support meetings with speakers

OTHER POSSIBILITIES:

- ◆ Tie into other PTA committees for joint projects. (Ex: hearing and vision screening to teach about hearing and vision disabilities)
- ◆ Tie into Character Education to teach empathy, respect and proper response to person with disabilities.
- ◆ Grant writing workshop.

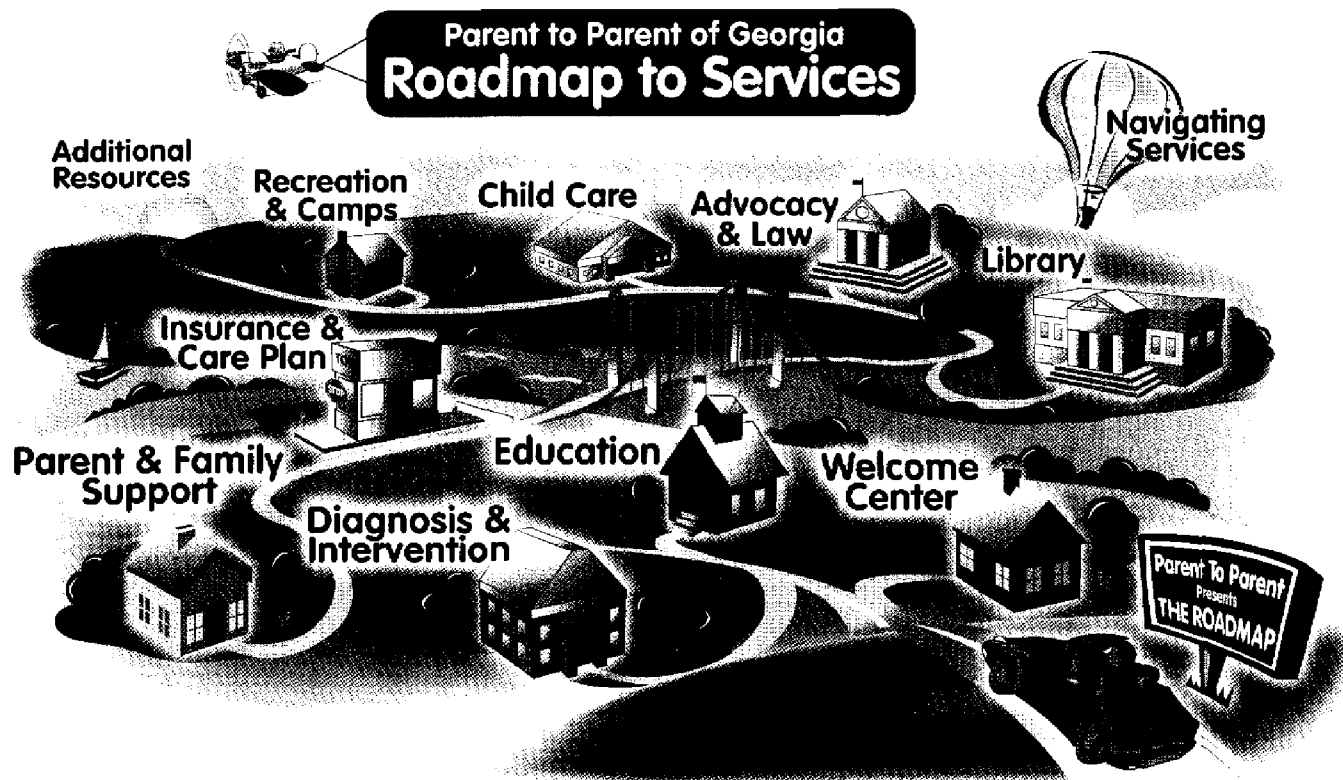


PARENT TO PARENT OF GEORGIA

PROVIDING SUPPORT AND INFORMATION TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Your ONE STOP for...

