

# You Finally Received the Waiver, Now What?!

## Information for New Enrollees

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AUTISM WAIVER ADVISORY COMMITTEE | JULY 2018



**HUSSMAN INSTITUTE**  
FOR AUTISM



# Presenters

- Beth Benevides (parent), Hussman Institute for Autism
- Trish Kane (parent), Pathfinders for Autism
- Boyd Pusey, MSDE
- Sheri Weissman, The Coordinating Center
- Daniel Hammond, Montgomery County Public Schools

# Agenda

- The Basics of the Autism Waiver: Eligibility & Current Status
- Services Provided
- Coordinator Role
- Choosing a Provider
- Recruiting, Interviewing, and Onboarding Instructors
- Panel: Tips for Running a Successful Home Program
- Q&A

# The Basics



## Home and Community-Based Services (Medicaid) Waiver for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder COMAR 10.09.56

Eligibility – must be maintained and reevaluated every 12mo

- Is between 1 year old and the end of the school year in which the individual turns 21
- Is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder
- Has an IFSP or IEP
- Receives 15 hours or more per week of special education and related services and requires a more intensive therapeutic program than other students
- Needs the level of services provided in an intermediate care facility for the intellectually disabled and persons with related conditions
- Can be safely maintained in the community with the assistance of Autism Waiver services

## Current Status



### Enrollment & Wait List as of July 2018

- 100 additional slots legislated in January 2018 to total 1,200 slots as of July 1, 2018
- 92 graduated or aged out in June 2018
- March 2010 registrants now being served (8 year wait)
- 5,330 on registry as of July 2, 2018

# EXPECTATIONS



# REALITY

Services Provided (and not provided)

## Services Provided



Most children are eligible for the following services:

**Intensive Individual Support Services (IISS)** –  
1:1 support in the home and community

**Respite Care** (includes approved camps)  
1:1 support provided in home and community based settings

**Family Consultation**  
Treatment Plan based on *family* needs, to be implemented at home

**Adult Life Planning Services**  
Available for children 16 and older  
Planner assists with the transition to the adult system

## Services Provided



Most children are eligible for the following services:

### **Environmental Accessibility Adaptations**

\$2,000 over 36 month period to improve safety in the home

### **Therapeutic Integration Services**

1:2 or 1:3 supervision in an afterschool or weekend program

### **Intensive Therapeutic Integration Services**

1:1 supervision in an afterschool or weekend program

### **Residential Habilitation Services**

group home or alternative living unit placement

**At least one Waiver Service must be utilized at least once per month**



## Not Provided



Most children will not receive:

**Onboarding in a flash**

*(staffing issues, parent choice, constant turnover)*

**An abundance of professionals to choose from**

*(providers work very hard to attract and keep qualified therapists)*

**Professionals with ABA experience or high levels of autism experience**

*(highly qualified professionals have a wide array of choices including private pay, private insurance, other community based programs, etc.)*

**Backup staff to fill in when staff cancel**

*(many parents do not want a substitute who is unfamiliar with their child and their treatment program)*

## Not Provided

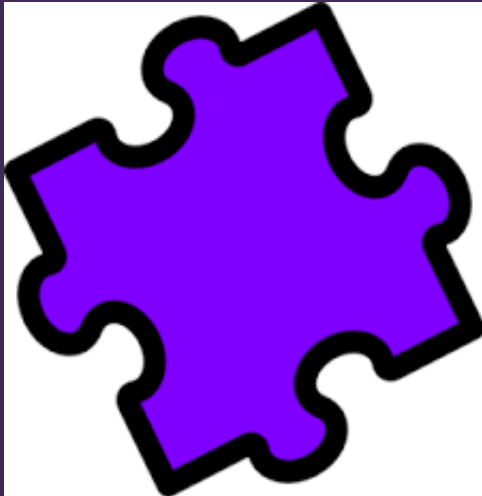
Most children will not receive:

Funding for items and services outside of the waiver  
(e.g. *therapeutic riding, summer camps, iPads*)

Replacement or funding for morning and afterschool care



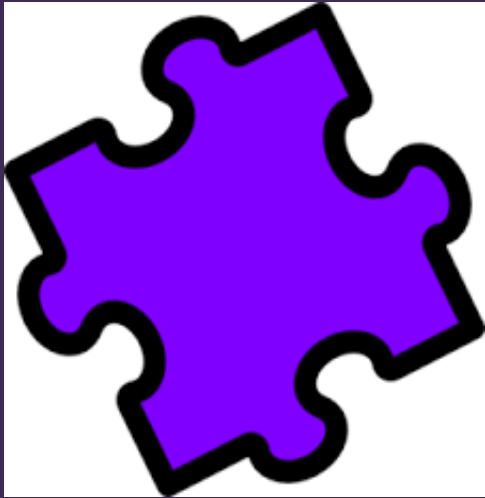
# Service Coordination



The service coordinator provides case management services for Autism Waiver participants. COMAR requires the following of service coordinators:

