Florida APD Waiver Family Resource Guide

An overview of eligibility, documentation, service options, and choosing support in Florida

Created by Connext Care

This guide is designed to help families understand the APD application process and the range of services available through the iBudget Waiver.

Connext Care currently provides only selected waiver services, but this guide includes the full APD service family overview so families can understand the complete system.

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Introduction

Navigating disability services can feel overwhelming. This guide brings together the key information families often need first: who may qualify, what documents may be needed, what services exist under the APD iBudget Waiver, and how to move forward if you want to choose or switch to Connext Care.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) uses pre-screening items when determining eligibility. In general, applicants must be 3 years of age or older, live in Florida, and have a developmental disability that presented before age 18.

Basic eligibility area	What APD looks for
Age	Applicant is 3 years of age or older
Residency	Applicant lives in Florida
Developmental history	Developmental disability presented prior to age 18

What to gather first

APD may request identity verification, domicile verification, and diagnosis documentation.

The most helpful records are often diagnostic evaluations completed during the developmental period and prior to age 18.

Questions about the APD application process can be directed to 1-866-APD-CARES (1-866-273-2273).

Identity, Residency, and Documentation

In many cases APD can verify Florida residency from information on the application form. If needed, additional documents may be requested to verify identity and domicile. Applicants born outside the United States may also need immigration documentation showing qualifying status and proof of domicile in Florida.

Examples of documents that may be needed include:

- Birth certificate
- Social Security card
- Valid Florida driver's license
- U.S. passport
- Federal, state, or local government-issued photo ID
- School photo ID for children under age 16
- Military dependent's ID card
- Certificate of Indian Blood or Native American tribal document

Diagnosis categories APD recognizes for this process include:

- Autism
- Intellectual disability
- Cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Prader-Willi syndrome
- Phelan-McDermid syndrome
- Spina bifida cystica or myelomeningocele
- Children ages 3 to 5 who are at high risk for a developmental disability

Diagnosis Documentation at a Glance

APD may ask for different supporting records depending on the diagnosis being used to establish eligibility. The summaries below are simplified to help families understand the types of records commonly reviewed.

Diagnosis	Common supporting documentation	Typical professional source
Autism	Diagnostic testing plus collateral documentation such as school records, IEPs, psychological or educational evaluations, therapy progress notes, or other supporting records. Common testing examples include ADOS-2, GARS-3, CARS-2, ASRS, and ADI-R.	Florida-licensed psychiatrist or psychologist, board-certified developmental pediatrician, or board-certified pediatric neurologist qualified to diagnose autism.
Cerebral palsy	Physician documentation, medical treatment records, visit summaries, or medical history records indicating diagnosis before age 18.	Medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy.
Down syndrome	Chromosome analysis / karyotype or physician documentation and medical history supporting diagnosis.	Medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy.
Intellectual disability	Diagnostic testing, adaptive testing, and collateral documents such as school or medical records. Examples include Stanford-Binet, WISC, WAIS, Vineland, and ABAS.	Appropriately licensed professionals; adaptive functioning typically validated by a psychologist experienced with the testing instrument and population.
Phelan-McDermid syndrome	Genetic testing or physician documentation clearly stating diagnosis.	Medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy.
Prader-Willi syndrome	Physician documentation, treatment records, visit summaries, or medical history supporting diagnosis.	Medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy.
Spina bifida	Physician documentation or medical records showing diagnosis of spina bifida cystica or myelomeningocele before age 18.	Medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy.
High-risk ages 3-5	Records showing developmental delay, qualifying illness or trauma, parent or guardian developmental disability affecting needs, or qualifying physical/genetic anomaly.	Physician or doctor of osteopathy records may be used; APD may also help with evaluations if needed.

After gathering the needed records, families can complete and submit the application online or through a local APD office. Once APD receives the application, the applicant receives an acknowledgement of receipt, APD reviews the materials, may request more information, and then communicates next steps.

APD iBudget Waiver Service Families

APD's iBudget Waiver offers an array of social, medical, residential, and therapeutic services that can be authorized to meet individualized needs and goals. Services are organized into eight service families.

Group	Service family	General focus
1	Life Skills Development	Community participation, daily living development, employment and prevocational support
2	Supplies and Equipment	Medical supplies, adaptive equipment, emergency response, and home modifications
3	Personal Supports	Hands-on assistance with daily living and caregiver relief
4	Residential Services	Residential habilitation, specialized home care, and support for living independently
5	Support Coordination	Case management and coordination of supports
6	Therapeutic Supports and Wellness	Nursing, therapies, counseling, and behavior services
7	Transportation	Access to approved waiver services
8	Dental Services	Adult dental treatments not otherwise covered

Group 1 - Life Skills Development

- **Life Skills Development Level 1 (Companion)** - Nonmedical care and socialization activities provided to an adult on a one-to-one basis or in groups of up to three recipients.

- **Life Skills Development Level 2 (Supported Employment)** - Helps individuals find and keep a job in the community.

- **Life Skills Development Level 3 (Adult Day Training)** - Provides training and assistance with acquisition, retention, or improvement in self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills in the community. Adult Day services may include recreational and other activities to enhance social development and activities of daily living and community living.

- **Life Skills Development Level 4 (Prevocational)** - Provides learning and work experiences where individuals can develop general, non-job-task-specific strengths and skills that contribute to paid employment and lead toward competitive integrated employment.

