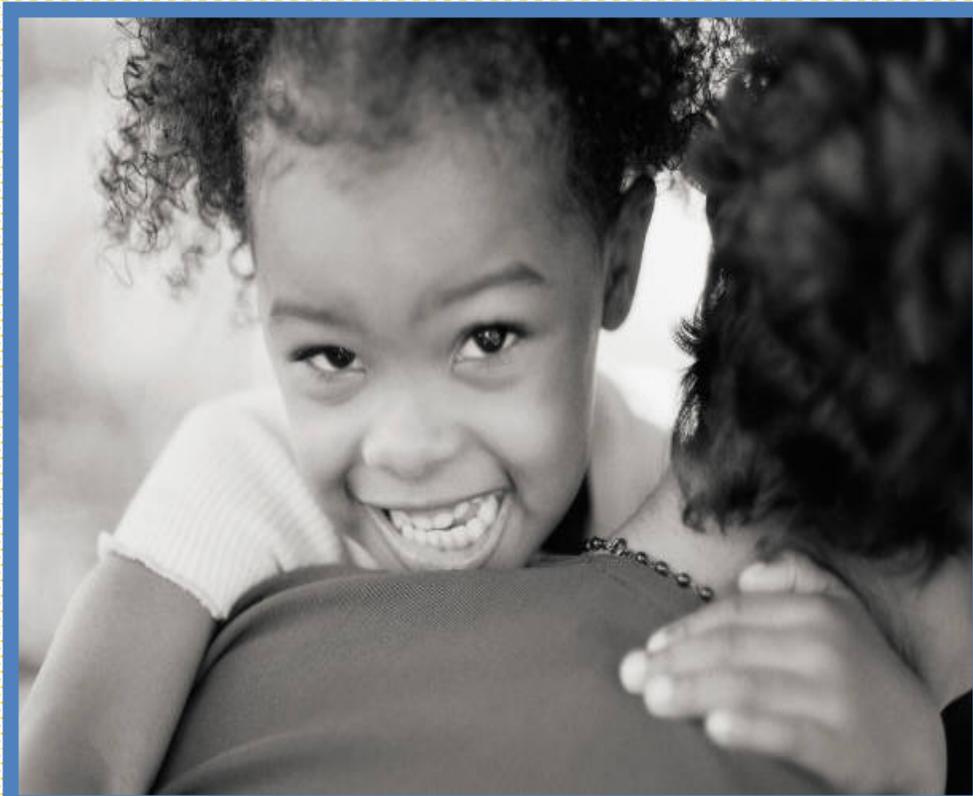


Foster & Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC) Foster Parent Health Access Guide

Printed in collaboration with
DC Child and Family Services Agency
Office of Clinical Practice
Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA)



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Congratulations on your very important role as a foster parent for the District of Columbia's child welfare system!! Having been foster parents ourselves, we know that there are certain things that are different about accessing health care for our foster children than for our birth or adopted children. The following serves as a guide to help you through the medical maze as it relates to the children in foster care in your home. We hope that this guide will allow you to feel confident that you will be able to access the health care your children need.

The Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA) at Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) is the central resource for health and behavioral health needs and services. The Behavioral Services Unit is the component within the CHSA that manages mental health services/referrals. This unit is available to help **CFSA and private agency** foster, kinship and pre-adoptive parents of District of Columbia children, both directly and through providing resources to your child's social worker to assist you. Please contact OCP for any health related questions or concerns. For routine questions, please call Cheryl Durden at 202-727-7049. She will triage your call and assign a nurse to call you back. For more time-urgent questions, please call 202-498-8456 and state that it is an urgent question.

Additionally, as of December 2009, the DC KIDS contract with Children's National Medical Center ended and the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center at CFSA opened its doors. Please note that although the CFSA contractual agreement with DC KIDS has ended, all services except screenings that were previously received at Children's or at THEARC will remain available and your child's Medicaid will cover those costs.

If the child in your home has been seen at Healthy Horizons for their screening, you may feel free to call them for questions you might have after the screening or for follow-up information. That new number is 202-442-4200 or 202-727-8096.

Please be aware that the information in this guide is accurate as of the date of printing, but that this is a system in which many changes often occur. We encourage you to call your social worker or CFSA's Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration at 202-724-9742 if you have questions about changes in practice or procedures.

Thank you for your important commitment to the District of Columbia's children!!

