

Laredo and Webb County First 90 Days Checklist



Get matched with a BCBA
secure.alpacahealth.io/signup

Gather the paperwork in week 1

Health plans, clinics, schools and Border Region each ask for some of these papers. Keep them in one folder and make copies of the diagnosis report.

☐ **The full written diagnosis report**

Texas Medicaid looks for the DSM criteria, the severity level and the name of the standardized test used, such as the ADOS. A screening checklist like the M-CHAT does not count on its own.

☐ **A signed referral for an ABA evaluation**

Texas Medicaid needs a signed, dated referral before an ABA evaluation. Your child's primary care provider or the diagnosing doctor can write it.

☐ **Your child's Medicaid or insurance card, proof of income and proof of where you live**

Border Region asks for all of these at an IDD intake appointment, and it uses the parents' income for a child. Driscoll Children's asks you to bring every insurance and Medicaid card to each visit.

☐ **A written evaluation request to your school district, if your child is 3 or older**

Give it to the district's special education director or your child's principal, and keep a dated copy. A request made only by phone or in person does not start the 15 school day clock.

☐ **Earlier evaluations and school records**

Driscoll Children's asks for copies of any earlier testing from ECI, the school, therapists or a psychologist. UT Health San Antonio asks for earlier hearing, speech, neurology or school testing.

☐ **Papers for a Medicaid application**

Your Texas Benefits asks about each applicant's Social Security number and birth date, citizenship or immigration status, money from jobs and other sources, and the bills you pay.

☐ **A folder for every letter you get**

Texas HHS mails a letter when your child is added to the HCS or TxHmL waiver interest list. Keep it, because the letter shows your child is on the list.

Make the first calls in week 1

Who to call and how	What they do
CACOST Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), under 3. Call 361-265-4502 to refer your child. Webb and Zapata office, 5709 Springfield Avenue, Laredo, TX 78041.	Evaluates your child's development and brings services to your home or child care. The evaluation, case management and interpreters cost nothing. ECI asks permission to bill your insurance, other services use a sliding-scale family fee based on family size and income, and no family is turned away for not being able to pay. Anyone can refer. United ISD lists it as ECI Project Niños.
Laredo ISD Department of Special Education Services, 3 and older. (956) 273-1500. 2400 San Bernardo Ave., Laredo, TX 78040.	Put your evaluation request in writing to the special education director or your child's principal. The district then has 15 school days to send you consent forms or a written refusal. Its Child Find steps are posted in English and Spanish.
United ISD Special Education Office, ages 3 to 21. (956) 473-2047.	Handles Child Find for United ISD, and the same 15 school day rule applies to a written request. United ISD says services schools provide under special education law cost parents nothing.
Texas Parent to Parent, any age. 866-896-6001.	Staff are parents of children with disabilities. They take calls, run weekly Zoom support groups in English and in Spanish, and share a Care Notebook for keeping records.
TEAM Project, Partners Resource Network, birth to 26. 1-877-832-8945. Region 1 coordinator, who speaks Spanish, 956-477-9526.	The federally funded parent center for Education Service Center Region 1, which includes Webb County. It helps you understand your child's special education rights and take part in school meetings, at no cost to parents.

Set up how therapy gets paid for

Start with the coverage your child has now. If your child has no coverage yet, the Medicaid application is the first thing to send.

☐ Know that Texas Medicaid covers ABA for children under 21

Since February 1, 2022, Texas Medicaid has covered applied behavior analysis (ABA) evaluation and treatment for members 20 and younger with an autism diagnosis. It comes through Texas Health Steps, the Texas name for EPSDT, which stands for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment. Under EPSDT, Texas Medicaid has to pay for a listed service that is medically necessary to correct or improve a child's condition, even when it does not cover that service for other members. The ABA provider asks the health plan for approval before therapy starts.

☐ Find out whether your child belongs in STAR Kids, and save your plan's number

STAR Kids is the Texas Medicaid program for children and youth 20 and younger with disabilities, and every member gets a service coordinator. A child on Medicaid is enrolled if the child also gets SSI, has Medicare, or is in a waiver such as HCS or CLASS. Webb County's STAR Kids plans are Driscoll Health Plan, 1-877-324-7543, Superior HealthPlan, 1-844-590-4883, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, 1-877-597-7799.

