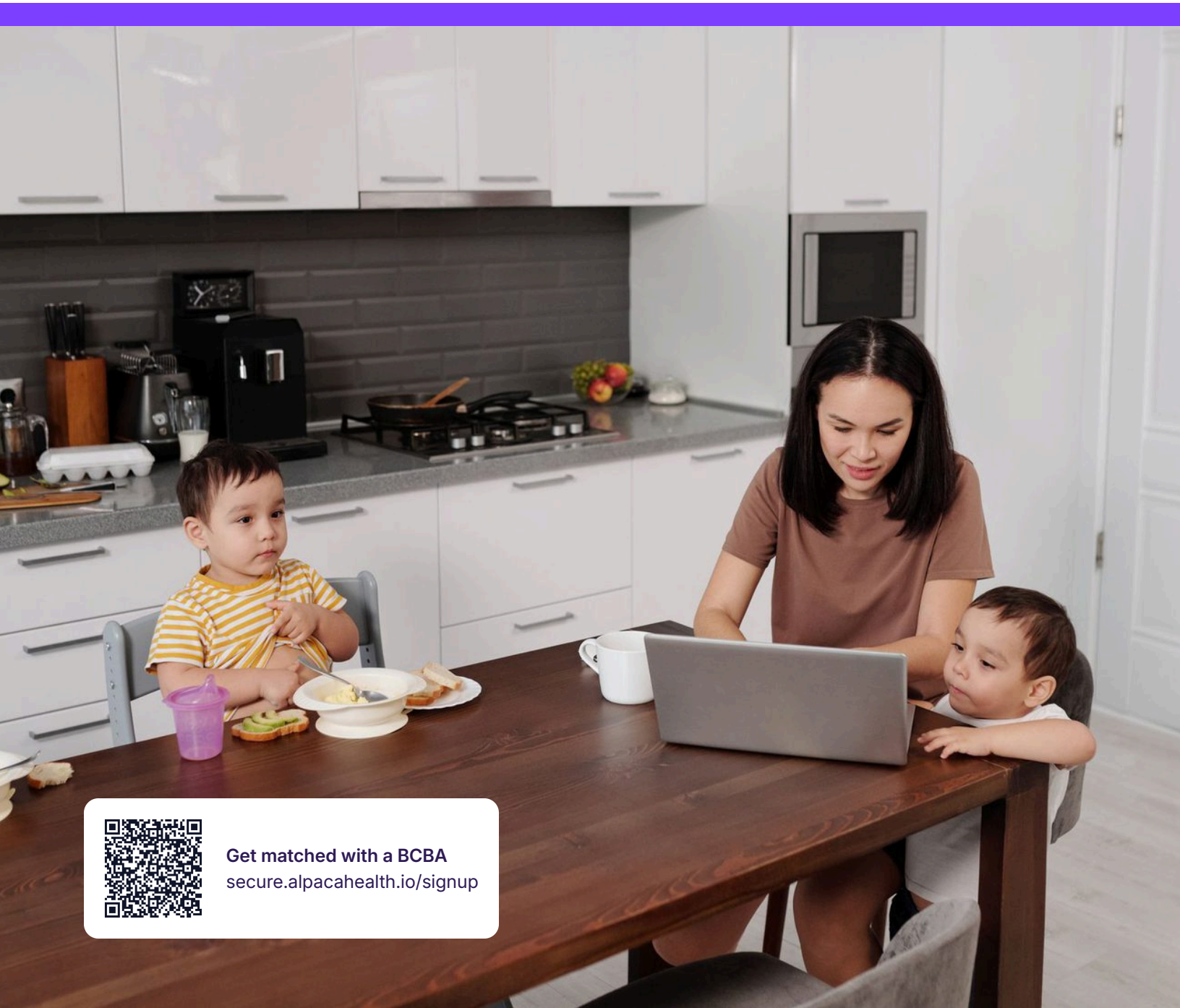


Texas Medicaid Waiver **Interest List Kit**

Who to call for each of the six Texas Medicaid waivers, and what your family can do while you wait.



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

How Texas Medicaid waiver interest lists work

Texas has six Medicaid waivers that can serve children: MDCP, CLASS, HCS, TxHmL, DBMD, and YES. All six are home and community-based 1915(c) waivers. They pay for services in your home and community so your child does not have to live in an institution. Five of the six look at your child's income only and do not count parent income.

Each waiver has its own interest list, and you have to sign up for each one separately. Places generally go to people in the order they joined, so your place starts on the day you call, and the Arc of Texas reports waits as long as 16 years on some lists.



Good to know

Being on an interest list does not guarantee your child a spot, because Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) enrolls people as funding allows. When your turn comes, HHSC or your local authority contacts you and you have to answer quickly. If they cannot reach you, your record can be marked inactive and your enrollment release can be closed. Keep your phone number and mailing address current with every program, and call right away if you think you missed a notice, because a closed release can sometimes be reopened.