We hope you will find this guide helpful----

The Foster & Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC), May 3, 2010

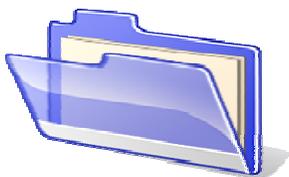
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Medical History and Screening Information

How do I get the medical history when a child is placed in my home?



When children are placed in your home, a medical screening report must accompany them. All children must have a pre-placement screening by a doctor or nurse practitioner prior to placement in a new home. The only exception is if the child is coming from the hospital. In that case, the discharge summary will serve as the pre-placement screening.

In December 2009, CFSA opened the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center for pre-placement screenings and 14-day comprehensive health screenings on site at 400 6th Street, SW. Children coming into care or children moving to a new placement will receive their medical screening at this site instead of at Children's Hospital as previously.

Please note that when a new child first comes into foster care, the agency might not have much information, but they should be providing it to you as soon as it becomes available and updating it whenever there is new information.

What documentation will I receive from those screening appointments?

You should receive a two-page form called the Health Check Form that will include the results of the screening evaluations.

What if the child is placed in my home needing a prescription filled?



If a child needs a prescription, the social worker should have it filled before placing the child with you. However, because many children are placed in emergency situations, the worker, despite the best of intentions, might not have been able to get the prescription filled. If the worker does not immediately provide you with the Medicaid card, make sure to get the child's Medicaid number. If you have the card or the number, you should be able to fill the prescription at any pharmacy that accepts DC Medicaid. If you don't have the number, you can call the Healthy Horizons Assessment

Center 202-442-4200 or 202-727-8096 for assistance with getting the prescription filled.

Once you get the Medicaid number or card, you may fill the prescription at any pharmacy that accepts DC Medicaid.

What is the policy regarding HIV testing?

Historically, DC children coming into the child welfare system were not routinely screened unless there were obvious known risk factors and/or medical indicators. This practice is in the process of changing as this guide is being written. If this has not been discussed with you and you have concerns, first talk to the social worker, who will speak with the Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA). Please note that although foster parents should be told if the Agency knows that the child being placed is HIV positive, until children are consistently screened, the Agency itself may not have that information to give you. You should become aware of methods of universal precautions so that you can utilize them.

Appointment Information and Responsibilities

When does my child need his/her first medical appointment after coming to my home?

The pre-placement screening is not a comprehensive physical exam. Children need comprehensive medical and dental appointments soon after coming into foster care. New CFSA guidelines **implement** a comprehensive health screening within **14 days** of entering out-of-home care.

This screening replaces the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) examination formerly required within 30 days of entry into care. Dental examinations will occur within 30-days of entry into care.



Where do we go for this first appointment?

The first appointment must take place at CFSA. This is a new procedure that began in December 2009 with the opening of the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center on the first floor of CFSA's main building at 400 6th Street, SW.

Comprehensive health screenings will be available **by appointment** from 8 AM to 8 PM **seven** days a week at the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center. For appointments please call 202-442-4200 or 202-727-8096.

The Healthy Horizons medical assistant will contact both the social worker and caregiver to schedule this appointment. At the same time, the medical assistant will schedule an appointment for the child/youth to receive a dental examination at a provider who accepts DC Medicaid. You will receive a separate phone call from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) staff co-located at CFSA to schedule the comprehensive mental health examination. It is *very important* that you make these appointments for a time when you can accompany the child, as you may receive critical information by being there.

During regular business hours parking is available in the CFSA garage for foster parents and private agency social workers who are bringing children/youth to the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center. Entrance to the garage is off Virginia Avenue SW via the driveway directly behind the CFSA building. Drive down to the second (lower) garage entrance, turn into the garage, and stop. Inform the CFSA garage attendant that you are there for an appointment at the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center. You will be given a parking pass and directed to a parking space. Be sure to display the parking pass in the car while parked in the garage. Take an elevator or the stairway to the first floor of CFSA and sign in at the security desk. Please return the parking pass to the garage attendant before exiting the CFSA garage. At other times, park on the street outside CFSA, and enter through the front door. [Please note, all street parking is metered parking at up to \$2.00 per hour. You should be prepared with an adequate number of quarters for the meter. Meter payment is required Monday-Saturday.] Upon arrival at CFSA for a comprehensive health screening appointment, foster parents should sign in at the reception desk in the first floor lobby. A receptionist or security guard will admit you through the security door. Follow the signs to the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center.

