

# **Texas' Special Kids**

## **Navigating the System** (UPDATED 6-13-07)

### **I. Information at your finger tips:**

#### **A. 2-1-1**

The 2-1-1 System connects people with needed human services through an easy to remember three-digit phone number, the web and a variety of community interactions.

<http://national.unitedway.org/211/>

**B. Yellow Pages for Kids** Find educational consultants, psychologists, educational diagnosticians, health care providers, academic therapists, tutors, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, coaches, advocates, and attorneys for children with disabilities on the Yellow Pages for Kids for your state.

<http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com/>

**C. Texas Parent to Parent** <http://www.txp2p.org/> Texas Parent to Parent is a nonprofit organization that was created by parents for families of children with disabilities, chronic illness and other special needs throughout the state of Texas. The majority of our staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers are parents of children with disabilities or chronic illness and have many years experience providing parent to parent support.

**D. GovBenefits.com** [www.govbenefits.gov](http://www.govbenefits.gov) GovBenefits.gov is the official benefits website of the U.S. government, with information on over 1,000 benefit and assistance programs.

### **I. Texas State Agencies**

**MHMR- Mental Health Mental Retardation** <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/contact/mra.cfm>

#### ***New Names:***

HHSC- Health and Human Services Commission <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/>

DARS- Dept. of Assistance and Rehabilitative Services (2005) <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/>

DADS- Dept. of Aging and Disability Services <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/>

Searching for State Programs: <http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/tirn/refguide.shtml>

### **Programs administered by DARS and DADS:**

**A. ECI- Early Childhood Intervention (DARS)** <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/services/ECI.shtml>

An alternate website for this program is <http://www.eci.state.tx.us>.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a coordinated system of services available in every Texas county for children, birth to age 3, with disabilities or delays. Developmental delays are significant delays in one or more of the following areas: cognitive (learning), motor, communication, or self-help skills. ECI supports families to help their children reach their potential through developmental services.

ECI provides free screening and evaluations. If a child is eligible, families work with their team to create an individualized plan outlining services for the child and family. The team includes the family and at least two professionals. Services may include: screenings and assessments; physical, occupational, speech and language therapy; activities to develop learning and eating skills, activities to help social and emotional development, assistive technology; and needed social and health services, and support groups. Services are provided in the home and community settings with children who do not have delays.

Services- Developmental Assessment \* Speech and Hearing \* Early Intervention for Developmentally Delayed \* Occupational Therapy \* Physical Therapy \* Speech/Language Pathology \* Early Identification Programs

Eligibility- Services available to families of all incomes. Families are charged on a sliding fee scale for some ECI services. All screenings and evaluations are at no cost to families. No child and family will be turned away because of an inability to pay.

## **B. MDCP- Medically Dependent Children Program (DADS)**

<http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/mdcp/index.cfm>

The Medically Dependent Children Waiver Program (MDCP) provides respite care for families with medically involved children and young adults, as a cost-effective alternative to providing for their care in a nursing facility. The program serves a limited number of children and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Individuals determined eligible for MDCP also receive Medicaid coverage.

Participants/families choose their waiver service providers who meet program / provider requirements. Services- Respite Care \* Minor Home Barrier Evaluation/Removal \* Assistive Technology Equipment- **may include** vehicle lifts with tie-downs, an environmental control unit-- a computer or other device that allows its user to operate the phone, television, lights, etc.

**MDCP is not an entitlement program.** Texas is not obligated to operate the MDCP. MDCP can only retain funding if it operates within its budget and remains cost-effective. The responsible use of all resources rests with families and MDCP staff. It is a collaborative process. MDCP can provide a specific range of services in limited amounts. For the most part, parents choose the services for their child. If parents do not comply with the program rules, eligibility can be denied.

## **C. IFHS- In Home and Family Support (DADS)**

[http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/communitycare/in\\_home.html](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/communitycare/in_home.html)

Direct grant benefits to individuals with physical disabilities and/or their families to purchase services (and/or the purchase of equipment or architectural modifications) that enable them to live in the community. Eligible individuals are empowered to choose and purchase services that help them to remain in their own homes.

## **D. DB-MD- Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DADS)**

[http://www.dads.state.tx.us/news\\_info/publications/brochures/dads159\\_dbmd.html](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/news_info/publications/brochures/dads159_dbmd.html)

To be eligible, an individual must:

Be age 18 or older. Meet financial criteria. Have a condition that meets the definition of deaf-blindness with at least one additional disability. For example, a person would meet the definition of deaf-blindness with multiple disabilities if he or she cannot understand speech, even with a hearing aid; has less than 20/200 vision in the better eye, with correction, or a severe visual field defect; and has at least one other disability that impairs independent functioning.

Services

Habilitation — help with learning daily living skills such as meal preparation, shopping, personal care, recreation and housekeeping.

