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## Introduction...

If your child is under 18, or in some cases, under 22\*, and has, or is at risk of having serious emotional or behavioral difficulties, you can get help through the Virginia Comprehensive Services Act (**CSA**) for At-Risk Youth and Families which provides assistance to children and their families in need of services from multiple agencies.

This handbook describes how you can get help through the **CSA** in the City of Roanoke.

*\*Youths aged 22 and under who are eligible for special education and whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires education in a private school or residential placement are eligible for **CSA** services until the last day of the school year when they turn 22.*

## The Comprehensive Services Act (CSA)...

Is a Virginia law enacted in 1993 to “create a collaborative system of services and funding that is child-centered, family-focused and community-based when addressing the strengths and needs of troubled and at-risk youths and their families in the Commonwealth”. (Virginia Acts of the Assembly, Chapter 880, Section 2.5-745)

This act is intended to improve efforts to meet the needs of families with children and youth who have or who are at risk of having serious emotional or behavioral difficulties.

The goal of the **CSA** is to keep families together and to provide services within the community whenever possible. Through teams required by the **CSA**, state and local agencies are brought together to provide services that will:

- Provide Services to preserve and strengthen families
- Identify at-risk children and families
- Identify needs and help families as early as possible
- Provide services in the least restrictive setting possible
- Design services to meet the specific needs of children and youth
- Increase interagency collaboration and family involvement
- Encourage public and private partnerships
- Provide more community control and flexibility to communities.

## **Who receives services under the CSA?**

Youths who **may** be eligible to receive services fall into one of two groups:

### **Mandated...**

- Those for who services are legally mandated to be provided. These include youth in foster care, youth who have an Individualized Education Program (**IEP**) that requires the youth to receive education in a private day or residential school, and youth who are at risk of removal from their own homes and meet the criteria for Foster Care Prevention Services.

### **Non-mandated\*...**

- Those who are targeted for services, or who are given priority for services. Most are youths who need non-residential programs.
- Those who are eligible for services because they have emotional or behavioral difficulties which are very disabling and require services beyond usual agency services; and/or

*\*These youth are not legally required to receive services but may be served out of limited **CSA** funds when available.*

## **Who takes part in the CSA process?**

The following human service agencies work together to implement the **CSA** in the community:

- Department of Social Services
- Roanoke City Public Schools
- Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare (Community Services Board)
- Department of Health
- 23-A Court Services Unit, Department of Juvenile Justice

In addition to these agencies, Parent Representatives, many of whom also have children with emotional or behavioral difficulties, are appointed from the community. Above all, your involvement is extremely important and welcome. In some cases, Private Providers, are appointed from the community.

### **Teams working together...**

In each community, various teams are working together to implement the **CSA**. In the City of Roanoke, these teams are the:

- **Family Assessment & Planning Team (FAPT)**
- **Roanoke Interagency Council (RIC)**

The following information describes each team and how it functions.

### **Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT)...**

If the needs of your child cannot be met through regular agency services, then you may be referred to a Family Assessment and Planning Team. Family Assessment and Planning Teams are made up of eight appointed members:

- Parent Representative and representatives from the following agencies:
- Department of Social Services

- Roanoke City Public Schools
- Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare
- CSB -- Department of Health
- Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court
- 2 Private Providers

### **What you can expect from the FAPT process...**

The case manager will develop an initial service plan known as an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to meet the needs of your child and your family.

The IFSP is a written plan that includes information about the strengths and needs of your family and child, professionals involved with your family, services that have been provided, and services that are being recommended.

The case manager will deliver the IFSP and any additional supporting documents to the FAPT members prior to the scheduled FAPT review.

Every effort will be made to hold the FAPT meeting at a time that is convenient for you. FAPT meetings take place at the Department of Social Services, 1510 Williamson Road, Roanoke, VA 24012. You may also bring a friend along for support. Accommodations are made for persons needing special arrangements such as interpreters. You are strongly encouraged to attend the FAPT meeting with your case manager.

When you attend a FAPT meeting, the CSA FAPT Coordinator will explain the process of the meeting and introduce you to everyone in the room. Everyone in the room has signed a confidentiality statement.

Your meeting will last approximately 10-20 minutes. Your case manager will present your child's case to the FAPT and make recommendations as to what services are needed. After that, you and your child (if attending) will have the opportunity to discuss your concerns and add any information that you think is relevant to this process. Then others involved with your child may wish to add further information.

You are considered a member of the FAPT team, and will have an important voice in decisions regarding your child. As a member of the team, you should...

- Exchange important information among all team members regarding your child
- Ask questions and receive as much information as possible about services, programs and resources for your child and your family
- Ask for explanation of new or unfamiliar words and phrases.

After open discussion of the information presented, services requested, and resources available, the FAPT decides which services are most appropriate, and develops the IFSP. The FAPT then decides the services that they will approve for funding\*.

Decisions are made by general agreement. If an agreement cannot be reached, a vote will be taken from the attending members of the FAPT, the case manager and the parent or legal guardian.

At the end of the meeting the CSA FAPT Coordinator will:

- restate the plan and goals to make sure they are clear
- review everyone's responsibilities.

Your case manager will have a copy of all forms used in the FAPT meeting. Services agreed upon may not begin until you give written consent, unless ordered by the court system. Please request copies of the paperwork from your case manager.

*\*CSA funds are limited for non-mandated youth and are not always available for FAPT approved services. If funds are not available, your FAPT will suggest alternative services.*

### **How is a case reviewed?**

Each case that comes before a FAPT must be reviewed. The CSA FAPT Coordinator will provide the case manager with the next review date. Reviews may occur at any time from 3 - 12 months, depending upon the type of services approved. It is important to advise your child's case manager of any significant events or changes.

### **What happens if you do not agree with the FAPT?**

At the FAPT meeting, the CSA FAPT Coordinator will explain what to do if you do not agree with the recommendations of the FAPT. Appeals are heard by the Roanoke Interagency Council (RIC). All appeals should be addressed to:

***Chair, the Roanoke Interagency Council  
c/o CSA FAPT Coordinator Department of Social Services  
1510 Williamson Road  
Roanoke, VA 24012***

### **Roanoke Interagency Council (RIC)...**

Referred to in the Comprehensive Services Act as the Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT), this is a policy-making team that oversees the implementation of the CSA and makes all FAPT appointments. This team oversees funding, helps agencies to work together and hears appeals on FAPT decisions. It is also responsible for implementing new legislation that affects the CSA. Members of the CPMT are appointed by the local governing body of the City of Roanoke.

#### **Members include:**

- Director of Human Services,
- Chief Service Supervisor, Department of Social Services
- Director of Child and Family Services, Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare - CSB
- Director, Department of Health
- Director, 23A Court Service Unit
- Parent Representative
- Private Service providers

### **Who pays for CSA services?**

The Commonwealth of Virginia and your local government contribute significant funds to the CSA services. However, as of January 1996, Virginia law also requires you, as your child's parent or legal guardian, to contribute toward the cost of some services based on income and other factors. Your case Manager will discuss this with you in more detail and will assist you in obtaining the forms you will need.

**Who to contact with questions?**

When you have questions about the CSA, please contact your case manager. It is the responsibility of the case manager to coordinate services and exchange information with you.

**What happens in an emergency?**

If you believe that your child is in need of emergency services contact your case manager. If your case manager is unavailable, contact your local mental health center or Lewis Gale Hospital for help with emergency assistance.

If your case manager arranges to begin services on an emergency basis, your family's and child's needs will be presented to a FAPT within 14 days after the services begin.