HOW TO GET BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HELP

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Whether you are looking for help for a child with disabilities, with behavioral health needs, in foster care, or in trouble at school, getting help from the state can be a long and difficult process. The goal of this guide is to give you some tips for getting your family the help you need.

GEORGIA SYSTEM of CARE

FAMILY | COMMUNITY | PARTNERS

SPEAK UP FOR YOUR CHILD.

You don't have to know everything to speak up for your child. You don't have to be an expert to make decisions about your child's care.

- Ask questions about your child's care.
- If you don't understand something, ask for someone to explain it.
- Don't ever be afraid to speak up.

Try to learn as much as you can about Georgia's behavioral health system. Find more information about available services on page 8.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Hundreds of thousands of families in Georgia are getting state services or applying to receive state services for their children. Others are facing the same situation, too.

- Try to connect with parent-support organizations. These organizations can help you and others like you learn how to deal with the challenges of getting state services for your child.
- Parent and family support organizations can also provide emotional support, advice, and other supplemental services. A list of parent and family support organizations can be found on page 11.

START WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL.

Your child's public school is probably the first place where you will begin learning about state services. If your child has special needs or requires additional support, it is important know your options.

- Read the school's student handbook or code of conduct book to find the rules that affect your child's rights, especially about discipline and special needs. (Schools are required to give code of conduct books out to students and parents at the beginning of every school year.)
- Don't wait until your child is in trouble. Meet with teachers about behavior concerns before they call you. Look into support options for your child at school. A Student Support Team can help address your child's needs without creating an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Some schools have other behavioral support options.
- Speak up if your child is having difficulty keeping up with school work, is being bullied, or needs additional help. Most schools have a lot of available resources to help. Use them.

- If an issue is not being handled properly, do not be afraid to move the issue up to somebody with more authority.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION.

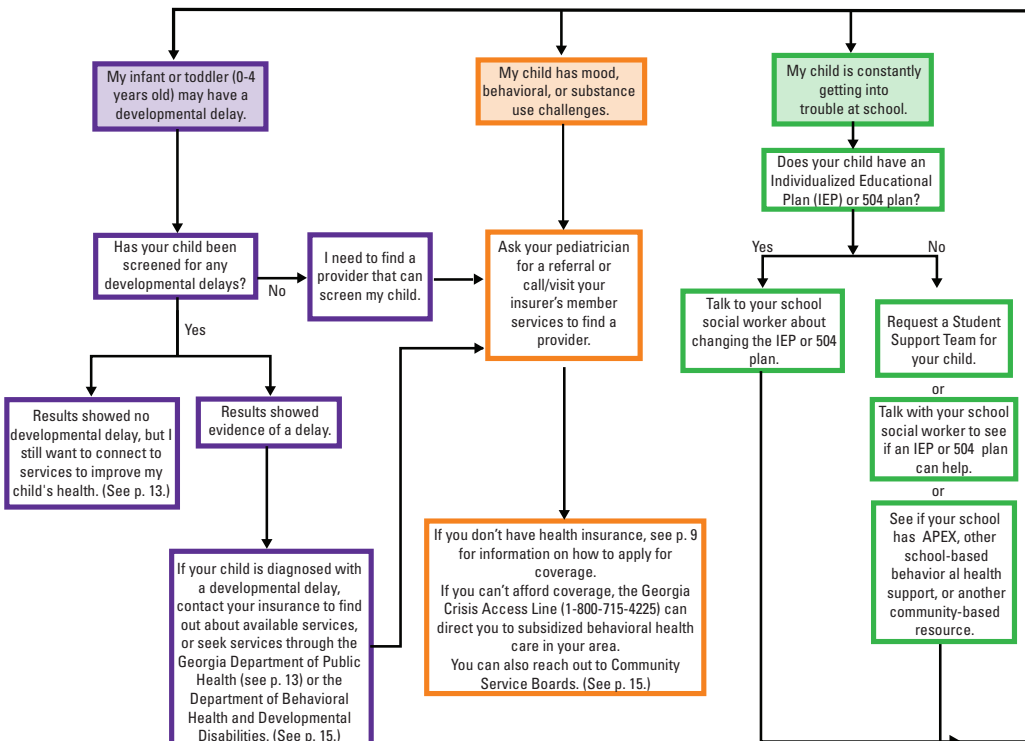
- If you think your child needs special education or a student-support plan, do not wait. Talk to your school social worker about what options are available.
- If the current IEP or 504 plan is not helping your child, you have the right to change it or end it.
- Take advantage of all the resources the schools should offer. Many schools have graduation coaches, social workers, and tutoring services. If your child has an IEP or a 504 plan then the school should be helping with your child's behavioral health needs, as well.