- › Information and Education on:
 - Health Related Issues
 - Early Intervention Services
 - Special Education Questions
- › Training Opportunities
- › Leadership Development
- › Emotional Support
- › Services and Support In Spanish



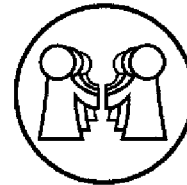
<http://www.parenttoparentofga.org/roadmap/>

Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc.
3805 Presidential Parkway, Suite 207
Atlanta, GA 30340

Phone #: 770-451-5484 Toll Free #: 800-229-2038 Fax #: 770-458-4091

What You Need to Know

About Parent to Parent of Georgia



What is Parent to Parent? Parent to Parent of Georgia is a statewide organization that provides support, information, education, and leadership development services to families of children ages birth to 26 with disabilities or special health needs.

What Programs are Available?

Parent to Parent of Georgia offers five primary programs:

1. **Special Needs Database:** Our database program is designed so anyone can easily and quickly access information and resources available across the state. Our database is available via telephone through P2P staff, or online at www.parenttoparentofga.org. This database serves as the Babies Can't Wait Central Directory.
2. **Roadmap to Services:** This navigation tool, loaded with information on disability issues, is available on our website. Designed entirely by parents of children with disabilities and P2P staff, visitors can tour Georgia's disability system and learn valuable tidbits of information!
3. **Peer Match:** *P2P's signature emotional support program!* Using our vast volunteer Supporting Parent network, P2P staff can arrange for parents to be matched with other parents for sage advice, and empathetic and understanding dialogue. Supporting Parents have no magic answers, but they are willing listeners. They can share the pleasures and the challenges of parenting a child with special needs.
4. **Family to Family for Health Choices (F2F):** Georgia's newest Health Information Center, our F2F program assists families of children and youth with special health care needs and the professionals who serve them by offering information, resources and options for informed decision-making.
5. **Navigation to Connections to Increase Student Outcomes (N2C):** N2C serves as Georgia's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). N2C provides parents of children with disabilities with the training and information they need to enable them to participate effectively in educational decision making, particularly as they pertain to IDEA and NCLB.

And an additional Program, offered collaboratively among leading parent and disability organizations, is the **Parent Leadership Coalition (PLC) Navigator Team Project**. The PLC is working to establish a single point of contact in each Georgia County so that no parent ever feels alone.

Want to learn more about Parent to Parent, and how we can assist you?

Here's how to reach us. . .

