

NJ Children's System of Care

Administered by PerformCare®

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

For Families of Youth Eligible for Intellectual/Developmental Disability Services

Family Support Services (FSS) are a coordinated system of on-going public and private supports, services, resources, and other assistance, which are designed to maintain and enhance the quality of life of a young person with an intellectual/developmental disability and his or her family. Family Support Services are designed to strengthen and promote families that provide care at home for a child or young adult.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

In order to be eligible for Family Support Services:

- Your child must be determined eligible for Intellectual/Developmental Disability services **through the New Jersey Children's System of Care** ("eligible for Functional services") before applying for Family Support Services, and
- Your child must live in the community either with a family member or an uncompensated caregiver, and
- All other benefits for which the individual may be eligible (such as SSI and private insurance) must be accessed before accessing FSS resources.

HOW TO APPLY FOR AND REQUEST FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

To apply for Family Support Services, please call PerformCare toll free at **1-877-652-7624** to complete an application by phone. PerformCare is the single point of access for youth into the New Jersey Children's System of Care (CSOC). You can apply for Family Support Services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year, at the time most convenient to your schedule.

A Care Coordinator will work with you to determine which services you are interested in and which are appropriate. You will also be asked about your and your child's current needs and abilities, income, and medical insurance. The application takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Requests for FSS may be made by the parents or legal guardian of a child under the age of 21, or in certain circumstances, by a young adult under the age of 21 on his or her own behalf.

PerformCare evaluates for Family Support Services based on individual need, caregiver need, current services utilized/available, and the availability of resources. During the phone call, if other needs are identified, the Care Coordinator can connect you to other services, including behavioral health referrals and other community resources.

Once complete, your Family Support Services application is valid for 1 year. You must contact PerformCare at 1-877-652-7624 to re-apply for Family Support Services annually.

The FSS application should only be completed **once per year** to request services, with a new application being completed **within 90 days before** the current application's expiration. Outside of that 90-day expiration window, a new application may be completed in less than one year **only under the following circumstances**:

- To request a **new** category of service not previously requested, e.g. request to switch from Agency Hired Respite (AHR) to an Agency After School Care (AAS);
- To request a **new** location of service not previously requested due to moving from one provider service area to another;
- Due to a **significant change in circumstances**; Examples include but are not limited to the following:
 - Development of a new or worsening of an existing medical condition in the youth, which affects mobility, behavior, or the ability to perform self-care activities;
 - Changes to a caregiver's status that significantly affect the caregiver's ability to care for the youth; examples include development or worsening of a medical or psychological condition
 - Changes to the family situation - this may include divorce or additional family members moving in to the home to assist;
 - Changes in financial status - this may include loss of employment, or a significant promotion.
- The need for a new application within one year since the previous application must be clearly indicated by PerformCare.

PerformCare will notify families within 90 days before the current application's expiration.

WHAT TYPES OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

Family Support services fall into three main categories: **Assistive Technology**, **Educational Advocacy** and **Respite Care** for families, including recreational programs for youth.

Additionally, PerformCare can assist you with connections to other supports and resources, including community referrals. Services are not a guarantee and are based on family need and availability of resources.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Device means an item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of youth; assistive technology cannot be solely therapeutic. Examples of assistive technology include travel chairs, walkers, and positioning systems.

Vehicle Modifications means assessments, adaptations or alterations to an automobile or van that is the youth's primary means of transportation in order to accommodate the special needs of the youth, and that are necessary to enable the youth to integrate more fully into the community. Examples of vehicle modifications include motorized lifts and ramps.

Environmental Modifications means removable/minor structural modifications to the private residence of the youth or his/her family that are necessary to ensure the health, welfare and safety of the youth or that enable the youth to function with greater independence in the home. Examples of environmental modifications include widening of doorways, ramps and/or grab-bars, and their installation.

Equipment provided in this category is subject to a maximum limit per child, per three-year cycle.

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY

Educational Advocacy is a service provided to I/DD eligible youth and their families when the youth necessitates in-depth help with education-related needs.

RESPITE CARE

The word *respite* means "break" or "relief." **Respite** is intended to provide temporary relief for the primary caregiver from the demands of caring for an individual with disabilities during the times when the caregiver would normally be available to provide care. This service is intended to provide care and supervision to your child either in their own home or outside their primary residence. The service relieves family members from care on a temporary or emergency basis for short periods of time.