Consider how trauma and the environment can affect your child's behavior. Studies have shown that when dangerous or traumatic events happen to or around kids (such as violence, death of a loved one, or sexual or physical abuse), it can greatly affect their behavior.

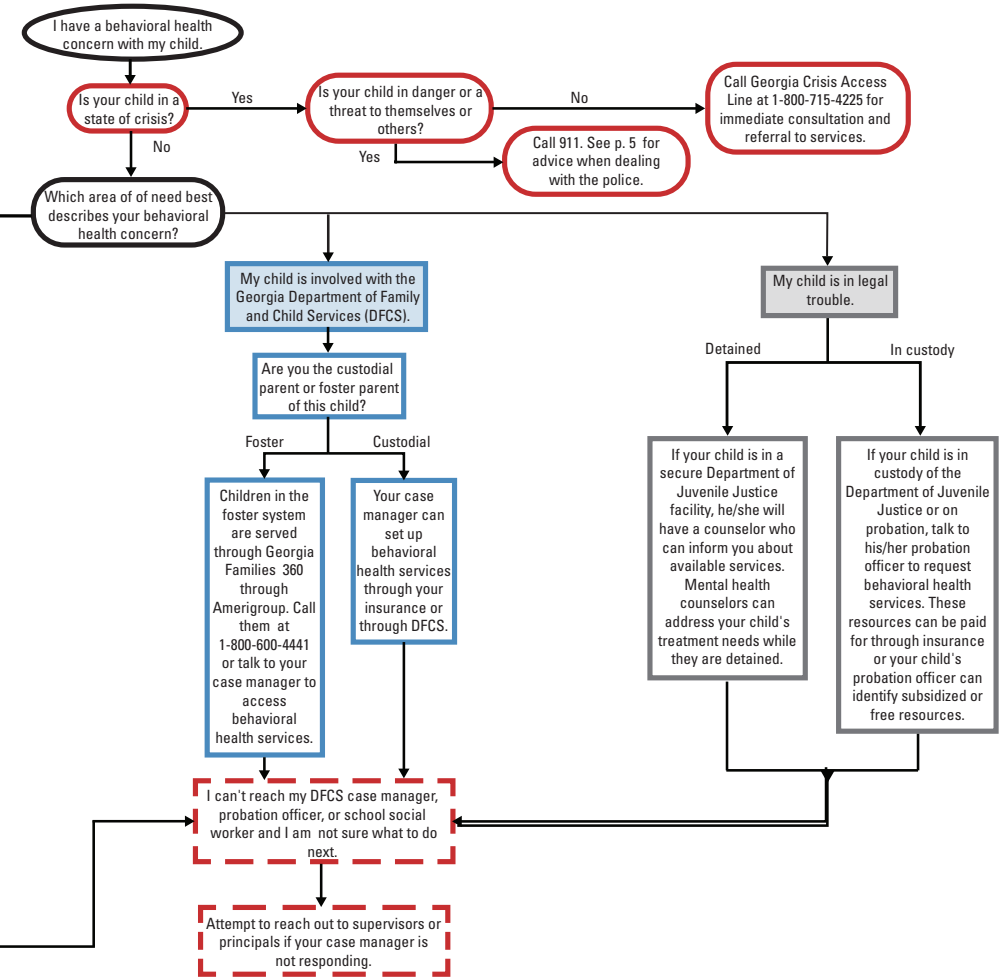
SUPPORT YOUR CHILD.