☐ If your child does not have Medicaid yet, apply online or call 2-1-1

Apply at YourTexasBenefits.com, at a Texas HHS benefits office, or by calling 2-1-1. A child has to be enrolled in Medicaid before STAR Kids can start.

☐ Ask about Medicaid Buy-In for Children if you earn too much for Medicaid

This program offers low-cost Medicaid to children 18 and younger with a disability whose families make too much money for Medicaid. The child has to be a U.S. citizen or a qualified non-citizen living in Texas. The monthly payment can be up to \$230. Apply the same ways as for Medicaid.

☐ If you have private insurance, ask whether the Texas autism law applies to your plan

Texas Insurance Code section 1355.015 applies to state-regulated group health plans. It requires them to pay for autism treatment your child's primary care doctor prescribes, which can include ABA, speech, occupational and physical therapy, when the diagnosis was in place before age 10. From age 10, a plan may cap ABA at \$36,000 a year, and deductibles and copays can still apply. The Texas Department of Insurance says the state does not regulate self-funded plans, so ask your plan which kind it is. The TDI help line is 800-252-3439.

Join the waiver interest lists this month

Each Texas Medicaid waiver has its own interest list, and you sign up for each one separately. The Arc of Texas reports waits as long as 16 years for some waivers.

☐ Call Border Region Behavioral Health Center for the HCS and TxHmL lists

Border Region is the local IDD authority for Webb, Zapata, Jim Hogg and Starr counties. Call its IDD intake worker at (956) 794-3148, or the main line at (956) 794-3000, and ask to add your child to both lists.

☐ Call 877-438-5658 for the CLASS, MDCP and DBMD lists

This Texas HHS interest list line takes requests for all three. Write down the date of your call.

☐ Join even if you are not sure your child qualifies

The Arc of Texas says you do not have to prove eligibility to join a waiver list, because eligibility is checked when your child reaches the top. Texas HHS rules say the same for HCS and TxHmL.

☐ Check your child's place in line online

The Arc of Texas says you can see each list your child is on, and your place in line, under Interest List Manager in your YourTexasBenefits.com account. Keep your phone number and address current there and with Border Region.

☐ Read the full steps in the Texas Medicaid waivers guide

Alpaca Health's guide explains each of the six Texas waivers and how to apply, at alpacahealth.io/family-resources/texas-medicaid-waivers-your-guide-to-approval.

☐ While you wait, ask 2-1-1 about the Children's Autism Program

This Texas HHS program provides focused ABA through local contractors for children 3 to 15 with an autism diagnosis, up to 180 hours in 12 months. Parent training is part of it. Call 2-1-1 to find the contractor closest to Laredo.

Get a full evaluation if you still need one

Where and how to reach them	How to get an appointment
Gateway Community Health Center, West Clinic, 1702 Lafayette Street, Laredo, TX 78041. (956) 795-8100.	Gateway's site lists a developmental behavioral pediatrician at this clinic. It does not say whether she evaluates for autism, so ask when you call. Gateway has a sliding fee discount for families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, with proof of income.
Driscoll Children's Hospital, Developmental Pediatric Medicine, 3533 S. Alameda St., Corpus Christi, TX 78411. (361) 694-5650.	Your child's primary care doctor sends a referral. The clinic mails you questionnaires, and you return them with copies of earlier testing before it books the first visit, which lasts 60 to 90 minutes.
UT Health San Antonio, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics, Pediatric Subspecialties Clinic, 8435 Wurzbach Rd., Suite 311, San Antonio, TX 78229. 210-450-7334.	Your child's primary care provider refers you. For an autism concern, the provider also has to refer your child for a hearing test and a speech and language evaluation.
Alpaca Health, autism evaluation, for children and teens. alpacahealth.io/autism-evaluation	Alpaca Health offers insurance-covered ADOS-2 evaluations and checks your coverage before anything is scheduled. Ask where the evaluation would take place.

