

# HOW TO GET BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HELP

## A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES



Whether you are looking for help for a child with disabilities, with behavioral health needs, in foster care, or in trouble at school, getting help from the state can be a long and difficult process. The goal of this guide is to give you some tips for getting your family the help you need.



## SPEAK UP FOR YOUR CHILD.

You don't have to know everything to speak up for your child. You don't have to be an expert to make decisions about your child's care.

- Ask questions about your child's care.
- If you don't understand something, ask for someone to explain it.
- Don't ever be afraid to speak up.

Try to learn as much as you can about Georgia's behavioral health system. Find more information about available services on page 8.

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Hundreds of thousands of families in Georgia are getting state services or applying to receive state services for their children. Others are facing the same situation, too.

- Try to connect with parent-support organizations. These organizations can help you and others like you learn how to deal with the challenges of getting state services for your child.
- Parent and family support organizations can also provide emotional support, advice, and other supplemental services. A list of parent and family support organizations can be found on page 11.

Your child's public school is probably the first place where you will begin learning about state services. If your child has special needs or requires additional support, it is important to know your options.

- Read the school's student handbook or code of conduct to find the rules that affect your child's rights, especially about discipline and special needs. (Schools are required to give code of conduct books out to students and parents at the beginning of every school year.)
- Don't wait until your child is in trouble. Meet with teachers about behavior concerns before they call you. Look into support options for your child at school. A Student Support Team can help address your child's needs without creating an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Some schools have other behavioral support options.
- Speak up if your child is having difficulty keeping up with school work, is being bullied, or needs additional help. Most schools have a lot of available resources to help. Use them.
- If an issue is not being handled properly, do not be afraid to move the issue up to somebody with more authority.



## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION.



- If you think your child needs special education or a student-support plan, do not wait. Talk to your school social worker about what options are available.
- If the current IEP or 504 plan is not helping your child, you have the right to change it or end it.
- Take advantage of all the resources the schools should offer. Many schools have graduation coaches, social workers, and tutoring services. If your child has an IEP or a 504 plan then the school should be helping with your child's behavioral health needs, as well.

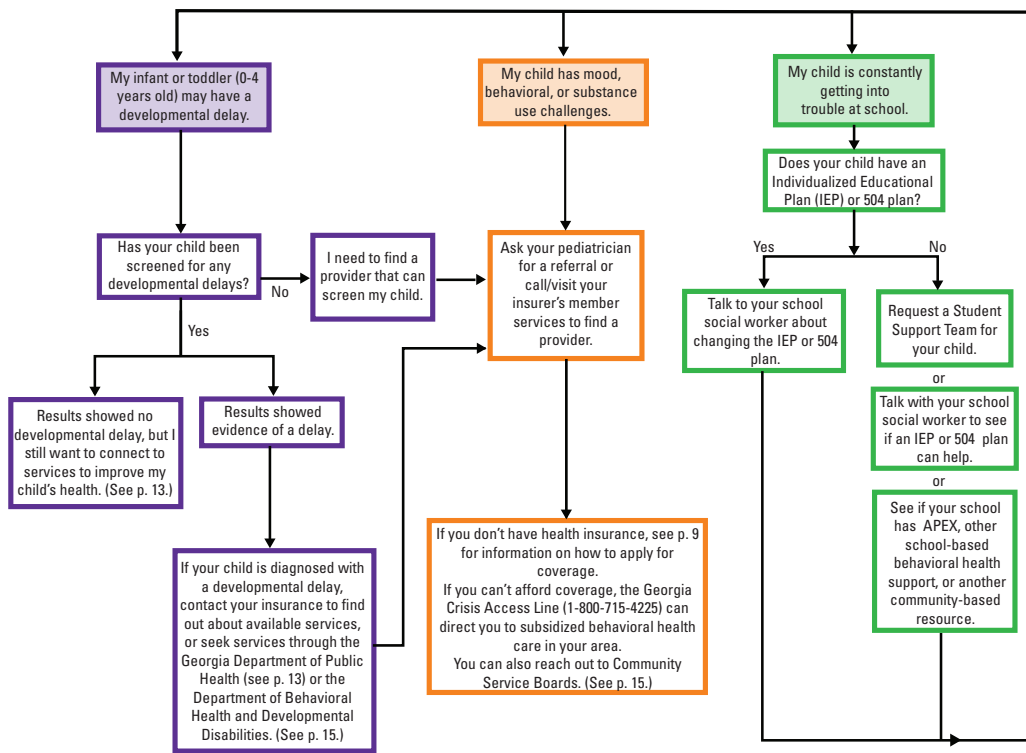
Consider how trauma and the environment can affect your child's behavior. Studies have shown that when dangerous or traumatic events happen to or around kids (such as violence, death of a loved one, or sexual or physical abuse), it can greatly affect their behavior.

