

Services for Children, Youth & their Families under the
COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES ACT
in the Fairfax - Falls Church Community

A Guide for Parents



Revised April 2005

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Introduction

Your child and family maybe eligible for assistance through the Virginia Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families if your child meets the following guidelines:

- Under the age of 18, or in some cases, under 22*; and,
- At risk of having serious emotional or behavioral difficulties; and
- In need of services from multiple County/City agencies.

This handbook describes how you can get help through the CSA in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

*Youth aged 22 and under who are eligible for special education and whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires education in a private school or residential placement, are eligible for CSA services until the last day of the school year in which they turn 22 years of age.

What is the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA)?

In 1992, the Virginia General Assembly passed the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families. This act improves efforts to meet the needs of families with children and youth who have, or who are at risk of having, serious emotional or behavioral difficulties.

The goal of the CSA is to keep families together and provide services within the child's home and community whenever possible. Through teams required by the CSA, state and local agencies are brought together to provide services that are intended to:

- Preserve and strengthen families.
- Identify needs and help families as early as possible.
- Provide services in the least restrictive setting possible.
- Develop service plans to meet the specific needs of children and youth.
- Increase the communication between families and county agencies.
- Encourage public-private partnerships in serving families.
- Provide more community control and flexibility in the use of funding.

Who receives services under the CSA?

Youth who may be eligible to receive services fall into one of two groups*:

Mandated

Youth for whom services to be provided are mandated by law include:

- Youth in foster care and those deemed to be imminently at-risk for placement into foster care.
- Youth who are special education eligible and the youth's Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires that the youth receive education in a private day or residential school setting.

*Eligibility for CSA funding is determined by various laws (in education, juvenile justice and social services) and by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Policy and Management Team.

Non-mandated

Youth for whom services to be provided are not mandated by law include: Youth served through the Juvenile Court, Community Services Board, public schools and other county/city human services agencies who require assistance from more than one public agency, and whose needs can not be met through the family's or public agencies' resources. CSA non-mandated funds must be available in the community; otherwise these youth may be placed on a waiting list for consideration of funding.

Who takes part in the CSA process?

The CSA requires that the following human service agencies work together to implement the program in the community:

- Department of Family Services.
- Fairfax County Public Schools.
- Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.
- Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.
- Department of Health. (when appropriate)

In addition,

- Parent Representatives, many of whom also have children with emotional or behavioral difficulties, are appointed from the community.
- Private Providers of services to children, youth and families also participate.
- Above all, your involvement is extremely important and welcomed!

Teams Working Together

In each community, various teams work together to implement the CSA. In the Fairfax – Falls Church community, these teams are the:

- Child Specific Team (CST)
- Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT)
- Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT)

The Child Specific Team (CST)

The CST is an ongoing team formed to help you solve problems, explore service and financial resources, and plan for the

changing needs of your child and family. Membership on the team is flexible according to your child's needs and should include:

- Yourself.
- Your county/city case manager.
- Your child, when appropriate.
- Representatives, with your permission, from other public agencies who can suggest or provide services.
- Others you may want to invite who are familiar with the strengths and needs of your family, including teachers, counselors, clergy, doctors, supportive friends, and others.

What are your responsibilities as part of the CST process?

You are a respected member of this team and have an important voice in decisions regarding services for your child. As a member of the team, you should:

- Exchange important information among all team members regarding your child (your case manager will ask you to sign a written consent to exchange information).
- Ask questions and receive as much information as possible about services, programs and resources for your child and your family.
- Ask for explanations of new or unfamiliar words and phrases.
- Be prepared to discuss your family resources such as insurance and what treatment services it may cover.

What can you expect from the CST process?

Together with other team members, you will develop a written service plan known as an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to meet the needs of your child and your family. The IFSP is a written plan that includes information about the strengths and needs of your child and family, professionals involved with your family, services that have been provided, recommended services, and the objectives and goals for the services.

If it is determined that your child will require services funded through the CSA, then your family's IFSP will be referred to a Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT).

Family Assessment and Planning Teams (FAPTs)

If the CST determines your needs cannot be met through regular agency services or other resources, then your family's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) may be referred to a FAPT. These teams are made up of seven appointed members from the following:

- Department of Family Services.
- Fairfax County Public Schools.
- Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.
- Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.
- Department of Health. (when appropriate)

In addition,

- Parent representatives, many of whom have children with emotional or behavioral difficulties, are appointed from the community.
- Private providers.

What is the FAPT process?

Family Assessment and Planning Team meetings take place in locations throughout Fairfax County on different days of the week. Once you have signed and agreed with the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), it will be scheduled for review at a FAPT meeting at a location in the county closest to your home. Your case manager will provide you with a copy of the IFSP.

You have the right to be present during the FAPT review if you choose; however your participation in the service planning for your child and family occurs at the CST (or Individualized Education Program meeting, if applicable).

Your attendance at the FAPT meeting is not required for the FAPT to reach a decision about approving the services and authorizing funds for the services, however you are welcome to attend. If you do want to attend the FAPT meeting, tell your case manager during the CST meeting. If you attend the FAPT meeting, you may also bring someone for support. If you need special arrangements, such as an interpreter, your case manager will make the arrangements for you.

If you decide to attend the FAPT meeting, the leader of the FAPT or the Parent representative will explain the process of the meeting, tell you about your rights, and introduce you to everyone in the room, which may include observers. You have the right to have the purpose of observers explained to you and to decide whether you want them to stay in the meeting. Everyone in the room must sign a confidentiality statement.

