

## DESE/DDS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FY '12

### **DESE/DDS Program Overview:**

The DESE/DDS Program is designed to provide supplemental supports to children/young adults determined to need services to prevent a more restrictive educational or out of home residential placement. This Program also provides an increased level of support services to families whose child returns from a residential school placement and requires assistance to remain at home. The intent of the program is to increase family capacity to support their child in the home and community, as well as to provide an individualized plan of supports that promotes skill building, independence, and social integration across the spectrum of the child's home, school and community.

The DESE/DDS Program is administered by the Department of Developmental Services with funding from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Funding for this Program is subject to annual appropriation. Families are active students in the program including selecting the type of service delivery model they wish to use and collaborating on the development of the child's DESE/DDS Support Plan (DDSP) and budget based on the child's needs and goals. Individuals must be eligible for DDS services and meet additional specific program criteria for participation.

### **Overview of Creating a DESE/DDS Individualized Program:**

1. DDS administers a standard needs assessment for each student in the Program. The purpose of the assessment and collection of current documentation on the student is to determine the overall level of supports for the student in the Program. The use of the assessment tool is a way to ascertain what areas are most difficult for the student/family in an effort to ensure these are addressed in the plan of services and supports and thus in the overall individual budget.
2. The family also works with DDS Area staff to determine the type of service delivery option that best suits their situation. Families have two choices of service delivery: they can select a provider from the qualified list to deliver the full array of DESE/DDS Program services or families can choose to self-direct their supports with the help of a Family Navigator from a qualified DESE/DDS Program Provider and the Financial Management Service (currently PPL).
3. Once a family decides on a service delivery option the family then chooses a provider from a master list who are qualified to administer the DESE/DDS Program. All DESE/DDS providers are required to offer Family Service Navigation.
4. The development of a comprehensive, individualized plan of services, the DESE/DDS Support Plan, serves as the foundation for the Program. This should be a person-centered planning process with the family and the student in a lead role with the support of the DDS Area Coordinator and Family Service Navigator. This is an opportunity to identify the student's interests, strengths, support needs, goals, and vision for the future.
5. The family then works with the Family Navigator and DDS Area staff on the completion of the DESE/DDS Support Plan. This plan helps to outline the student's needs, learning styles and helps to establish the short and long-terms goals of the student/family.

6. The individual budget allocation determined by the initial needs assessment and supporting documentation is then created using the DESE/DDS Budget Tool. The final individual budget is approved by DDS staff.
7. The family then works with the Family Navigator to implement services with either with a DESE/DDS Provider or with the Financial Management Service, PPL.
8. The DDS Area staff checks in with the family throughout the year and formally receives reports provided by the staff working with the individual student on a quarterly basis.
9. Prior to the end of the year the services and budget are reviewed and revised for the following fiscal year's DESE DDS Support Plan and Budget Tool development. The availability of funds shapes the final allocation of every DESE DDS Student.

**Service Delivery Options:**

All families participating in the DESE/DDS Program are offered the choice between two different service delivery options, the Provider Assisted Service Model, and the Self-Directed Service Model. These are described in further detail.

**The Provider Assisted Service Model:**

In this model, the provider works closely with the family to implement their individual plan of services and will take on more of the responsibility for arranging services with the family and to hire and manage staff to provide services. The provider agency ensures that the necessary staff is available to deliver the specific services to families as specified in the students' plan of services. The provider agency is also responsible for delivery of Family Service Navigation as well as all fiscal reporting, hiring of staff, payroll, etc.

This model may involve the following activities:

- Providing agency staff to deliver services such as respite or professional supports.
- Interviewing and hiring potential staff identified by the student's family.
- Ensuring that all staff hired meets the minimum qualifications for the specific services they will be providing for the student.
- Utilizing rates established by the Division of Health Care Finance Policy (HCFP) for applicable services and/or negotiate all inclusive rates with families for similar services at rates no higher than applicable HCFP established rates.
- Ensuring that the agency complies with all applicable IRS tax requirements including the issuance of 1099s for independent consultants/contractors who provide professional services, W-2s, and that payments for services are in accordance with IRS regulations.
- Purchasing or paying for goods (adaptive aids, educational reinforcers, specialty clothing, vitamins, etc.) or services as identified in the student's plan of services (YMCA membership, therapeutic activities, camp programs, etc) or reimbursing families for these purchases with the required invoices + receipts.