Intervener — a facilitator who involves the person in community activities by assisting with communication and providing information about the environment.

Chore provider — help with home maintenance.

Assisted living facility — 24-hour support in small licensed group homes (four to six people), which includes habilitation, chore services and transportation.

24-hour residential habilitation — 24-hour support in a shared apartment (three or fewer people), which includes habilitation (staff work in shifts), chore services and transportation.

Case management — assistance with obtaining an eligibility determination, development of individual service plan, and service monitoring.

Specialist services — physical, occupational and speech therapy; orientation and mobility; dietary; nursing; and behavior communication assistance.

Respite care — relief for a person's primary caregiver.

Adaptive aids and medical supplies — equipment or supplies that assist in independent functioning or health care.

Minor home modifications — structural alterations to a home to improve safety and accessibility for the individual.

Prescription medications (if not eligible to receive prescriptions through Medicare.)

Consumer directed services — for respite, residential habilitation, and intervener services for persons living in their own or family home.

Transition assistance services — helps people leave a nursing facility and establish services in the DBMD Medicaid Waiver program.

## **E. CLASS- Community Living Assistance and Support Services (DADS)**

<http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/communitycare/class.html>

Provides home and community-based services to people with related conditions as a cost-effective alternative to ICF-MR/RC institutional placement.

Services- Nursing \* Respite Care \* Case Management \* Physical Therapy \* Occupational Therapy \* Speech Therapy \* Adaptive aids \* Home Barrier Evaluation/Removal \* Habilitation Services \*

An individual must have a "related condition" (disability, other than mental retardation that affects the ability to function in daily life). Certification that the individual has a medical condition requiring daily skilled nursing care.

## **F. HCS Program (DADS)– <http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/tirn/refForm.asp>**

Assists individuals with mental retardation in returning to or remaining in their family's home or their own home by providing individual services.

Services- Assistive Technology Equipment \* Case Management \* Speech and Hearing \* Speech/Language Pathology \* Occupational Therapy \* Physical Therapy \* Nutrition Assessment and Prescription Services \* Counseling Modalities \* Home Rehabilitation/Repair Services \* Long-Term Home Health Care \* Respite Care \* Supported Employment \* Independent Living Skills Instruction

## **G. Resources for the Blind**

### **State:**

#### **1. DARS Division for Blind Services <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/index.shtml>**

The DARS Division for Blind Services (DBS) assists blind or visually impaired individuals and their families. Depending upon their goals and needs, DBS offers services to help regain independence or find a job.

DBS staff work in partnership with Texans who are blind or visually impaired to get high quality jobs, live independently, or help a child receive the training needed to be successful in school and beyond. DBS envisions a Texas where people who are blind or visually impaired enjoy the

same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independence and employment, and our mission is to work in partnership with Texans who are blind or visually impaired to reach their goals.

## **2. Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired** <http://www.tsbvi.edu/>

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) serves as a special public school in the continuum of statewide placements for students who have a visual impairment. It is also a statewide resource to parents of these children and professionals who serve them. Students, ages 6 through 21, who are blind, deafblind, or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities, are eligible for consideration for services at TSBVI.

## **H. Texas Health and Human Services** <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/wps/portal>

### **III. Federal Agencies**

#### **A. SSI- Supplemental Security Income (Fed.)**

<http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income/>

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes):

It is designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income; and

It provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.

Understanding Supplemental Security Income (a booklet that will help explain the program).

<http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income/text-understanding-ssi.htm>

#### **If you qualify for \$1 of SSI, then:**

##### **1. Medicaid (Tx.)** [http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/med\\_info.html](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/med_info.html)

Medicaid is an assistance program that pays for necessary Medical and Health Care costs for persons who qualify. The Federal and State Government fund it.

##### **2. HIPP- Health Insurance Premium Payment (Tx. Medicaid)**

[http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/programs/hipp/hipp\\_start.html](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/programs/hipp/hipp_start.html)

The Health Insurance Premium Payment Program (HIPP) is a Medicaid program that pays for the cost of Medical Premiums. The Program reimburses clients or employers for private health insurance payments for Medicaid eligible persons when it is cost effective.

HIPP has advantages that directly affect you.

HIPP will pay for your private health insurance program.

Members of your family who are not eligible for Medicaid may be covered under HIPP.

Health Insurance paid through HIPP may cover services that are not covered under Medicaid

How will the Premiums be paid?

Once your eligibility has been determined, the State Contractor, Texas Medicaid and Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) will pay or continue to pay for private health insurance premiums as long as you or a member of the family is eligible for Medicaid and the private insurance has been determined to be cost effective.