Toll Free: 800-229-2038

State Office: 770-451-5484

Fax: 770-485-4091

Website: www.parenttoparentofga.org

Email: info@parenttoparentofga.org

Southeast Georgia: 912-489-1904

Middle Georgia: 478-934-3694

Southwest Georgia: 229-436-7774

Northwest Georgia: 706-802-5535

Augusta Area: 706-721-5160

Helpful Numbers

The Partnership for Families, Children & Youth
770-207-6060

Project Healthy Grandparents (Walton)
678-425-0718

Advantage Behavioral Health Systems
1-800-357-9774

Monroe Office 770-267-8302

Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center
1-800-474-7540

Pregnancy Resource Center of Walton County
770-466-3900

Team UP Mentoring
770-316-5735

Walton County Dept. of Family and Children Services
770-207-4000

Walton County Health Department
770-207-4125

Mercy Health Center (Athens)
706-425-9445

Walton County Board of Education
770-266-4520

Social Circle City Schools
770-464-2731

Department of Juvenile Justice
770-207-4192

Faith in Serving Humanity (FISH)
770-207-4327

Child Support Recovery
770-207-4180

Probate Court of Walton County
770-267-1417

Walton County Juvenile Court
770-267-1797

Walton County Safe Kids
770-267-1422

Prime for Life
770-207-6061

Social Security Office
770-307-4607

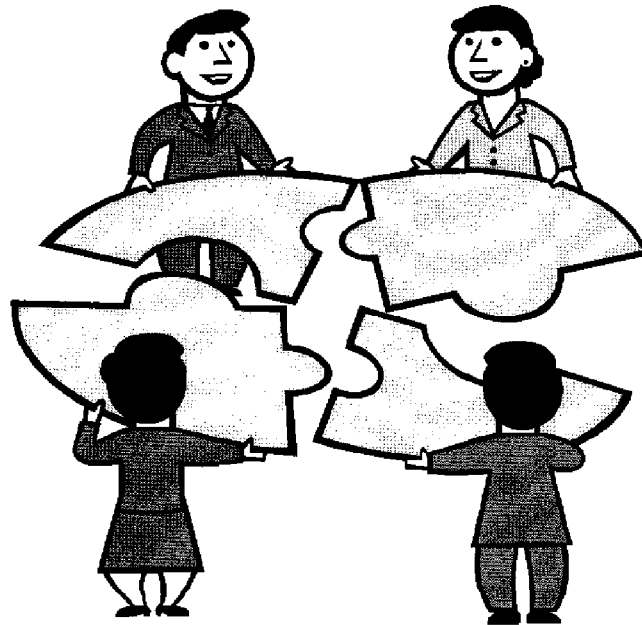
Boys and Girls Club of Walton County
770-207-6279

Department of Labor
770-207-4111

Information for Walton County
211

Teresa Johnson, Parent Mentor – Walton County Schools
770-266-4505

Understanding The Medicaid Waiver



A Practical Guide for Families
and Individuals with Developmental
Disabilities

Published by
The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

Fall 2006

What Is A Medicaid Waiver?

A Medicaid Waiver is money that can pay for services for people with developmental disabilities. These services can take place in the person's home or in the community. Both children and adults can be supported by Medicaid Waiver services.

Medicaid usually pays for doctor appointments, hospital expenses, medicine, therapy, and some adaptive equipment. The Medicaid Waiver allows for Medicaid to be used to pay for additional services. The state writes a plan that tells what kind of services will be provided under their Medicaid Waiver program. The federal government has to approve the Medicaid Waiver plan. The Medicaid Waiver dollars are part state and part federal money.

The New Medicaid Waivers

The Office of Developmental Disabilities has written two new waivers. These new waivers are designed to give people more control over how their service dollars are spent.

The NOW waiver will provide supports to people who don't need 24 hour care. The Comprehensive waiver will provide supports to people who need 24 hour care.

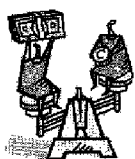
Families who have heard about the new waivers are excited because they will have more options for support and more will have more control in making the decision about how the money is spent.

The new waivers are still going through the approval process with Medicaid. If you would like to see the new waivers operating in Georgia, you can let your legislators and the governor know how you feel. For contact information check www.aadvocacy.org

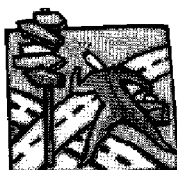
Features of the New Waivers



Individual Budgets – With the new waivers, every person will have an individual budget based on their needs. The family will be aware of how much money is available to purchase the supports needed. In the past the dollars went to the providers to reimburse them for providing the service.



Supports Intensity Scale – The support coordinators have been trained to use the Supports Intensity Scale in an effort to find out what the individual needs. It is an interview that is done with people who know the individual well. The score on the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) along with other information will be used to decide how many waiver dollars will be set aside for your family member's supports and services.



Choice of Services – If a family is happy with the services they are currently receiving, they can choose to continue to purchase those same services. If they want to think of other ways to support their family member, they can look at new and innovative ways of providing the community supports. Families can even choose to become responsible for hiring the people to work with their family member.



Financial Support Services – If a family wants to be in control of choosing who provides the services for their family member, then they can use the financial support service agency to pay the bills for them. The family would sign off on the time sheets and submit them for payment. The agency pays the taxes and social security, pays for the background check, and provides W-2 forms and monthly budget reports.

