

Bulletin: Referring Children to the County Intellectual Disability and Autism Programs

Attachment 3 – Understanding the Importance of Registering with the County Intellectual Disability/Autism (ID/A) Program

Understanding the Importance of Registering with the County Intellectual Disability/Autism (ID/A) Program

About the Handout:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) understands that the human service system is vast and may be confusing to children, families, and other stakeholders who are new to learning about the service system. This document is intended to provide a clear understanding of the county ID/A program and why it is important for children, families, and any individual with an intellectual disability, developmental disability, or autism (ID/D/A) to register with the county ID/A program. County and private children and youth social service agencies, county mental health/behavioral Health (MH/BH) programs, physical health managed care organizations, and infant toddler and preschool early intervention programs should give a child, family member, or any other interested individual this handout if they are interested in services through the county ID/A program.

What is the County Intellectual Disability and Autism (ID/A) Program and Why Should My Child be Registered?

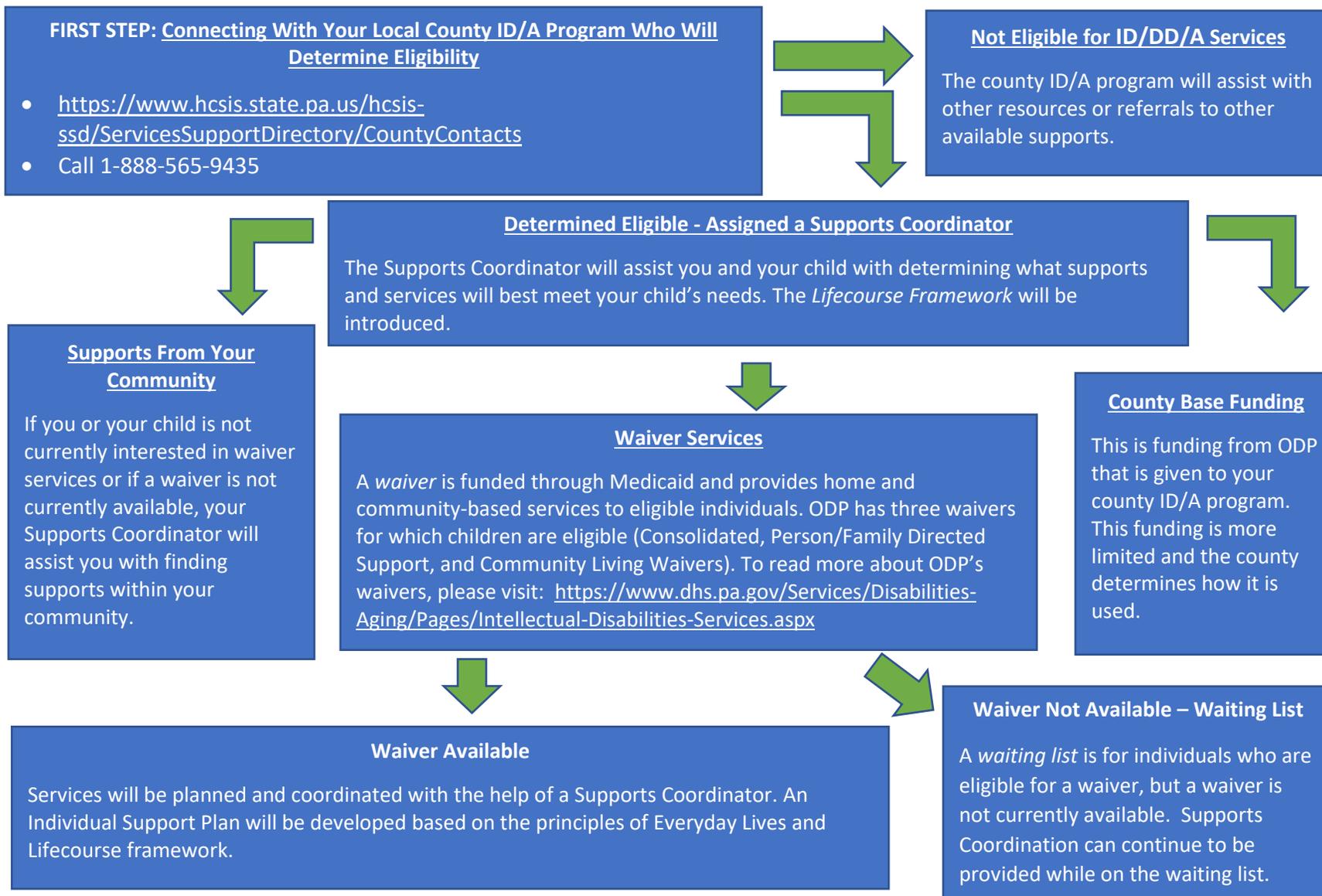
The Department of Human Services has many program offices, one of which is the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). ODP offers services and supports to individuals with an intellectual disability, developmental disability, or autism (ID/DD/A) throughout the individual’s lifespan (starting at birth). In order to receive services and supports, you will need to contact your county ID/A program (see contact information in the next section below or in Attachment 2) which will help you with eligibility, registration, planning, and coordinating supports and services.