### **The Self Directed Service Model:**

This model allows families to proactively manage their student's budget using a Fiscal Management Service (FMS) that handles payments for staff and related goods and services. Families are responsible for keeping track of staff hours and for the submission of all invoices for approval for services/supports outlined in the individual budget plan.

DDS currently contracts with Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL) to provide FMS services for DESE/DDS Program families using a program called the DESE Portal. DDS provides PPL with rate tables for services which are the maximum rates allowed. Services may not exceed the published rate; however, families may negotiate lower rates. DDS also provides service caps and related budget information. The DESE Portal's individual budget tool keeps track of expenditures submitted and paid out to help families maintain their budget and account details.

To access this service option the family is required to pay a service fee of 8% and to purchase Family Service Navigation from a qualified DESE/DDS Program provider.

Families who choose this service provision option are required to follow all the rules associated with the provisions of professional supports and related services as well as Family Navigation. Families must also abide by all program service caps and limits set forth on individual goods/service as outlined in this document.

### **Which Service Model to Choose?**

There are advantages and drawbacks to both approaches. The Self-Directed Service Model is ideal for families who like to take control of the provision of the services/supports that their family member receives through the Program. The Provider-Assisted Model assumes more of the responsibilities for the delivery of services which may be preferable for families who do not want the responsibility of hiring and managing staff. The best way to decide which service delivery option is preferable is for the family to discuss these choices with their DDS Area Service Coordinator. PPL can answer questions about managing an individual budget using a Financial Management Service.

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**Family Service Navigation:**

All families are required to receive Family Service Navigation from a qualified DESE/DDS Program provider which will be included in the student's individual plan of services and budget. A minimum of one hour per month, 12 hours per year with a maximum of 48 hours per service year is required. Additional hours over 48 hours per year require prior approval by the DDS Program Manager. Hours of Family Navigation may vary monthly as long as there is at least one hour per month delivered. The responsibilities for the Family Service Navigator are listed below.

**Family Service Navigation in both Service Models includes the following activities:**

- Assisting the family with service planning and the development of the DESE/ DDS Support Plan (DDSP) and the annual individual budget for services to meet the support needs of the student.
- Informing families about their responsibilities for participation in the DESE/DDS Program including providing them a copy of this document.
- Assisting the family to identify and arrange the provision of Professional Supports and other services.
- Maintain communication with the family to provide support, assess progress of student, assist with problem resolution and be available for crisis management as needed. This may occur through home visits, telephone contacts, email communication, attendance at school meetings, etc.
- Monitor service delivery and expenditures of Program budget.
- Maintain regular communication and work collaboratively with DDS staff to provide updates and to engage in joint problem-solving about issues/difficulties with the student's service plan and budget.
- Keep current records for students in the program.
- Complete all reports and other documentation as required by the program including the student's annual budget, budget amendments, mid-year reviews, year end reports and any prior approvals as required for specific goods and services.

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## **I. DESE/DDS Program Professional Services and Supports Overview:**

The intent of the DESE/DDS Program is to help the student remain in their home and to help the student take part in age appropriate community events and outings. In order to help develop the capacity of the student and the family, the DESE/DDS Program requires the use of Professional Supports and Skills Training. These services consist of Behavioral Therapists, Professional Therapists and/or Skills Trainers working in the home or in the community with the student.

All students must receive a **minimum of 3 hours a week** of these Behavioral Therapists, Professional Therapists and/or Skills Trainers. This may be provided by a variety of staff as outlined in the list below. These services can take place before school, after school, in the evening and also over the weekend. The amount and duration of this service is based on the student's needs and overall yearly allocation.

These Professional Therapists and Skills Trainers must be coordinated with any services provided in the student's school program they may not supplant or duplicate those supports. This means collaborating on goals for the student and adjusting the individual's support plan as necessary to accommodate changing needs or adapting to the acquisition of skills. These services must also be provided by staff with demonstrated skills, experience, educational credentials and licensure, where applicable, depending on the discipline. Please refer to DESE/DDS Service Provider Requirements for more detailed personnel qualifications.

### **Please note:**

- Rates for these services are set by HCFP/DDS and must be adhered to by providers and families.
  - These are up to rates, so families are free to negotiate a lower rate as long as it is above the Federal Minimum Wage Rate includes tax fringe etc.
- Families are required to access services provided through state and private insurance before accessing the services through the DESE.
- The family is responsible for any co-payments for these services that are available through their primary insurance.
  - If these co-payments are a financial burden for the family then the family should seek supplemental disability insurance or premium assistance through MassHealth.