Respite care services are designed to offer families the opportunity for a break from caregiving responsibilities. Respite also provides a positive experience for the individual receiving care. Respite allows parents time to engage in activities that they find relaxing, entertaining, or restful while a trained respite provider cares for your child.

Respite is not a substitute for school, participation in other age appropriate activities, daycare or traditional childcare, which is needed by parents in order to go to work or school and which is provided on a daily or regular basis. Respite, on the other hand, is provided on an intermittent or short-term basis to provide you with a break from caring for your child with a disability.

- **Agency Hired Respite** – Agency Hired Respite is a service provided to families who want a respite worker who is recruited, trained and employed by the qualified agency to provide social and recreational experiences to children in or out of their homes. Agency Hired Respite is limited to 60 hours of service (billed in 15-minute increments) per 90-day authorization. Families have the flexibility to utilize the 60 hours as needed within the 90-day authorization.

- **Self-Hired Respite** – Self-Hired Respite is a service provided to families who want to recruit their respite worker of choice. The family pays the worker directly and sends the paperwork in support of reimbursement to the provider agency on a monthly basis. Self-Hired Respite is limited to 60 hours of service (billed in 15-minute increments) per 90-day authorization. Families have the flexibility to utilize the 60 hours as needed within the 90-day authorization.
- **Agency After School Care** – Provided by community-based agencies, after school care programs have individual criteria including specific age and supervision needs, and are close to the child’s residence. After school care is provided at an agency’s site and not in the child’s home. After school care programs provide social and recreational experiences rather than educational programming for children out of their homes at the end of the school day. It is the caregiver’s responsibility to provide transportation. Please note: Agency After School Care is billed in 15-minute increments.
- **Agency Weekend Recreation** – Weekend Recreation provides social and recreational experiences for children outside of their homes, sometimes including a community outing component, Friday evening through Sunday. It is the caregiver’s responsibility to provide transportation. Please note: Agency Weekend Recreation is billed in 15-minute increments.
- **Overnight Respite** – allows your child to stay overnight in a safe, short-term alternate living arrangement. Each youth may attend up to 6 days in a rolling 365-day period, based on availability. Services must be provided in a licensed facility with round-the-clock supervision and care. Families can utilize time as needed within a rolling 365-day period. Please note: Overnight Respite is billed on a daily frequency.

EXCLUSIONS

The following items and services are not included as part of Family Support Services:

- Services such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech therapy, and tutoring
- Daycare/childcare
- Summer camp financial assistance
- Services available through other sources
- Funding for the cost of a service animal
- Monthly fees for devices
- Funding for augmentative/alternative communication devices, including tablet computers (e.g., iPads)
- Funding for any item that restrains the child, including door locks, vehicle restraints, and fences
- Funding for the purchase of a modified vehicle or a vehicle to be modified
- Reimbursement for assistive technology devices or modifications that were previously purchased

Please note: CSOC will *not* supply an assistive device, vehicle or environmental modification that can be paid by another source, e.g., Medicaid, private insurance, another State division, or the school district or Local Education Authority.

NOTIFICATION

If you are approved for an available Family Support Service, the agency providing the requested service will contact you once they have an opening in their program. You will also receive a letter from PerformCare indicating authorization of the service. If you have not heard from the identified provider by the start date of service indicated on the authorization letter, call PerformCare for assistance. PerformCare matches families to services as they become available.

The agency providing the service will call you to complete their intake process. The provider is responsible for verifying every 3 months whether the service is being used and if it is helpful.

If your needs change and you wish to request a different service, call PerformCare to request the change. You will need to update your Family Support Service Application during that call.

Please be advised that Family Support Services are not entitled or guaranteed and the ability to provide services to your child is contingent upon the availability of CSOC resources.

GETTING INVOLVED

If you are interested in providing feedback about Family Support Services and identifying service priorities, contact the **New Jersey State Council on Developmental Disabilities (NJCDD)**. The Council supports Regional Family Support Planning Councils that enable caregivers to have a forum to identify systemic gaps and issues in Family Support Services statewide.

Information about the Family Support Planning Councils is available on the NJCDD website: <http://njcdd.org/the-regional-family-support-planning-councils>.