



APD now Serves Individuals with Phelan-McDermid Syndrome

In the Florida First Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017, Governor Rick Scott and the Legislature included \$2.5 million to offer waiver enrollment to approximately 55 people with Phelan-McDermid syndrome. Phelan-McDermid syndrome is a rare disability. Children are born with a specific chromosomal abnormality. Although the range and severity of symptoms may vary, Phelan-McDermid syndrome is generally characterized by low muscle tone, absent to severely delayed speech, moderate to profound intellectual disability, minor malformed or misshapen features, symptoms of autism spectrum disorder, motor delays, and epilepsy.

Foster Parent Recruitment

APD will be launching a campaign to recruit foster families for special needs kids. This initiative will include the 14 Family Care Councils having a lead role in connecting with their communities and disseminating information, as well as organizing local events to highlight the need for foster families for children with special needs. APD will be using the materials that DCF has developed under its “Special Heart” campaign and creating a packet of information to help potential foster families learn about how to become a foster parent and the services that are available to foster children through the Medicaid State Plan, School System, APD, and other agencies. APD anticipates launching this campaign in November 2016.

The Florida Navigator - Lifespan Overview of State of Florida Services

The Florida Navigator is an online tool designed to empower and inform individuals with developmental disabilities, caregivers, and professionals about specific state of Florida resources. The goal of this program is to streamline the search for state services that users or their loved ones may be eligible to receive. Users will find a simplified path of information to guide them through the following stages of life:

- Early Years (Birth to about 3 years)
- Work and Family Years (18 to 55 years)
- School Years (4 to 21 years)
- Retirement Years (56+ years)

Families will be able to search state resources by age and service type in order to tailor the results to their specific needs. By answering a few questions, the Navigator will share programs available from Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Children and Families, Department of Education, Department of Elder Affairs, and the Department of Health. This tool is currently being developed with an anticipated launch date of November 2016.

Employment of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is committed to enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Faith-Based and Community-Based partners can help individuals find and maintain employment in many ways. If you are interested in employing someone or would like to help someone with a developmental disability find competitive employment, please contact your local APD Employment Liaison. Contact information for your region can be found online at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.