What Services Are Available Using Waiver Dollars?



Behavioral Support – If your family member has challenging behaviors, waiver dollars can help purchase the services of an expert to address the behaviors and support the person. (\$2,460 maximum yearly).



Community Access – This service can be provided individually or with a group of people. It can take place during the day, in the evening, or even on weekends. Community activities that would be enjoyable to the person would be identified, and participation and support arranged.



Community Guide – Waiver dollars can pay a person to link your family member to local community resources. The community guide can research what is available based on the person's interests and needs. (\$2000 maximum yearly).



Community Living Support – This service helps the person live at home. The support can help with bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, eating, shopping, banking, exercising, decision making, supervision of the person taking their medication, or other community living activities.



Community Residential Alternative – This waiver service is for people who are living in a residential home operated by a provider agency. The person can receive support in daily living activities, community activities, and household chores. The agency staff provides the training and supervision in the home.



Dental Services for Adults – Currently Medicaid only pays for adults to have teeth pulled. Dental services cover preventative dental care or dental treatment. (\$500 maximum yearly)



Environmental Accessibility Adaptation - Medicaid Waiver funds can be used to modify a home to make it more accessible, like adding ramps or grab bars. (\$10,000 lifetime maximum)



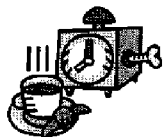
Financial Support Services – This is a service that assists families in paying for the services when the family chooses to hire the people they want to work with their family member. The financial support service manages payroll, taxes, background checks, etc.



Natural Support Training and Individual Directed Goods and Services – These two services are available only under the NOW waiver and are designed to help promote the individual's participation in the community. Funds can be used to train people or to purchase things the person needs in the community. (\$1800 maximum yearly for training...\$1500 maximum annually for goods or services)



Professional Therapeutic Services - The Medicaid Waiver can pay for physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, or nutritional therapy. (\$1800 maximum yearly)



Respite – The Medicaid Waiver will pay for respite care to give the family a break from their demanding schedules involved in caring for their family member who has developmental disabilities. This can be hourly or overnight.



Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies – The Waiver can pay for medical supplies or adaptive equipment that might be needed. This could include things like disposable diapers, chux pads, latex gloves, and wipes. (\$13,474 equipment Lifetime cap.....\$1,734.48 maximum yearly for supplies)



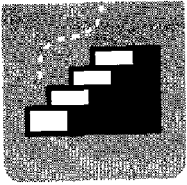
Support Coordination – The support coordinator will be responsible for completing all the waiver paperwork and will monitor to make sure the services are being delivered. They also check on the individual's health and safety.



Transportation – Waiver dollars can be used to purchase transportation to get people where they need to go in the community. (\$2800 maximum yearly)



Vehicle Adaptation – If a vehicle needs to be adapted, waiver funds can be used to pay for such things as a van lift, a portable ramp, wheelchair tie downs or brackets, or a specialized seatbelt. (\$6,240 maximum lifetime cap)



Steps To Take To Apply For A Waiver

1. Contact the Intake and Evaluation Team at the Regional Office to apply for services. The Intake and Evaluation Team will screen you to determine if you are eligible for services. The Intake and Evaluation Team will place your name on either the long term or the short term waiting list.
2. If you are on the short term waiting list, then a support coordinator will be assigned. The support coordinator will check in with you and your family periodically to see if there are any changes in your situation.
3. When funding becomes available, the regional office staff will send a letter stating that you have been approved for a Medicaid Waiver.
4. The Intake and Evaluation Team will come out to the house to complete the paperwork for the waiver. This includes doing a social history, a psychological update, a nursing assessment, and completing other Medicaid required documents. As a family member, be sure that the assessments thoroughly describe the needs of your son / daughter.
5. The Support Coordinator will assist you and your family in completing the Individual Service Plan. Goals will be developed from needs identified in the intake assessments. The support coordinator will also complete the Supports Intensity Scale and the Health Risk Assessment Tool which will be used to determining the level of funding that will be received.
6. The individual and their family will be given information about providers who work in that region. The family will choose the provider they want with help from the support coordinator or decide if they would prefer to self direct the services.



