

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. However, for individuals age 18 and over, the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities is responsible for eligibility determination for related life-long planning.

The following information is provided to answer common questions about developmental disability services available through 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 in the community as well as to those involved with child protective services. In 2013, it also began serving children with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities and their families, and providing coordinated access to substance use treatment services for certain youth.

What is PerformCare?

PerformCare is the Contracted System Administrator for the New Jersey Children's System of Care. PerformCare provides a family-centered, community-focused single point of entry for New Jersey's eligible children to obtain publicly available behavioral health, substance use 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 use 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 (DDD). 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 DDD prior to December 31, 2012. Please note that the eligibility determination is valid until your child's 18th birthday, after which a re-assessment would need to occur through DDD.

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 do not have access to a computer, please contact PerformCare by phone at **1-877-652-7624** and request that an application is mailed to you.

For youth over 18, the Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is responsible for making a determination for eligibility. More information on this can be found by calling **1-800-832-9173** or at the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities website, <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/home/index.html>.

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 submitting all of the required forms and documents as well as current supporting evaluations at the same time.

Please note that your application cannot be processed by the DD Eligibility Review Team 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**.

NOTE: 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 support caregivers of 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 (DDD), 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 CSOC Summer Camp Services for my child?

Funding toward summer camp tuition 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.

CSOC Summer Camp Services do NOT require the completion of a Family Support Service application. Camp assistance is available for eligible youths 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. You 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 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 local Care Management Organization (CMO), the decision to access Out-of-Home care will be made by you 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 (CSOC) can assist families by arranging for their child to enter a residential placement where trained staff will provide day-to-day care. Once your child enters a developmental disability residential placement, you as a parent or legal guardian have financial responsibilities. 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 (CSOC) 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 FamilyCare. All families who are not already Medicaid or NJ FamilyCare eligible are required to complete a NJ FamilyCare 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 (DDD) to the Children's System of Care (CSOC) impact my child's status on the Division of Developmental Disabilities' Community Care Waiting List?

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) 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 DDD 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 DDD eligibility. 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 (DDD) when they turn 21?

No. All youth applying for **adult services** through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) will have their eligibility for DDD functional services re-assessed through the DDD Functional Eligibility Process once they turn 21.

Please note that 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 (CSOC).

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 DDD when their child turns 18, including determining eligibility for Medicaid. For more information, please visit the following website: <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?

In general, there are multiple resources available regarding an application for guardianship of a child with a developmental disability. For example:

1. Parents may file a petition for guardianship by themselves by filling out the Pro Se form and gathering required documents. The Pro Se form and other vital information can be found at the Supreme Court of New Jersey's website here: <https://njcourts.gov/courts/civil/guardianship.html>
2. The New Jersey Bureau of Guardianship Services:
<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/services/guardianship>