



# A Guide For Parents Seeking Mental Health Services for Children In Berks County

Electronic versions of this document in English and Spanish can be found here:  
<http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/MHDD/Pages/CASSP.aspx>



## Introduction

As a parent, getting mental health services is the first important step in helping you and your child get the support you may desperately need for emotional and behavioral issues that may be a dominant factor in your lives. This guide will help you get started.

Studies show that children with emotional and behavioral problems respond best to treatment when their parents and caregivers are active participants in their child's treatment. As the child's parent, you know your son or daughter best and mental health providers will rely on your input into the development of your child's treatment plan and will partner with you in carrying out that plan. Since the mental health treatment for your child will change over time, it is important to strengthen and educate the family to be a constant source of support throughout the child's lifetime.

Getting support for yourself as a parent or caregiver is also an important part of your child's treatment. Here are some ideas for taking care of you:

- Accept help from your family and friends
- Talk with other parents who have children with similar behaviors
- Join a parent support group
- Consider getting therapeutic support for yourself
- Participate in an activity that is just for you – social organizations, church groups, reading

*(Created April 2011, Revised January 2016, August 2016, November 2016, March 2018) This guide was prepared by the Berks County CASSP Coordinator and the ICSP Family Advisory Committee. It is not intended to be an all inclusive document. Questions regarding the information contained in this guide can be directed to the CASSP Coordinator at 610-478-3271 ext.6584.*

## Step 1 – Identify what kind of insurance your child has or needs

The type, provider, and cost of mental health treatment may be determined by the child/family's insurance.



If your child has:

- Private/Commercial Insurance – provided by an employer or purchased by you
  - Call the toll free number on the back of the insurance card and ask what the steps are to get mental health treatment for your child.
  - Check with your place of employment for instructions.

If your child has:

- Medical Assistance/Medicaid - sometimes referred to as MA or Access
  - Contact Community Care Behavioral Health (CCBH) at 1-866-292-7886.
  - CCBH can help you find a mental health agency where you can take your child for an evaluation and treatment.

If your child has:

- Private Insurance AND Medical Assistance – you MUST seek services through your private insurance first. Medical Assistance might cover services or costs that the private insurance does not so it might be a good idea to pick an agency that accepts your private insurance AND Medical Assistance.

If your child has:

- No insurance/Needs to apply – Children with disabilities may be eligible for Medical Assistance based on medical need, not family income.
  - Apply on-line through COMPASS <https://www.compass.state.pa.us>
  - COMPASS is an online application for Pennsylvanians to apply for many public health and human service programs.

If your child is:

- Not eligible for any insurance
  - Contact Service Access and Management, Inc (SAM) at 610-236-0530. Ask for the Children's Intake Department and schedule an appointment.
  - The Intake Case Manager will complete the intake process and determine eligibility for services.



## Step 2 – Getting Help for your Child

The type of mental health treatment your child receives will be determined by his or her needs. Typically the first step is to call your insurance company who will help you locate a mental health professional to complete an initial evaluation and help you locate the right service to meet your child's needs.

Here is a description of the different types of mental health services available to children in Berks County. Check with your insurance company to determine which services are covered by your plan.

### **Crisis services**

**Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!**

**NO COST!**

**Available to anyone in Berks County regardless of insurance coverage**

**Call: 610-236-0530**

**Text: ruOK to 484-816-ruOK(7865)**

Student Assistance Program (SAP) – Assists school personnel to identify issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student's success. Contact the guidance counselor at your child's school if you would like your son or daughter evaluated through SAP. *This service is free and not billed to insurance.*

Case Management (CM) – A mental health professional that can help you locate and coordinate the necessary services for your child and family. Service Access and Management (SAM) can determine eligibility for case management services and help you find a case management agency. Their phone number is 610-236-0530.

Outpatient (OP) – Mental health treatment that can include individual, family and group therapy, psychiatric evaluations and medication management. This service is available at community agencies as well as in most school districts throughout Berks County.

Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) – A nationally-recognized, evidence-based parent training program for families who have children ages 2 to 7 with externalizing behavior problems. The program is unique in that it involves coaching parents as they interact with their young child.

Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) – Short term mental health services provided on an outpatient basis that typically occurs every weekday for several hours a day. Educational instruction is provided at most Partial Hospital Programs.

Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (BHRS) – Mental health services that are provided in home and community settings. One of the roles of BHRS staff may be to help prevent the need for hospitalization or other out-of-home placements. Sometimes called "wraparound" services, there can be three components to BHRS:

1. Behavioral Specialist Consultant (BSC) – Develops a behavior management plan.
2. Mobile Therapist (MT) - Provides individual and family therapy in your home or in a community setting.
3. Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS) – Provides therapeutic support when therapy alone is not enough to meet the needs of a child.
  - Provides one-to-one interventions with a child along with a child's caregivers.
  - Helps a child and family to meet their treatment goals. Helps caregivers develop the skills they need to manage the child's behavior.

Family Based Mental Health Services (FBMHS) – In-home, team delivered, intensive services that help to strengthen the family to prevent out of home placement of the child. Family Based teams are on call 24/7 and can help the family to access respite services as needed.

Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) – In-home service for youth ages 12 to 17.6, at risk of out-of-home placement due to antisocial or delinquent behaviors and/or youth involved with the juvenile justice system. MST is an evidence-based, intensive family- and community-based treatment program that focuses on addressing all environmental systems. MST therapists are on call 24/7 and work intensively with parents and caregivers to put them in control and keep the adolescent focused on school and gaining job skills.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (PRS) - This service supports individuals ages 16 and older to reach their goals in the areas of living, learning, working, and socialization, as well as promoting self-advocacy in one's recovery. This service can be delivered at a site or through mobile services provided in the community.

Certified Peer Support (CPS) – Based upon the fundamental principles of recovery, CPS services are specialized therapeutic interactions conducted by self-identified current or former consumers of behavioral health services. CPS Specialists are trained and certified to offer support and assistance in helping others in their recovery and community-integration process. This service is available to individuals ages 14 and older.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) - An intensive and highly integrated approach of services delivered in the community to youth ages 16 and older that have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. A team of professionals work with the youth to provide: mental health treatment, substance abuse intervention, educational and vocational assistance, life skill instruction, residential independence, physical health and wellness.

Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) Host Home – Provides “out-of-the-home” community-based behavioral health treatment, which includes a 24 hours/day structured therapeutic environment for the child in a host home. Host home parents are extensively trained and supervised. Children in CRR attend public school in their home district (when possible) or in the school district where the host home is situated.

Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) – A time limited, “out-of-the-home” mental health treatment service for children with severe emotional and behavior problems. Doctors, therapists, social workers, and childcare workers give 24 hour care and treatment to children in RTF’s. Education services are provided either on the grounds of the RTF or in the district where the RTF is situated.

Inpatient – Inpatient service is a hospital stay where your child is treated for a mental illness or serious behavior problem. The hospital stay will last as long as needed to make sure that your child will be safe when he or she leaves.



#### Helpful Websites

2-1-1 Pennsylvania  
<http://www.pa211east.org/>

Community Care Behavioral Health Organization  
<https://members.ccbh.com/>

Service Access and Management, Inc.  
<http://www.sam-inc.org/>

Berks County Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Program  
<http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/MHDD/Pages/default.aspx>

COMPASS – Apply on line for Medical Assistance/Medicaid  
<https://www.compass.state.pa.us>

Consent to Mental Health Treatment for Minor Children in Pennsylvania  
[http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c\\_276794.pdf](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_276794.pdf)

National Institute of Mental Health - Treatment of Children with Mental Illness  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/treatment-of-children-with-mental-illness-fact-sheet/index.shtml>

