

Kansas Benefits Guide

For Individuals with IDD

A central navigation tool for benefits, services, and supports across a person's whole life.



Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities



About KCDD

The purpose of the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD) is to support people of all ages with developmental disabilities so they have the opportunity to make choices regarding both their participation in society and their quality of life.

AGENDA

What we'll cover today

- 1 What the guide is & why it exists
- 2 A tour of all nine sections
- 3 The “Not sure where to begin?” feature
- 4 How to access it — link & QR code
- 5 How to use it in Project ECHO — discussion

Families face a navigation maze, not just an eligibility test

A fragmented system

Support for a person with IDD is spread across dozens of agencies — education, healthcare, Social Security, employment, housing — each with its own rules.

Scattered information

Families must piece together programs, eligibility criteria, applications, and waitlists from many disconnected sources.

Missed benefits

People who qualify still go without support — simply because they can't find it or don't know it exists.

One central, plain-language hub for the whole IDD journey

What the guide does

- Links education, benefits, healthcare, employment, waivers, and daily-living supports in one place.
- Built for Kansans with IDD and their families.
- Organized so users jump straight to what's most relevant to their needs.

Who it's for & how it helps

- Individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities
- Parents, caregivers, and family members
- Providers making referrals or warm handoffs
- Includes a “Not sure where to begin?” entry point
- Free and public — no login required

HOW IT'S ORGANIZED

Nine sections that mirror a whole life — plus a resource hub

1 Education & School Supports

2 Social Security & Cash Benefits

3 Employment & Work Supports

4 Healthcare & Medicaid

5 HCBS Waivers & Long-Term Services

6 Caregiver, Aging & Respite

7 Housing, Food & Basic Needs

8 Legal & Decision-Making Support

9 Financial Tools

+ Resources & Quick Links

agency contacts · applications · forms · external resources

1

Education & School Supports

SECTION 1 OF 9

Follows a child from early childhood through post-graduation planning.

- Early intervention
- IEPs and 504 Plans
- Transition planning & graduation pathways
- Extended school services
- Postsecondary options and financial aid

Education & School Supports

Learn about early intervention, special education, accommodations, transition planning, graduation pathways, extended services, and postsecondary opportunities for Kansas students with IDD.

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This section will cover the following:

Want to jump to a specific section? Click any of sub-categories below:

- [Accessing Early Intervention](#)
- [Special Education & IEPs](#)
- [Section 504 Plans](#)
- [IEP vs. 504 Plan](#)
- [Private School Rights](#)
- [Diploma vs. Certificate Track](#)
- [Transition Planning / Pre-ETS](#)
- [School-Based Medicaid](#)
- [Extended High School Services](#)
- [Postsecondary Programs](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)



Every section includes:

✓ Overview ✓ Eligibility ✓ How to Apply ✓ Helpful Resources

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and prepare for a meaningful adult life. For Kansas students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), there are important rights, protections, and support systems in place from birth through young adulthood. Federal laws like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensure that students with disabilities have access to education, accommodations, and specialized instruction when needed. In Kansas, these services are administered by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and other state partners.

This section walks families step-by-step through early intervention (birth to three), special education and IEPs, 504 Plans, transition planning, graduation pathways, extended services, and postsecondary opportunities. Whether you are just starting your journey or planning for life after high school, understanding you or your child's rights and options helps you make informed decisions and advocate with confidence.

2

Social Security & Cash Benefits

SECTION 2 OF 9

Income support — and a critical eligibility milestone at age 18.

- SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
- SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
- Representative payees
- Work incentives
- Planning for the age-18 transition

Social Security & Cash Benefits

Understand federal disability benefit programs, including SSI and SSDI, along with representative payee supports, work incentives, and planning steps for age 18.

