

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the designated State department responsible for providing services for children and youth up to age 21 with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). In addition, the Children's System of Care (CSOC) is responsible for determining eligibility for childhood developmental disability services provided by the State of New Jersey for children under age 18. For individuals age 18 and over, and for related life-long planning, the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities is responsible for eligibility determination.

The following information is provided to answer common questions about the integration of developmental disability services into the NJ Children's System of Care.

ABOUT THE SYSTEM OF CARE

A system of care is a big picture approach to how, when, and where services and supports are offered. The System of Care approach to service delivery for children began in the 1990s as communities were looking for ways to improve the well-being of children with serious emotional and behavioral disorders. At that time there was nearly no community-based treatment options for families, limited private insurance resources, and out of home treatment often required giving up custody of children to child protective services. Over the past two decades, the approach has been tested and refined in communities around the country, and expanded to include other child populations, such as very young children, children in state custody, and children in detention.

The New Jersey Children's System of Care began as a federal grant program in 1999 and expanded to provide all essential components in every county by 2006. The New Jersey Children's System of Care has always provided supports to youth with behavioral health challenges both in the community, and involved with child protective services. In 2013, it also began serving children with developmental and intellectual disabilities and their families, and providing coordinated access to substance abuse treatment services for certain youth.

What is PerformCare?

PerformCare New Jersey is the Contracted System Administrator for the New Jersey Children's System of Care. PerformCare New Jersey provides a family-centered, community-focused single point of entry for New Jersey's eligible children to obtain publicly available behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, and developmental disability services. DCF's Children's System of Care utilizes PerformCare to provide 24 hour, 7 day a week access for families to obtain services for their child with behavioral health, substance use, and/or developmental disability challenges.

What is a Contracted System Administrator (CSA)?

As a Contracted System Administrator, PerformCare administers the State's service delivery system for children with behavioral health challenges, substance abuse treatment needs, and/or developmental disabilities. This includes providing 24/7 access for families and coordinating the care for over 50,000 of New Jersey's children a year.

ELIGIBILITY

My child was previously determined eligible by the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities. Is my child still eligible?

Families do **not** need to re-apply for childhood developmental disability eligibility determination if your youth has already been determined eligible for developmental disability services by the Division of Developmental Disabilities via an application submitted to DDD prior to December 31, 2012.

How do I apply for developmental disability eligibility for my child?

If your child has not yet turned 18, you can access the application materials, on the PerformCare website at <http://www.performcarenj.org/families/disability/determination-eligibility.aspx> . If you don't have access to a computer, please contact PerformCare by phone at 1-877-652-7624 and request that an application be mailed to you.

Eligibility for individuals over 18, including life-long planning after age 18, is provided by the Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). More information on this can be found at the Division of Developmental Disabilities website <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/home/index.html> or by calling 1-800-832-9173.

How long does it take for an application to be reviewed to determine eligibility?

The length of time it takes to determine eligibility is based on several factors. The most important factor is completeness of the forms and supporting documentation. Your application cannot be processed by reviewers until all necessary information has been submitted.

SERVICES

How do I get services for my child?

The Children's System of Care offers an array of services for youth and their families that can be accessed by calling PerformCare. Services may be requested by calling PerformCare 24 hours per day, 7 days per week at 1-877-652-7624.

Your child's educational needs, including services necessary to participate in educational settings, are still provided through your child's school district.

What services are available for youth with developmental disabilities?

For those that have previously experienced accessing services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities, there are minimal changes and the current service array is essentially the same as it was prior to January 1, 2013. The services include, but are not limited to: group home placements, in-home supports, and assistance with costs of summer camp.

Our goal is to best meet the needs of children with I/DD that are not being met through school related services, medical services reimbursable by health insurance or by other existing supports or services. If your child has an unmet need, please call us to discuss your options. It is important to note that service availability is in part determined by the availability of state funding.

What are Developmental Disability Family Support Services?

Developmental Disability Family Support services are intended to help support uncompensated caregivers for individuals who are eligible for developmental disability services and living in their own homes. Under the direction of the New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council, the Regional Family Support Planning Councils assist the Children's System of Care in the allocation of funding for these services by making recommendations based on input they receive from families.

The following is a list of some of the typical Family Support services:

- Respite
- Assistive Technology
- Home & Vehicle Modifications

How can I access Developmental Disability Family Support Services?

Call PerformCare at 1-877-652-7624 and ask to complete a Family Support Service application.

How long can I receive Developmental Disability Family Support Services?

Any new service authorized by PerformCare will be reviewed at regular intervals. The amount of service your family receives may increase or decrease based on current need.

I already completed an application for Developmental Disability Family Support Services with the Division of Developmental Disabilities, but I am not currently receiving any services. Do I need to re-apply with PerformCare?

Yes. We need current information from you to assess family needs. Once complete, a Family Support Service application is valid for one year. You must reapply at least once per year in order to be considered for an available opening for family support services.

How can I apply for camp assistance for my child?

Funding for camp is subject to availability. Please check the PerformCare website beginning in March of each year for updates about availability of funds and information about the application process. Applications will be available on the PerformCare website or by calling PerformCare and requesting an application be mailed.

Requests for camp assistance do NOT require the completion of a Family Support Service application. Camp assistance is available for eligible youth who attend approved camps. The approved camps are listed on the PerformCare website as they become approved each year.

Who is my child's case manager?