The schedule for the follow up (routine) appointments will be determined by age and need. Younger children have more frequent appointments that are driven by

age and the immunization schedule. Children 4 years and older are scheduled every year, based on the primary care physician's recommendations. The doctor who sees your child should explain these medical mandates to you.

In addition, if the child in your home has special health care needs, more frequent medical appointments may be necessary to ensure proper treatment.

Accessing Medical Care



How do I find a doctor for the children in my home? Will my children have a primary care provider?

The first routine appointment after the screening must be done at CFSA. Please see details above under the section about the 14-day comprehensive health screening appointment. After that appointment, you can utilize the primary care and specialist services at Children's Hospital, you may go to THEARC Town Hall Education Arts and Recreation Campus at 1901 Mississippi Ave, SE., or you may choose another primary care provider who accepts DC "Fee-for-Service" Medicaid. Although the CFSA contractual agreement with DC KIDS has ended, these services that you previously received at Children's or at THEARC will remain unchanged and your child's Medicaid will cover those costs.

You must inform your social worker as to where you will be taking your child for medical care so that records will be readily available to CFSA. Most children in CFSA care will have been part of a Managed Care Organization (MCO) under their birth parent's Medicaid coverage. If the child has a doctor who has been treating them with quality care before they came to your home, and that information is available to you, you might want to ask if that doctor will accept the "fee for service" Medicaid that the child receives while in foster care in order to consider the option of maintaining that continuity.

Sometimes foster parents choose to use their personal insurance in order to use a specific medical provider. We have even heard occasionally of foster parents who have received pro-bono care from pediatricians with whom they have had long-term relationships. If this is your preference and your insurance company allows it, please discuss this with your social worker and/or with the Office of

Clinical Practice/ Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA) to ensure continuity of care.

How do I get the medical reports and follow up information from appointments?

If you are not given the medical reports and information directly at the appointment, you can get them from the social worker. Reports that come to the Agency go through OCP/CHSA and on to the child's social worker. You should keep all medical information in a health folder, which should follow the child if the child leaves your home for another placement.

Do I transport to medical appointments or does my social worker?

It is primarily the responsibility of the foster parent to transport to medical appointments, and appointments should be made according to the needs of your schedule. Additionally, the foster parent's presence is critical to give and receive medical information about the child.



It is possible to get help from the child's social worker if you have a legitimate and infrequent need for help with transportation. Be aware that every worker and every agency may interpret this request differently and thus there is very little consistency in policy or practice. Additionally, workers also may become overwhelmed and may not have the time to help. Thus, you could have one worker who believes it is fine to ask for help and another who gets annoyed when you ask. Some agencies do have Social Service Assistants who can assist, but again, this is agency specific. If you and your worker have built a positive and strong relationship, you will be more likely to work things out without conflict. If you are really in a bind and the social worker refuses to assist at all, you might want to consider calling the social worker supervisor or the Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration at 202-724-9742. **OCP will not be able to provide transportation, but may be able to assist in arranging for transportation.**

It may also be possible as another option to arrange transportation to medical appointments under your child's Medicaid plan. This service should be used only when the patient has no other available option to attend a Medicaid provider appointment. Minors must be accompanied by an adult. There is also a van available for medically challenged patients. To access this van, a *level of care form is required* from the provider. To arrange transportation to medical appointments you can call the number on the back of your child's Medicaid card. If your child is insured through Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN), you can call their customer care line at 202-467-2737 or toll free at 1-800-841-7419.

Please remember that your foster children need you with them at medical appointments and that an adult must accompany children if using this form of transportation.



Where and when does my child get shots / immunizations?

The initial 14-day comprehensive health screening appointment will address immunizations. The clinicians will have access to the immunization registry and will give you information about the immunization schedule.

Do I need a referral for specialists?

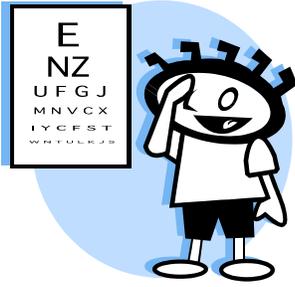
Your child's primary care doctor will give you the referral to a specialist. A referral will ensure that the specialist knows why the child is there and whether Medicaid will pay. Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN) is a managed care network for children with special medical needs. They cover special services that might not be covered under traditional Medicaid. To enroll your child in HSCSN, you will need to talk with your social worker or one of the OCP/CHSA nurses.