Key People Available To Help You and Your Family

The Regional Offices have a person called a **Developmental Disabilities Case Expeditor** who can assist individuals moving from hospitals or in crisis to access services.

The **Intake and Evaluation Team** has professional staff that can assist the family by identifying needs and recommending goals for the services and completing the eligibility evaluations.

The **Support Coordinator's** role is to help make sure that the individual gets the services and supports that they need. The support coordinator makes sure all the paperwork is completed and monitors to make sure services are being delivered. They also keep a watchful eye to make sure the person receiving services is safe and in good health. This is a Medicaid Waiver service.

There will be **community guides** as resources to individuals and their families. These community guides will help link the person to individuals and associations in their local community that match their interests. This service is purchased using Medicaid Waiver dollars.

There are individuals with disabilities who have gone through a training program to certify them as **peer supporters**. They can be contacted through the Independent Living Centers around the state. Peer supporters share information that they have learned from personal experience.

There are a variety of **providers** who want to deliver Medicaid Waiver services. The Regional Office can provide families with a list of providers approved to deliver services within their region.

The **Financial Support Services Agency** is available to pay for services or goods if a family wants to hire the people they want to work with their family member. Acumen is currently the only agency in Georgia providing this service. They will pay the social security and employer taxes as well as do criminal background checks and provide a W-2 form for all people hired by the family.

An Example of a Person Already on the Waiver

Jimmy is forty-four years old and lives with his mother who is a widow. Jimmy goes to the day program five days a week from 9:00 until 3:30. His mom works for an insurance company.

When the support coordinator explained the new waivers to Jimmy and his mother, they decided that they wanted him to continue to go to the day program four days a week. His mother is off on Wednesdays so she didn't need him to be at the center that day.

Jimmy has become very interested in NASCAR racing and loves anything that has to do with cars. This is an interest that his mother knows nothing about.



With Jimmy's waiver funds, they purchased the services of a community guide. She explored possible activities that Jimmy might enjoy that had to do with cars. She found the following:

- A car dealership who wanted to hire someone to wash cars.
- An auto parts store that needed help unloading trucks on Wednesday afternoons.
- A club for NASCAR fans that meets to watch the races on Sunday afternoons.
- An opportunity to vacuum out state patrol cars between shifts at 3:00 p.m.

Jimmy's mother took him to the auto parts store on Wednesday. The assistant manager received waiver funds to teach Jimmy how to unload the truck and stock the shelves. The manager paid Jimmy minimum wage for his work from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

One of the NASCAR club members knew Jimmy from church. He volunteered to take Jimmy out to lunch on Sundays after church and then take him to watch the race on television with the other club members. This was a natural support that was developed based on a shared interest. It did not require any Medicaid waiver dollars.

An Example of a Person New to the Waiver

Mary graduated from high school and stayed at home 14 months before receiving news that she had been awarded a Medicaid waiver. Mary lives with her parents, but wants to have her own apartment in the future.



Mary wants a job. She loves working with children. She helps with the child care at church during choir practice.

The support coordinator explained the new waiver to Mary and her family. They want to purchase community access services to help Mary become employed. They also wanted respite care for a three day weekend so her parents could celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. They decided to purchase transportation for Mary to get to church on choir practice night because her mother is taking a class and can't take her. Mary also wants to join a gym and take a water aerobics class. She needs someone to go with her to help her change into her swimsuit.

Mary's mother found a child development student at the Vo-Tech School who was willing to work with Mary in the church nursery. She also agreed to check with the Pre-K program at the elementary school where she was doing an internship. She helped arrange for Mary to work in the Pre-K program two mornings a week. They also were able to arrange for Mary to ride the school bus home at noon when the bus was transporting the children home.