## SUPPORT YOUR CHILD.

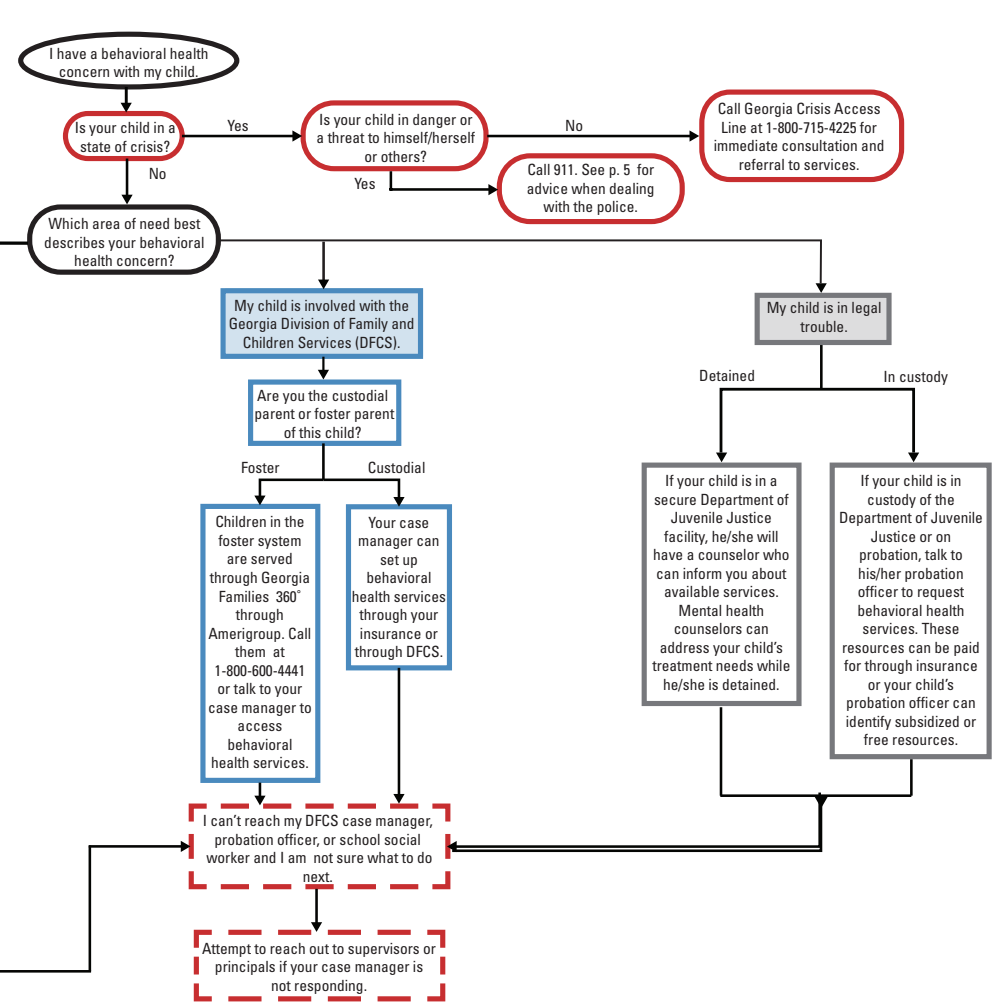
- Discipline, routine, medication, and behavioral health support can help meet your child's needs. Be open to trying various methods of support.
- Work with your service providers to create an individualized plan that is best for your child.
- You know your child best and have final say. If providers present a plan that you know won't work, ask for a new plan.
- Having a child with disabilities or behavioral health needs is stressful. Parent and family support groups can help. See page 11.
- If your child is in a state of crisis where he or she is a threat to you, someone else, or themselves, call 911. If you do need the police, ask for an officer with Crisis Intervention Training and inform the dispatcher that your child has behavioral health needs.
- If your child is in a state of crisis, but not posing a threat, call the Georgia Crisis Access Line at 1-800-715-4225.



# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS MAP



Parent and family support organizations: No matter what challenge you or your child may be facing, it is very important to reach out to these organizations for support. They can help you and your child deal with the system themselves. After connecting to the appropriate agency for your need, reach out to these organizations for support. (For a list of these org



It is important to connect with people who have been through what you are going through or who are currently going through it. Reach out to an organization that specializes in peer-to-peer, or informal advocacy for people dealing with the system. For more information on these organizations, see p. 11.)