At what age do children need to start seeing a dentist?

Children need to see a dentist for an oral exam at one year old, unless teeth are coming earlier and you see a problem that needs to be checked out. They will then need to see the dentist routinely every six months, or more often as directed by the dental provider.



At what age do children need to get an eye exam?



This decision will be made as a result of the eye screening at the 14-day comprehensive health screening. They will give you a referral for a more comprehensive exam, if needed. Children over 3 years old come in annually for a comprehensive physical examination and will get an eye screening determined by their history or a standard testing method periodically, as recommended.

Who pays for glasses or contact lenses? How often can they be replaced if lost or broken?

Medicaid will pay for glasses and contact lenses when medically indicated. However, they will only pay for two pairs in a year's time. If your child requires more than that, please call OCP/CHSA for their assistance.

When would my child need a developmental assessment?



Children will get a developmental screening at the 14-day comprehensive health screening. If further assessment is required, they will be referred at that time.

Emergencies

What hospital should I go to for emergencies?



If you are receiving primary care at Children’s Hospital, there will be less “red tape” if you go to that emergency room. However, depending upon the emergency, you might want to go to the closest hospital and allow the hospital to triage you to the appropriate facility. If an ambulance is called they most likely will take you to the nearest facility/hospital. If the call for an ambulance is for a psychiatric emergency and your home is in Maryland, you should ensure in advance that the hospital to which you are going has a psychiatric unit that treats children/adolescents. It is very difficult to arrange transportation for a District child from a Maryland emergency room to a hospital in the District. Please also see the section below on emergency intervention for mental health crisis to find information on the mobile crisis service that is available for your use in a psychiatric emergency.

Who should sign for hospital admissions or procedures?



CFSA must sign for hospital admissions and procedures. Foster parents should not sign for hospital treatment. The easiest way at all times of day or night to reach CFSA for this type of emergency is to call the CFSA hotline at 202-671-SAFE; (202-671-7233). They should connect you with the on-call Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA) staff. If there is any problem getting through you can call the on-call OCP number yourself, at 202-498-8456. If the hospital pressures you to sign, explain that you are not allowed to do so, and direct them to call CFSA. If an emergency is truly life-threatening, the hospital will treat your child while working to obtain appropriate consents.

What do I need to know about calling an ambulance?

You will give the child’s Medicaid number to the EMT with the ambulance. The ambulance company should bill Medicaid. If you sign as financially responsible, you might get the bill instead of



it going to Medicaid. If that happens by mistake, you should give that bill to the child's social worker. **Remember you must let your social worker/agency know as soon as possible if there has been any emergency related to foster children in your home.**

What if we have a mental health crisis requiring emergency intervention?



Beginning in 2008, foster and kinship parents have the benefit of a new children's crisis mobile service and crisis beds for children experiencing mental health emergencies. DMH, in collaboration with CFSA, contracted with Catholic Charities to provide Children & Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Service (ChAMPS). Any child under the age of 18 who lives in Washington, DC or **any DC child under the age of 21 who lives in a CFSA or private agency foster home (even if that home is in MD)** is eligible to receive crisis intervention services.

A foster parent who is experiencing a child having a psychiatric episode or serious behavioral problem that requires intervention may call ChAMPS directly at **202-481-1450** or may call the DMH Access Helpline at **202-561-7000** or **1-888-7WE-HELP (1-888-793-4357)**. The ChAMPS team will respond to the scene of the crisis within 1 hour of the request. If you don't feel that your emergency can wait this long, you might want to consider calling 911.

The ChAMPS team will assess the child and the situation to determine if the crisis can be safely resolved on site or if the child may need more intensive intervention, such as an emergency psychiatric evaluation or a temporary respite placement. If the ChAMPS team believes that the crisis can be resolved on site, without more restrictive options, the crisis team will work with the family to develop a crisis plan with short term interventions. If your child has an existing mental health provider, ChAMPS will collaborate with that provider on services provided and communicate the crisis plan. If your child is not linked to a provider, the ChAMPS team will facilitate the process of getting your child linked to a mental health service provider that can provide ongoing treatment or support as necessary.