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This section will cover the following:

Want to jump to a specific section? Click any of sub-categories below:

- [Supplemental Security Insurance \(SSI\)](#)
- [Social Security Disability Insurance \(SSDI\)](#)
- [Tips](#)



Every section includes:

✓ Overview ✓ Eligibility ✓ How to Apply ✓ Helpful Resources

Federal Social Security programs can provide important financial and medical support for Kansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). These benefits are designed to help cover everyday needs like food, housing, healthcare, and other essential expenses. The two main programs are Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which provides needs-based cash assistance, and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), which offers benefits based on work history. Understanding eligibility, how to apply, and the resources available can help families and individuals access the support they need to live more independently and securely.

3

Employment & Work Supports

SECTION 3 OF 9

Working while keeping benefits — programs that make employment possible.

- Working Healthy
- STEPS and WORK programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Ticket to Work
- Trial Work Period and PASS

Employment & Work Supports

Explore Kansas employment programs that help individuals with disabilities prepare for, find, and keep meaningful work while protecting benefits and healthcare coverage.

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- [Working Healthy](#)
- [Kansas STEPS Program](#)
- [WORK Program](#)
- [Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\)](#)
- [SSA Ticket to Work & Trial Work Period](#)
- [Plan to Achieve Self-Support \(PASS\)](#)



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Work is more than just a paycheck—it's a way to gain independence, build skills, and participate fully in the community. Kansans with disabilities have access to a variety of programs that provide training, career planning, and ongoing support to help them find and keep meaningful employment. These programs, offered through federal and state initiatives like Kansas Working Healthy, STEPS, WORK, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the SSA Ticket to Work Program, are designed to meet individual needs, protect benefits, and make the transition to work smoother and more successful. Understanding what each program offers, who qualifies, and how to apply can help families and individuals take the next step toward a fulfilling career.

4

Healthcare & Medicaid

SECTION 4 OF 9

How Kansans get and keep coverage — KanCare is the Medicaid backbone.

- Private insurance
- KanCare (Kansas Medicaid)
- EPSDT and CHIP
- Special Health Care Needs (SHCN)
- D-SNP options

Healthcare Coverage

Review public and private insurance options for Kansans with disabilities, including coverage for children, adults, and individuals eligible for Medicaid or Medicare-related supports.

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This section will cover the following:

Want to jump to a specific section? Click any of sub-categories below:

- [Parent/Guardian Private Coverage](#)
- [EPSDT / Kan-Be-Healthy](#)
- [CHIP](#)
- [SHCN](#)
- [Private Adult Coverage](#)
- [KanCare](#)
- [D-SNP](#)



Every section includes:

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Access to healthcare coverage is essential for individuals with disabilities to maintain health, receive necessary treatments, and live as independently as possible. Kansans with disabilities have multiple options for coverage, including private insurance, employer-sponsored plans, military programs, Medicaid (KanCare), Medicare, and specialized state programs like EPSDT, CHIP, and the Special Health Care Needs (SHCN) program. Each program has different eligibility requirements, benefits, and application processes, making it important for individuals and families to understand their options. This section provides an overview of these programs, helping Kansans with disabilities and their families navigate coverage, access critical medical services, and make informed choices to support long-term health and well-being.

5

HCBS Waivers & Long-Term Services

SECTION 5 OF 9

The engine of most long-term supports — apply early, waitlists can be long.

- Kansas waiver programs
- Eligibility requirements
- Waitlists to plan around
- How to begin services
- Long-term supports & services

5

HCBS Waivers & Long-Term Services

Kansas Home & Community Based (HCBS) Waivers

Kansas HCBS waivers help children and adults with disabilities receive supports at home and in the community instead of in institutional settings. This section explains eligibility, services, and how to begin.

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This section will cover the following:

Want to jump to a specific section? Click any of sub-categories below:

- [\(IDD\) Waiver](#)
- [IDD Crisis Exception](#)
- [Technology Assistance \(TA\) Waiver](#)
- [Community Supports Waiver \(CSW\)](#)
- [Serious Emotional Disturbance \(SED\) Waiver](#)



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Kansas Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers help children and adults with disabilities receive the supports they need while living at home and being part of their community — rather than in a hospital or institution. These programs are made possible through federal Medicaid law, including the Social Security Amendments of 1981, and are overseen nationally by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. In Kansas, they are managed by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS).

