



**Navigating  
Community Resources  
for Children & Youth  
with Disabilities**



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**The Advocacy  
Network on  
Disabilities**



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**What is The Advocacy  
Network on Disabilities?**

**MISSION**

**"The Advocacy Network on Disabilities  
champions the rights of individuals with  
intellectual, developmental, and other  
disabilities by promoting inclusion,  
providing services, and advancing systems  
change."**



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## Objective

At the end of this training participants will demonstrate an introductory knowledge about basic resources for children and youth with disabilities and their families.

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## INFANTS AND TODDLERS:

### Birth to 36 months

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**EVALUATIONS:** for infants and toddlers whose parents, teachers, or others, are concerned they may have a developmental delay or disability.

**EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES:** for infants and toddlers determined eligible based on a diagnosed condition or significant delay.

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Two sites in Miami-Dade County:



**North Dade**

Located in Civic Center area

(305) 243-6660

Fax referrals to:

(305) 243-3501

**Southernmost Coast**

Located in Cutler Bay area

(786) 268-2611

Fax referrals to:

(786) 268-1748

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**PRE-SCHOOLERS:**

**36 months - 5 years old**

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**FDLRS**

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System



**SCREENINGS:** With parent consent, free at your site for children who are not enrolled in public schools and considered to be potential candidates for Special Education services (speech/language, hearing, vision, developmental)

**EVALUATIONS:** This office handles the referrals for evaluations for children not enrolled in public schools

**PARENT SERVICES:** provides training, information about community resources, and guidance to families

Phone number: (305) 274-3501

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**HELP ME GROW**  
Operated by JCS 2-1-1



**Supports questions and concerns of families regarding children Birth-8**

- Health and developmental screenings
- Information, Resources, Materials
- Referrals with enhanced advocacy and follow up
- Assistance enrolling in community programs



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**Evaluation and Services Kindergarten- 21 yrs. old**



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**Division of Special Education M-DCPS**

Provides services for children 5 to 21 yrs. old with qualifying disabilities

**Services include evaluations for children with suspected disabilities**

Evaluations are requested at the child's corresponding home school

All students that qualify for services have an (IEP)



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### The Process Simplified

Child is referred for an evaluation


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Child is evaluated within 60 days of parent consent

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Eligible students receive services as specified in IEP

Adapted from "The Basic Special Education Process under IDEA 2004" NICHY website



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### What the School Does Not Do...

**MDCPS does not diagnose!  
Rather...**

Students are identified to be in a category- or eligibility criteria- for placement purposes

Medical professionals can provide a diagnoses



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### Important Details Parents Should Know...

Concerned about your child?  
Begin by speaking to his/her teacher

Find out who in the school is in charge of Special Education- this varies!

Request for evaluation should be **in writing**



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### Important Details Parents Should Know...

Create a file for the child's records

Ask for all professionals to explain evaluation results

Parents actively participate in writing the IEP, & are their *child's most important advocate!*

It's a good idea for parents to bring someone to the IEP meeting that may be of support to them

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### School Choices

#### McKay Scholarship

Provides scholarships for eligible students with disabilities to attend an eligible public or private school of their choice.

To be eligible, the student must have an IEP or 504 accommodation plan AND have attended a Florida public school the prior year.

The scholarship amount is based on the student's IEP or 504 Plan and the services provided by the district.

Phone: 1-800-447-1636

<http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/mckay>

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### School Choices

#### Step Up Scholarships

Income based:

Special needs:

Pays up to \$5,677 (2015-16 school year) for school expenses:

- Tuition
- Books
- Uniforms
- Registration
- Transportation
- Testing

The average amount is **\$10,000**, and can be used for:

- School
- Therapies
- Specialists
- Curriculum
- Technology
- College Savings

Phone: 1-877-735-7837

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

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### How Can Your Program Help Children with Disabilities (or Suspected)?

Communicate and partner with parents and service providers

Schedule conferences with parents to support the student



Provide resources and referral information to families

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### How Else Can You Help?

Provide staff with professional development in the area of the student's disability

Reach out to other professionals that can support program in including the student

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### Useful Documents

- ✓ "Getting to Know Me"
- ✓ Authorization for Exchange of Information
- ✓ Individual Educational Plan (IEP)
- ✓ Evaluation recommendations & strategies
- ✓ Parent-Teacher Conference documentation

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**Resources to Support Parents**

Learning Disabilities and other  
[www.ncld.org](http://www.ncld.org)

Developmental Disabilities, including Autism  
[www.disabilitycoop.com](http://www.disabilitycoop.com)

Mental Health- Emotional/Behavioral  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

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What a difference knowledge makes...



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**RESOURCES**

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**Great Starting Points...**

**Dial 211**  
**The Children's Trust** is funding 211 in Miami-Dade County to make this resource and referral line available to everyone in our community. Includes referrals to after school care, summer program and child care centers.  
<https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/parents/helpingline>

**APD Resource Directory**  
 Search engine by zip-code or city listing general resources and also disability specific  
<http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/>

**FDLRS Resource Guide**  
 A compilation of resources, general and disability specific  
<http://prekese.dadeschools.net/~docs/ForTeachers/email-weeklybriefings/emails13-14/4.2.14%20FDLRS.pdf>

  
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**Great Starting Points...**

**The Advocacy Network on Disabilities**  
 Family Support Coordinators assists families and professionals identify and access the services they need and want  
 Phone: 305-596-1160  
<http://advocacynetwork.org>

**Parent to Parent of Miami**  
 Offers parents of children with special needs education, information and advocacy  
 Phone: 305-271-9797  
[www.ptopmiami.org](http://www.ptopmiami.org)

  
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**Disability Specific**

Autism

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Vision Impairment

Mental Health

  
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## Autism

**UM-NSU C.A.R.D.**  
**Center for Autism and Related Disorders**  
 A good starting point for families suspecting or learning of their child's diagnoses.