### **A. Professional Services and Supports:**

#### **1. Senior Level Behavioral Therapists:**

These therapists such as Licensed Psychologists, ABA therapists, LICSWs, etc. who are working to increase skills of students including communication, socialization and the decreasing of behavioral issues of the student, where applicable. Senior Level Behavioral Therapists are available to all students interested in this type of approach and are not intended for use only for those on the autism spectrum. This may include PhD, or Master's level professionals.

These Senior Level Behavioral Therapists are intended to help with the creation and oversight of a behavior plan. This includes consulting with the family, reviewing data and progress, and the monthly supervision of the behavior plan implementation by the In-Home Behavioral Therapist or Skills Trainer. The behavior therapist is not responsible for the direct implementation of the plan.

The implementation of the Professional Supports behavior plan should be provided by either the In-Home Therapist or Skills Trainer.

**Senior Level Behavioral Therapist Supports Service Requirements:**

- Over 16 hours a year requires approval from the DDS Area Coordinator

**2. In-Home Behavioral Therapists (In-Home Implementation Services):**

The In-Home Behavioral Therapists hold a Master's in Special Education, a BCBA certification or hold a Master's level degree in a related field and all have experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities on the implementation of an in-home behavioral or related program.

**In-Home Behavioral Therapist Service Requirements:**

- In-Home Therapist are required to implement a behavior plan written by qualified school personal or an individual who meets the criteria for the Senior Level Behavioral Therapist
- This is a MA Level Therapist

**3. Specialized Therapists:**

This is designed to help support the acquisition of communication skills, to increase functional skills, or to help address issues related to sensory integration deficits.

- Speech Therapists** or related professional supports who work on the acquisition of expressive and receptive language skills including through augmentative communication devices.
- Physical Therapists** work on the acquisition of motor skills, including proper positioning.
- Occupational Therapists** work on the acquisition of fine motor skills and helps the student become more fully integrated in their home and/or community environments

**Specialized Therapists Service Requirements:**

- Over three visits a week requires approval from the DDS Area Coordinator.

**4. Skills Trainers**

This service is designed to specifically increase the individual's participation in normative home based and community activities. The goal of this skills trainer is to work in the home or go out into the community and participate with the individual in the designated activity or demonstrate the requisite daily living skill developmental technique. If the individual participant also has an in-home behavioral program then the skills trainer should work with the in-home team to support this plan.

**Skills Trainer Service Requirements:**

- This service is not respite care
- Payment for support staff over a vacation period will be reviewed by DDS Area Coordinator and then the Regional DDS Family Support Director

**Mileage for Professional Support + Skills Trainers:**

This covers mileage only for professional support personnel who take the student out to community activities. Mileage costs are not covered for parents/guardians or other

responsible family members who have the normal responsibility of transportation related to their role as a parent/responsible party for the individual.

**Mileage Service Requirements:**

- Yearly cap of \$1000
- Mileage rate cannot exceed the state reimbursement rate, for FY '12, mileage is reimbursed at \$.45 a mile
- Emergency or unusual parent/guardian circumstances will be reviewed on an individual student basis by the DESE/DDS Program Manager

**II. Family Support Services:**

**1. Community Integration Activities:**

These Community Integration Activities are intended to help develop the individual student's ability to more fully participate in community activities and related tasks by developing the social, communication and/or physical skills of the individual student. Activities may also involve specialized family activities that create more normative experiences for the student.

Community Integration Activities include specialized social skills programs, music therapy programs, art therapy programs, specialized sport/swim programs, therapeutic horseback riding and specialized summer camp experiences. It also includes generic community activities available to students in the community.

**Community Integration Activities Service Requirements:**

- Yearly cap of \$3000
- The Program will not pay for fees associated with specialized family activities/vacations that are considered typical family expenses such as hotel fees and plane tickets
- The student's need for additional paid support is provided by either the skills trainer, or potentially by a voluntary/paid peer mentor
- These reimbursements or payments to service providers are subject to the Provider Transaction Processing Fee but are not included in the 30% overall cap for Stipend/Reimbursement Payments

**2. Family Training**

Family training expenses are those that relate to the education and support of other family members to help them support the DESE/DDS student. This can also include the development of a longer-term vision.

