

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Families with Children with Developmental and Intellectual 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 developmental and intellectual disabilities. This became fully effective as of January 1, 2013. The State's service delivery system for children with developmental and intellectual disabilities has been integrated into the DCF Children's System of Care which provides a single point of access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition, the Children's System of Care (CSOC) has also become responsible for determining eligibility for childhood developmental disability services provided by the State of New Jersey for children up to age 18. For individuals over the age of 18 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 the most frequently asked questions.

### **What is PerformCare?**

PerformCare New Jersey is the Administrative Services Organization 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 any of the behavioral health and developmental disability services available publicly through the State of New Jersey. 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 or developmental disability challenges.

### **What is an Administrative Services Organization (ASO)?**

As an Administrative Service Organization, PerformCare New Jersey simply administers the State's service delivery system for children with behavioral health challenges 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.

### **Was the shift in responsibility for children with developmental disabilities to the Department of Children and Families done to save money?**

No, there is no budget savings associated with this change. The focus of this reorganization is not fiscal; it is intended to create a single state agency to serve **all** children and families— and to provide enhanced access to integrated services along a continuum of care.

**Will the current reorganization have any impact on the Early Intervention Program for children with developmental delays from birth – 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) will not be affected by this reorganization.

**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. Families do **not** need to call PerformCare to register their child if they have already been determined eligible. Basic information such as name, address, date of birth, your child's case number, and your child's eligibility status has been transferred from the Division of Developmental Disabilities to the Children's System of Care.

**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 five years. All children already determined eligible by the Division of Developmental Disabilities will be 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 younger than 16, who have previously been determined eligible by the Division of Developmental Disabilities, as well as all children who are new to the Children's System of Care, will be required to go through the eligibility process at the Division of Developmental Disabilities sometime between the ages of 18-21 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 apply for eligibility with the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities as soon as their child turns 18. This information can be located at <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/home/index.html>

**Prior to the Children's System of Care becoming responsible for my child's services on January 1, 2013, my child was receiving services from the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities. What will happen with these services? Will the services continue?**

In order to ensure a smooth transition, all current services will be extended beyond January 1st. Please contact your current service provider for specific time frames. The Children's System of Care is presently reviewing all services to determine how the system may be improved and provide the right care at the right time. Our goal in the initial phase of the transition on January 1<sup>st</sup> has been to minimize any disruptions in 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. Some children under the age of 16 have already been added to the CCW Waiting List since historically, the wait for services has been long. Children who were on the CCW Waiting List prior to July 1, 2012 will 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.

**Who is my child’s new case manager?**

In the past, the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities assigned every child a case manager. However, with extraordinarily high caseload sizes, this was not an effective process for meeting the needs of most children. 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. 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. We recognize that this is a change, but we are confident that it will be a much more efficient and effective way to help families. The Children's System of Care has a state-of-the-art information management system that was not available prior to January 1, 2013. This information management system is managed by PerformCare and will significantly help to manage your child's care over time.

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

As of January 1, 2013, the Children’s System of Care (CSOC) assumed responsibility for determining eligibility for developmental disability services for children under age 18. This eligibility process for children, which was formally completed by the Division of Developmental Disabilities, is required under New Jersey law in order to access publicly available developmental disability services. The application process is explained and the materials are provided on the PerformCare website. 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.

**Will my child be determined eligible for developmental disability services?**

There is no simple answer to this question. Every child is unique and each child will be assessed individually to determine if eligibility requirements are fully met or not.

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

Once fully complete, an application may take up to 60 days to review.

**How do I get services for my child?**

The Children's System of Care offers a broad array of services for youth and their families that can be accessed by calling PerformCare. An overview of services can be found on the PerformCare website at <http://www.performcarenj.org>. Services may be requested by calling PerformCare 24 hours per day, 7 days per week at 1-877-652-7624.

**What services are available for youth with developmental and intellectual 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, respite, and camp. Our goal is to best meet the needs of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities 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 funding.

**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.

**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 Children's System of Care evaluates requests for Family Support based on an individual's need, the services and supports already available and/or being used, and the availability of Children's System of Care resources. Family Support is not an entitlement and cannot be

guaranteed. Budget allocations dictate the availability of services. Families must exhaust any other services to which they are entitled before they can receive assistance through Family Support.

The following is a list of some of the typical family support services:

- Respite
- Camp
- Assistive Technology Devices
- Home & Vehicle Modifications

### **How can I access Developmental Disability Family Support Services?**

PerformCare serves as a single entry point for families to apply for Family Support Services. Inquiries about Family Support Services will be handled by calling PerformCare at 1-877-652-7624.

### **Who is eligible to receive Developmental Disability Family Support Services?**

Families may apply for Developmental Disability Family Support Services only if their child has been determined eligible for developmental disability services in New Jersey. Determination for approval of Family Support Services is based upon intensity of need, availability, and date of application.

### **How can I apply for camp for my child?**

Funding for camp is subject to availability. Please check the PerformCare website 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. Official PerformCare applications must be used. For the 2013 camp season, the applications will be made available sometime between March 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. The application period will end on April 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Applications received after May 10th will not be accepted. Please check back frequently.

### **How will I be notified if I am approved for Developmental Disability Family Support Services?**

You will be informed in writing if and when approved by either PerformCare or the service vendor directly.

### **How long can I receive Developmental Disability Family Support Services?**

Any new service authorized by PerformCare will be time limited and will vary depending upon the service and intensity of need determination.

### **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?**

If you or your child is in need of any Developmental Disability Family Support services currently, then yes, you need to re-apply. We would like to have current information in assessing family needs. You do not need to apply for family support services if you do not have

any need for services currently. Also, if you are currently receiving Family Support Services there is no need to re-apply unless a different service is needed.

**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 will be required to complete a NJ Family Care application. Go to <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/home/index.html> for more information. 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](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). While all families are required to apply for Medicaid and/or Family Care, if families are determined ineligible, services may still be available. Eligibility for Medicaid is not a pre-requisite to obtaining most services.

**What is a families' 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 can not 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 are 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.