The six Texas Medicaid waivers

Waiver	Who it is for	What it covers	Where to apply
MDCP (Medically Dependent Children Program)	Children under 21 with medically complex needs who would otherwise need to live in a nursing facility	Respite care, flexible family support services, employment assistance, minor home modifications	Call HHSC at 1-877-438-5658
CLASS (Community Living Assistance and Support Services)	People with a related condition, which is a disability other than an intellectual disability that began before age 22	Respite, employment services, support family services, behavioral support, nursing, specialized therapies, adaptive aids	Call HHSC at 1-877-438-5658
HCS (Home and Community-based Services)	People of any age with an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD)	Residential support, individualized skills and socialization, employment assistance, respite, supported employment	Contact your local LIDDA

The six Texas Medicaid waivers (continued)

Waiver	Who it is for	What it covers	Where to apply
TxHmL (Texas Home Living)	People with IDD who live in their family home or their own home	Respite, individualized skills and socialization, employment assistance	Contact your local LIDDA
DBMD (Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities)	People with deafblindness plus at least one other significant disability	Intervener services, orientation and mobility training, supported employment	Call HHSC at 1-877-438-5658
YES Waiver	Children and youth ages 3 through 18 with serious mental, emotional and behavioral difficulties	Respite, community living supports, family supports, specialized therapies, paraprofessional services, adaptive aids	Contact your local LMHA

LIDDA is your Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority, and LMHA is your Local Mental Health Authority. Find your LIDDA in the Texas HHS directory at resources.hhs.texas.gov/directories/lidda. Find your LMHA with the mental health services search form and the service area map on hhs.texas.gov, both linked in the references.

Join every list your child qualifies for

You can ask for every list your child qualifies for on the same day. Three of the six waivers go through the HHSC number, two through your LIDDA, and one through your LMHA.

☐ **Call HHSC at 1-877-438-5658 and ask for the MDCP interest list**

MDCP, the Medically Dependent Children Program, serves children under 21 with medically complex needs who would otherwise need to live in a nursing facility.

☐ **In that same call, ask for the CLASS interest list**

CLASS is for a child with a related condition, which Texas defines as a disability other than an intellectual disability that began before age 22.

☐ **In that same call, ask for the DBMD interest list**

DBMD is for a child who has both deafblindness and at least one other significant disability.

☐ **Call your local LIDDA and ask for the HCS interest list**

Your LIDDA office handles HCS enrollment in your area, so call your LIDDA directly. Find yours in the Texas HHS LIDDA directory at resources.hhs.texas.gov/directories/lidda.

Join every list your child qualifies for (continued)

☐ Ask that same LIDDA for the TxHmL interest list

TxHmL serves people with IDD who live in their family home or their own home. Its services include respite, employment services, and individualized skills and socialization, the service Texas used to call day habilitation.

☐ Call your local LMHA and ask to be added to the YES Waiver inquiry list

YES serves ages 3 through 18 with serious mental, emotional and behavioral difficulties. Enrollment runs through your Local Mental Health Authority, and Texas calls this list an inquiry list, so use that term when you call. Find your LMHA with the mental health services search on hhs.texas.gov.

☐ Join every list your child qualifies for on the same day

You have to sign up for each waiver separately, so ask for every list your child qualifies for while you have each office on the phone. The Arc of Texas advises families to join the waiver lists as early in a child's life as possible.

☐ Give every program a phone number and mailing address you check often

If you move or change your phone number, tell HHSC and your local authority right away. If they cannot reach you when your turn comes, your record can be marked inactive and your enrollment release can be closed.

How to apply

Step 1: Call the right number for your waiver

Call HHSC at 1-877-438-5658 for MDCP, CLASS, and DBMD. Call your local LIDDA for HCS and TxHmL, and your local LMHA for YES. In each call, ask to be added to the list for every waiver your child qualifies for.

Step 2: Join the lists the same day

Each waiver has its own list and its own sign-up, so ask for every program your child qualifies for in the same round of calls. Joining early matters, because places generally go to people in the order they joined.

Step 3: Check in with each program once a year

Call each program once a year to confirm that your child is still on the list and that your phone number and mailing address are current. Write down the date, who you spoke to, and what they told you.

Step 4: Answer right away when a program contacts you

When your turn comes, HHSC or your local authority contacts you. If they cannot reach you, your record can be marked inactive and your enrollment release can be closed, so keep your phone number and mailing address current with every program you have applied to. If you think you missed a notice, call the program right away, because a closed release can sometimes be reopened.

Your yearly check-in and contact log

Date	Program	Who I spoke to	What they told me	Next step

What to do while you wait

The Arc of Texas reports waits as long as 16 years for some Texas Medicaid waivers, so join the lists now. Your child can still get services during those years without a waiver slot, and Texas HHS says getting other services does not change your child's place on an interest list.

- ☐ **Start ABA therapy, speech therapy, and OT through the Texas Medicaid State Plan now**

Texas Medicaid's State Plan covers these services for children under 21 through the EPSDT benefit, short for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment, with no waiver enrollment needed. If your child is not getting them through Medicaid yet, that is the first thing to set up.