Each waiver is designed to support different needs — including intellectual and developmental disabilities, medical complexity, serious emotional disturbance, or individuals who need some help to live independently. While each program has its own eligibility rules and services, they all share one goal: helping Kansans live safely, successfully, and with greater independence in their own homes and communities.

6

Caregiver, Aging & Respite

SECTION 6 OF 9

Supports for the people doing the caring, and for aging individuals.

- Respite care
- ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center) support
- Caregiver referrals & support
- Aging services coordination
- Dementia-related coordination options

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Caregiver, Aging & Respite

Caregiver, Aging & Respite Supports

Find caregiver supports, respite resources, aging-related referrals, and community-based assistance for individuals and families needing additional help.

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This section will cover the following:

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- [Aging and IDD: Access to Respite Care](#)
- [GUIDE \(Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience\)](#)



Every section includes:

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SECTION 7 OF 9

Foundational stability — a roof, food, and utilities.

- Section 8 housing assistance
- SNAP (food assistance)
- TANF (cash assistance)
- LIEAP (energy assistance)
- Other income-based supports

**Housing, Food &
Basic Needs**

Housing, Food & Basic Needs

Learn about income-based supports that can help cover housing, food, utilities, and other daily essentials.

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This section will cover the following:

Want to jump to a specific section? Click any of sub-categories below:

- [Housing \(Section 8\)](#)
- [Food \(SNAP\)](#)
- [Cash Assistance \(TANF\)](#)
- [Utilities \(LIEAP\)](#)



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For many Kansans, accessing stable housing, nutritious food, and basic financial support can be a critical factor in health, independence, and overall well-being. Income-based programs provide assistance to individuals and families who meet certain financial eligibility requirements, helping them afford safe housing, maintain food security, cover energy costs, and meet other essential needs. This section outlines key programs available in Kansas, including the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). Understanding eligibility, benefits, and the application process for each program can help Kansans access the resources necessary to live safely and independently.

8

Legal & Decision-Making Support

SECTION 8 OF 9

Balancing autonomy with support — a growing area of disability rights.

- Tools to make informed decisions
- Protecting individual rights
- Supported decision-making agreements
- Powers of attorney
- Alternatives to full guardianship

8

Legal & Decision-Making Support

Legal & Decision-Making Support Options

Explore tools that help individuals with disabilities make decisions, maintain independence, and receive support when needed. Learn about Supported Decision-Making, Powers of Attorney, Representative Payees, releases and authorizations, and Guardianship and Conservatorship.

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- [Supported Decision-Making](#)
- [Power of Attorney](#)
- [Health Care Power of Attorney and Advance Directives](#)
- [Representative Payee for SSI/SSDI Benefits](#)
- [Releases and Authorizations](#)
- [Guardianship and Conservatorship](#)



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People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) may need help making decisions about their health care, money, services, education, employment, housing, relationships, and daily life. This section provides an overview of common decision-making options.

Some people think that Guardianship and Conservatorship are their only options. Sometimes they are. In many cases, they are not.

Guardianship and Conservatorship should always remain options for people who need them, but we should not assume that all people with IDD need Guardians or Conservators. Many people use supporters, services, or legal tools to help them exercise their legal rights, understand their situations, identify and consider choices, make decisions, and manage their lives.

The key is to consider the person's strengths, needs, and preferences and explore other, less-restrictive options before seeking Guardianship or Conservatorship. If a person can use another option to retain their legal rights, make their own decisions, and direct their own life, they should be given every opportunity to do so. If they cannot, Guardianship or Conservatorship may be appropriate and should be tailored to the person's abilities and needs.

9

Financial Tools

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Save and plan without losing means-tested benefits.

- ABLE Accounts
- Special Needs Trusts
- Pooled Trusts
- Benefit-eligibility protection
- Other long-term planning tools

Financial Tools

Learn about ABLE Accounts, Special Needs Trusts, Pooled Trusts, and other financial planning tools.