# RESOURCES

## CHILD WELFARE

### Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services

Services: In charge of child safety and welfare, as well as support for foster children and adoptive families.

Constituent services: 404-657-3433

Adoptions: 404-657-3550

Abuse hotline: 1-855-422-4453

Foster care info: 1-877-210-5437

List of department services: [dfcs.georgia.gov/node/695](https://dfcs.georgia.gov/node/695)

County offices and locations: [dfcs.georgia.gov/locations](https://dfcs.georgia.gov/locations)

## EDUCATION/EARLY LEARNING

### Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Services: Administers Georgia's Bright From the Start prekindergarten program and other early learning programs.

Phone: 1-888-442-7735

Website: [families.dec.al.ga.gov](https://families.dec.al.ga.gov)

### Georgia Department of Education

Services: Center for all prekindergarten to grade 12 education-related services and information.

Phone: 404-656-2800

Website: [gadoe.org](https://gadoe.org)

Special education: [gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services](https://gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services)



### Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

Services: A state system of courts and legal agencies for youth offenders.

Office of Behavioral Health Services:

[djj.georgia.gov/office-behavioral-health-services](http://djj.georgia.gov/office-behavioral-health-services)

List of locations: [djj.georgia.gov/find-location](http://djj.georgia.gov/find-location)

Office of the Ombudsman: [djj.georgia.gov/office-ombudsman](http://djj.georgia.gov/office-ombudsman)

## MEDICAID/SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

If you don't have health insurance and need coverage, first check to see if you are eligible for Medicaid. Go to [gateway.ga.gov](http://gateway.ga.gov) to check your eligibility.

- If you qualify for Medicaid, you will need to sign up with one of the four care management organizations. Your options depend on the conditions of your eligibility. See page 10 for more details.
- If you don't qualify for Medicaid, you can try to obtain affordable health insurance in the Marketplace at [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov), or call 1-866-988-8246.
  - If you can't afford coverage see the orange section of the Behavioral Health Access Map for more service options.

### Georgia Department of Community Health

Services: Provides oversight for Medicaid and PeachCare services.

Medicaid services: 1-866-211-0950

Website: [dch.georgia.gov](http://dch.georgia.gov)

### Georgia Gateway

Services: Site to apply for and check eligibility for Medicaid and start application process.

Phone: 1-877-423-4746; 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. for a phone application

Website: [gateway.ga.gov/access](http://gateway.ga.gov/access)

### Georgia Social Security Offices

Services: Provide information on seeking benefits for disabilities and employment services.

Phone: 1-800-772-1213; 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

List of locations: [secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp](https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp)

Atlanta region site: [ssa.gov/atlanta/southeast/ga/georgia.htm](https://ssa.gov/atlanta/southeast/ga/georgia.htm)

## MEDICAID CARE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

### Amerigroup

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.

Phone: 1-800-249-0442

Website: [amerigroup.com](https://amerigroup.com)

### CareSource

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.

Phone: 1-855-202-0729

Website: [caresource.com](https://caresource.com)

### Georgia Families 360<sup>SM</sup> (Amerigroup)

Services: Special Medicaid program for families of foster children.

Phone: 1-800-600-4441

Website: [myamerigroup.com/ga/your-plan/georgia-families-360.html](https://myamerigroup.com/ga/your-plan/georgia-families-360.html)

### Peach State

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.

Phone: 1-866-874-0633

Website: [pshpgeorgia.com](https://pshpgeorgia.com)

### Wellcare

Services: Medicaid Care Management Organization.

Phone: 1-866-231-1821

Website: [wellcare.com/georgia](https://wellcare.com/georgia)

### Families Advocating for Voices of Resilience (FAVOR)

Services: Family and youth support.

Phone: 404-499-0078

Website: [favorfamilies.com](http://favorfamilies.com)

### Families First

Services: Provides health care, education, employment, and life skills enhancement for youth in the foster care system.

Phone: 404-853-2800

Website: [familiesfirst.org](http://familiesfirst.org)

### Georgia Parent Support Network

Services: Provides services and support to parents of children with severe emotional disturbances and behavioral health needs.

Phone: 1-844-278-6945

Website: [gpsn.org](http://gpsn.org)

### Integrated Concepts for Families

Services: Family support, individual, and family counseling.

Phone: 770-463-0202

Website: [integratedconceptsforfamilies.com](http://integratedconceptsforfamilies.com)

### National Alliance on Mental Illness' Peer to Peer

Services: Free educational program for people living with mental illness.

Phone: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)

Website: [nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-peer-to-peer](http://nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-peer-to-peer)

### Parent to Parent of Georgia

Services: Provides peer support to families of youth with disabilities.