These trainings may take on different forms such as:

- Parent Training
  - If the parent/guardian wishes to consult with a provider of the Professional Supports to learn more about a specific strategy or technique the parent can access this support through Parent Training
- Parent Conferences
  - Program funds can be used to pay tuition for a parent to attend a disability related conference or training series
  - The parent assumes responsibility for transportation, lodging + food costs.
- Sibling Supports

Program funds can be used to provide support to siblings to student in activities such as sibling support groups, counseling sessions, trainings, etc.

- **Family Counseling:**
  - This is to assist family members who need to establish coping strategies and related supports.

**Family Training Service Requirements:**

- Yearly cap of \$2500

**3. Respite**

Respite is a service designed to give the parents/guardians of the student a break from providing care for their child. Respite may be provided on a weekly basis and/or over the course of a weekend period if the family desires and overnight stay out of the home.

**Respite Service Requirements:**

- The total hours per worker cannot exceed 40 in one week

**4. Home Maker and Chore Services**

Home maintenance support services such as house cleaning, laundry and cooking are allowable services as they relate to the family's particular situation and care needs of the DESE/DDS student.

It is important that the support provided is above and beyond that of routine cleaning and cooking is in direct relation to the student needs.

**Homemaker and Chore Service Requirements:**

- Yearly cap of \$1000
- DDS has the right to assess the level of need for continued service and will reassess yearly at a minimum

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**Stipend Services/ Reimbursements/ Payments**

The Program offers a variety of other ancillary services paid in the form of a stipend or reimbursement to the family. These services are meant to cover other costs that are unique to families raising children with developmental disabilities and in some cases related special health care needs of the student. These service dollars can be administered directly to families either as a cash payment or as a reimbursement to help cover the cost of certain goods and services. There is a **transaction fee** associated with checks distributed to families for these ancillary services. Families are encouraged to work with the DDS Area Coordinator and Family Navigation Provider to address these fees in the manner that makes most sense for their situation.

**The overall amount of funding allowed for these ancillary stipend/reimbursement services is up to 30% of the total budget of the student.**

**Types of Stipends/Reimbursements:****1. Intermittent Child Care Services and Peer Mentors:**

In general, families utilize natural family supports to assist with the care of the family member with a disability. However, there may be certain circumstances when it is necessary for siblings, other family members or a neighbor to be paid to provide intermittent care to assist in the support of their sibling with a disability in the home.

- In the event of a sibling, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to insure that their non-disabled child has the maturity and capability to provide unsupervised care to their sibling.
- Peer Mentors are individuals around the same age as the student who are willing to work with the individual on an occasional basis to assist with social skill and community integration skills.

**Intermittent Child Care Services and Peer Mentors Service Requirements:**

- Yearly Cap of \$1700
- Families may pay for intermittent respite care via a stipend from the DESE/DDS Program up to the IRS maximum of \$1700 a year (Current as of 2011).
- After the \$1700 cap the person is considered a respite provider. Please review Respite Services definition for more information.

**2. Educational Materials and Reinforcements****—Including All Therapeutic Toys, Games, Books and Electronic Games:**

These materials are intended for use as rewards in a professional support program or for use when needed by student for quiet time or enrichment. These items may be electronics, books, indoor/outdoor toys and games.

**Educational Materials and Reinforcements Service Requirements:**

- Yearly Cap of \$600 and families must work with the Area Service Coordinator and the DESE Family Navigator on a plan for the reimbursement of these funds

**3. Adaptive/Replacement Clothing**

Adaptive Clothing/Replacement clothing costs are intended to cover specialized needs of the individual student such as all cotton or tag-less, specialized closures, Velcro etc.

**Adaptive/Replacement Clothing Service Requirements:**

- Yearly cap of \$750 and families must work with the Area Service Coordinator and the DESE Family Navigator on a plan for the reimbursement of these funds

#### **4. Specialized Nutritional Supplements**

Specialized products may include FDA approved vitamins and specialty food items to help the student maintain optimum health as it relates to medical health and nutritional needs as prescribed by a medical professional. This includes gluten free, casein free, allergy related and other specialized diet plans.

##### **Specialized Nutritional Supplements Service Requirements:**

- Yearly cap of \$2000 a year on specialty diets and vitamins
- Specialized diets require a written prescription from a medical professional/nutritionist

#### **5. Community Outing Costs**

As a part of Community Integration Skill Building, a student may go on outings to local convenience stores and restaurants where the purpose is to get the individual student to develop the skills necessary to interact with service personnel and to learn to act appropriately in these settings. This service covers the costs associated with these outings for the student and the related staff person.