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- [Special Needs Trusts](#)
- [Pooled Trusts](#)



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Planning for the future often means balancing financial security with eligibility for important public benefits. Fortunately, several financial tools allow individuals with disabilities and their families to save money, receive gifts or inheritances, and pay for disability-related expenses without unnecessarily affecting programs like SSI or Medicaid. This section explains Kansas ABLE Accounts, Special Needs Trusts, and Pooled Trusts, helping families understand how each tool works, who qualifies, and when each may be appropriate.

Resources & Quick Links — where info becomes action

Agency contacts

Direct lines to the offices that administer each program.

Applications

Where and how to apply for benefits and services.

Forms

The paperwork families need, gathered in one place.

External resources

Trusted partner organizations and further reading.

BUILT-IN GUIDANCE

“Not sure where to begin?”

The guide offers suggested starting points so no one faces a blank page.

Birth to age 5

Start with Education & School Supports

Turning 18

Social Security, work incentives, and guardianship alternatives

Looking for work

Employment & Work Supports

Need support at home

HCBS Waivers & Long-Term Services

Need help covering essentials

Housing, Food & Basic Needs

Education & School Supports

Early intervention, IEPs, 504 Plans, transition planning, graduation pathways, extended school services, postsecondary options, and financial aid.

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Education & School Supports

Learn about early intervention, special education, accommodations, transition planning, graduation pathways, extended services, and postsecondary opportunities for Kansas students with IDD.

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Accessing Early Intervention (Zero to Three) Services for Babies & Toddlers

About

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C — Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (P.L. 108-446) — was first enacted in 1986 and reauthorized in 2004.

It provides free services to infants and toddlers from birth to 3 years old who have, or are likely to have, a developmental delay. The program is overseen federally by the U.S. Department of Education and managed in Kansas by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

Eligibility

Infants and toddlers can qualify if they have a condition with an established risk of developmental delay, or a delay in one or more of the five areas of development. Qualified professionals evaluate each child against Kansas's criteria. The five areas of development include:

- Physical development (such as sitting up, rolling, crawling, walking)
- Cognitive development (such as processing information, learning, problem-solving, thinking)
- Communication development (such as listening, understanding, speaking)
- Social or emotional development (such as interacting, playing, coping with challenges)
- Adaptive and self-help development (such as feeding and dressing)

WALK ONE SECTION END-TO-END

How To

To apply for services in Kansas, anyone concerned — parents, healthcare providers, childcare workers, or others — can complete a referral form. After the referral, a free developmental evaluation is done by a team of professionals working in local Infant Toddler Services (ITS). The evaluation team may include:

- Speech-language pathologists
- Occupational therapists
- Physical therapists
- Early childhood special educators
- Psychologists
- Social workers
- Medical professionals (when needed)
- Vision and hearing specialists

If the child qualifies, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is created with input from the family. It details the specific supports and services the child and family will receive. Services always include Family Service Coordination and may include:

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Special instruction
- Family education
- Vision and nutrition services
- Sign or cued language

Most services are provided in the child's everyday environment to support growth and learning in natural settings.

Resources: [Infant Toddler Resources of Kansas](#) · [Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services Referral Form](#)

HOW TO ACCESS IT

Free, public, and one link away

Direct link

kcdd.org/kansas-benefits-guide

- Resources & Quick Links hub
- Agency contacts, applications, forms & external resources
- No login required — open to families and providers alike
- Scan the code to open it on your phone right now



Scan to open the guide

kcdd.org/kansas-benefits-guide

Turning the guide into a shared reference

For providers & clinicians

Use it as a warm-handoff referral tool and screen for missed benefits during visits.

For families & self-advocates

A self-serve starting map to review before appointments and IEP or waiver meetings.

In the ECHO learning network

Share as a common reference during case presentations — closing the “where do I send them?” gap.

Questions? Let's Connect!

kcdd@kcdd.org