### **IV. Private Organizations**

#### **A. The ARC- Association of Retarded Citizens** <http://www.thearcoftexas.org/>

**The Arc of Texas Master Pooled Trust**

Serves any Texas resident who meets the definition of a person with a disability under the Social Security Act

Provides for the needs of people who have disabilities, while allowing them to remain eligible for government benefits such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income

Frees families from learning Medicaid regulations

Offers an affordable alternative to traditional bank trusts:

no minimum or maximum funding requirements

low enrollment costs

low annual consultation fees for funded accounts; no annual fees for non-funded accounts

Is managed by The Arc of Texas, a nonprofit organization with over 50 years of experience in serving people with disabilities

Simple and prompt disbursement procedures, with excellent customer service satisfaction ratings

Can be funded with the person's own money or with money from a friend or family member

Investments are professionally managed by our Trustee, JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA

**Real Life** is a program working to create the solutions that enable people with disabilities to live in their communities and in their own homes, work in real jobs, and contribute to their cities and neighborhoods while gaining friends through pursuing common interests.

**Real Life** recognizes that many are waiting for home and community services and do not have the help they need to live in their communities. Acknowledging this fact, Real Life takes a realistic, proactive, and optimistic approach, empowering families, friends, and individuals with disabilities to take matters into their own hands and create change today.

### **Family Support Networks**

The Arc of Texas is helping families and/or individuals with disabilities organize into networks of people that are committed to assisting the individual with the disability with their plans for life. Beginning with the person-centered planning process, this group of committed family and friends follows the threads of a person's interests, gifts, dreams, and passions in the direction of community connection, companionship and contribution. Individual members draw upon their collective creativity to think "outside the box" and work together to develop the supports needed for a fully inclusive and productive life.

### **Who will be a part of the network?**

What about the extended families, members of churches, colleagues at work, neighbors and friends? Literally hundreds of people have never been asked to think about what they might do to welcome these individuals with disabilities, who they already know, into their world of work and play.

### **Consultation / Information and Referral**

**B. UCP- United Cerebral Palsy** <http://www.ucp.org/> Texas site: <http://www.ucptexas.org>

Speech, Physical and Occupational Therapy services are available to children from birth through age 21.

**Home and Community Support Services** The team develops an Individual Service Plan for a consumer focused on information contributed by the consumer or the consumer's representative.

A complete plan will reveal the consumer's needs including - but not limited to - housing, employment and medical care.

UCP-HCS provides a wide variety of programs and service options:

Case Management, Residential Support, Supported Home Living, Supervised Living,

Foster/Companion Care, Respite Services, Nursing Services, Audiology Services, Speech

Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Dietary Services, Social Work Services, Psychology Services, Adaptive Aids (up to \$10,000 yr.), Minor Home Modifications (\$7,500.00 Lifetime), Dental Services (up to \$1,000 yr.), Day Habilitation, Work Training Activities, Supported Employment.

Call 2-1-1 for the phone number of UCP in your local area.

**C. Easter Seals** <http://www.easterseals.com>

Easter Seals provides exceptional services to ensure that people living with autism and other disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play.

### **Providing Services for People with Disabilities and Their Families**

Children and adults with disabilities and special needs find highest-quality services designed to meet their individual needs when they come to Easter Seals. Teams of therapists, teachers and other health professionals help each person overcome obstacles to independence and reach his or her personal goals. Easter Seals also includes families as active members of any therapy program, and offers the support families need.

**Medical Rehabilitation:** Promoting Independence and Quality of Life

Whether through a birth condition, injury or illness, or because of functional limitations experienced in aging, Easter Seals medical rehabilitation services — including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-hearing therapy and early intervention — are the first step toward helping people with disabilities gain greater independence.

**Job Training and Employment:** Building Skills to Find — and Keep — a Great Job

Adults with disabilities looking for meaningful employment find training and placement opportunities through Easter Seals job training and employment services. Easter Seals staff help people identify their employment goals and structure job training programs to meet these personal goals.

**Child Care:** Providing a Learning Environment for Children and Peace of Mind for Parents

Meeting a growing need for high-quality child care for more than 20 million young children and their working parents, Easter Seals offers child care for children ages 6 months to 5 years. Young children are welcomed to a unique environment where children of all abilities learn together.

**Camping and Recreation:** Having Fun, Making Friends, Mastering Skills, Expanding Independence

Camp is about all the things children and adults can do — play basketball, canoe, sing, eat s'mores and more. Easter Seals camping programs provide a safe, barrier-free environment for children and adults to experience all aspects of camp without usual limitations.

**Early Intervention**

Early intervention is designed to help infants and toddlers work toward developmental goals at the time in their lives when they are most ready to learn and can most benefit from intervention. Qualified professionals work with children from birth to age 3 who are experiencing or are at risk for developmental delays to optimize development and achieve the highest possible level of functioning.

