

The Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP)

IFSP: First Steps

Revised August 2024

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Welcome! We're here to help!

We recognize that navigating the developmental disability system can be hard for families. The Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP) at the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) made this guide to help individuals and families understand resources, supports, and services that the Commonwealth of Virginia offers to people with developmental disabilities. We hope you will find this resource useful!

It includes the following information:

- how to access Virginia’s Medicaid Waivers for Developmental Disabilities (DD Waivers),
- links to our one-stop information website, My Life, My Community,
- a summary of the IFSP, and
- a list of resources for people who are on Virginia’s DD Waivers waiting List (“the Waitlist”).

For more detailed information about the resources named in this document, we invite you to explore this website or call My Life, My Community operators at 844-603-9248.

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What is the Individual and Family Support Program?

The IFSP helps individuals and families by providing:

- **Financial assistance:** Visit [our webpage](#) to learn more about eligibility and how to apply.
- **Education, information, and referrals:** Visit [My Life, My Community](#), our one-stop online tool, to find what you need.
- **Peer mentoring:** Connect with peers with disabilities through The Arc of Virginia's [Peer Mentoring Program](#)!
- **Family mentoring:** Want guidance or support from someone who has been there? [The Family to Family Network](#) at the Center for Family Involvement can help!
- **Community coordination:** Ready to give back to your community and have your voice heard? Consider joining [your IFSP Regional Council](#).

To get updates directly from the IFSP, please [sign up for our email list](#). This is the best way to get the most up-to-date information from us!

NOTE: Some families may know of or receive services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (also known as an IFSP) through the [Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia](#). The Individual and Family Support Program at DBHDS is not the same program!

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Resources for People with DD in Virginia

If you or a loved one has a developmental disability, is on the DD Waivers Waiting List, or has a DD Waiver, then you may be eligible for the supports listed here. You can also find more resources at <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-first->

[steps!](#)

Help with Finding Resources

- The IFSP partners with disabilityNavigator to provide [My Life, My Community](#), an online tool that helps individuals and families gain knowledge and connect to resources in their community. Explore the site to find general information on [DD Waivers](#), [providers](#), and [services](#).
- Local Community Services Boards/Behavioral Health Authorities (CSB/BHA) have [support coordinators/case managers \(SCs/CMs\)](#) who can answer your general questions about waivers and services. Support coordinators/case managers should be your point of contact if something changes, or if you need help sooner.

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Connecting with Others

- Peer support for self-advocates and people with disabilities through The Arc of Virginia's [Peer Mentoring Program](#).
- Emotional, informational, and systems navigational support for families through the VCU Center for Family Involvement's [Family to Family \(F2F\) Program](#).
- Connections to other families in your community through the IFSP Regional Councils: <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/connect-ifsp-regional-councils>

Getting Personalized Help or General Assistance

- Financial assistance through the [Individual and Family Support Program \(IFSP\) Funding Program](#). Read the [Beyond IFSP-Funding](#) document to find suggestions for free or reduced-cost alternatives for items or services typically purchased with IFSP funds:

Health Services and Health Advocacy

- Maintenance and repair of your Durable Medical Equipment (DME), assistive technology (AT), and physical therapy consultations through the DBHDS Office of Integrated Health's [Mobile Rehab Engineering Team](#).
- Assistance overcoming barriers and accessing dental care through the DBHDS Office of Integrated Health's [Dental Program](#).
- Assistance navigating complex health services and advocating for access and quality care in addition to [training resources and opportunities](#) through the DBHDS Office of Integrated Health's [Community Nursing](#).

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Resources for Youth

- If your child is under the age of 3 years old, they may be eligible for [Early Intervention Services](#) through the Infant and Toddler Connection.

Resources for Transition-Age and Adults

- If your child is between 14-22 years old and enrolled in an approved education program, they may receive [Pre-Employment Transition Services \(Pre-ETS\)](#) through the Division of Rehabilitative Services at DARS. These services include

job exploration counseling, work-based learning, workplace readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, and counseling on postsecondary education. To learn about vocational rehabilitation or other employment services in general, contact [your local DARS field office](#).

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- Virginia now formally recognizes [Supported Decision-Making Agreements \(SDMAs\)](#) as an alternative to more restrictive substitute decision-making options, such as legal guardianships. SDMAs give individuals with DD the ability to receive support with making various choices in their lives while also retaining all of their rights, including the right to make their own decisions. Read this [SDMA overview!](#)
- [Rent or housing assistance](#) through one of DBHDS's Integrated, Independent Housing Resources.

Crisis Services and General Information

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24/7 call, text, and chat access to trained crisis workers who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. Dial 988 or visit 988va.org for more information.

If you need immediate help for someone with developmental disabilities who is experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis, please contact [the REACH crisis services program in your region](#) for assistance.

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The REACH program is the statewide crisis system of care that is designed to meet the crisis support needs of individuals who have a developmental disability and are experiencing crisis events as a result of a behavioral or mental health support need that puts them at risk for homelessness, incarceration, hospitalization, and/or danger to themselves or others. REACH services are available statewide, with one regional program being located in each of the Commonwealth's five DBHDS service regions (Western/Region 1, Northern/Region 2, Southwestern/Region 3, Central/Region 4, and Eastern/Region 5).

- **Region 1 Crisis Line Children and Adults:** 888-908-0486 (Charlottesville)
- **Region 2 Crisis Line Children and Adults:** 855-897-8278 (Woodbridge)
- **Region 3 Crisis Line Children and Adults:** 855-887-8278 (Radford)
- **Region 4 Crisis Line Children and Adults:** 833-968-1800 (Chester)
- **Region 5 Crisis Line Children and Adults:** 888-255-2989 (Suffolk)

To find your region or to get more information, visit the [My Life, My Community Resources for Individuals and Families page](#), and select “*Find Your IFSP Region*” in the carousel.

If you need this message provide in Spanish or another language, please contact us at 804-663-7277.

Si necesita este mensaje proporcionado en Español, por favor contactenos en 804-663-7277.

Don't forget that you can complete the Annual Choice form and the Needed Services form online! Visit the [DD Waivers Information page](#) and click on "Accessing the Waiver Waitlist Forms," or scan this QR code to get the form links and instructions.

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More information coming soon!

[View PDF](#)