



The Office of Exceptional Children Services

NEWSLETTER



December 2025/January 2026



Winter is around the corner; this issue focuses on Medicaid information, preparing for life after high school, and community resources.

Did you know there are many types of Medicaid? Many of these services are called waiver programs, because the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) allows states to “waive” certain Medicaid requirements and pay for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) as an alternative to institutions, such as nursing homes or hospitals for people with disabilities. Essentially, the law provides you a choice.

Georgia has several home and community-based waivers. Some of the waiver program services include assistance with daily living activities (bathing, dressing, meals and some household chores), help with arranging medical or support services, and services to relieve family caregivers. This guide describes HCBS programs for people who are elderly, physically disabled, have a developmental or intellectual disability, or are medically fragile.

Although different waiver programs offer different services, they have some things in common. Each program is designed to help people who qualify for institutional care remain in the community or return to the community from nursing homes, hospitals or other long-term institutions. Each program also requires that people be eligible for Medicaid. To qualify for a waiver program, you can have higher income and resources than permitted in the regular Medicaid program.


In addition to the waiver programs, Georgia offers other services through the regular Medicaid program designed to support people in their homes and communities. Some of those are described in this guide and include the Georgia Pediatric Program’s (GAPP) in-home services for medically fragile children and behavioral or mental health services.


Download the Guide to Medicaid Waiver Programs in Georgia



ECS Parent Mentor

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 <https://www.rockdaleschools.org/>

 770-918-6187



What is Transition for young adults? The purpose of the transition planning process is to assist youth who are currently receiving special education services and their families in planning life goals after high school.

What is a Transition Plan? A Transition Plan will be part of your child's IEP when he/she enters high school. It is the guide for you, your child, and the professionals working with him/her. The Transition Plan is a long range plan and a critical tool for developing future options for your child.

Tips for Families:

- Begin planning for your child's transition to life after high school as early as possible. This includes making choices about and advocating for the types of classes your child will take so that he/she can get a regular high school diploma if possible. If you wait until your child is in middle school or high school to try to get "on track" for a regular diploma, it will be too late!!
- Help build your child's self-determination and self-advocacy skills. Help your child learn how to talk about his/her disability and to ask for any support or accommodations that he/she needs.
- Help your child develop social relationships and opportunities for recreation. These are important to help connect your child with the community where he/she lives and can provide a wider network of people who can support your child after high school.
- Have a clear plan to address your child's healthcare needs once he/she reaches adulthood.
- You and your child should bring suggestions to the transition planning meeting about what your goals are for life after high school. Your vision and your child's vision for the future should help drive the IEP goals for your child.
- Consider what your child wants to do with his or her life. What are his/her dreams and goals? Does he/she want to go to college or to get a job? Where does he/she want to live and with whom?
- Make sure your child is learning skills that he/she will need for jobs and for life after high school. These might include things like asking for help, accepting directions and feedback from others, and dealing with conflict. He/she also needs to know how to be on time, the importance of good hygiene, and dressing appropriately for different settings such as work and social events.
- If your child plans to go to college, is he or she taking the courses needed to meet the college entrance requirements?
- If your child will go on to college or technical school, he/she will need to learn about what supports may be available from that school. Ask who to contact for disability support services at the school your child will attend. Postsecondary programs are required to provide accommodations to students with disabilities, but they are not required to modify the course work. Your child will have to provide documentation of his/her disability and will have to request the accommodations that are needed.
- Start to become knowledgeable about the protections provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which will apply to your child after high school.



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RESOURCES




- The emotional and physical health of parents has an effect on the family. Parents are the heart of the family and are most often the ones who deal with the issues of the child with a disability, in addition to working, paying bills, shopping, cleaning and taking care of the needs of other children. All of this can be overwhelming and can take a toll on your health.
- Seek support from other parents. Support can come in many ways – one-on-one, in a group, or on the internet. **Call Parent to Parent of Georgia at 1-800-229-2038** to find the support you need.
- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**
- **Information on financial assistance, please call 770-922-0165 or 211**
- Rockdale Emergency Relief (RER) provides financial assistance to residents of Rockdale County. Our goal is to help maintain housing stability and provide utility assistance. At the present time, our Financial Assistance Program is generally limited to households who have not received emergency financial assistance from RER before.
- NOTE: Program depends on funding availability which varies seasonally.

Crisis Support: Crisis Support Services provides community-based crisis services that support individuals with developmental disabilities in their communities as an alternative to institutional placement, emergency room care and /or law enforcement involvement including incarceration.

Team arrives on site within 1.5 hours of the Georgia Crisis Access Line (GCAL) dispatch and assesses the situation for health and safety risks related to the individual and/or others.

Georgia crisis and access: 1-800-715-4225 or 988

LINKS AND WEBSITES

-  [UNDERSTOOD.ORG](https://www.understood.org)
-  [P2PGA.ORG](https://www.p2pga.org)
-  [APPLY FOR MEDICAID](https://www.applyformedicaid.ga.gov)
MEDICAID.GEORGIA.GOV
-  [MYRER.ORG](https://www.myrer.org)
(Rockdale Emergency Relief)
-  [WANDER ALERT PROGRAM](https://www.rockdalesheriff.com)
www.rockdalesheriff.com



UPCOMING EVENTS



VIRTUAL PARENT TAKEAWAY

- 12/09 Medicaid Basics
- 1/13 ABC's of an IEP
- 1/27 IPSE Inclusive Post Secondary Programs in Georgia



ALL VIRTUAL TAKEAWAYS START AT 6 PM





TEAMS LINK

<https://tinyurl.com/2t8tpsfb>

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