

## What services can a person receive from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities?

The services children and adults can receive are called supports and services that make it easier for persons to live, work and play in places they choose. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities can arrange for a support coordinator to assist individuals in identifying the supports and services they need. Together a plan of supports and services will be developed to assist persons with developmental disabilities.

## When & where can a person apply for services?

Persons who have or might have a developmental disability may apply for services at any time by calling the Agency for Persons with Disabilities in their area. Concerned relatives, friends or others may apply on behalf of a person believed to have a developmental disability.

## How can you learn more about the Agency for Persons with Disabilities?

- Write to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities office at 4030 Esplanade Way, Suite 380, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0950.
- Write or call the local Agency for Persons with Disabilities Office.
- Attend meetings of the Family Care Council where persons with developmental disabilities and their family members discuss issues important to them.
- Visit the APD website at <http://apd.myflorida.com>

For additional information about the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, complete and mail this form to:

- I would like to know more about the agency.
- I would like someone I know to be contacted about getting services.
- I want to apply for services.
- I would like to volunteer to work with persons who have developmental disabilities.
- I would like information about becoming a service provider.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

TTY: \_\_\_\_\_

(Text telephone for persons who are deaf)



# AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

*Questions & Answers*

The primary mission of the Agency is to support persons with developmental disabilities in living, learning, and working, in all aspects of community life.



agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida

## What is a Developmental Disability?

“Developmental Disability” is a broad term that refers to a variety of conditions that interfere with a person’s ability to function in everyday activities. Chapter 393, Florida Statutes, defines developmental disabilities as spina bifida, autism, cerebral palsy, Prader-Willi syndrome and mental retardation. Some of the causes of developmental disabilities are not known. Most developmental disabilities are present at birth, but others may not be recognized and identified for several months.

Disabilities challenge people because it can change the way persons grow, learn and function.

## What is the Agency for Persons with Disabilities?

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities assists persons who have developmental disabilities and their families. It also provides assistance to identify the needs of persons with developmental disabilities and funding to purchase supports and services.

Although the Central Office is in Tallahassee, the supports and services for persons with developmental disabilities are provided through Area offices throughout the state.

## The developmental disabilities identified in Florida law are the following:

❖ **SPINA BIFIDA** means divided backbone or spine. When a person has spina bifida, the spine and the cord inside the spine do not grow the way most spines grow. Normally, the spinal cord carries messages from the

brain to other parts of the body, but when a person has spina bifida, the spinal cord does not carry all of the messages to the rest of the body.

❖ **AUTISM** is a condition characterized by impairment in social interactions and communication abilities and unusual or restricted ranges of play and interest. Autism results in social isolation and varying degrees of unusual behaviors.

❖ **CEREBRAL PALSY (CP)** “Cerebral” means the brain. “Palsy” means moving of the muscles in a way that the person can’t control. It refers to a group of motor disabilities that arise because of injury to the developing brain before or during birth or during the first year of life. These motor disabilities do not get worse over time. Cerebral palsy keeps the brain from telling the rest of the body some of the things it is supposed to do. It might be hard for a person with cerebral palsy to talk, walk, see, hear, sit, or swallow. A person with cerebral palsy might have a combination of these things. Despite significant motor impairment, many persons with CP have normal intelligence.

❖ **MENTAL RETARDATION** refers to significant limitations in functioning related to subaverage intelligence. Mental retardation is caused by an injury, disease or abnormality of the brain that happens before the person is 18 years old. Persons who have mental retardation learn more slowly than other persons and might need assistance in other areas like communication, self-care, self-direction, health and safety, leisure, work and functional academics.

❖ **PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME** is an inherited condition. A severe lack of muscle tone and failure to thrive are present in early infancy

Later on, excessive drive to eat usually leads to significant weight problems. Obsessive-compulsive behaviors and difficulty with social interactions are often present. Persons with Prader-Willi syndrome are usually short with small hands and feet. They typically are mildly mentally retarded.

## ❖ HIGH RISK OF DEVELOPING A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

It is not always easy to tell if a baby has a developmental disability. However, a child who does not crawl, walk, or talk at the same age as most other children may be considered a child with a developmental disability. In Florida, children from birth to five years of age who are at high-risk of developing a developmental disability may receive services from the following agencies: The Department of Health, Division of Children’s Medical Services serves children from birth to three years of age. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities serves children in the high-risk category who are three through five.

## Who can receive services from our program?

To receive services, the person must live in Florida and must be diagnosed with a developmental disability before the age of 18.

## How much does it cost to find out if someone is eligible for services?

There is no charge to learn about services. If necessary, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities will provide a free assessment to determine if someone is eligible for services.