



# A Guide for Parents Seeking Mental Health Services for Children



## Introduction

As a parent, getting mental health services is the first important step in helping you and your child get the support you may desperately need for emotional and behavioral issues that may be a dominant factor in your lives. This guide will help you get started.

Studies show that children with emotional and behavioral problems respond best to treatment when their parents and caregivers are active participants in their child's treatment. As the child's parent, you know your son or daughter best and mental health providers will rely on your input into the development of your child's treatment plan and will partner with you in carrying out that plan. Since the mental health treatment for your child will change over time, it is important to strengthen and educate the family to be a constant source of support throughout the child's lifetime.

Getting support for yourself as a parent or caregiver is also an important part of your child's treatment. Here are some ideas for taking care of you:

- Accept help from your family and friends
- Talk with other parents who have children with similar behaviors
- Join a parent support group
- Consider getting therapeutic support for yourself
- Participate in an activity that is just for you – social organizations, church groups, reading

*(April 2011) This guide was prepared by the Berks County CASSP Coordinator and the ICSP Family Advisory Committee. It is not intended to be an all inclusive document. Questions regarding the information contained in this guide can be directed to the CASSP Coordinator at 610-478-3271 ext.6584.*

Step 1 – Identify what kind of insurance your child has or needs

The type, provider, and cost of treatment may be determined by the child/family's insurance.



If your child has:

- Private/Commercial Insurance – provided by an employer or purchased by you
  - Call the toll free number on the back of the insurance card
  - Check with your place of employment for instructions.

If your child has:

- Medical Assistance/Medicaid - sometimes referred to as MA or Access.
  - Contact Community Care Behavioral Health at 1-866-292-7886.

If your child has:

- Private Insurance AND Medical Assistance – you must seek services through your private insurance first. Medical Assistance might cover services or costs that the private insurance does not.

If your child has:

- No insurance/Need to apply – Children with disabilities may be eligible for Medical Assistance based on medical need, not family income.
  - Apply on-line through COMPASS  
<https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/Compass.Web/CMHOM.aspx>
  - COMPASS is an online application for Pennsylvanians to apply for many public health and human service programs.

If your child is:

- Not eligible for any insurance
  - Contact Service Access and Management, Inc (SAM) at 610-236-0530. Ask for the Children's Intake Department and schedule an appointment.
  - The Intake Case Manager will complete the intake process and determine eligibility for services

## Step 2 – Getting Help for your Child

The type of treatment your child receives will be determined by his or her needs. Typically the first step is to call your insurance company who will help you locate a mental health professional to complete an initial evaluation and help you locate the right service to meet your child's needs.

All the services listed below may not be covered by your insurance company so be sure to ask your insurance company if they will pay for a service you believe your child needs.



Case Management – A mental health professional that can help you locate and coordinate the necessary mental health services for your child and family. Service Access and Management (SAM) can determine eligibility for case management services and help you find a case management agency. Their phone number is 610-236-0530.

Outpatient – Mental health treatment that can include individual, family and group therapy, psychiatric evaluations and medication management.

Partial Hospitalization Program – Short term mental health services provided on an outpatient basis that typically occurs every weekday for several hours a day. Educational instruction is provided at the Partial Hospital Program.

Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (BHRS) – Mental health services that are provided in home and community settings. One of the roles of BHRS staff may be to help prevent the need for hospitalization or other out-of-home placements. Sometimes called “wraparound” services, there can be three components to BHRS:

1. Behavioral Specialist Consultant (BSC) – Develops a special behavior management plan.
2. Mobile Therapist (MT) - Provides individual and family therapy in your home or in a community setting.
3. Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS) – Provides therapeutic support when therapy alone is not enough to meet the needs of a child.
  - Provides one-to-one interventions with a child along with a child's caregivers.
  - Helps a child and family to meet their treatment goals. Helps caregivers develop the skills they need to manage their child's behavior.

Family Based Mental Health Services (FBMHS) – In-home, team delivered, intensive services that help to strengthen the family to prevent out of home placement of the child.

Individualized Residential Treatment (IRT) – Provides “out-of-the-home” community-based behavioral health treatment, which includes a 24 hours/day structured therapeutic environment for the child in a host home. Host home parents are extensively trained and supervised. Children in IRT attend public school in their home district (when possible) or in the school district where the host home is situated. This level of service is also known as “Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) Host Home”.

Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) – A time limited, “out-of-the-home” mental health treatment service for children with severe emotional and behavior problems. Doctors, therapists, social workers, and childcare workers give 24 hour care and treatment to children in RTF’s. Education services are provided either on the grounds of the RTF or in the district where the RTF is situated.

Inpatient – Inpatient service is a hospital stay where your child is treated for a mental illness or serious behavior problem. The hospital stay will last as long as needed to make sure that your child will be safe when he or she leaves.

**Crisis services are available 24/7 by calling Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM) at 610-236-0530.**

**There is no cost for crisis services and they are available to anyone in Berks County.**

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## Helpful Websites



Network of Care for Behavioral Health-Provider Directory for Berks County  
<http://berks.pa.networkofcare.org/mh/home/index.cfm>

Community Care Behavioral Health Organization – Provider Directory for Members  
<http://www.ccbh.com/pdfs/HCMembers/providerDirectory/Berks.pdf>

Service Access and Management, Inc.  
<http://www.sam-inc.org/>

Berks County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program  
<http://www2.co.berks.pa.us/berks/cwp/view.asp?a=1159&q=443117>

Compass – Apply on line for Medical Assistance/Medicaid  
<https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/Compass.Web/CMHOM.aspx>

Consent to Treatment and Confidentiality Provisions Affecting Minors in Pennsylvania  
[http://www.jlc.org/publications/consent\\_and\\_confidentiality/](http://www.jlc.org/publications/consent_and_confidentiality/)

Navigating the Mental Health and Education Systems: A Caregiver's Guide  
<http://www.namiswpa.org/documents/pdfs/CAREGIVERS%20GUIDE.pdf>

National Institute of Mental Health - Treatment of Children with Mental Illness  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/treatment-of-children-with-mental-illness-fact-sheet/index.shtml>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
[www.ffcmh.org](http://www.ffcmh.org)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities – You are not alone  
<http://nichcy.org/families-community/notalone>

Kids Mental Health Info.com  
<http://www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com/p-besthelp-getstarted.php>

Mental Health America  
<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>