Phone: 1-800-229-2038

Website: [p2pga.org](http://p2pga.org)

## HOUSING/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### Georgia Public Housing Authority

Services: Provides list of public housing authority sites in Georgia.

List of locations:

[hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/pha/contacts/ga](http://hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/ga)

### Needhelppayingbills

Services: Website lists organizations that may offer financial assistance.

Website: [needhelppayingbills.com/html/atlanta\\_rent\\_assistance.html](http://needhelppayingbills.com/html/atlanta_rent_assistance.html)

### Nicholas House of Atlanta

Services: Provides services for homeless families in DeKalb and Fulton counties.

Phone: 404-622-0793

Website: [nicholashouse.org](http://nicholashouse.org)

### Salvation Army of Georgia

Services: Provides support and housing services for Georgia families.

Phone: 770-441-6200

List of locations: [salvationarmygeorgia.org/locations](http://salvationarmygeorgia.org/locations)

## SOCIAL SECURITY/DISABILITY

### Georgia Social Security Offices

Services: Provides information on benefits for disabilities and employment services.

Phone: 1-800-772-1213; 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Office locator: [secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp](http://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp)

Atlanta region site: [ssa.gov/atlanta/southeast/ga/georgia.htm](http://ssa.gov/atlanta/southeast/ga/georgia.htm)

### Babies Can't Wait

Services: Provides screening for early identification of developmental issues with infants ages 0 – 36 months.

Phone: 1-888-651-8224

Website: [dph.georgia.gov/Babies-Cant-Wait](http://dph.georgia.gov/Babies-Cant-Wait)

### Early Head Start

Services: Provides child development support services up to age 3 years.

Phone: 1-877-255-4254

Website: [georgiaheadstart.org](http://georgiaheadstart.org)

### Georgia Department of Public Health

Services: Maternal and infant health; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

Phone: 1-800-228-9173

WIC services website: [dph.georgia.gov/WIC](http://dph.georgia.gov/WIC)

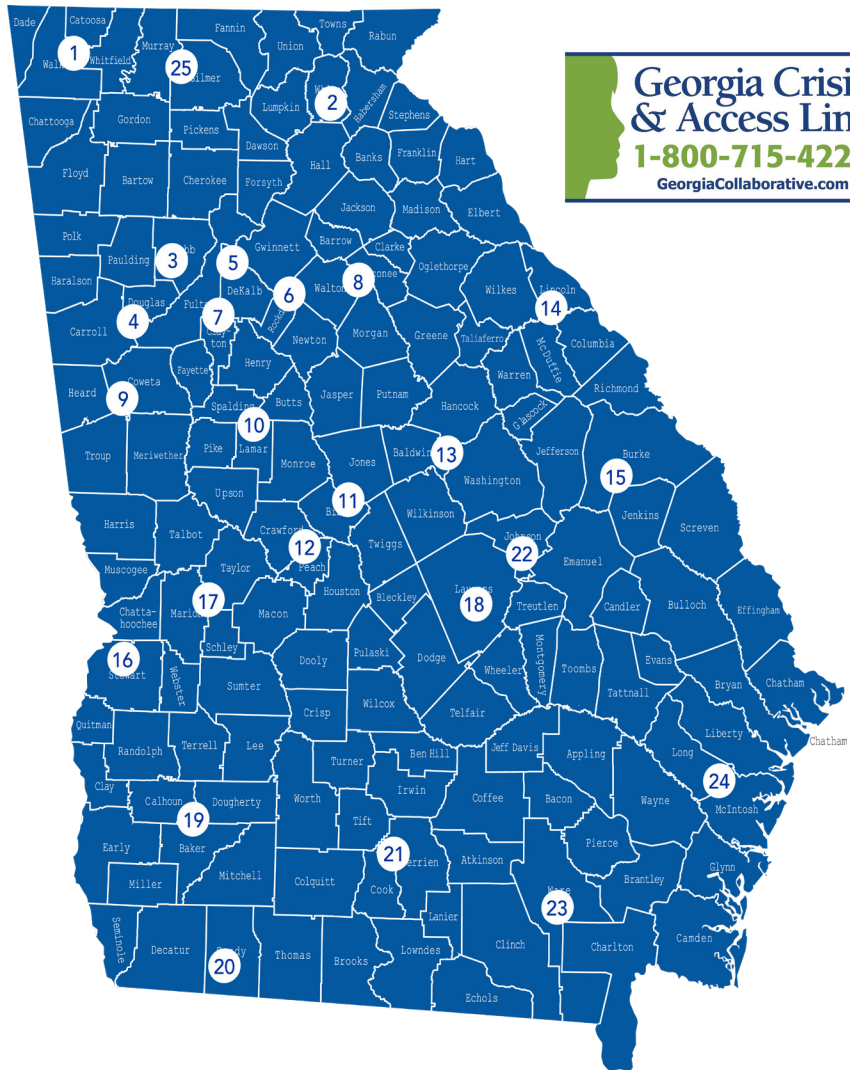
Phone: 404-657-2850

### Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies

Services: Mother and child health helpline, refers callers to services and education resources.