- Completion of Risk Assessment with parent/guardian within 45 days of enrollment in the Waiver
- At least 4 quarterly visits, one of which must be in the participant's home. *Other visits may take place outside of the home, including school, Therapeutic Integration (TI) program, or other afterschool program.*
- Monthly contact with the parent/guardian
- Conduct annual reassessment meetings
- Prepare updates to the participant's Plan of Care – adding and/or deleting services, increasing/decreasing service hours, adding/deleting providers

## Service Providers

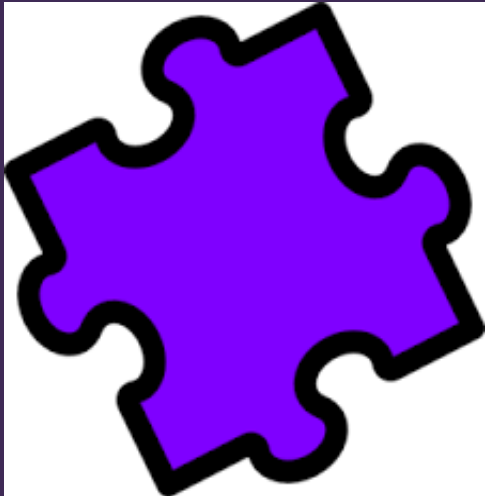


Providers are companies hired to implement the services. There are 45 providers serving Autism Waiver families.

Providers are required to have a professional on-call at all times, *and* providers **must assure** supervision of direct care workers by one of the following:

- Licensed psychologist
- Certified school psychologist
- Certified special educator
- Licensed certified social worker
- Licensed professional counselor
- Board-certified behavior analyst
- Individual with a masters or doctorate degree in special education or a related field and at least 5 years of experience in providing training or consultation in the area of ASD or DD

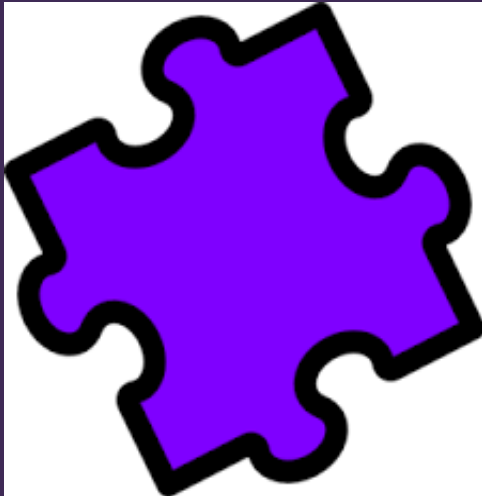
# Program Supervision



COMAR requires the following of program supervisors:

- Train and provide ongoing supervision to IISS workers
- Supervise the IISS workers when crisis intervention services are necessary—evaluate the nature of the crisis and intervene as necessary
- Plan and regularly review the participant's therapeutic activities and behavior plan
- Meet regularly with participant and family
- Observe participant in the home or community setting
- Develop individualized interventions and identify them on the Plan of Care
- Identify the tasks that the direct care worker is to implement on the Plan of Care

# Family Consultation



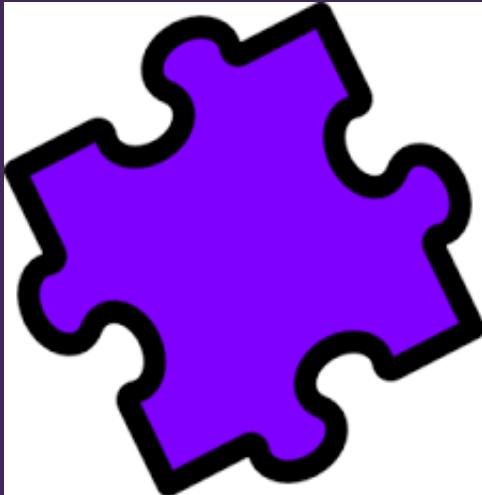
Family consultation is a separate service from supervision, though the family consultant may also function as the supervisor in some cases.

Family consultation can only be billed to the Waiver if the consultant is directly meeting with the parent/guardian.

