

## Medicaid Waivers and Transition Planning

Some students with disabilities will need services and support once they exit school services. Many are able to access supports to live, work, and interact in their communities with limited agency support for independence. What about students who need long-term or more intensive support to meet their needs? More importantly, how are those supports paid for once students exit school services? Those who qualify might be eligible for Medicaid Waivers to pay for and provide a range of services.

### What are Medicaid Waivers?

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Medicaid Waivers serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their home communities by “waiving” certain requirements for services. Prior to Medicaid Waivers, people with disabilities could only receive services if they resided in an institutional setting.

#### **Medicaid Waivers Available in Virginia**

Currently, there are eight Medicaid Waivers available in Virginia that cover a variety of services to support people with disabilities. Three Medicaid Waivers direct care and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including the Building Independence Waiver (BI), Family and Individual Supports Waiver (FI), and the Community Living Waiver (CL). People with a Medicaid Waiver could receive services such as medical care, medical goods and assistive technology, and employment, community living, and behavioral supports.

#### **Medicaid Waiver Waitlist**

Typically, people wait a period of time for a Medicaid Waiver slot and must be on a waitlist before receiving services. To be added to the waitlist, contact the local Community Services Board or Behavioral Health Authority for a Medicaid Waiver screening.

### Benefits of a Medicaid Waiver

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There are a multitude of services and benefits available through Medicaid Waivers. Most importantly, Medicaid Waivers provide funding for adult services for people with more significant barriers to community living and engagement.

The supports listed below comprise a few of the available services included with the three Medicaid Waivers used by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- Community Engagement and Coaching
- Crisis Support Service
- Employment and Community Transportation
- Assistive Technology
- Peer Mentor Supports
- Residential Supports
- Supported Employment

## Tips for Educators

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Educators serve an integral role in connecting families to community agency supports during the transition process. The tips below can assist educators in helping families understand the benefits of Medicaid Waivers and how to access this valuable set of services.

1. Learn the basics about Medicaid Waivers to share these valuable resources with families.
2. Provide families with information on Medicaid Waivers as soon as possible. Many Waivers will accept children on waitlists during young childhood.
3. Share resources to help explain the differences between Medicaid Waivers such as:  
[Virginia Waiver Fact Sheet](#)  
[Waiver Information](#)
4. Make connections with the Medicaid Waiver experts at the Community Services Board (CSB) and other advocacy groups. Teachers aren't meant to be the experts on Waivers, but you will want to know where to direct families.
5. Work with your CSB, Family Resource Center, PEATC, and/or the local Center for Independent Living to provide training for families on Medicaid Waiver services and benefits.

## Conclusion

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Medicaid Waivers provide meaningful benefits to live, work, and engage in the community. While the process for Medicaid Waiver screening is complicated and the waitlist is long, the sooner families learn about this valuable resource the sooner their children can reap the benefits.