If your foster child is already receiving on-going mental health services, that child can still receive ChAMPS services. The Washington, DC Department of

Mental Health provides funding for all ChAMPS services. There is no charge to families for any ChAMPS service.

Medicaid

What type of Medicaid does my child have and what does that mean?



Although for the rest of the District, services are provided through Managed Care Organization (MCO) Medicaid, children in the District foster care system use what is known as Fee for Service (FFS) Medicaid or Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN). Fee for Service Medicaid means that you can use any provider who accepts DC Medicaid instead of being restricted to a particular HMO network.

What is HSCSN?



Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN) is a nonprofit managed care organization that coordinates care for children and youth with disabilities and complex medical needs. Their mission is to provide access to comprehensive, quality health care for these children through a network of community based services. Their coordinated care program is specially designed to meet each child's needs with dignity and compassion. Family members are encouraged to participate in their child's care. Please note that HSCSN has some benefits that differ from regular Fee for Service Medicaid. If the child in your home is covered by HSCSN, please refer to the member handbook for specific questions.

Should a Medicaid card come with my child?



If the agency has it, the Medicaid card should be included with the initial placement package of information when your child is placed. However, often this does not happen, particularly if the child has just come into the system. If the child does not already have Medicaid, it will take a while for the paperwork to be

completed and the card issued. If the child was already covered by Medicaid while at home, it would most likely be an HMO Medicaid, and it will take time to change over to the Fee for Service program, sometimes as long as a month or more.

If you do not have the actual card, you should be given the Medicaid number for almost every child. Most, but not all, doctors and pharmacies will accept the number without the card.

There are a few avenues to take if you need assistance to get the Medicaid card and the child's social worker cannot resolve the situation for you. First, if the situation is not an emergency, you should call Anitra Chastine at 202-727-7847 or Jill Forbes at 202-727-7688. They are in the CFSA Placement Office and can help get you the card. If you are being refused medical care for your child because you do not have the card or the number, you can call Cheryl Durden 202-727-7049. If you cannot reach her and you need to reach someone quickly, you should call the OCP/CHSA on-call number at 202-498-8456.

What do I do if my foster child gets sick and we are out of state and they won't take our Medicaid card?



If you are a CFSA foster parent, you can get a "Payment for Emergency Medical Care" form to take with you when you are traveling. This form informs emergency medical providers that the child is in District of Columbia care and custody and thus CFSA is responsible for bills that are not covered by DC Medicaid. Private agency foster parents should have medical providers send the bill to their agency directly. If your youth is attending college out of state, be sure that the college health plan has been purchased on his/her behalf, or that they have been otherwise informed as to how to proceed if medical care is needed. If your youth is 18 or older and thus legally an adult, a provider may want the youth to sign his/her own consents and may then persist in sending the youth the bill. Foster parents should be alert for this and notify the social worker.

[Even if you follow these procedures, it is possible that if a child in your home is hospitalized on an emergency basis where DC Medicaid is not accepted, you may find that you or they receive a bill from that hospital.] In that situation, you

should submit that bill to CFSA. Even if CFSA says it will or has paid, foster parents need to track it with the hospital themselves to make sure that when payment was sent, the hospital applied it accurately.

Will I ever have to pay out of pocket for medical costs? If I do, how do I get reimbursed?

In order to receive reimbursement for a non-Medicaid funded service, it must be pre-approved by the social worker prior to the cost being incurred by the foster parent. However, in an emergency, if a cost is incurred and reimbursement is being sought, the foster parent should submit all receipts for the services rendered and proof of payment (cancelled check, etc.) to the social worker who would then request reimbursement on the foster parent's behalf. It is also beneficial for you to make and keep copies of all of your receipts. Please note that without documentation, payment is not possible, so foster parents need to keep track of these incurred costs.

How would Medicaid coverage change if I become an adoptive parent or guardian for the children in my home?



If you become an adoptive parent of the District of Columbia child in your home and you live in DC, you can keep your DC Fee for Service Medicaid, which should continue uninterrupted. This means that you will be able to continue therapeutic relationships with providers in the Choice Core Service Agencies.

However, if you become an adoptive parent of your DC child and you live in Maryland, you will be switched to Maryland Medicaid or to Maryland REM (Rare and Expensive Case Management Program), insurance for children with special needs. In most cases, this could mean that you would need to change to medical and mental health providers who accept Maryland Medicaid (which is an HMO Medicaid program). If you are becoming an adoptive parent, the subsidy unit at CFSA should make the arrangements to transfer your Medicaid so that there is no break in coverage.

