

What is the “Front Door?”



TIP SHEET

The **Front Door** is the NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities' (OPWDD) process for deciding if a person is eligible for services and creating a service plan.

I WANT TO GET OPWDD SERVICES FOR MY CHILD. WHAT DO I DO?

First, your child must have a developmental disability, such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, or autism. This disability must have been diagnosed before age 22, and it must greatly limit your child's independence. You will need documentation from your child's doctor to support this.

HOW DO I BEGIN THE FRONT DOOR PROCESS?

The first step is to attend a Front Door Information Session to learn about OPWDD's services and supports, and how to get them. You can visit [OPWDD's website](#) to find out when Front Door Information Sessions will be, or you can call us at Starbridge - (585) 546-1700.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?

Contact your local [Developmental Disability Regional Office \(DDRO\)](#) Front Door team. There are four in NYC. They will help you begin an Eligibility Review to determine if your child is eligible.

WHEN SHOULD I APPLY FOR OPWDD SERVICES FOR MY CHILD?

You can apply for OPWDD services at any age. The earlier the better! Your child may be eligible for some services while receiving Early Intervention services, attending school, or transitioning to adult life after school.

DOES MY CHILD NEED MEDICAID TO GET OPWDD SERVICES?

Yes. Most of the services that your child will receive are paid for by Medicaid. That's why your child must meet eligibility requirements for Medicaid and the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver. If your child lives at home, your income will not be considered when Medicaid eligibility is being determined.

MY CHILD IS ELIGIBLE FOR OPWDD AND MEDICAID. NOW WHAT?

An Assessment Specialist will contact you within five business days from the time your child's OPWDD eligibility is confirmed. If no one contacts you within this time frame, you can contact the Front Door team at your [local DDRO](#). The Assessment Specialist will talk with you by phone or in person to discuss your service requests and your child's needs.





WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SERVICES THAT MY CHILD AND FAMILY CAN GET FROM OPWDD?

OPWDD offers services that help you support your child. Services may include respite, after school programs, community habilitation, employment training, assistive technology, clinic services, and Intensive Behavioral (IB) services. These services are free.

HOW WILL I GET SERVICES FOR MY CHILD?

Service Coordinators, who work for [OPWDD provider agencies](#), will help you locate and set up services. They will also develop your child’s Individualized Service Plan (ISP), which outlines your child’s goals, supports, and services.

I HAVE A FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER. CAN SHE BE FOUND ELIGIBLE FOR OPWDD SERVICES?

Yes. Children under eight may receive provisional eligibility based on the judgement of a clinician, such as a psychologist. Provisional eligibility lasts for a limited period of time. You will have to provide updated paperwork to OPWDD before your child’s eighth birthday. This will help OPWDD decide if your child should continue to receive services.

HOW CAN I HAVE MORE CONTROL OF MY CHILD’S SERVICES?

You can self-direct all or some of your child’s services. Self-Direction means that your child (or you as their guardian) will be in charge of and responsible for their services. It gives you flexibility and allows you to choose and manage the staff working with your child. Self-Direction also gives you control of your budget. If you choose to self-direct, then you should attend a Self-Direction Training Session instead of the Front Door Information Session. Contact your [local DDRO](#) for session dates.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP WITH THE FRONT DOOR PROCESS?

Please check the [OPWDD Provider Directory](#) for agencies in your area that can help you. You can also get help from your local DDRO Front Door team or you can call us at Starbridge - (585) 546-1700.