A paraprofessional in the Pre-K program got to know Mary and became qualified to provide the respite care that the family needed. She already had the first aid and CPR training and had a criminal background check done before becoming employed by the school system.

Mary never attended a day program, but had her services and supports designed around her interests. A service does not have to be a program or a place.

Questions You Might Ask

1. What if I want to try a different way of doing services but change my mind and want to go back to the original service provider?

It is fine to change your mind and you will be allowed to switch back to the service provider you prefer.

2. Can we spend the waiver dollars on anything that my family member wants?

Waiver money cannot be spent on anything the person wants. There are rules and guidelines that have to be followed. The services that will be paid for have to be spelled out in the individual service plan and must address a need or goal area that has been agreed upon by the team who helps create the individual service plan.

3. Can family members be paid to provide any of the services?

If there is an extenuating circumstance, a family member may be allowed to provide some of the services. The federal law says that neither the parent of a minor child nor a spouse can be paid. These requests are to be reviewed and considered on a case by case basis.

4. Will there be enough providers available to serve all the people on the waiver?

The Office of Developmental Disabilities thinks that the number of providers in Georgia will grow under the new waivers. In other states where they have gone to more individualized services, the number of providers has grown by more than 100%.

Myths and Facts about Medicaid Waivers

1. The waiting list is ten years long. This is **false**. The advocates through the Unlock the Waiting List Campaign have been working with the legislature to promote a multi-year funding plan to address the waiting list over the next five years. However, more planning may be needed for any growth in demand.
2. Providers will go out of business with the new waivers. This is **false**. Providers who offer services that people want will experience growth and not go out of business under the new waivers. There should be an increase in the number of providers in Georgia over the next six years.
3. There are limited dollars in the waiver program and the amounts that can be spent will be capped. This is **true**. The new waivers will be activated using the money that is currently in the waiver program. There are no new dollars unless the legislature allocates them for this purpose.
4. The Supports Intensity Scale is the best tool currently available to evaluate people's needs. This is **true**. The Supports Intensity Scale has the best record of being accurate in evaluating peoples' needs. More work is being done to make it work well for children under sixteen. There will be a health risk screening tool that will make sure that medical issues are properly assessed.
5. There will be additional money available in case of a crisis or other extenuating circumstances. This is **true**. There will be flexibility and the ability to move money around if a person does not need it during the year. This will allow for additional money to be assigned to people who need more during the year.

RESOURCES

Georgia Advocacy Office
150 E. Ponce de Leon Ave
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 885-1234
www.thegao.org

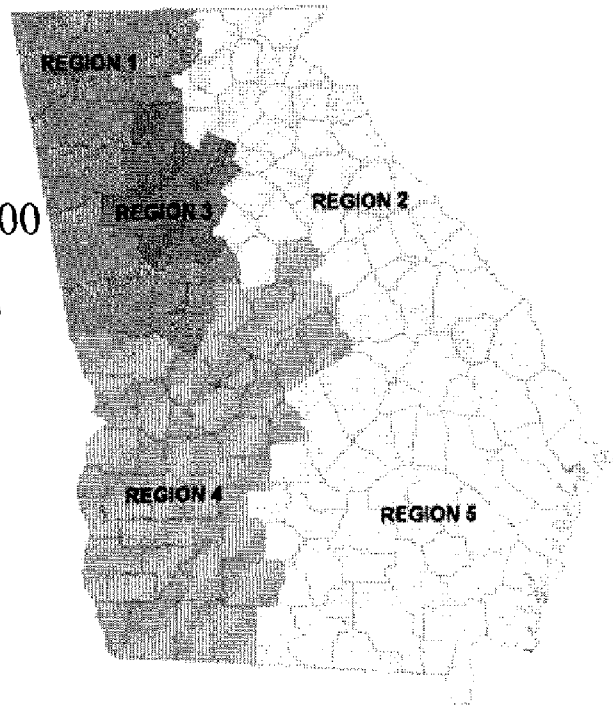
Parent to Parent of Georgia
www.parenttoparentofga