Phone: 1-800-300-9003

Website: [hmbga.org](http://hmbga.org)



**Georgia Crisis & Access Line**  
**1-800-715-4225**  
 GeorgiaCollaborative.com

Source: Adapted from information provided by the Georgia Association of Community Service Boards and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

## Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) provides services for those with mental health and substance abuse issues, as well as disabilities. DBHDD also trains certified peer support workers. For services call the Georgia Crisis & Access Line at 1-800-715-4225 or visit [dbhdd.georgia.gov/dbhdd-services](http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/dbhdd-services).

Youth services and support clubhouses: [dbhdd.georgia.gov/office-cyf-services#clubs](http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/office-cyf-services#clubs)

Substance abuse and recovery clubhouses: [dbhdd.georgia.gov/adolescent-services](http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/adolescent-services)

Community Service Boards across Georgia

1 - Lookout Mountain Community Services:	<a href="http://lmcs.org">lmcs.org</a>	706-638-5580 x4151
2 - Avita Community Partners	<a href="http://avitapartners.org/about/locations.php">avitapartners.org/about/locations.php</a>	1-800-525-8751
3 - Cobb Community Service Board	<a href="http://cobbcsb.com">cobbcsb.com</a>	770-429-5000
4 - Douglas Community Service Board	<a href="http://cobbcsb.com">cobbcsb.com</a>	770-429-5000
5 - DeKalb Community Service Board	<a href="http://dekcsb.org">dekcsb.org</a>	404-294-3836
6 - View Point Health	<a href="http://myviewpointhealth.org">myviewpointhealth.org</a>	678-209-2411
7 - Clayton Community Service Board	<a href="http://claytoncenter.org">claytoncenter.org</a>	1-844-438-2778
8 - Advantage Behavioral Health Systems	<a href="http://advantagebhs.org">advantagebhs.org</a>	706-369-6363 x3100
9 - Pathways Center	<a href="http://pathwayscsb.org">pathwayscsb.org</a>	1-888-247-9048
10 - McIntosh Trail Community Service Board	<a href="http://mctrail.org">mctrail.org</a>	770-358-5252
11 - River Edge Behavioral Health Center	<a href="http://river-edge.org">river-edge.org</a>	478-803-7600
12 - Phoenix Center Behavioral Health Services	<a href="http://phoenixhealthcenter.com">phoenixhealthcenter.com</a>	478-988-1222
13 - Oconee Community Service Board	<a href="http://oconeecenter.org">oconeecenter.org</a>	478-445-5322
14 - Serenity Behavioral Health Systems	<a href="http://serenitybhs.com">serenitybhs.com</a>	706-432-4800
15 - Ogeechee Behavioral Health Services	<a href="http://obhs-ga.org">obhs-ga.org</a>	478-289-2522
16 - New Horizons Community Service Board	<a href="http://nhbh.org">nhbh.org</a>	706-596-5500
17 - Middle Flint Behavioral Healthcare	<a href="http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/location/middle-flint-behavioral-healthcare">dbhdd.georgia.gov/location/middle-flint-behavioral-healthcare</a>	229-931-2504
18 - Community Service Board of Middle Georgia	<a href="http://csbmg.com">csbmg.com</a>	478-272-1190
19 - Aspire Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Services	<a href="http://aspirebhdd.org">aspirebhdd.org</a>	229-430-4140
20 - Georgia Pines	<a href="http://georgiapines.net">georgiapines.net</a>	228-227-5426
21 - Behavioral Health Services of South Georgia	<a href="http://bhsga.com">bhsga.com</a>	229-671-6170
22 - Pineland Area Community Service Board	<a href="http://pinelandcsb.org">pinelandcsb.org</a>	1-800-746-3526
23 - Unison Behavioral Health	<a href="http://unisonbehavioralhealth.com">unisonbehavioralhealth.com</a>	1-800-342-8168
24 - Gateway Behavioral Health Services	<a href="http://gatewaybhs.org">gatewaybhs.org</a>	1-866-557-9955
25 - Highland Rivers Community Service Board	<a href="http://highlandrivershealth.com">highlandrivershealth.com</a>	1-800-729-5700



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