The Driscoll Children's and UT Health San Antonio pages do not list telehealth for these evaluations, so ask about video visits when you call. Bring every insurance and Medicaid card and copies of earlier testing. Texas Medicaid accepts an autism diagnosis from a developmental pediatrician, neurologist, psychiatrist, licensed psychologist or diagnostic team.

Apply for grants and money

Program and who can apply	What it pays for and how to apply
PDSES, Parent-Directed Special Education Services. Texas public school students, Pre-K to 12th grade, with an IEP, who have not had a PDSES grant before.	A one-time \$1,500 online account for learning materials and services such as extra speech therapy or tutoring, first-come, first-served. Join the 2026 to 2027 email list at spedtex.org or call SPEDTex at 1-855-773-3839.
More grants for Texas families.	Alpaca Health's Texas autism grants guide lists more Texas and national grants and how to apply, at alpacahealth.io/family-resources/texas-autism-grants .
SSI, Supplemental Security Income. Apply at ssa.gov or call 1-800-772-1213, weekdays 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time.	A monthly payment for a child under 18 whose condition causes marked and severe functional limits expected to last at least 12 months. Social Security counts part of the parents' income and resources.
Texas ABLE account. A person whose disability began before age 46.	A savings account for qualified disability expenses. Since January 1, 2026, people whose disability began before age 46 can open one. Learn more at texasable.org or call 844-489-2253.

Find respite and things to do together

These programs serve families in Laredo and Webb County. Call ahead, since schedules change.

☐ **Search Take Time Texas for respite near Laredo**

Respite means someone else looks after your child while you take a break. Take Time Texas is the Texas HHS respite search, by area and by your child's age, in English or Spanish.

☐ **Ask CACOST about ECI respite, if your child is under 3**

CACOST's early intervention program lists respite among its services, to give families short-term relief. Call 361-265-4502.

☐ **Ask Border Region about respite through its IDD services**

Border Region's IDD services list respite in or out of the home, planned or in an emergency, for a person's unpaid caregiver. Ask the IDD intake line, (956) 794-3148, what your child can get.

☐ **Sign up for Special Olympics Texas, Area 21 Laredo**

Special Olympics Texas runs sports for people with intellectual disabilities, and Area 21 covers Laredo and the rest of Webb County. Find the Area 21 contact and the athlete sign-up steps at sotx.org.

☐ **Join 1, 2, 3 Play with Me at the Laredo Public Library, for ages 1 to 3**

This five-week parent and child workshop runs at the Joe A. Guerra Laredo Public Library and the McKendrick Ochoa Salinas Branch Library. An expert on child development is on hand to answer your questions. Call (956) 795-2400 to ask when the next session starts.

Get help in Spanish

Each of these offers help in Spanish. Todos estos recursos ofrecen ayuda en español.

☐ **Autism Society of Texas Spanish line, 512-479-4199, ext. 3**

The Spanish line gives information and referrals at no cost. The society also runs a statewide online support group in Spanish, Grupo de Apoyo para Padres y Cuidadores. It has no in-person group in Laredo.

☐ **Texas Parent to Parent support calls in Spanish, Mondays at 12 p.m.**

Register for the weekly Zoom call at txp2p.org, which has a Spanish version, or call 866-896-6001.

☐ **TEAM Project Region 1 coordinator, 956-477-9526**

The Region 1 coordinator speaks Spanish and helps with your child's school rights and meetings, at no cost to parents. Email Teamregion1@prntexas.org.

☐ **SPEDTex, 1-855-773-3839**

SPEDTex is the Texas special education information center for families. Its website works in English and Spanish, with live chat and email at inquire@spedtex.org.

☐ **Avancemos Juntos Texas**

This is the Spanish version of the Texas HHS website for families of children with disabilities, at navigatelifetexas.org/es.

Save these crisis numbers now

Put these numbers in your phone before you need them. If anyone is in danger or needs emergency medical care, call 911.

☐ **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**

Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org, at any hour of any day. Conversations are free and confidential, and text and chat are available in Spanish.

☐ **Border Region 24-hour crisis hotline, 1-800-643-1102**

The hotline answers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with information, support, referrals and screening.

☐ **Ask about Border Region's Mobile Crisis Outreach Team**

The team goes to homes, schools and other places to give emergency care to someone in a mental health crisis who cannot get to an office.