Statewide Independent Living Council
www.silcga.org

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
2 Peachtree St NW, 26th floor
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 657-2126 or toll free 1-888-275-4233
www.gcdd.org

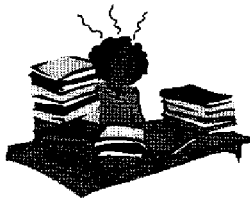
Unlock the Waiting List Campaign
Attention: Dave Blanchard
1440 Dutch Valley Place NE Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30324
(404) 881-9777 or 1-877-WAITLIST
www.unlockthewaitinglists.com

Office of Developmental Disabilities
2 Peachtree St NW, 22nd floor
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 463-8037
www.mhddad.dhr.georgia.gov



Regional Offices for Mental Health / Developmental Disabilities
and Addictive Disease Services

Region 1 (706) 802-5272 or toll free 1-800-646-7221
Region 2 (706) 792-7733 or toll free 1-866-380-4835
Region 3 (770) 414-3052
Region 4 (229) 225-5099
Region 5 (912) 303-1670 or toll free 1-800-348-3503



Information for Applicant (Please read this page first!)

We know that completing paperwork for disability services can be overwhelming! Please use this page to guide you through the process.

✓	Step 1
	Complete the 2-page <u>Application for Mental Retardation or Developmental Disabilities Services</u> .
	Call 770-123-4567 if you need assistance with the application. <i>A Guide to Georgia's Services for Persons with Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities</i> is also included in this packet to answer questions.
	Return the application in the self-addressed stamped envelope to: <div style="margin-left: 40px;">DHR-MHDDAD Region Office Attn: Intake and Evaluation Unit Street City, State Zip Code</div>
Your regional office will contact you within 14 days to schedule a screening assessment meeting. The individual with the disability must be present at the screening assessment meeting.	

✓	Step 2- Gather copies of the following information that will be needed during the screening assessment meeting:
	Proof of Citizenship – birth certificate, passport, permanent resident card
	Copy of Social Security card or Social Security number
	Copy of Medicaid and/or Medicare card
	Copy of Social Security Benefit information
	Current doctors' names, addresses, and phone numbers
	Psychological that includes IQ score and adaptive skills testing– Example: School psychological Report
The items below maybe helpful in addition or in lieu of the above-mentioned items:	
	Copy of reports describing the disability completed by schools attended or by other service agencies (i.e. copies of IEP)
	Copy of guardianship documents (if applicable)

Step 3: Review the following documents included in this packet prior to your screening assessment meeting:	
	Authorization for Release of Information (requires signature)
	Notice of Privacy Practices (requires signature)

Step 4: Additional information provided to assist you:	
	List of State MHDDAD Regional Offices
	Unlock the Waiting Lists! Fact Sheet
	Georgia's Autism Spectrum Resource Guide
	Parent to Parent of Georgia

Developmental Disabilities Services

Georgia Department of Human Resources OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES/ MENTAL RETARDATION SERVICES

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE LOCAL INTAKE
AND EVALUATION OFFICE BY CONTACTING: 1-877-551-4897

I. GENERAL INFORMATION (APPLICANT)

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Address: _____
Street Address (Apartment Number if Applicable)

City County State Zip Code

Mailing Address (if different) _____

Telephone Number: _____ Marital Status: S M D W Sex: _____
Area Code

Birthdate: ____/____/____ Medicare # _____

Social Security # _____ - _____ - _____ Medicaid # _____

PRIMARY CONTACT: _____

Address: _____

City County State Zip Code

Relationship to Applicant: _____ Telephone Number: _____
Area Code

LEGAL STATUS OF APPLICANT: ____ Minor ____ Competent ____ Legally Incompetent (Documentation
Required)

Name of Legal guardian, if applicable: _____

Address: _____
Street Address (Apartment Number if Applicable)

City County State Zip Code

Relationship to Applicant: _____ Telephone Number: _____
Area Code

II. ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY AND ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Georgia's Developmental Disabilities Waiver services, you must be:

- a. Medicaid eligible
- b. Have mental retardation since birth or before age 18, or another developmental disability since birth or before age 22, which requires similar services to those needed by people with mental retardation.
- c. Be at risk for going into an institution for people with mental retardation if you do not get the services you need in your community.

