

Making it happen



**CALIFORNIA
CHILDREN'S SERVICES:
A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**



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Introduction

California has a special medical benefits program for children with certain physical or medical conditions. This program is called California Children's Services (CCS). Harbor Regional Center has created this information booklet to help you understand CCS and decide whether your child might be eligible for CCS services.

We have organized the booklet around seven questions:

- What is California Children's Services?
- What kinds of services does CCS offer?
- Could my child be eligible to receive CCS services?
- Are there costs to my family for CCS services?
- How do I apply for this program?
- What else do I need to know about this program?
- How do I get a referral to CCS if I believe my child may be eligible?

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What is

WHAT IS CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S SERVICES?

CCS is a program operated by the state of California that provides medical and related services to children who have certain physical or medical conditions. In general, these are conditions that are physically disabling or require medical, surgical, or rehabilitative services.

Many children who are regional center clients have conditions that allow them to qualify for CCS services. Below is a summary list of the types of conditions that are covered by CCS:

- Conditions involving the heart (congenital heart disease)
- Neoplasms (cancers, tumors)
- Disorders of the blood (hemophilia, sickle cell anemia)
- Endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases (thyroid problems, PKU, diabetes)
- Disorders of the genito-urinary system (serious chronic kidney problems)

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- Disorders of the gastrointestinal system (chronic inflammatory disease, diseases of the liver)
- Serious birth defects (cleft palate, spina bifida)
- Disorders of the sense organs (hearing loss, glaucoma, cataracts)
- Disorders of the nervous system (cerebral palsy, uncontrolled seizures)
- Disorders of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues (rheumatoid arthritis, muscular dystrophy)
- Severe disorders of the immune system (HIV infection)
- Disabling conditions or poisonings requiring intensive care or rehabilitation (severe head, brain, or spinal cord injuries, severe burns)
- Complications of premature birth requiring an intensive level of care
- Disorders of the skin and subcutaneous tissue (severe hemangioma)
- Medically handicapping malocclusion (severely crooked teeth)

CCS works with other programs such as Medi-Cal and private insurance to ensure payment for things that are required to treat the child's eligible condition or that are not paid for by these other programs. If your child has Medi-Cal, CCS acts as the first payer for services needed to treat the medically-eligible condition.

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WHAT KIND OF SERVICES DOES CCS OFFER?

This program offers both diagnostic and treatment services.

Diagnostic services. If your child needs examinations, laboratory tests, or x-rays to establish eligibility for CCS or to develop a treatment plan, they may be provided without cost to you.

Treatment services. If your child is eligible for CCS services, the program may pay for or provide the following services *if they are medically necessary to treat your child's eligible condition* and if your child does not have other coverage to pay for them:



- Doctor services, hospital care, surgery, laboratory tests, X-rays, orthopedic appliances, and medical equipment.
- Medical case management services to help you find special doctors for your child when medically necessary, and to refer you to other agencies, such as public health nursing.
- Physical or occupational therapy in public schools through the Medical Therapy Program (MTP). The MTP is discussed below.

COULD MY CHILD BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE

CCS SERVICES? First of all, to be eligible for CCS your child must have an eligible medical or physical condition as discussed above. In addition, the following must be true:

- He or she must be under the age of 21 and a resident of California.

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■ **One** of the following must also be true:

- Your family's yearly income is less than \$40,000

or

- You expect to have out-of-pocket medical expenses for the child that will equal more than 20% of your family's income

or

- Your child has "Healthy Families" coverage

or

- Your child has full-scope Medi-Cal coverage through "institutional deeming"

or

- Your child is adopted and had a CCS-eligible condition at the time of adoption.

ARE THERE COSTS TO MY FAMILY FOR CCS

SERVICES? There is no cost to you if your child is eligible for CCS and is covered by either full-scope Medi-Cal with no Share of Cost or the Healthy Families program. There is also no cost to your family if your child receives only diagnostic services or only services through the Medical

Therapy Program. Depending on your income, you may be asked to pay an enrollment fee or an annual assessment fee, or both. The enrollment fee would be figured on a sliding scale depending on your family's income. The annual assessment fee is \$20, although this fee may be waived if it is a hardship for the family.

WHAT IS THE MEDICAL THERAPY PROGRAM? This program is different from the general CCS program in two ways. First, not all CCS-eligible children are eligible for MTP services. Second, it is the only CCS program where CCS itself provides direct care. The program provides occupational and physical therapy to children with physical disabilities in places called Medical Therapy Units (MTUs). MTUs are located on site at public schools but are actually part of CCS.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR THIS PROGRAM? To apply for CCS, you should do the following:

- Complete an application form and return it to the county CCS office.

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- Give CCS all of the information requested so CCS can determine if your child and family qualify.
- Apply to Medi-Cal if your family's income qualifies your child for the Medi-Cal program and your child is not already covered.

If your child has a physical disability such as cerebral palsy, you should request on the application that he be evaluated for both the general program and the Medical Therapy Program.

CCS applications are available in the HRC Resource Center or from your regional center Counselor. You can also download one from the California Department of Health Services website: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/publications/forms/pdf/dhs4480.pdf>.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PROGRAM?

- If your child becomes eligible for CCS, your family will be assigned a Nurse Case Manager

who will help you coordinate services for your child. She will receive all reports on your child's condition and services and she will authorize CCS doctors to provide treatment and other services. *All services to your child must be pre-authorized by CCS.*

- CCS is only allowed to pay for services by doctors who are approved by the CCS program. For this reason, it is possible that your child may need to change doctors to receive services covered by CCS.
- When your child needs a service, his or her doctor will send a request for authorization to your CCS Nurse Case Manager describing what service is needed and why. If CCS agrees that the service is needed, they will send you and the doctor an authorization letter approving payment for the service.
- Your eligibility for CCS will be reviewed each year. Your child's medical records and information about your family's financial situation will be reviewed in order to determine whether the

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child's condition remains medically eligible for the program and if your family still meets the financial requirements for eligibility.

- If you are denied eligibility for the CCS program or if a service is denied, reduced, or stopped, you have a right to appeal that decision. Your local CCS office has information on how to submit an appeal.

HOW DO I GET A REFERRAL TO CCS IF I BELIEVE MY CHILD MAY BE ELIGIBLE?

Most physicians who work with children are aware of CCS and will be able to coordinate a referral of your child to the program. If your child's physician is unable to do this, you should talk to your regional center Counselor about a possible referral. He or she knows about this program and has access to regional center medical professionals who can help decide whether your child should be referred.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY CHILD REACHES AGE 21?

It is important to remember that your child's CCS coverage ends at age 21. As your child's 21st birthday approaches you should speak with your

CCS nurse case manager and your regional center Counselor to find out whether there are other programs available to your child to address his ongoing medical needs.



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