- Discipline, routine, medication, and behavioral health support can help meet your child's needs. Be open to trying various methods of support.
- Work with your service providers to create an individualized plan that is best for your child.
- You know your child best and have final say. If providers present a plan that you know won't work, ask for a new plan.
- Having a child with disabilities or behavioral health needs is stressful. Parent and family support groups can help. See page 11.
- If you child is in a state of crisis, call 911 if your child is a threat to you, someone else, or themselves. If you do need the police, ask for an officer with Crisis Intervention Training and inform the dispatcher that your child has behavioral health needs.
- If your child is in a state of crisis, but not posing a threat, call the Georgia Crisis Access Line at 1-800-715-4225.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS MAP



Parent and family support organizations: No matter what challenge you or your child may be facing, it is v
dealing with the system themselves. After connecting to the appropriate agency for your need, reach out t
(For a list of these or



very important to connect with people who have been through what you are going through, or are currently
to an organization that specializes in peer-to-peer, or informal advocacy for people dealing with the system.
ganizations, see p. 11.)

RESOURCES

CHILD WELFARE

Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services
Services: In charge of child safety and welfare, as well as support for foster children and adoptive families.
Constituent services: 404-657-3433
Adoptions: 404-657-3550
Abuse hotline: 1-855-422-4453
Foster care info: 1-877-210-5437
List of department services: dfcs.georgia.gov/node/695
County offices and locations: dfcs.georgia.gov/locations

EDUCATION/EARLY LEARNING

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Services: Administers Georgia's Bright From the Start pre-kindergarten program and other early learning programs.
Phone: 1-888-442-7735
Website: families.decal.ga.gov

Georgia Department of Education
Services: Center for all pre-kindergarten to grade 12 education-related services and information.
Phone: 404-656-2800
Website: gadoe.org
Special education: gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

Services: A state system of courts and legal agencies for youth offenders.
Office of Behavioral Health Services:
djj.georgia.gov/office-behavioral-health-services
List of locations: djj.georgia.gov/find-location
Office of the Ombudsman: djj.georgia.gov/office-ombudsman

MEDICAID/SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

If you don't have health insurance and need coverage, first check to see if you are eligible for Medicaid. Go to gateway.ga.gov to check your eligibility.

- If you qualify for Medicaid, you will need to sign up with one of the four care management organizations. Your options depend on the conditions of your eligibility. See page 10 for more details.
- If you don't qualify for Medicaid, you can try to obtain affordable health insurance in the Marketplace at Healthcare.gov, or call 1-866-988-8246.
    - If you can't afford coverage see the orange section of the Behavioral Health Access Map for more service options.

Georgia Department of Community Health

Services: Provides oversight for Medicaid and Peach Care services.
Medicaid services: 1-866-211-0950
Website: dch.georgia.gov

Georgia Gateway

Services: Site to apply for and check eligibility for Medicaid and start application process.
Phone: 1-877-423-4746; 7:00 am – 2:00 pm for a phone application
Website: gateway.ga.gov/access

Georgia Social Security Offices

Services: Provides information on seeking benefits for disabilities and employment services.
Phone: 1-800-772-1213; 7:00 am – 7:00 pm
List of locations: secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp
Atlanta region site: ssa.gov/atlanta/southeast/ga/georgia.htm

MEDICAID CARE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Amerigroup

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.
Phone: 1-800-249-0442
Website: amerigroup.com

CareSource

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.
Phone: 1-855-202-0729
Website: caresource.com

Georgia Families 360°SM (Amerigroup)

Services: Special Medicaid program for families of foster children.
Phone: 1-800-600-4441
Website: myamerigroup.com/ga/your-plan/georgia-families-360.html

Peach State

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.
Phone: 1-866-874-0633
Website: pshpgeorgia.com

Wellcare

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.
Phone: 1-866-231-1821
Website: wellcare.com/georgia

Families Advocating for Voices of Resilience (FAVOR)
Services: Family and youth support.
Phone: 404-499-0078
Website: favorfamilies.com

Families First
Services: Provides health care, education, employment, and life skills enhancement for youth in the foster care system.
Phone: 404-853-2800
Website: familiesfirst.org

Georgia Parent Support Network
Services: Provides services and support to parents of children with severe emotional disturbances and behavioral health needs.
Phone: 1-844-278-6945
Website: gpsn.org