**Physical Therapy**

Physical therapy services focus on enhancing or restoring mobility that may have been lost due to injury, disease, aging or congenital abnormality. Easter Seals licensed physical therapists use exercise, therapy, assistive devices and special techniques to encourage independence at work, home, school and in the community.

**Occupational Therapy**

Occupational therapy services focus on developing a child or adult's ability to perform activities

of daily life, such as bathing, dressing and feeding, by enhancing or restoring function that may have been lost due to injury, disease, aging or congenital abnormality. Easter Seals licensed occupational therapists promote independence in self-care, work and productive activities and play or leisure skills.

#### [Speech and Hearing Therapy](#)

Speech and hearing therapy services focus on enhancing or restoring communicative skills or swallowing capabilities lost due to injury, disease, aging or congenital abnormality. Easter Seals licensed speech therapists use special techniques and equipment, exercise and evaluation tools.

#### [Assistive Technology](#)

Assistive technology includes equipment and services that allow individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers in the home, on the job, at school or just about anywhere.

#### **D. TSRHC- Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children <http://www.tsrhc.org/>**

The hospital treats Texas residents, birth to 18 years of age, who are referred by a physician because of an orthopedic condition, certain related neurological disorder or learning disorder, such as dyslexia. The hospital's primary objective is the treatment of children with orthopedic conditions. These include conditions such as scoliosis, clubfoot, dislocated hips, Legg-Perthes, congenital and traumatic limb loss, arthritis and spina bifida. The hospital's Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders provides evaluation of children, ages 5 through 14, with suspected learning disabilities. There are NO charges for any services provided at Texas Scottish Hospital for Children nor have there been since its inception. The hospital operates solely on voluntary gifts from generous individuals, Masons, corporations and foundations. The hospital is committed to continuing the extraordinary legacy.

#### **Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders:**

[http://www.tsrhc.org/p\\_child\\_development.cfm](http://www.tsrhc.org/p_child_development.cfm)

A PREMIER FACILITY - The Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders provides help for children, ages five through 14, with learning differences. Through our diagnostic and educational services, we hope the barriers come down and children dare to discover their fullest potentials.

A diagnostic center, dyslexia lab, dyslexia therapist training, outreach, research and developmental pediatric fellowship programs are all integral parts of one of the most comprehensive programs for childhood learning disorders in the nation. Every aspect of the Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia is intended to enlighten and encourage children as they reach for the sky.

#### **Local Agencies**

##### **A. Testing**

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalBrief%2C5%2C>

#### **1. IQ & Performance tests; identify disability by federal regs, receive FIE (Full Individual Evaluation)**

**(2) Is the district where the private school is located responsible for providing an independent educational evaluation (IEE), if requested?**

LEAs where a private school is located have responsibility for child find activities, including evaluation, which may include a request for an IEE.

[from [TEA Question and Answer document \(March 2006\)](#) ]

2. ARD Meeting to review results, propose goals & placement (PPCD or Spec. Education)

3. You may deny services and use FIE/goals

### **B. Dual Enrollment**

(c) Parents of an eligible student ages 3 or 4 shall have the right to "dual enroll" their student in both the public school and the private school beginning on the student's third birthday and continuing until the end of the school year in which the student turns five or until the student is eligible to attend a district's public school kindergarten program, whichever comes first, subject to the following.

(1) The student's ARD committee shall develop an individualized education program (IEP) designed to provide the student with a FAPE in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the student.

(2) From the IEP, the parent and the district shall determine which special education and/or related services will be provided to the student and the location where those services will be provided, based on the requirements concerning placement in the least restrictive environment set forth in 34 CFR, §§300.550-300.553, and the policies and procedures of the district.

(3) For students served under the provisions of this subsection, the school district shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the personnel providing the service, providing the needed instructional materials, and maintaining pupil accounting records. Materials and services provided shall be consistent with those provided for students enrolled only in the public school and shall remain the property of the school district.

[from **State Commissioner's Rules on Private School Placement (Dual Enrollment)**]

### **(8) If parents decline dual enrollment for a 3 or 4 year old, can services be provided under any other arrangement besides dual enrollment?**

Dual enrollment is the option available to parents of private school students if they want special services for their child. [from [TEA Question and Answer document \(March 2006\)](#) ]

1. Ages 3-5 eligible
2. Speech, O.T., P.T., I.H.F.T. at local campus with academics at your home
3. Private schools qualify (Child Find) and Leeper vs. Arlington ISD qualifies home school as a private school.
4. ARD meeting may be contentious
5. Take advocate(s) with you to ARD meeting
6. Contact TSK for consult/advice/tips for ARD meeting, **BUT...**  
***Be ready to act on our advice!***

- A. Navigating the red tape is difficult and frustrating
- B. Paperwork and Case Managers meddlesome
- C. Don't Ask...Don't Tell Policy
- D. Can Be a Life Saver!
- E. Allow TSK to be your Light House in the storm