During your initial screening appointment, specific medical information will be collected to confirm the disability. Please read the *Information for Applicant* checklist at the front of this application, and have items or copies available.

III. SERVICE NEEDS

Describe the type of services you believe you need. For example do you need help with getting a job, do you need assistance to get dressed, do you need family support or do you need some place to live.

IV. COMPLETED BY:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Check one: ☐ Applicant ☐ Guardian ☐ Other: _____

Printed Name: _____

What is the best way to contact you?

When this application is received, it will be stamped with a date. Within fourteen working days of that date, you will be notified that your application has been received and you will be offered a screening appointment. If this does not occur, please call the Intake and Evaluation listed above.

Return this application in the envelope provided.

Care Notebook

From Amy Kephart, MPH, CHES, Program Coordinator of Technical Assistance,
Division of Children with Special Needs, National Center of Medical Home
Initiatives for Children with Special Needs , American Academy of Pediatrics

Dr. Charles Onufer, Director, Division of Specialized Care for Children at the University of Illinois at Chicago and his Title V CSHCN staff, created a web site called "Build Your Own Care Notebook". They are working with staff from the National Center of Medical Home Initiatives for Children with Special Needs. This web site is designed to assist families to build their own care notebooks for their own children with special needs. The web site allows parents to select different versions of care notebooks and put them together to build their own customized care notebook.

Dr. Onufer took 20 complete care notebooks and developed a template consisting of 6 major sections with their corresponding subsections. For each of these subsections, up to 20 versions of that subsection was created in MS Word and Adobe PDF formats. A parent then has the capability to review these different versions of the subsections that they would like to include in their child's care notebook, and download those Word or PDF files to their computer.

The next step was creating an online tutorial for parents to guide them in "how to" use the online care notebook for their child or patient. A field test of the tutorial was held for parents and health care professionals February 5, 2008 at the Illinois Center for Rehab and Education. Dr. Onufer and his staff are revising the tutorial based on comments from the field test and will work with National Center Staff on uploading the tutorial.

Currently, the care notebook web site is live and is located at:
http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/tools/care_notebook.html .

Web site: <http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org>

GET IT FOREVER TOGETHER

G.I.F.T.

A Workshop for Parents of
children with special needs



Workshop Includes:

Organizing your child's file: IEPs, Therapy or medical notes, evaluations, work samples, standardized test results, communication, etc.
(Bring the last 2 years of records with you!)

Knowing what is important to keep

Knowing how to organize student records

Creating a working document for now and for the future

Building a notebook of your child's information, materials are provided

Learning how to keep up with important school and medical information

Receiving information on Medicaid, SSI, Katie Beckett, Transition

ALL AT NO COST TO YOU!



"What do I do NOW?"

2 Workshop Locations, Choose 1 that fits you!

Thursday, August 28 Lighthouse World Outreach
609 Gene Bell Road
Monroe, GA 30655

Thursday, October 2 LifeBridge Christian Church
3734 Rosebud Road
Loganville, GA 30052

6:00-8:30 p.m.

Includes dinner and local churches will provide fun activities for your children during the workshop.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED!

Due to limited space, reservations are required for adults and children attending.

Call Teresa Johnson, Parent Mentor Walton County Schools
770-266-4505

Registration opens on August 1, 2008

This Workshop is hosted by Walton County Navigator Team and is made possible by local donations