

Children With Special Needs

Caring for a child with special needs can be overwhelming at times. You may have lots of questions or concerns about your child.

- Where can I find help for my child?
- Is my child eligible for services?
- How do I apply for services?
- Where can I get support to help my family?
- What can I do to get additional services for my child?

Ask Us!

A Family Navigator can help you!

Funding for the Family Navigator Program is provided by:

The Governor's Office for Children

in partnership with

Caroline County Human Services Council, Inc.
Dorchester County Local Management Board
Kent County Local Management Board
Queen Anne's County Community Partnerships
for Children and Families
Talbot Family Network
Mid-Shore Mental Health Systems, Inc.

How to Contact A Family Navigator in Your County

Caroline County

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Dorchester and Talbot Counties

Bernadette Townsend
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Kent and Queen Anne Counties

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Maryland Coalition of Families for
Children's Mental Health

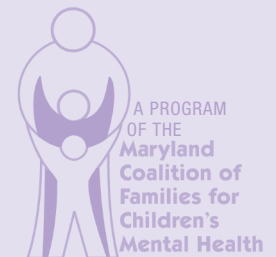
Central Office

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Mid-Shore Family Navigators

Helping You Find Your Way



The Maryland Coalition of Families is the statewide family voice for children's mental health and is dedicated to building a family-driven network of information and support, and improving services in all systems of care for children, youth and their families.

We Believe

Children and youth with special needs have value and require individualized services to achieve their potential.

Families have a primary decision making role in the care of their own children, as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community.

Services for children, youth and their families are provided from a strength-based approach and are responsive to the culture and needs of the whole child and entire family.

The system of care for children with special needs is community-based and includes a full continuum of care from prevention, early intervention, and a range of treatment options.

What Is A Family Navigator?

A Family Navigator is:

- A parent or primary caregiver who is or has cared for a child with special needs
- Trained to assist other families to obtain the appropriate services and supports for their child and family
- Knowledgeable about state and local resources and how to access them.

Family Navigators are not lawyers or therapists and do not provide legal representation or counseling. Navigators do not advise families on decisions pertaining to their children, but provide support and information and discuss options with families so they can make the best choices for their children.

Who Can Call A Family Navigator?

Anyone who needs assistance with obtaining services or support for their child or family can call a Family Navigator. There is no eligibility requirement or fees to contact a Family Navigator.

How Can A Family Navigator Help Your Family?

A Family Navigator can provide:

- Information, referral and linkage to appropriate services for your child
- One-to-one support and advocacy for your family
- Guidance in completing forms and applications for services
- Support at meetings related to your child, when possible
- Education on laws, policies and procedures to access services for your child
- Workshops to inform you and other families on services and ways to effectively advocate for your child.

Family Navigators also work in partnership with local agencies and participate on planning and advisory boards to provide a family perspective on policies and programs for children with special needs. Navigators make every effort to involve many families in leadership roles in their community.