☐ **Ask Border Region about crisis help for a child with an intellectual or developmental disability**

Border Region lists crisis intervention and crisis respite among its IDD services. Call the IDD intake line, (956) 794-3148, to ask how to get this help before a crisis happens.

Your call log

Date	Who I called	Who I spoke to	What they told me	Next step and date

Questions to ask on each call

Write down each answer with the date and the name of the person you spoke to.

☐ **Does my child's diagnosis report meet Texas Medicaid's rules for ABA?**

Ask the evaluator. Texas Medicaid looks for the DSM criteria, the severity level and a standardized diagnostic test, made or reconfirmed within the last 3 years.

☐ **Which STAR Kids plan is my child in, and who is our service coordinator?**

Ask your plan's member services line.

☐ **On what date did the school district receive my written request?**

The 15 school days start on that date. Once you sign consent, Texas gives the district 45 school days to finish the evaluation.

☐ **Is my child on the HCS and TxHmL lists, and what is our request date?**

Ask Border Region at (956) 794-3148. Texas HHS serves the person who has waited longest first.

☐ **Is my child on the CLASS, MDCP and DBMD lists?**

Ask the Texas HHS interest list line at 877-438-5658, and write down the date of your call.

☐ **Does my private plan follow Texas Insurance Code 1355.015?**

Ask your health plan whether it is state-regulated or self-funded, and whether ABA needs approval before it starts.

☐ **Does this clinic take my child's plan, and can any visits be by video?**

Ask Gateway, Driscoll Children's and UT Health San Antonio how long the current wait is, and compare the answers in your log.

☐ **Which Children's Autism Program contractor is closest to Laredo?**

Ask 2-1-1, and ask the contractor whether it has room for your child.

Sources

Sources change over time, so check each one before you act on it.

Community Action Corporation of South Texas (CACOST), Early Childhood Intervention

<https://cacost.org/programs/early-childhood-intervention/>

United ISD, Child Find (read through the Internet Archive copy of October 30, 2025)

<https://www.uisd.net/child-find>

Laredo ISD, Department of Special Education Services

<https://www.laredoisd.org/page/special-education>

Texas Education Agency, Special Education Initial Referral Timeline (PDF, 2024)

https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2024-09/special-education-initial-referral-timeline_2024.pdf

Texas Parent to Parent

<https://www.txp2p.org/>

Partners Resource Network, TEAM Project

<https://prntexas.org/texas-ptis/team-project-2/>

Region One Education Service Center, about Region One and the counties it serves

<https://www.esc1.net/about>

TMHP, autism services benefits effective February 1, 2022

<https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-07-30-hhsc-release-autism-services-benefits-effective-february-1-2022>

TMPPM, Children's Services Handbook, September 2026, sections 2.1 and 2.3 (PDF)

https://www.tmhp.com/sites/default/files/file-library/resources/provider-manuals/tmppm/pdf-chapters/2026/2026-09-september/2_04_childrens_services.pdf

Texas HHS, STAR Kids (read through the Internet Archive copy of December 8, 2025)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip/medicaid-chip-members/star-kids>

Texas HHS Handbooks, STAR Kids plans and member services numbers by service area

<https://fhhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/star-kids-program-support-unit-operational-procedures-handbook/appendix-xxvi-star-kids-plan-codes>

Sources (continued)

Driscoll Health Plan, member services

<https://www.driscollhealthplan.com/>

Your Texas Benefits, apply for benefits (read through the Internet Archive copy of September 15, 2026)

<https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home>

Texas HHS, Medicaid Buy-In for Children (read through the Internet Archive copy of January 3, 2026)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip/medicaid-chip-programs-services/programs-children-adults-disabilities/medicaid-buy-children>

Texas Insurance Code, chapter 1355, sections 1355.002 and 1355.015 (read through the Internet Archive copy of December 11, 2025)

<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/IN/htm/IN.1355.htm>

Texas Department of Insurance, health care coverage guide (read through the Internet Archive copy of August 7, 2026)