- ☐ **Ask your HHSC caseworker whether your child qualifies for Community First Choice**

Texas started the Community First Choice Option in 2015. It pays for attendant care and habilitation services for Medicaid recipients who meet an institutional level of care. There is no interest list for Community First Choice, and Texas is letting some people on waiver interest lists use it while they wait.

- ☐ **Check Medicaid Buy-In for Children if your income is over the standard limit**

Children 18 and younger with a disability can get Medicaid coverage through this program. The monthly payment depends on your family income and on whether your child has employer coverage, and it ranges from nothing up to \$230.

- ☐ **Apply for the PDSES grant as soon as the window opens**

The PDSES grant gives a one-time \$1,500 benefit for approved educational services that support a child's learning. It is for parents of students who get special education services in a Texas public school. Applications open once a year through the Texas Education Agency, and funds are first-come, first-served.

What to do while you wait (continued)

☐ **Apply to ACT Today for help paying for autism services**

ACT Today gives grants for autism treatment and services, and its grants typically run between \$100 and \$5,000.

☐ **Look up private-pay ABA rates if you need to start before funding comes through**

If you need to start before Medicaid approval or grant funding comes through, ask providers near you what they charge per hour and check what autism services your health plan covers.

☐ **Call a Texas advocacy organization for free help**

Texas Parent to Parent, Disability Rights Texas, and Partners Resource Network offer free support and advocacy for families of children with disabilities. Protect TX Fragile Kids is a parent-run nonprofit that advocates on Texas policy for medically complex children. The Arc of Texas publishes a guide to the waivers and tracks how many Texans are waiting.

Sources

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

Texas HHS, long-term services and supports waiver comparison (PDF, revised September 5 2025)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/providers/resources/ltss-waivers.pdf>

Texas HHS, explanation of IDD services and supports (PDF, revised August 2025)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/providers/long-term-care/lidda/iddserviceeng.pdf>

Texas HHS, LIDDA directory

<https://resources.hhs.texas.gov/directories/lidda>

Texas HHS, find your local mental health or behavioral health authority

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/mental-health-substance-use-resources/find-your-local-mental-health-or-behavioral-health-authority>

Texas HHS, Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/long-term-care-providers/medically-dependent-children-program-mdcp>

Texas HHS, Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/long-term-care-providers/community-living-assistance-support-services-class>

Texas HHS, Texas Home Living (TxHmL)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/long-term-care-providers/texas-home-living-txhtml>

Texas HHS, Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/long-term-care-providers/deaf-blind-multiple-disabilities-dbmd>

Texas HHS, YES Waiver

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/childrens-mental-health/yes-waiver>

Texas HHS, interest list reduction

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/about/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction>

Sources (continued)

Texas HHS, 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>

Texas HHS, STAR Kids handbook section 2100, activities following MDCP interest list release

<https://fhhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/star-kids-program-support-unit-operational-procedures-handbook/2100-activities-following-mdcp-interest-list-release>

Texas HHS, STAR Kids handbook section 2300, interest list release closures

<https://fhhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/star-kids-program-support-unit-operational-procedures-handbook/2300-interest-list-release-closures>

Texas HHS, Community First Choice

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/resources/community-first-choice-cfc>

Texas HHS, Community First Choice questions and answers (PDF)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/services/health/medicaid-chip/programs/community-first-choice/cfc-faqs.pdf>

Texas HHS, Medicaid Buy-In for Children

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

Texas HHS, applied behavior analysis for Medicaid members (PDF)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/applied-behavior-flyer.pdf>

Medicaid.gov, Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment

<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/early-and-periodic-screening-diagnostic-and-treatment>

Medicaid.gov, 1915(c) home and community-based services waivers

<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/home-community-based-services-authorities/home-community-based-services-1915c>

Texas Education Agency, Parent Directed Special Education Services (PDSES)

<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/parent-directed-special-education-services-pdses>

Sources (continued)

Texas Education Agency, PDES school system requirements and program updates

<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/pdes-school-system-requirements-program-updates>

ACT Today, autism grant questions

<https://www.act-today.org/apply-for-grant/autism-care-today-grant-faq/>

The Arc of Texas, Medicaid waivers

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

Texas Parent to Parent

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

Disability Rights Texas

<https://disabilityrightstx.org/>

Partners Resource Network

<https://prntexas.org/>

Protect TX Fragile Kids

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

Alpaca Health, insurance and Texas Medicaid

<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 in Texas while you wait for a waiver

A Texas Medicaid waiver can take a decade or more to come through. Texas Medicaid's State Plan EPSDT benefit funds ABA for children under 21 now, with no waiver needed, so your child can start therapy while you stay on the interest lists. Alpaca Health accepts Texas Medicaid and STAR Kids, and covers applied behavior analysis under the EPSDT benefit. Alpaca Health also matches families in Texas with independent BCBAs.



When you are ready

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



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