There are many benefits to consider when deciding whether to register with the county ID/A program. Once determined eligible by the county ID/A program:

- You can get assistance with planning for a quality and everyday life for your child. This assistance includes being supported to problem-solve and plan using the Charting the LifeCourse framework and tools. The Charting the LifeCourse framework’s core principles and values guide people to think differently about supporting individuals with ID/DD/A and their families, which includes creating a vision for a good everyday life. Charting the LifeCourse information and resources can be found at: <http://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/foundational-tools/family-perspective/>.
- The county ID/A program will assist you and your child with planning and coordinating the appropriate supports or services.
 - Supports or services may consist of non-medical services in your home and community.
- The county ID/A program may provide you with information about services that are available outside of the ODP program, such as Medicaid or the educational system (see more information on other services starting on page 3).
- The county ID/A program can also provide access to information about and a connection to a network of family support (with other families with similar experiences).
 - You may ask your county ID/A program for contact information for family support organizations or groups in your area. These support groups could include your local Arc chapter, Community of Practice for Supporting Families, Disability Rights PA, PA Autism Support and Advocacy Groups, PA Developmental Disabilities Council, the PA Family Network, Parent to Parent of PA, Self-Advocates United as 1, etc.

How Does My Family Receive Support and/or Services Through the County ID/A Program?



Are There Other Services Available That My Child Can Receive While Waiting for Waiver Services or Receiving County ID/A Services?

There are many other services that may be available to your loved one. Please note, this is not a full list of resources that are available through government funding.

Behavioral Health Services

Through the Medicaid managed care program provided via HealthChoices, there are mental health services and substance use disorder services. For mental health services, each county contracts with a Managed Care Organization (MCO). Once enrolled, the MCO will outline how to access services and benefits that are available. The behavioral Health services are required to be provided by the counties and to facilitate effective coordination with other needed services. These programs also have a children's focused behavioral health system. For more information, please visit <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Mental-Health-In-PA/Pages/default.aspx>

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT)

For children who are enrolled in Medicaid, EPSDT is a benefit that provides comprehensive and preventive health care services (dental, mental health, developmental, and specialty services) for children under the age of 21. To learn more, please visit:

[https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/early-and-periodic-screening-diagnostic-and-treatment/index.html#:~:text=PDF%2C%2068.09%20KB\)-,The%20Early%20and%20Periodic%20Screening%2C%20Diagnostic%20and%20Treatment%20\(EPSDT\),who%20are%20enrolled%20in%20Medicaid](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/early-and-periodic-screening-diagnostic-and-treatment/index.html#:~:text=PDF%2C%2068.09%20KB)-,The%20Early%20and%20Periodic%20Screening%2C%20Diagnostic%20and%20Treatment%20(EPSDT),who%20are%20enrolled%20in%20Medicaid). The following links includes guidance about eligibility of children for Medicaid and can be used to apply for Medicaid, and how to contact Medical Assistance: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/compass.web/Public/CMPHome> and <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/Medical-Assistance.aspx>

Infant Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention

Early Intervention is a program that is available to children from birth until the age established by the school district board of directors for admission to the district's first grade. The program helps children with developmental delays and disabilities to develop

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and learn to their fullest potential using a state-supported collaboration among parents, service practitioners, and others who work with young children. To learn more, please contact the CONNECT Helpline at (800) 692-7288 or help@connectpa.net or visit: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Early%20Learning/Early%20Intervention/Pages/default.aspx>.

Evidence Based Home Visiting/Community Based Family Centers

Evidence based home visiting programs support parents as their children’s first teachers. During voluntary home visits (in-person and virtual), trained professionals meet with families as early as the beginning of pregnancy to promote positive birth outcomes and provide parent education and support. Participation in these programs can lead to improved family health, early literacy, economic security, and positive parenting practices that strengthen families and reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment. Family Centers provide integrated community services to support families in becoming healthier, more knowledgeable and self-sufficient. For more information on programs available please visit:

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Early%20Learning/Family%20Support%20Programs/Pages/default.aspx>

PA Family Network

The PA Family Network provides information and support its Family Advisors. Support to families is also developed through the “Charting the LifeCourse Tools.” The PA Family Network also connects families with other families throughout the state using networking opportunities. For more information, please contact 1-844-PAFAMILY or visit <https://www.visionforequality.org/pa-family-network/>

Special Needs Units (SNU)

The HealthChoices Program is Pennsylvania managed care program for Medical Assistance members to receive quality physical and behavioral medical care and long-term supports. Through Physical Health Managed Care Organizations (PH-MCOs), members may access the SNU. The SNU assists members with receiving needed healthcare services, including complex medical services. The SNU can help a child and family with doctor appointments, finding providers, getting connected to the Medical Assistance Transportation Program in the member’s county, assisting with interpreter services, coordination with other child and adult serving programs, and other services as needed. To learn more and to find information about contacting a PH-MCO’s SNU, please visit

<http://www.healthchoices.pa.gov/info/about/physical/index.htm>