The Children's System of Care has reconfigured the way service coordination will take place. Many children with very intense service needs will still have an assigned case manager, called a DD Consultant. Other youth may be connected with a local care management entity called a CMO (Care Management Organization) that provides in-person individualized and family-centered planning. However, for many children and families, there will not be a single designated case manager. Instead, the Children's System of Care is providing a 24 hour/7 day a week resources through PerformCare to assess needs and facilitate the delivery of services.

How can I access out of home (residential or group home) treatment for my child?

It is the Children's System of Care's philosophy that youth are best served at home and in their communities. Out of home treatment is considered as a last resort option and is sought after having exhausted a community plan. If a family believes their youth's needs have escalated and may require an out of home treatment option, the first step would be to call PerformCare. If your child has already been connected to a care manager, either through the Division of Children's System of Care or a local Care Management Organization (CMO), the decision to access out of home care will be made by you, the care manager, and your child's team.

What is a family's responsibility under "Contribution to Care" for out-of-home (residential or group home) care for my child with a developmental disability?

Children with developmental disabilities at times have needs that cannot be met at home. Under certain circumstances, the Children's System of Care can assist families by arranging for their child to enter a residential placement where trained staff will provide day-to-day care. If this is your family's experience, it is important for you, as a parent or legal guardian, to understand your financial responsibilities once your child enters a developmental disability residential placement. These responsibilities are required by law and outlined in NJAC 10:46D. If your child is under 18, your contribution to care will be based on your financial situation and on any unearned income your child receives. If your child is 18 or older, a contribution to care will be assessed based solely on his or her unearned income and/or wages. In all cases, a lien will be filed against the real and personal property of the individual who is entering a residential placement. Additional liens may be filed later if you are assessed a contribution to care but do not pay it.

What services is my child/youth entitled to?

It is important to remember that services provided to developmental disability eligible youth are not entitlements and are dependent upon available resources; if the requested service is not available, an alternate service may be recommended. As the Children's System of Care is the payer of last resort, all other sources of funding must be exhausted.

Are services that I am referred to by PerformCare free?

Although families may not be charged for certain services, they are not free. Services recommended and authorized by PerformCare are paid by a variety of sources, such as state and federal public funds, Medicaid, commercial insurance, or self-pay. Most services paid for with public funds are not entitlements and are subject to availability. Families will be asked to provide insurance information as part of their contact with PerformCare.

Some services may be covered by Medicaid and or NJ Family Care and all families that are not already Medicaid or NJ Family Care eligible are required to complete a NJ Family Care application. Go to <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/home/index.html> for more information. However, if you are determined ineligible for Medicaid, your child will still be able to receive services from the Children's System of Care.

Additionally, families requesting services for developmental disability eligible youth must apply for all benefits that the youth may be entitled to, including but not limited to Supplemental Security Income through the U.S. Social Security Administration www.socialsecurity.gov.

Did the integration have any impact on the Early Intervention Program for children with developmental delays from birth to age 3?

No, the Early Intervention Program, administered by the New Jersey Department of Health and funded via Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was not affected by this reorganization.

TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICES

How will the care of my child being transitioned from the Division of Developmental Disabilities to the Children’s System of Care impact my child’s status on the Division of Developmental Disabilities’ Community Care Waiting List?

The Division of Developmental Disabilities currently maintains a Waiting List for the Community Care Waiver (CCW), which provides funding for long-term community-based services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. Children who were on the CCW Waiting List prior to July 1, 2012, will continue to be served by the Division of Developmental Disabilities as they age into the adult system and their need for services will be regularly evaluated, including when they reach the top of the Waiting List.

New children will not be added to the CCW Waiting List. When the child turns 18, s/he will be informed about the CCW Waiting List when they apply for Division of Developmental Disabilities eligibility, and at that time, they will have the opportunity to go on the Waiting List if they meet the CCW criteria.

What will the role of the Department of Human Services’ Division of Disability Services (DDS) be with regard to serving children with developmental disabilities and their families?

DDS’ role as a resource for individuals with any type of disability and their families through its Information and Referral hotline – 1-888-285-3036 – remains unchanged. However, DDS will not be providing any case management type services for children under 21.

Will my child, who has been determined eligible as a child, automatically be eligible for adult services through the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities when they turn 21?

No, except in certain circumstances for the next four years.

All children already determined eligible by the Division of Developmental Disabilities are likewise deemed eligible for childhood developmental disability services through the DCF Children’s System of Care. All children 16 and older as of January 1, 2013 will be “grandfathered” back into the Division of Developmental Disabilities and will not need to go back through the functional eligibility process for adult services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities once they turn 21.

All children born on or after January 2, 1998, who have previously been determined eligible by the Division of Developmental Disabilities, as well as all children of any age whose initial eligibility has been determined by the Children's System of Care, will be required to go through the eligibility process at the Division of Developmental Disabilities prior to age 21 in order to be eligible to receive services when they turn 21. Families that are seeking developmental disability eligibility as part of their child's life-long planning are encouraged to begin the process for eligibility with the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities when their child turns 18, including determining eligibility for Medicaid. This information is located at <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/home/index.html>

What do I do if I think I will need to apply for Guardianship of my child with a developmental disability?

For those youth who have an assigned case manager (DD Consultant) or receive services through a local Care Management Organization (CMO), these individuals will share information with the Bureau of Guardianship Services (BGS) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) and collaborate with BGS to assess whether a youth is likely to need a guardian upon attaining the age of majority. DD Consultants or care managers will assist those youth who are in need of guardians to work with BGS in completing all necessary processes. *See* N.J.S.A. 30:4-165.5, N.J.S.A. 30:4-165.7 to -165.13, and in DHS's implementing regulations at N.J.A.C. 10:43 and N.J.A.C. 10:45.