##### **Community Outing Costs Service Requirements:**

- Yearly cap of \$500
- This covers the purchase of the incidental items for the student such as water, slice of pizza, movie ticket, etc.
- The Program does not require receipts for these outings, however families must adhere to the requirements of their DESE /DDS Provider Agency in terms of submission of receipts for this service

#### **6. Uncovered Medical Supplies + Services**

This service covers any uncovered medical supplies that relate to the individual with a disability and are not covered by the family's insurance either private insurance or MassHealth. This might be for a particular type of incontinence supplies, medications, etc. The Program cannot allow the student (or, will not provide funding for the student) to engage in any therapies without scientific efficacy such as Chelation or other non FDA approved therapeutic interventions.

The Program will review and approve the use of the following therapies on an individual participate basis: Acupuncture, Massage Therapy and Bio-Medical Therapies.

##### **Uncovered Medical Supplies + Services**

- Yearly cap of \$2000 on uncovered medical supplies
  - Families must try to access their health insurance benefits first including their primary insurance-private, MassHealth or the state disability insurance (MassHealth Commonwealth) prior to seeking funds from this Program.
- Co-Pays are not an allowable DESE/DDS expense
  - Families are encouraged to seek additional coverage for these costs through their third party insurer or through the state Medicaid Program, MassHealth's Premium Assistance

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These requests will all come through on a Prior Approval Form. These services will not appear on the yearly individual budget as these are one-time special purchases.

**1. Specialized Equipment and Computers**

The equipment and modifications covered under this service category are for the purpose of developing the capacity of the individual student in the areas of physical strength/comfort, communication skills and specialized health needs the help the student remain in the home.

The following are some examples of allowable expenses under this service category.

- Personal computer for use by the Student
- Personal equipment
  - Including specialized seating, positioning boards, and lifts
  - Physical Therapy Evaluation is required prior to purchase
- Specialized/adaptive recreational equipment
  - Including sensory gym equipment, stationary bikes, treadmills, etc.

**Specialized Equipment and Computers Service Requirements:**

- **Prior Approval Request Form must be completed for all purchases**
- **Cap of \$2,000 a year**
- The Program will not pay for items already purchased by the family prior to the submission of this Authorization Form.
- All computer purchases must be aligned with a communication/educational outcome associated with the individual's Professional Supports support plan.
- Replacement Computers considered 3 years after initial computer purchase at the time of the individual's re-assessment
- Children must be at least 10 years old before the Program considers the purchase of an iPad/Tablet or Netbook Device.

**2. Home and Vehicle Modifications:**

The following are some examples of allowable expenses under this service category.

- Specialized bedroom equipment
  - Including individual room air conditioners, air purifiers, adaptive bedding, etc.
- Home safety equipment
  - Including alarms, window guards, personalized GPS devices, fences, etc.
- Bathroom safety
  - Including grab bars, specialized fixtures, etc.

**Home and Vehicle Modifications Service Requirements:**

- **Prior Approval Request Form must be completed for all purchases**
- **Cap of \$5,000 a year**
- The Program will not pay for items already purchased by the family prior to the submission of this Authorization Form.
- There is a lifetime participation cap of one fence per student

- All work done by a contractor or service personnel requires three written bids/estimates for the job

**Overall Budget Requirements:**

1. All DESE/DDS families must work with the Family Support Navigator and the DDS Area Coordinator to complete the DESE/DDS Support Plan prior to the completion of the DESE/DDS Budget Tool.
2. This planning document outlines the needs of the student and helps formulate the creation of the needs based budget.
3. All items and services for the student must fall into one of the allowable goods/services of the Program.
4. All Specialty One-Time Equipment and Home/Vehicle Modification Requests/Purchases require the submission of the Prior Approval Form.
5. Budgets are based on 48 weeks of staffing to accommodate for illness and vacations.
6. The budget may not contain services/supports/costs outside of the DESE/DDS Support Plan nor services included in the student's IEP.
7. The following services costs are prohibited:
  - The Program will not pay any legal fees, including fees associated with guardianship, special education appeals or advocacy fees.
  - The Program cannot pay for rent, mortgage costs, real estate taxes or utilities.
  - The Program cannot pay for any general home improvements that add value to the home such as a spa, pool, addition, etc.
  - DESE/DDS funds cannot supplement provider rates that are set by Health Care Finance and Policy.
  - The Program cannot pay any costs associated with an au-pair or nanny.