

## How Do I Choose a Provider of Treatment Services?

In Allegheny County, there are many different providers of the treatment services listed above. If your child's doctor recommends that your child may benefit from these services, you will be able to select the provider(s) who best meets your needs. The best way to find out who the providers are, and how to contact them, is to get a copy of the *Where to Call* directory by calling Information, Referral and Emergency Services at 412-350-4457/TTY, 412-350-3467. The *Where to Call* directory is also available on the DHS website at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/mhservices.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/mhservices.aspx).

To select a provider, call and ask questions. Find out what services are offered and what will be expected of you and your child. Ask for written information. Talk to other parents who are involved with the agency. It is your right to get the best treatment possible for your child. You will want to make an informed choice when selecting where your child receives treatment and who will provide the services.

## What Supportive Services are Available?

There are a number of mental health support services that are available, in addition to treatment services, to help you and your child.

### Service Coordination

Some children with serious emotional disturbances will require a variety of treatment services. Coordination of these services can quickly become complicated, confusing, and time-consuming for the family. Service Coordinators know the mental health system. They can ease the burden and help to coordinate services for you and your child. Children qualify for service coordination support based on their diagnosis and how well they are able to interact at home, in school, and in the community. Any child in Allegheny County with a diagnosed serious emotional disturbance is eligible for service coordination, regardless of their family income or insurance coverage. In fact, many health insurance providers require service coordination. **You will have a choice of who will provide service coordination services.**

There are two levels of service. They are:

- Administrative Service Coordination - This is usually a starting point for most families. If your child receives treatment from any Service Coordination Unit in Allegheny County, an administrative service coordinator will help to assure that an assessment is done, a treatment and service plan is written, referrals are made, and that your child receives the treatment and support services that are needed.
- Blended Service Coordination - If your child is experiencing more significant serious emotional disturbances that interfere with his or her ability to function at home and he or she needs to receive treatment from two or more mental health providers or publicly funded systems (such as Education, Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice), a blended service coordinator would assist you and your child in coordinating these services. A blended service coordinator will also serve as a link and an advocate between multiple systems to ensure that your child gets the services that he or she needs.

**Enhanced Service Coordination** – There are also three separately funded, unique service coordination programs in Allegheny County. They are:

**The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers** – This program coordinates services for children (up to three years of age) who have a diagnosis or condition that has a high probability of leading to a

developmental delay. “At risk” children include

- Children whose birth weight is less than three pounds, five ounces.
- Children who were cared for in the hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.
- Children born to chemically dependent mothers.
- Children involved with Children, Youth, and Families (CYF).
- Children with confirmed lead poisoning.

NOTE: Any child in Allegheny County who is under age three can have a developmental screening and evaluation, even if he or she does not fall into one of the above categories.

Services may include developmental screening and assessment; coordination of specialized early intervention services; and parent education and support. All services are provided in the home or in a community setting. Services are voluntary and free of charge. For more information, call 412-885-6000.

**The Life Project** – This program is for children between the ages of two and 21 years who have serious emotional or behavioral problems and are considered to be at high risk for placement outside of the family home. The Life Project plans, implements and coordinates:

- Enhanced service coordination with a focus on multiple system involvement
- Intensive mental health treatment
- Advocacy for the needs of the child and family
- Linking families with community and other natural supports
- Streamlined funding, offering opportunities for unique and creative treatment and support services

All services are voluntary and free of charge. For more information, call 412-884-4500.

**Shuman Center Project** – This program is for children/adolescents with serious emotional disturbances who are being detained at Shuman Detention Center. The Shuman Center Project provides:

- A service coordinator who will coordinate mental health services to ensure that services will be in place for the child/adolescent upon release from the detention center
- Linkages to the probation officer
- Advocacy for the child/adolescent
- This service is voluntary and is provided free of charge. For more information, call 412-665-4144.

**Mobile Crisis Services** – The goal of this support service is to work with the child with serious emotional disturbances during a crisis (in the home, at school, or in the community) in order to prevent injury or hospitalization. When called, a crisis intervention team will come to the child to assess, coordinate, treat and refer, if necessary. This service is voluntary and provided free of charge. Allegheny County residents should call re:solve Crisis Network 1-888-7-YOU CAN (1-888-796-8226) for more information.

**Student Assistance Program (SAP)** – This is a prevention program provided in every middle and senior high school in Allegheny County. Through this program, school personnel are trained to identify potential emotional or behavioral issues that may be causing a child to experience barriers to learning. In collaboration with the family and school personnel, a SAP Liaison will provide treatment suggestions and offer assistance in obtaining mental health services, if needed. The goal of the program is to improve the child’s success at school. If you want more information, contact your child’s school or the

Allegheny County SAP Coordinator who can be reached at 412-350-3374.

**Liaison Services** – There are a number of professionals in Allegheny County who are specifically trained to recognize that serious emotional disturbances can impact a child in a variety of settings and situations. The following professional liaisons help to identify “at risk” children and work in partnership with the family and outside agencies to link the child to mental health services he or she may need. To contact any one of the following liaisons, call 412-350-5746 or 412-350-4978.

- Education Liaison - This professional helps families and educators resolve educational concerns. This professional also serves as an advocate for families by providing information to assure that appropriate educational plans are developed to meet your child’s needs. This service is free of charge. Additional information about educational issues and services can be found on page 19.
- Children, Youth and Families (CYF)/Interagency Liaison - This professional works with CYF to identify children who may be “at risk” for serious emotional disturbances, and acts as a link between the two systems. This professional also attends and follows up on Allegheny County Interagency Reviews. (See page 23 for more information.)
- Allegheny Intermediate Unit Liaison - This professional works with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to identify children who may have serious emotional disturbances. This liaison acts as a link between the mental health and mental retardation systems.

**Family Support Programs in Allegheny County** – Family Support Programs are based on the philosophy that the most effective way to ensure the healthy development and growth of small children (up to 5 years of age) is by supporting families in the community where they live. These programs are designed to:

- Increase the strengths and stability of families
- Increase parents’ confidence and competence in their parenting abilities
- Afford children a stable and supportive family environment
- Chart the progress of the child and family

Services offered by the Family Support Programs include:

- Child development
- Parenting education
- Infant and toddler groups
- Parent support groups
- Service coordination
- Resource center
- Parent leadership and advocacy

**Natural Supports** – A solid system of natural supports for your child can make a positive difference in his/her life. Natural supports are the relationships that occur in everyday life. These may include family members, friends, and mentors. There are various ways to build up a network of natural supports. Some of these are:

- Participating in community activities and projects
- Joining groups and clubs
- Socializing with immediate and extended family and neighbors