

Mental Health and Behavioral Health Services for My Child

Waiting for Services

In most parts of Wisconsin there are not enough mental health providers to serve every child who could benefit from their services. This means that families may experience some wait time before their child can be evaluated or will be seen by a mental health or behavior health provider.

What Can Families Do While Waiting for Services?

While waiting for formal services can be frustrating, parents/family members can be actively involved in finding programs and informal services. **You can also advocate for your child and do what you can to get your child off the wait list.** Below are some ideas for families as they wait:

- If you are waiting for an appointment, ask if you can be put on a cancellation list. You should also call back regularly to see where your child is on the wait list. If you are waiting for private therapy, ask about other options like group therapy or support groups.
- Talk to your child's school social worker or school psychologist about incorporating some supports into the school day. School may be able to access a behavioral consultant who can work with your child and their teacher during the school day.
- Look for supports in your community that can help you and your child while you wait for more formal therapy services. The **Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs** or **Wisconsin Family Ties** (see contact information on page 2) can help you find local groups and supports.
- Connect with your **County Human Services Department** to learn about county-based supports, including "wraparound" services. Contact **WI First Step** at **1-800-642-STEP (7837)** or go to their website and click on your county - **www.mch-hotlines.org/wisconsin-first-step**
- Connect with other families either in person or online. Other families can share their experiences and help you learn about resources, providers and programs. **Parent to Parent of WI (P2P)** is a statewide program that connects parents one to one with another parent who has a child with similar special needs and "who has been there".

Crisis Mental Health - If your child is in crisis there are programs to help your child and family that do not have wait lists. Your child's primary care doctor and clinic can help you find crisis mental health programs. You can also call **Wisconsin First Step** at **1-800-642-STEP (7837)** for a listing of services in your area.

This fact sheet was developed by Family Voices of Wisconsin - www.familyvoicesofwisconsin.com
in partnership with the WI Office of Children's Mental Health - children.wi.gov

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- Connect with **Mental Health Organizations**. They can provide assistance and connect you with resources, local groups and events. Examples include:
 - **NAMI Wisconsin** - www.namiwisconsin.org or **1.800.236.2988**
 - **Mental Health America of WI** - www.mhawisconsin.org or **1.866.948.6483**
- Connect with **Family Support Organizations**. These groups are staffed by parents/family members who have children with special needs. They can help connect you to resources and provide training sessions and conferences so you can stay informed and educated about programs and services for children with special needs.
 - **Wisconsin Family Ties** at **1.800.422.7145** has information and referral specialists as well as parent peer specialists who can meet with a family and provide one-on-one support.
 - **Parent to Parent of WI (P2P)** at **1.888.266.0028** connects parents 1-on-1 who have children with similar conditions or live in the same area. Parent matches can be short term (a few phone calls) or long-term relationships.
 - **WI FACETS** at **1.877.374.0511** provides individual assistance, telephone training workshops and resources for families related to your child's education.
 - **Family Voices of Wisconsin** at **608.220.9598** hosts face-to-face and online training sessions to help families learn about insurance coverage, health care and community supports and services. Family Voices also develops fact sheet for family to help navigate caring for a child with special needs.

If you have questions or need help finding services contact the following agencies:

- **Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs**, a network of 5 centers dedicated to supporting families who have children with special needs - dhs.wisconsin.gov/cyshcn/regionalcenters.htm
- **Wisconsin First Step**, a statewide information and referral hotline that can assist families with finding mental health providers and other supports at **1-800-642-STEP (7837)** or www.mch-hotlines.org/wisconsin-first-step
- **The Behavioral Health Treatment Locator: 1-800-662-HELP** or findtreatment.samhsa.gov provides a listing of mental health and behavioral health providers and services in your area.