If you are becoming a guardian, the Medicaid situation is not as clear-cut. Medicaid is no longer automatically available because the child is no longer a ward of CFSA, nor is the guardianship subsidy governed by federal rules that regulate post-adoption Medicaid. Thus, you might be told that you will have to apply for Medicaid in your state of residence. However, at this time it appears to be the District government's general practice to keep children on DC Medicaid post-guardianship. Please check with your attorney and/or CFSA for further clarification.

If changing therapists or providers would be traumatic for your child, **before signing the subsidy agreement** please discuss the particulars of your child's needs with your attorney, with your child's Guardian ad litem (GAL), and with your social worker. They should help you find a comparable service in Maryland or help you adjust your subsidy so that you can continue to use the current provider.

Troubleshooting, Special Circumstances, and Reporting

Which health issues do I have to report to my agency?



Every medical/health issue should be reported to the child's social worker. Additionally, if you think it is necessary, you can report issues to the Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA). You should also keep a record so that if the child leaves your home the health records will be as comprehensive as possible.

How do I handle my child's meds at school?

This depends on the school policy. Please consult with your social worker or OCP/CHSA.

What do I do if my child refuses to take prescribed medicine?

Foster parents do sometimes experience this problem, especially with older children. You must let the child's social worker know that this is a problem. For your own protection, keep a record of your attempts to give medicine that were refused and follow up your conversation with the social worker with something in writing. You should also talk with the prescribing physician. The child/youth might be experiencing unpleasant side effects. The physician may offer suggestions on how to best administer the medication (i.e. in divided doses, at bedtime, etc.) or may want to use an alternative medication if this is determined to be a problem. The worker should help you and the child come to resolution about this issue. If you don't get help from the social worker, call OCP/CHSA.



Mental Health and Behavioral Health

How can I find appropriate and quality mental health therapy for my child?



DC Medicaid covers Mental Health Rehabilitation Services (MHRS) for children and youth through a network of providers called Core Service Agencies (CSA). In 2009, DMH in partnership with CFSA, contracted with a few of these CSAs that will serve as "clinical homes" for children in the foster care system. These providers are known as the "Choice" Providers.

Choice Providers are expected to conduct a diagnostic assessment within 30 days of referral, partner with the child and family in the development of an Individualize Plan of Care (IPC), and coordinate a clinical treatment team around each child and family. This treatment approach includes the engagement of biological parents and foster/kinship families as partners in the assessment and service delivery process.

Some of the specific therapeutic expertise of the Choice Providers is to include:

- ❖ Psychotropic Medication Management
- ❖ Diagnostic Assessment
- ❖ Community Support Services

- ❖ Community-Based Intervention (CBI)
- ❖ Counseling/ other therapeutic approaches such as:
 - Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
 - Play Therapy

The referral process to access services from the public mental health system for mental health or behavioral health services for a District child in foster care has been set up as follows:

- If you as a foster or kinship parent think there is a need for mental health evaluation or services, you would contact your child's social worker.
- The social worker would complete a CFSA referral form.
- The referral then goes from the social worker to the Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical & Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA)
- OCP/CHSA and DMH staff will process all mental health requests by submitting referrals to the most appropriate provider.
- The Choice Provider acknowledges receipt of the referral within 24 hours and identifies the assigned clinical manager.
- Someone from the Choice Provider Agency will contact you to schedule an intake appointment for a diagnostic assessment.
- The assessment and treatment plan should be completed within 30 days.

As in any system, sometimes procedures or time frames as written are not what actually occur. If you do not get the appropriate responses from the social worker or the provider, feel free to contact OCP/CHSA directly at **202 498-8456 for urgent assistance.** or **202-724-9742 for routine assistance.**

Sometimes a child may require a more intensive service that needs to be pre-authorized by the Department of Mental Health, such as day services, therapeutic after-school programming or Community Based Intervention (CBI). CBI includes intensive home and community-based treatment and crisis intervention services several times a week and can be accessed 24 hours a day, as needed. If foster parents think one of these more intensive services might be helpful, they can discuss these options with a provider at the Core Services Agency (CSA). If the provider deems this service medically necessary for the child, the CSA should make the referral with supporting documentation, and the service should be promptly authorized and provided.