The FAPT meeting will last approximately 60 minutes. Your case manager will present your child's IFSP to the FAPT and make recommendations as to what services are needed. After that, you and your child (if attending) have the opportunity to discuss your concerns and add any information you think is relevant to the process. Then, others involved with your child may present additional information.

After an open discussion of the information, services requested, and resources available, the FAPT decides which services are most appropriate, and may make amendments or recommendations to the IFSP. The FAPT then decides which services to approve*.

Decisions are made by general agreement. If an agreement cannot be reached, a vote is taken by the seven members of the FAPT, the case manager and the parent or legal guardian.

At the end of the meeting the FAPT leader:

- Restates the plan and goals to make sure they are clear.
- Reviews everyone's responsibilities.
- Sets a service review date.

Your case manager will provide you with a copy of the FAPT decision following the meeting.

*CSA funds are limited for non-mandated youth (see page 4) and are not always immediately available for FAPT approved services. If funds are not immediately available, your child will be placed on a waiting list and your case manager will keep you updated on the availability of funds. The FAPT may suggest alternative services while you wait for the requested funding to become available.

How is an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) Reviewed?

Each Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) that comes before a FAPT must be reviewed, with the next review dates set at the FAPT meeting. Reviews may occur at any time from three to 12 months, depending upon the services approved. It is important to advise your child's case manager of any significant events or changes in your family's situation. During the time services are in place, CST members continue to meet with you, as needed, to ensure the helpfulness of your IFSP.

What happens if you do not agree with the FAPT's decisions?

You are given a document at the FAPT meeting explaining what to do if you do not agree with the recommendations of the FAPT and want to appeal their decision. If you decide not to attend the FAPT meeting, your case manager will provide you with a copy of the appeal document.

Your written appeal request must be submitted no later than 10 days following your receipt of the FAPT decision. Appeals are heard by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT). All letters of appeal should be addressed to:

Chair, the Fairfax-Falls Church CPMT
c/o CPMT Staff
12011 Government Center Parkway
5th Floor
Fairfax, VA 22035

Fax number: 703-324-7929

Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT)

This is a policy-making and management team that oversees the implementation of the CSA and makes FAPT member appointments. The team develops local policies and procedures for CSA, develops the fiscal policies for CSA, coordinates long-range, community-wide planning for resources and services needed by children and families in its community, manages the CSA budget, helps agencies to work together, hears appeals on FAPT decisions, and performs other management duties. The CPMT is also responsible for implementing new legislation affecting the CSA.

Members of the CPMT are appointed by the governing bodies of Fairfax County, and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. Members include:

- Fairfax County Deputy County Executive for Human Services.
- Director, Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services.
- Director, Fairfax County Department of Family Services.
- Director, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.
- Director, Fairfax County Department of Health.
- Director, Fairfax County Department of Family Services Office for Children.
- Director, Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.
- Representatives from the Fairfax County and Falls Church City Public Schools.
- Representatives from the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.
- Two Parent Representatives.
- Two representatives reflecting the cultural diversity of the community.
- Two Private Service Providers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who pays for CSA services?

The Commonwealth of Virginia and local governments share the cost of services funded through the CSA. Effective, January 1996, Virginia law requires you, as your child's parent or legal guardian, to contribute toward the cost of services based on income.

Your case manager will discuss this with you in more detail and help you understand whether the services your child receives require a co-payment. Your case manager will provide the necessary co-payment forms for you to complete prior to submitting your child and family's IFSP to the FAPT.

Who to contact with questions?

When you have questions about the CSA, please contact your case manager. It is the responsibility of the case manager to coordinate services and exchange information with you. If you do not have a case manager, call Fairfax County Human Services at 703-222-0880, TTY 703-803-7914 and they will help you begin the process. You can visit the Fairfax-Falls Church CSA web site at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/csa/. You can also call the local Fairfax-Falls Church CSA Office at 703-324-7938, TTY 703-222-9452.

What happens in an emergency?

If you believe your child is in need of emergency services, contact your case manager. If your case manager is unavailable, or you do not have a case manager, contact your local mental health center or Woodburn Emergency Services at 703-573-5679 for help with emergency assistance. If your case manager arranges to begin services on an emergency basis, your family and child's IFSP will be presented to a FAPT for review within 14 calendar days after the services begin.

Important phone numbers



All phone numbers listed below can also be reached by dialing
711 (Virginia Relay)

- **Alcohol and Drug Services** 703-324-7000
Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
- **Fairfax County Department of** 703-324- 5570
Community and Recreation Services
- **CSA Office (Fairfax-Falls Church)** 703-324-7938
- **Fairfax County Department of Family Services** 703-324-7500
 - o Child Protective Services Hotline 703-324-7400
- **Fairfax County Department of Health** 703-246-2411
- **Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court** 703-246-2495
- **Mental Health Services (Main Office)** 703-324-7000
 - o **Emergency Services ~ Woodburn (24 hours)** 703-573-5679Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
- **Mental Retardation Services** 703-324-4400
Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
- **Falls Church City Schools and Fairfax County Public Schools**
Please call your child’s school and ask to speak to the school social
worker.

Important notes for you to keep

Your **case manager**:

Name, agency, phone number

Other **CST** members:

Name, agency, phone number

Other important information and meeting dates:



12011 Government Center Parkway
Suite 500
Fairfax, VA 22035-1115
703-324-7938, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/csa



Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request special accommodations, or if you have questions or want additional information related to this publication, please contact the Fairfax-Falls Church CSA Program, at 703-324-7938; TTY 711.