Integrated Concepts for Families
Service: Family support, individual, and family counseling.
Phone: 770-463-0202
Website: integratedconceptsforfamilies.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness' Peer to Peer
Services: Free educational program for people living with mental illness.
Phone: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)
Website: nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-peer-to-peer

Parent to Parent of Georgia
Services: Provides peer support to families of youth with disabilities.
Phone: 1-800-229-2038
Website: p2pga.org

HOUSING/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Georgia Public Housing Authority
Services: Provides list of public housing authority sites in Georgia.
List of locations:
hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/ga

Needhelppayingbills
Services: Website lists organizations that may offer financial assistance.
Website: needhelppayingbills.com/html/atlanta_rent_assistance.html

Nicholas House of Atlanta
Services: Provides services for homeless families in DeKalb and Fulton counties.
Phone: 404-622-0793
Website: nicholashouse.org

Salvation Army of Georgia
Services: Provides support and housing services for Georgia families.
Phone: 770-441-6200
List of locations: salvationarmygeorgia.org/locations

SOCIAL SECURITY/DISABILITY

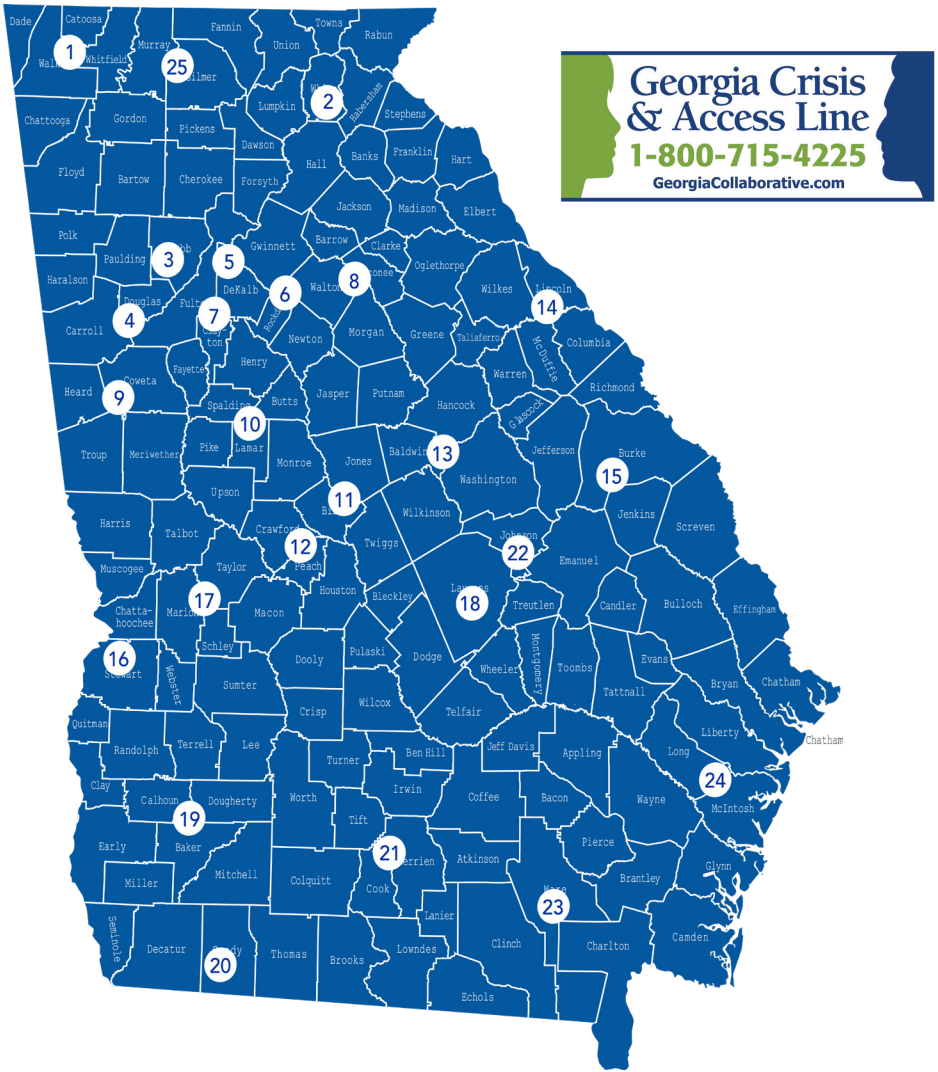
Georgia Social Security Offices
Services: Provides information on benefits for disabilities and employment services.
Phone: 1-800-772-1213; 7:00 am – 7:00 pm
Office locator: secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp
Atlanta region site: ssa.gov/atlanta/southeast/ga/georgia.htm