What if the service my child needs is not offered through the Medicaid and Choice Provider network?

Some specialized mental health services are hard to find through the Medicaid and Choice Providers system. In those situations, foster parents can work collaboratively with the social worker to see if the Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA) offers any additional services outside of the public mental health system. CFSA may contract directly with some providers who provide specialized therapies not otherwise available. If you believe that the child in your home needs a specialized mental health service – or any private provider – not available through Medicaid or the Choice Provider Network, you can call OCP/CHSA at 202-724-9742 to see if they contract with someone who can provide that service.

Another option some foster parents have used for mental health services not covered by Medicaid has been to apply for Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP) funds. Foster children are often victims of crimes, or are “secondary victims,” and may be eligible for up to \$6,000 in counseling paid for by the District of Columbia Crime Victims Compensation Program. However, funding for this program may not be consistently available. Additionally, the Office of Clinical Practice has expressed concern that if a child starts therapy through accessing Crime Victim funds, it is very possible that the therapist will not be covered by Medicaid and the child will then have to change therapists if those funds run out. OCP requests that you work with them if you think it is necessary to access any non-Medicaid mental health specialty provider service.

What should I do if the child in my home needs substance abuse treatment?

Follow the same procedures as for mental health therapy. Talk to the child’s social worker and if you don’t get results, call the Office of Clinical Practice at 202-724-9742.

HIPAA

What is HIPAA and how does it affect me as a foster parent?



HIPAA stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. It is a federal law intended to protect people's privacy and make it easier for people to keep their health insurance when changing jobs. HIPAA encompasses a complicated set of regulations, policies and procedures and has had a significant impact on the creation and sharing of information regarding health care. Directly or indirectly HIPAA affects everyone, because everyone has health insurance or gets health care or is responsible for someone who does. This includes all foster children.

Even people who are responsible for maintaining medical records may not fully understand HIPAA. This can delay releasing records or result in records not being provided at all.

As a foster parent, you need to know that HIPAA cannot be used to prevent you from obtaining health and medical information about a foster child. You are entitled to have accurate and complete medical information about the foster children in your care.

However, HIPAA can affect how records and information are provided to you as a foster parent. You may have to get authority from CFSA or a private agency before a doctor or hospital will give records to you or before they will discuss the child's care. Sometimes it may be easier to get what you need from your agency.

Most importantly, do not hesitate to seek whatever it is you need to know, even if you are told that your request violates HIPAA or that you cannot have the information because of HIPAA.

It is recognized that you cannot properly care for and maintain the health of your foster child without timely access to health and medical information. HIPAA does not prevent this but can make it more difficult.

Resource Section

We hope this guide has been helpful to you. The resources mentioned in this guide are listed below to assist you.

1. **CFSA Office of Clinical Practice/Clinical and Health Services Administration (OCP/CHSA)**
 - a. General Questions 202-724-9742
 - b. Cheryl Durden 202-727-7049.
 - c. Healthy Horizons Assessment Center 202-442-4200 or 202-727-8096
 - d. Substance Abuse issues 202-724-9742
 - e. **For medical consent call CFSA hotline 202-671-SAFE (202-671-7233).** If you cannot get through to the hotline then call 202-498-8456

◆◆◆ For urgent medical issues that you cannot resolve using the ◆◆◆ above numbers call the OCP on-call number 202-498-8456

2. **CFSA Placement Office** to obtain Medicaid card, call:
 - a. Anitra Chastine 202-727-7847 or
 - b. Jill Forbes 202-727-7688
3. **CFSA Subsidy Unit**
 - a. Patricia Johnson 202-727-5424 or
 - b. Rhonda Flood-Horn 202-727-5381
4. **CFSA Ombudsman**
 - a. Jenna Beebe 202-727-7040
5. **ChAMPS mobile crisis service-** 202-481-1450
6. **DMH Access Helpline** 202-561-7000 or toll free at 1-888-7WE-HELP (1-888-793-4357)
7. **Foster & Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC)** - 202-269-9441
8. **Health Services for Children with Special Needs-** customer care line 202-467-2737 or toll free at 1-800-841-7419
9. **THEARC-** Town Hall Education Arts and Recreation Campus at 1901 Mississippi Ave, SE. (Tuesdays thru Fridays) www.thearc.org

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www.dcfapac.org

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www.consumerhealthfdn.org

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