Families should expect a strong consultant to:

- ✓ return calls/emails within 24 hours
- ✓ address parents' concerns
- ✓ regularly update parents on the plan's progress

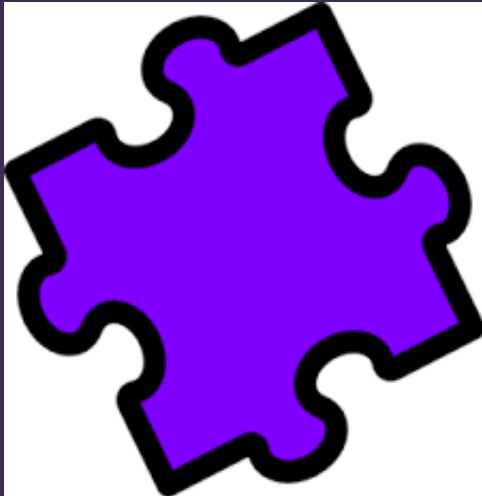
# Family Consultation



The family consultant's role is to provide parents with training related to the participants' needs in the following areas:

- daily life skills
- behavior management
- self-direction
- socialization
- mobility
- money management
- habilitation (e.g., communication, sensory integration)

# Direct Care Workers



Direct Care Workers (a.k.a. IISS workers, instructors, therapists, caregivers, support staff) provide direct support to the participant.

Qualifications for this entry-level position:

- High School Diploma or GED
- Adequate and appropriate training within 60 days of employment pertaining to care for children with ASD
- Supervised by qualified professional employee
- Approved by parents
- Experience as volunteer or employee with children with ASD or DD as a service provider or family member for a minimum of 100 hours



A chalkboard with a dark grey surface. At the top, there is a drawing of a house with a red roof and a chimney, set against a green background. The word "Homework" is written in white chalk in a cursive-like font.

# Homework

Choosing a Provider: Questions to Ask

# Begin with Basics

How long have you been providing Autism Waiver services?

How many families do you serve in Maryland? in \_\_\_\_\_ City or County?

How many family consultants do you employ?

What are their qualifications?

How many direct care workers (IISS and respite) do you employ?

What are their qualifications?

How do you recruit new direct care workers?

What training do you provide?

How often do you expect/require the family consultant and/or supervisor to meet with families and observe direct care workers?

# Ask about the Business Model

What reporting (data) is required of the direct care workers on a daily basis?

How much of your day-to-day business reporting is done electronically?

How are time cards handled?

What is required of the parent in overseeing the program?

How much do you pay a direct care worker—is there a minimum and maximum?

Is there a difference in pay rate for IISS and respite hours?

What is your school closing and snow day policy?

What is transportation policy?

# Ask the Big Questions

How do you assign direct care workers to a participant?

Do you hire direct care workers recommended by the family?

How long does it take to get them hired? What is required?

Do you provide ongoing training?

Who is responsible for training direct care workers on a participant's specific needs? (e.g. communication system, behavior plan)

Who is responsible for creating materials for the program, if necessary? (e.g. visual schedule, task list, PECs, etc)

What is an ideal family for you to work with?

# “Ideal family” input from providers ...

*What are some of the qualities/characteristics that make a family easy to work with?*

- ✓ open communication; responsive
- ✓ informed about autism
- ✓ informed about the autism waiver
- ✓ realistic expectations
- ✓ trusting
- ✓ provides a safe and clean environment
- ✓ meets with the provider/family consultant
- ✓ allows and supports home visits

# “unreasonable expectations” input from providers . . .

*What are some unreasonable expectations from parents?*

- approves only one staff person to work with the child
- expects backup/substitute staff for last-minute cancellations
- does not inform provider of schedule changes
- includes siblings in the program
- assigns household chores that are not related to the treatment plan
- accepts non-approved staff as part of the program
- involves service coordinator *before* talking about concerns with provider



Recruiting, Interviewing, Onboarding Instructors

# Recruiting

Talk to friends, fellow school parents, autism society members

Talk to paraeducators in your child's school or previous schools

Talk to former Best Buddies members

Talk to your previous caregivers

Advertise

- community colleges, local colleges
- Care.com



# Interviewing

Prepare a list of questions in advance

Be clear about your expectations and goals

Be honest about your child's best day *and* worst day

Listen carefully to the candidate's perspective on autism and disability

Ask questions about the candidate's relevant experience

Ask them to describe the children they previously supported

# Onboarding

- Do not rush pairing! It takes time for most of our kids to feel comfortable with a new person in the house.
- Keep things very casual and without demands at first
- Consider inviting the direct care worker to shadow you or another staff member several times before providing 1:1 support
- Accompany your child and the worker into the community—show them routines, familiar places, activities your child enjoys

# Helpful Tips!



Parent & Coordinator Panel: Tips for Running a Successful Home Program



Q & A ... anything we forgot?

# Contacts

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