- Provides family and professional training
- Individualized client and family support
- Programmatic Consultation and technical assistance
- Facilitates social groups

Intake appointment phone: (305) 284-5440  
<http://www.umcard.org/index.php>

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## Deaf and Hard of Hearing 711

**Florida Relay Service** is the communication link for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability. Dial 711 from any phone to connect.

**Sign Language Interpreters**

**American Sign Language Interpreters, Inc**  
 5800 S.W. 5<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
 Miami, FL 33144  
 Phone: 786-393-4864

**American Sign Language Services, Inc**  
 Phone: 407-518-7900 extension 334  
 Toll Free: 1-888-SIGN-ASL  
 FAX: 407-518-7903

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## Relay 711 Service

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### Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST)

Non-profit organization funded by the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) through the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 and the State of Florida Department of Education Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The mission is to improve the quality of life for all Floridians with disabilities through advocacy and awareness activities that increase access to and acquisition of assistive services and technology.

<http://pediatrics.med.miami.edu/community-outreach/assistive-technology/faast>

<http://www.faast.org/>

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### Visual Impairments

**Miami Lighthouse for the Blind** provides a variety of services for people with visual impairments, such as:

- Programs for babies through adults at no cost to families
- Braille lessons and translation of written language
- Professional training and technical assistance support to program's serving children with visual impairments

Phone Number: 305-856-2288 <http://miamilighthouse.org/>

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### Florida Division of Blind Services

Helps blind and visually impaired Floridians achieve their goals and live productive and independent lives. Services cover all ages from babies to senior citizens and offer Employer Services, the Braille and Talking Books Library, and the Business Enterprise Program.

<http://dbs.myflorida.com/>

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## Mental Health

**Institute for Child and Family Health (ICFH)** provides child and family counseling services in the family's home, the child's school, or in one of three outpatient centers.

North Dade number: (305) 722-7159

South Dade number: (305) 722-5636

**PsychSolutions** provides individual and family therapy, psychiatric evaluation and mental health targeted case management. Services may be in the client's homes and in some M-DCPS sites.

Main office number: (305) 668-9000

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## Resources for Children Without Insurance

### Act4me

Provides therapy scholarships for up to \$3500 for children with neurological disabilities who do not have Medicaid

Contact: Martha Poulat Phone: (786) 473-6020

More information at: [www.act4me.org](http://www.act4me.org)

### FL Elks

Provides free physical therapy for uninsured children up to 18 yrs. old in Miami Dade County

Contact: Chantal Salnave

(305) 278-2044

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## Resources for Children Without Insurance

### Shriner's Hospital (Tampa)

Offers care at no cost to uninsured children with orthopedic conditions

**Contact for referrals:  
1-813-972-2250 ext.: 7740**

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## Financial Assistance

### Supplemental Security Income (SSI)


Financial assistance to adult and children with disabilities who have limited income and resources

Maximum Assets \$2000 not counting home  
Maximum Payment \$735

Applications on-line or visit your local SSA office

**FL residents who are eligible for SSI automatically receive Medicaid from the State**

**For more information: 1-800-772-1213**  
<http://www.ssa.gov/pqm/ssi.htm>



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## Planning for the Future

- The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act allows individuals with disabilities and their family and friends to save for future expenses, like popular Roth IRA and 529 college savings plans, while maintaining government benefits.



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## Medical Assistance Medicaid Today

Primarily a system of Managed care  
10+ choice plans available

Medicaid recipients enrolled/receiving waiver services or waiting for waiver services are NOT required to participate. Those recipients may continue receiving Medicaid "Open Access"



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**Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)**

The state agency responsible for serving the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

In the state of FL, a developmental disability is defined as:

Autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, Down Syndrome, Prader-Willi Syndrome, intellectual disability, children age 3-5 at a high risk of a developmental disability

There are priority categories for accessing services

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**Agency for Persons with Disabilities**

Waiting list for services, the lower the priority area, the longer the wait

There are 30,000 people on waiting list in Florida and more than 5000 in Miami-Dade County.

Everyone who may be eligible for services should apply and be added to the waiting list.

Phone: 305-349-1478    [www.apdmyflorida.com](http://www.apdmyflorida.com)

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**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**

Helps people who have physical or mental disabilities get or keep a job

What type of services are offered?

Medical and Psychological Assessment  
Vocational Evaluation and Planning  
Training and Education after High School  
Job Placement & Coaching

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## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Candidates can self refer and children are linked as part of transition services in last year of High School

Visit <http://www.rehabworks.org>

to access a VR office directory

Contact your local office to request services

Questions?

(800) 451-4327 or

(866) 515-3692

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## EMPLOYMENT ENHANCEMENT PROJECT - APD

- Supported Employment Coaching for individuals not working with VR to obtain and maintain competitive employment and participate in paid or unpaid internships as a path to employment. Any individual in Florida who meets APD eligibility, on the APD Waiting List, and over the age 18 may be considered for participation in the EEP.

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To receive your certificate for completing this training, please visit: <http://collabornation.net/login/advocacynetwork>

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