<https://www.tdi.texas.gov/pubs/consumer/cb005.html>

Texas HHS Handbooks, LIDDA handbook section 7000, HCS and TxHmL interest lists

<https://fhhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/local-intellectual-developmental-disability-authority-handbook/7000-hcs-txhtml-interest-lists>

Border Region Behavioral Health Center, IDD local authority, intake line, required documents and crisis services

<https://www.borderregion.org/admission.htm>

Border Region Behavioral Health Center, IDD programs and services, including respite

https://www.borderregion.org/programs_services.htm

Border Region Behavioral Health Center, children's mental health, crisis hotline and mobile crisis team

https://www.borderregion.org/services_children.htm

The Arc of Texas, Medicaid waivers

<https://www.thearcoftexas.org/resources/medicaid-waivers/>

Texas HHS, Children's Autism Program (read through the Internet Archive copy of February 9, 2026)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/autism>

Sources (continued)

Gateway Community Health Center, Developmental Pediatrics

<https://gatewaychc.com/developmental-pediatrics/>

Gateway Community Health Center, West Clinic address and phone

<https://gatewaychc.com/gateway-community-health-center-west-clinic/>

Gateway Community Health Center, sliding fee discount

<https://gatewaychc.com/sliding-fee-discount/>

Driscoll Children's Hospital, Developmental Pediatric Medicine

<https://driscollchildrens.org/specialty/developmental-pediatric-medicine/>

UT Health San Antonio, Section of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics

<https://lsom.uthscsa.edu/pediatrics/divisions/section-of-developmental-behavioral-pediatrics/>

SPEDTex, Parent-Directed Special Education Services (PDSES)

<https://spedtex.org/resources/pdses>

Social Security Administration, SSI for children, 2026 edition

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-child-ussi.htm>

Social Security Administration, contact by phone

<https://www.ssa.gov/agency/contact/phone.html>

Texas ABLE, expanded ABLE eligibility in 2026

<https://www.texasable.org/expanded-able-eligibility/>

Texas HHS, Take Time Texas respite search (read through the Internet Archive copy of October 31, 2025)

<https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/taketimetexas/>

Special Olympics Texas, area offices and the counties each area serves (read through the Internet Archive copy of October 30, 2025)

<https://www.sotx.org/area-offices/uxaysfdb.html>

Sources (continued)

Special Olympics Texas, become an athlete (read through the Internet Archive copy of September 11, 2025)

<https://www.sotx.org/become-an-athlete>

Laredo Public Libraries, Family Place Libraries

<https://www.laredolibrary.org/library-services/family-place-libraries/>

Laredo Public Libraries, contact and branch phone numbers

<https://www.laredolibrary.org/contact-ask-librarian/>

Autism Society of Texas, Connection Groups and Spanish help line (read through the Internet Archive copy of April 8, 2026)

<https://www.texasautismsociety.org/support/>

Avancemos Juntos Texas, Texas HHS site for families, in Spanish

<https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/es>

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

<https://988lifeline.org/>

Alpaca Health, autism evaluation

<https://www.alpacahealth.io/autism-evaluation>

Alpaca Health, Texas Medicaid waivers guide

<https://www.alpacahealth.io/family-resources/texas-medicaid-waivers-your-guide-to-approval>

Alpaca Health, Texas autism grants guide

<https://www.alpacahealth.io/family-resources/texas-autism-grants>

Alpaca Health, insurance

<https://www.alpacahealth.io/insurance>

Alpaca Health, ABA therapy in Texas

<https://www.alpacahealth.io/states/texas>

This kit is general information and is not medical or legal advice. Talk to a qualified professional about your child's situation.

Start ABA therapy in Texas with Alpaca Health

Alpaca Health accepts Texas Medicaid and private insurance plans. It matches Texas families with an independent Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), and it handles the insurance paperwork, from checking your child's coverage to sending claims after each session. Depending on where your family lives, therapy can happen at home or by video.



When you are ready

[Start with Alpaca Health →](https://secure.alpacahealth.io/signup)

<https://secure.alpacahealth.io/signup>



Scan to open

Read the Texas Medicaid waivers guide <https://www.alpacahealth.io/family-resources/texas-medicaid-waivers-your-guide-to-approval>