Group 2 - Supplies and Equipment

- **Consumable Medical Supplies** - Nondurable supplies and items that enable individuals to perform activities of daily living and are not otherwise available through Medicaid State Plan. Examples include incontinence supplies, wipes, and pads.

- **Durable Medical Equipment and Supplies** - Physician-prescribed equipment not covered by Medicaid State Plan. Examples include lap trays, grab bars, lifts, and individualized positioning equipment.

- **Environmental Accessibility Adaptations** - Physical adaptations to the home required by the support plan and medically necessary to avoid institutional placement and increase independence in the home.

- **Personal Emergency Response Systems** - Equipment and monitoring service that enables an individual to secure help in the event of an emergency, including portable help buttons used at home or in the community.

Group 3 - Personal Supports

- **Personal Supports** - Assistance and training in activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, and meal preparation for adults.

- **Respite Care** - Supportive care and supervision for individuals under age 21 living in the family home when the primary caregiver is unavailable due to a brief planned or emergency absence, or is temporarily physically unable to provide care.

Group 4 - Residential Services

- **Residential Habilitation** - Supervision and training in licensed residential facilities that help clients acquire, maintain, and improve skills related to daily living, homemaking, social, and adaptive functioning. Types include Standard Residential Habilitation, Behavior-Focused Residential Habilitation, Intensive-Behavior Residential Habilitation, and Enhanced Intensive Behavior Residential Habilitation.

- **Specialized Medical Home Care** - Up to 24-hour-a-day nursing services and medical supervision to residents of licensed group homes serving individuals with complex medical conditions.

- **Supported Living Coaching** - Training and assistance in a wide variety of activities to support individuals who live in and maintain homes or apartments of their own.

Group 5 - Support Coordination

- **Support Coordination** - Case management through a waiver support coordinator to identify, develop, coordinate, and access supports and services on the person's behalf, regardless of funding source, in the most cost-effective manner possible. Types include Limited Support Coordination, Full Support Coordination, and Enhanced Support Coordination.

Group 6 - Therapeutic Supports and Wellness

- **Private Duty Nursing** - Individual, continuous care by registered or licensed practical nurses as prescribed by a physician.

- **Residential Nursing** - Continuous care prescribed by a physician and provided by registered or licensed practical nurses to individuals in residential facilities, group homes, or foster homes.

- **Skilled Nursing** - Part-time or intermittent care prescribed by a physician and provided by registered or licensed practical nurses.

- **Dietician Services** - Physician-prescribed services necessary to maintain or improve overall physical health, including assessment of nutritional status, diet recommendations, counseling, and education.

- **Respiratory Therapy** - Physician-prescribed service related to impairment of respiratory function and other deficiencies of the cardiopulmonary system.

- **Speech Therapy** - Physician-prescribed service to produce specific functional outcomes in communication skills for an individual with a speech, hearing, or language disability.

- **Occupational Therapy** - Physician-prescribed service aimed at producing specific functional outcomes in self-help, adaptive, and sensory motor skill areas and helping the individual control and maneuver within the environment.

- **Physical Therapy** - Service that produces specific functional outcomes in ambulation, muscle control, and postural development and helps prevent or reduce further physical disability.

- **Specialized Mental Health Counseling** - Service provided to treat or control an individual's mental illness and restore the person to the best possible functional level.

- **Behavior Analysis Services** - Analysis, development, modification, and monitoring of behavior for the purpose of changing an individual's behavior.

- **Behavior Assistant Services** - Limited-time services under supervision by a behavior analyst to train paid or unpaid support persons in how to assist the individual in functioning more independently.

Group 7 - Transportation

- **Transportation** - Rides between the individual's home and community-based waiver service providers, enabling the individual to receive approved supports and services when such services cannot be accessed through natural unpaid supports.

Group 8 - Dental Services

- **Adult Dental Services** - Dental treatments and procedures not otherwise covered by Medicaid State Plan services.

Services Currently Provided by Connext Care

Connext Care does not provide every waiver service listed in this guide. The guide includes the full APD service menu so families can understand the entire system, while the services below reflect the supports Connext Care currently offers.

- Supported Living Coaching

- Personal Supports

- Respite Care

- Life Skills Development Level 1 (Companion)

- Life Skills Development Level 2 (Supported Employment)

Why families choose Connext Care

Person-centered support planning

Focus on independence, confidence, and everyday life skills

Collaboration with individuals, families, and support coordinators

Community-minded support that respects each person's goals

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the APD iBudget Waiver?** - A Medicaid-funded program that authorizes supports and services for eligible individuals with developmental disabilities in Florida.

- **How long is the waitlist?** - Wait times vary based on priority category, funding, and individual circumstances.

- **Can I change providers?** - Yes. Individuals receiving waiver services can request a provider change through their Support Coordinator.

- **What does a Support Coordinator do?** - A Support Coordinator helps identify goals, coordinate services, develop support plans, and connect individuals with approved providers.

- **Can families choose providers?** - Yes. Families may choose approved providers that best fit their needs and goals.

How to Choose or Switch to Connext Care

- **Step 1** - Tell your Support Coordinator you would like Connext Care as your provider.

- **Step 2** - Your Support Coordinator updates the support plan and cost plan to reflect the provider choice.

- **Step 3** - Once the change is in place, Connext Care connects with you to begin services and support your goals.

> ## Contact Connext Care
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