

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES ACT FOR AT-RISK YOUTH AND FAMILIES



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What is the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families?

It is a Virginia law designed to help troubled youths and their families. State and local agencies, parents and private service providers work together to plan and provide services. In each community, local teams decide how to do this.

The Community Policy and Management Team:

(CPMT) coordinates agency efforts, manages the available funds, and sees that eligible youths and their families get help.

The Family Assessment and Planning Team:

(FAPT) looks at the strengths and needs of the individual youth and families, decides what services to provide, and prepares a service plan with input from families.

Both teams include parents, staff from community services boards, courts service units, the departments of health and social services, the public schools and private providers. In some localities, these teams go by different names and may also include other members.



Who is eligible for services?

Services under CSA may be available to a child who meets at least one of the following descriptions:

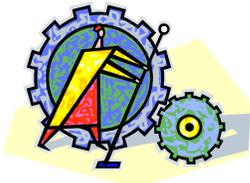
- has serious emotional or behavioral problems or
- may need residential care or resources beyond normal agency services, or
- needs special education through a private school program, or
- receives foster care services, or
- receives services to prevent foster care placements, or
- is under supervision of the juvenile and domestic relations court, or domestic relations court, or
- is a ward of the Department of Juvenile Justice

Eligibility is determined by various laws (in education, juvenile justice and social services) and by your Community Policy and Management Team. Also, there must be funds available in your community.



How can I find out if my child is eligible?

Contact your local Comprehensive Services Act Coordinator. You can access this information on the CSA web page at www.csa.state.va.us/rosters/coord3a.cfm



How does CSA work?

A Family Assessment and Planning team meeting is scheduled to with the FAPT Team and members of the family:

- the child and family take an active part of the FAPT meeting to discuss their needs
- a service plan is developed
- the family signs the service plan if they agree with the plan
- services begin as soon as possible
- if the family disagrees with the plan, they may ask for a review with the local CPMT
- emergency services may begin immediately
- parents may be required to make co-payments for non-foster care services
- parents may be required to make child support payments for foster care services
- parents are not required to make co-pay payments for special education services



What are my rights?

Most importantly, you have the right to understand the local CSA process:

- you have the right to receive information on the local CSA process and timelines for receiving referrals
- you have the right to be notified before your child is assessed for offered services
- you have a right to understand the information that you receive and delivered in your native language, if possible
- you have the right to consent and agree in writing before beginning any services, except when ordered by the court
- you have the right to read records, challenge information, give permission for release of records and be provided a written copy of the records unless ordered otherwise by the court
- you have the right to assistance from someone assigned to you as the Case Manager from the FAPT as well as a member of your family, friend, advocate or support person
- you have the right to review the assessment and service plan

- you have the right to disagree with the assessment and service plan and place your concerns in writing to the FAPT and/or CPMT
- you have the right to participate and be present for the entire FAPT meeting and discuss your child's and family's situation and well as participate in decisions that apply to you and your family



What about children and youth eligible for special education?

If your child is eligible for special education, all the rights and protections of special education continue to be available to you and your child:

- you have the right to notice before a child's educational service begins or changes
- you have the right to consent before certain evaluations or placements
- you have a right to an independent educational evaluation if you disagree with the school's evaluation
- you have the right to participate in the preparation of your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- you have the right to inspect and review your child's education records
- you have the right to file a complaint or request a due process hearing

If you think that your child may be eligible for special education, you can access the Department of Education's "**A Parent's Guide to Special Education**" at

www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Sped/parent_guide.pdf

for additional information.



What about children and youth receiving foster care?

If your child is in foster care you can ask the foster care social worker for help. Unless the court has taken away your parental rights, you have a right to be involved in making decisions about your child.

- you have the right to have contact with your child, including telephone calls, visits and or letters, unless the court has determined you cannot have contact
- you have the right to receive services or help that will allow the child to be returned to you
- you have the right to be informed by the agency about how your child is doing
- you have the right to be consulted when there are important decisions to be made about your child
- you have the right to participate in service planning for your child
- you have a right to be informed and invited to all court hearings and reviews concerning your child
- you have a right to legal representation at court hearings that involve your child
- you and your child have a right to confidentiality

For more information about foster care services, contact your local Department of Social Services

Office. You can access a statewide DSS office listing at www.dss.state.va.us/localagency/index.html



Where can I go for help?

The Comprehensive Services Act process can seem overwhelming and impersonal. Help is available at every step of the CSA process. Please contact the Office of Comprehensive Services at (804) 662-9815 or by email at XCS992@central.dss.state.va.us for a list of people who can help you.