Babies Can't Wait
Services: Provides screening for early identification of developmental issues with infants ages 0 to 36 months.
Phone: 1-888-651-8224
Website: dph.georgia.gov/Babies-Cant-Wait

Early Head Start
Services: Provides child development support services up to age 3 years.
Phone: 1-877-255-4254
Website: georgiaheadstart.org

Georgia Department of Public Health
Services: Behavioral health supports for mothers and families; maternal and infant health; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); autism support.
Phone: 1-800-228-9173
WIC services website: dph.georgia.gov/WIC
Phone: 404-657-2850
Georgia Autism Initiative website:
dph.georgia.gov/georgia-autism-initiative

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
Services: Mother and child health helpline, refers callers to services and education resources.
Phone: 1-800-300-9003
Website: hmhbga.org



Source: Adapted from information provided by the Georgia Association of Community Service Boards and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) provides services for those with mental health and substance abuse issues, as well as disabilities. DBHDD also trains certified peer support workers. For services call the Georgia Crisis & Access Line at 1-800-715-4225 or visit dbhdd.georgia.gov/dbhdd-services.

Youth services and support clubhouses: dbhdd.georgia.gov/office-cyf-services#clubs
Substance abuse and recovery clubhouses: dbhdd.georgia.gov/adolescent-services

Community Service Boards across Georgia

1 - Lookout Mountain Community Services:	lmcs.org	706-638-5580 x4151
2 - Avita Community Partners	avitapartners.org/about/locations.php	1-800-525-8751
3 - Cobb Community Service Board	cobbcsb.com	770-429-5000
4 - Douglas Community Service Board	cobbcsb.com	770-429-5000
5 - DeKalb Community Service Board	dekcsb.org	404-294-3836
6 - View Point Health	myviewpointhealth.org	678-209-2411
7 - Clayton Community Service Board	claytoncenter.org	1-844-438-2778
8 - Advantage Behavioral Health Systems	advantagebhs.org	706-369-6363 x3100
9 - Pathways Center	pathwayscsb.org	1-888-247-9048
10 - McIntosh Trail Community Service Board	mctrail.org	770-358-5252
11 - River Edge Behavioral Health Center	river-edge.org	478-803-7600
12 - Phoenix Center Behavioral Health Services	phoenixhealthcenter.com	478-988-1222
13 - Oconee Community Service Board	oconeecenter.org	478-445-5322
14 - Serenity Behavioral Health Systems	serenitybhs.com	706-432-4800
15 - Ogeechee Behavioral Health Services	obhs-ga.org	478-289-2522
16 - New Horizons Community Service Board	nhbh.org	706-596-5500
17 - Middle Flint Behavioral Healthcare	dbhdd.georgia.gov/location/middle-flint-behavioral-healthcare	229-931-2504
18 - Community Service Board of Middle Georgia	csbmg.com	478-272-1190
19 - Aspire Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Services	aspirebhdd.org	229-430-4140
20 - Georgia Pines	georgiapines.net	228-227-5426
21 - Behavioral Health Services of South Georgia	bhsga.com	229-671-6170
22 - Pineland Area Community Service Board	pinelandcsb.org	1-800-746-3526
23 - Unison Behavioral Health	unisonbehavioralhealth.com	1-800-342-8168
24 - Gateway Behavioral Health Services	gatewaybhs.org	1-866-557-9955
25 - Highland Rivers Community Service Board	highlandrivershealth.com	1-800-729-5700

Georgia Health Policy Center

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integrating research, policy, and practice

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Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

55 Park Place NE, 8th Floor . Atlanta, Georgia 30303 . 404.413.0314