

Developmental Disabilities Administration Voluntary Placement Services Frequently Asked Questions

What are Voluntary Placement Services?

Voluntary placement services (VPS) are administered by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) to provide temporary residential placement for a child, outside of the family home. VPS requires an agreement between the child's parent or guardian and DDA, which outlines the services a child receives while residing outside of the family home and the responsibilities of each party.

Who is eligible?

A child age 17 or younger that:

- Is DDA enrolled;
- Their family has asked for VPS in writing;
- Requires residential placement due solely to their disability;
- Needs more services and supports than can be provided in the family home;
- Residential placement is determined to be in their best interest; and
- The parent or guardian has no pending child protective services investigations.

What is a VPS Agreement?

Before a child may enter a voluntary out-of-home placement, the child's parent or legal guardian must sign a voluntary placement agreement. The voluntary placement agreement states:

- The child's parent or legal guardian retains legal custody of the child
- Any party to the voluntary placement agreement may terminate the agreement at any time
- If a child's placement is disrupted under the terms of the voluntary placement agreement, the child will return to their parent's or guardian's physical care until a new placement is available
- The parent or legal guardian is available and actively participates in the client's life and decisions

What services does a child receive in VPS?

A provider works with the family to coordinate supports to meet the child's needs as noted in the shared parenting plan and the person-centered service plan. The provider ensures the child receives therapeutic supports in a structured environment including assistance with activities of daily living, behavioral support and participation in their local communities. The provider coordinates with the local school district so the child may receive [Free and Public Education \(FAPE\) services](#).



What type of settings may VPS be provided in?

VPS may be provided in the following settings:

- Licensed child foster home,
- Licensed staffed residential home,
- Licensed group care facilities for children who are medically-fragile, or
- Children's state-operated living alternative.

How is VPS monitored?

A DDA assessment is completed annually in the home where the child resides by the DDA Social Worker. DDA conducts an in-person health and safety review where the child resides every 90 days.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families licenses VPS settings and conducts licensing reviews of the physical environment every three years. For licensed staff residential homes and group care facilities, DDA conducts annual quality assurance evaluations.

What happens after a child is approved for VPS?

After consent is received, DDA sends the child's referral information to contracted providers that can serve new clients. The referral information may include: assessment details, Positive Behavior Support Plan, Functional Assessment, Behavior Intervention Plan, Applied Behavioral Analysis and plan, Individualized Education Program, and any other relevant documentation. Potential providers review the child's individualized needs and housemate compatibility. Once a provider accepts a referral, the family signs the Voluntary Placement Agreement.

How will medical support be provided in a VPS setting?

Within 45 days after entering into placement, a Shared Parenting Plan is created. This plan outlines medical services including primary care physician, dentist, Applied Behavior Analysis providers and other specialists the child is currently utilizing. Coordination of these services is defined in the shared parenting plan between the provider and family.

What is a Shared Parenting Plan?

The Shared Parenting plan is a written agreement between the parent or legal guardian, licensed provider, and DDA. This plan includes:

- A schedule for visiting the child
- An activities schedule
- Emergency contact information
- Consent to medical care
- A process to exchange routine communication about medical issues, education, daily routines, and special considerations in the life of the child
- Expectations for each party's role
- Coordination of healthcare benefits
- The name of the child's representative payee
- Identification of the child's available income sources

How does the contracted provider get paid?

The DDA VPS Resource Manager conducts a rate assessment for a child preparing to access services in an Licensed Staffed Residential setting or Child Foster home. The rate is based on the child's needs as identified in the DDA assessment. The rate for staff supports and services is paid by DDA to the service provider directly.

What expenses are family's responsible for?

A parent or legal guardian is not required to contribute financially towards the cost of voluntary placement services. A parent, on behalf of their child, must apply for all benefits for which they are eligible, such as Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance. These benefits go towards the child's cost of care. This is known as client responsibility, and covers the basic expenses for food and shelter. A parent or guardian must pay for the child's clothing, activities, special events and gifts.

What is the role of the representative payee?

The child's representative payee manages the child's countable income and uses those funds towards the cost of the child's rent, utilities, food, and other personal items. The representative payee also monitors the child's account to maintain eligibility for supplemental security income (SSI) and medicaid. Children receiving VPS are required to have a representative payee.

What happens when a client turns 18 in VPS?

If a client turns eighteen while receiving VPS, a new Shared Parenting Plan and Voluntary Placement Agreement are completed. The provider, DDA social worker, youth, and family collaborate to determine if the youth should remain in VPS or transition to adult services. Clients can remain in VPS until age 21, as long as they are enrolled in school.

If the client remains in VPS past age 18 and requires assistance with medication administration, DDA will submit a referral for nurse delegation services if needed.

What are some of the other things I should know about Voluntary Placement Services?

- Providers have a choice about who they want to serve. They can also choose to end services if they do not feel they can meet the client's needs.
- Licensed staff residential and group care facility agencies hire staff to work with clients. Most service providers have a core team of employees for a home; however, at times there is staff turnover. The service provider hires and trains their employees.
- There is a limited number of programs licensed to provide VPS statewide. The client may need to move from their family's local community to receive voluntary placement services; however, DDA will work to keep children close to their families whenever possible.
- Finding a home that meets a client's needs can take time. Among other factors, DDA considers the following when searching for a child's temporary, out-of-home placement: accessibility, nurse delegation, gender preferences, and appropriate housemate matches.