FAMILY VOICES of Tennessee

Tennessee Disability Support Programs: A Guide for Families

Navigating disability services in Tennessee can feel overwhelming. This guide provides an overview of programs that support children and adults with disabilities, including who may qualify, what services are available, and where to find more information.

Quick Comparison of Programs

Program	Age	TennCare Required?	Eligibility Requirement	Main Supports
Katie Beckett	Under age 18	No, but provides access to TennCare for some children.	Disability or medical complexity meeting Level of Care criteria	Supportive services, or Medicaid coverage and additional supports
ECF CHOICES	Children and adults	No, but includes TennCare enrollment	Intellectual and/or developmental disability (I/DD) meeting Level of Care	Long-term services and supports
Family Support Program	All ages	No	Severe disability	Flexible funding for family needs
MAPs	Prioritizes Transition-age youth and young adults	No	Intellectual and/or developmental disability (I/DD)	Employment and independent living skills
CHOICES	Older adults, (65 plus) and younger adults with physical disabilities(21 plus)	Yes	Meets financial eligibility and Level of Care for nursing home OR “at risk” of needing LOC without homecare	Long Term Services and Supports.

Important Information

Some programs cannot be used at the same time.

- Individuals cannot be enrolled in both the Family Support Program and Katie Beckett or CHOICES, or ECF CHOICES.
- MAPs participants cannot be enrolled in other long-term services and support programs, including ECF CHOICES, CHOICES, Katie Beckett, or 1915(c) waivers.
- MAPs participants may also participate in the Family Support Program.

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1. Katie Beckett Program

The Katie Beckett Program is designed for children under age 18 with disabilities or complex medical needs who would not otherwise qualify for TennCare Medicaid due to their parents' income or resources.

The program provides supportive services to divert children from Medicaid, and /or provides access to Medicaid benefits and additional supports that help families care for their children at home.

To qualify, children must meet medical eligibility requirements, including Level of Care criteria determined through an assessment completed by the Department of Disability and Aging (DDA).

How to Apply

1. Complete a self-referral through TennCare Connect.
2. The Department of Disability and Aging (DDA) will contact you to complete an assessment to determine whether your child meets the required Level of Care criteria.
3. TennCare will complete a financial review.
4. Families should be prepared to provide medical records and other documentation that explain their child's disability, medical needs, and how those needs affect daily functioning.

Resources

Family Voices of Tennessee Katie Beckett Resource Hub
https://familyvoicestn.org/resources/katie-beckett/

Tennessee Katie Beckett Program Information
https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging/disability-aging-programs/katie-beckett.html

Apply Through TennCare Connect
https://tenncareconnect.tn.gov/

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2. Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES

ECF CHOICES is a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver program administered through TennCare. TennCare contracts with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to provide coordinated services and supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The program is designed to help people:

- Live as independently as possible;
- Participate in their communities;
- Build meaningful relationships;
- Access needed supports; and
- Pursue employment if they choose.

Many families believe ECF CHOICES is only for adults. However, Tennessee's ECF CHOICES program also includes benefit groups specifically designed for children and youth under age 21.

Benefit Groups for Children and Youth

Group 4 – Essential Family Supports

Helps children remain at home with their families and participate in community life by providing services such as:

- Personal assistance
- Respite care
- Assistive technology
- Home modifications
- Behavioral supports
- Nursing services
- Caregiver support
- Other community-based services

Group 7 – Intensive Behavioral Family Supports

Provides intensive in-home behavioral services for children and youth with significant behavioral support needs to help them remain safely at home with their families. Enrollment in Group 7 is meant to be short term.

Resources

ECF CHOICES Information and Application
https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging/disability-aging-programs/ecf-choices.html

ECF CHOICES 101 (PDF)
https://familyvoicestn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ECF_CHOICES_101-2025.pdf

What Financial Documents Are Needed to Apply for ECF CHOICES?
https://familyvoicestn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/EmploymentCommunityFirstCHOICESApplicationItemsFinancialEligibility.pdf

Who Can Receive Services Now?
https://familyvoicestn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/EmploymentCommunityFirstCHOICESNewGreenPage.pdf

ECF CHOICES Member Handbooks

BlueCare Member Handbook
https://familyvoicestn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/BlueCare_Member_Handbook.pdf

WellPoint Member Handbook
https://familyvoicestn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Member-Handbook-English.pdf

UnitedHealthcare Member Handbook
https://familyvoicestn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/TN-MemberHandbook-EN.pdf

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3. Family Support Program

The Family Support Program is funded by state dollars and designed to assist individuals of all ages with severe disabilities and their families to remain together in their homes and communities. This program is not income-based. Funds are limited, families must apply each year, and waiting list are long.

Family members cannot be enrolled in :

- ECF CHOICES
- CHOICES

- Katie Beckett
- 1915(C) Waivers

The primary purpose of the program is to support:

- Families who have school-aged or younger children with severe disabilities;
- Adults with severe disabilities who choose to live with their families; and
- Adults with severe disabilities who are not supported by other residential programs funded by state or federal funds.

Services may include, but are not limited to:

- Respite care
- Day care services
- Home modifications
- Equipment and supplies
- Personal assistance
- Transportation
- Homemaker services
- Housing costs
- Health-related needs
- Nursing services
- Counseling

Resources

Family Support Program Information
https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging/disability-aging-programs/family-support.html

Find the agency that serves your county
https://www.thearctn.org/who-we-are/local-chapters/

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4. Medicaid Alternative Pathways to Independence (MAPs)

MAPs is a program designed to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities build skills needed for employment, independent living, community participation, and pursuing personal interests.The focus is on use of enabling technology . Someone can participate in MAPs for up to three years with a budget of up to $20.000 a year.

MAPs is available to individuals who:

- Have an intellectual and/or developmental disability;
- Have finished from high school or are expected to finish within the next three years; and
- Are not enrolled in another long-term services and support program.

MAPs participants cannot be enrolled in:

- ECF CHOICES
- CHOICES
- Katie Beckett
- 1915(c) Waivers

However, MAPs participants can also participate in the Family Support Program.

Resources

What Is the MAPs Program?
https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging/disability-aging-programs/maps.html

Apply for MAPs
https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=v75F83ENN0OSgSS5QWFsNrPc1X6NmilBh17CCiDPKaNUOEUxSE8xOVExWTFUWDFBWk4yQUpMWU5TVy4u&route=shorturl

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How to Apply for TennCare

If you believe you or your family member may qualify for TennCare Medicaid, you can apply through TennCare using the application information available on the TennCare website.

Resource

TennCare Application Information
https://www.tn.gov/tenncare/members-applicants/how-do-i-apply-for-tenncare.html

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Disclaimer

Program eligibility requirements, funding availability, policies, and application processes may change over time. Families are encouraged to verify current requirements and information with the administering agency before applying.