



# Imagine Different...Achieve Different Coalition

## ***FAST FACTS:*** Parents as Home Health Aides for Children

### Overview

Children with disabilities and complex health care needs are often eligible for Medicaid-funded personal care or home health aide services. While federal rules don't allow parents to be paid to provide personal care services to their own children, there is no such prohibition for home health aide services. In September, 2023, PA's Department of Human Services announced that it will cover home health aide services provided by a qualified parent or other legally responsible relative to Medicaid-eligible children under 21 years of age under the home health services benefit. Paying parents as home health aides allows parents to financially support their families while helping to ensure that children with complex disabilities receive the extraordinary care they need.

Home health aide duties include the provision of hands-on personal care; performance of simple procedures as an extension of therapy or nursing services; assistance in ambulation or exercises; and assistance in administering medications. Home health aide services do not include skilled care that must be provided by a nurse. Parents or other relatives who are interested in serving as home health aides to their children must be employed through a licensed home health agency and meet all training, competency, and supervision requirements. Many home health agencies will provide the training, hiring, and supervision required for parents to be employed as their child's home health aide.

### Eligibility

To access home health aide services, your child must first be enrolled in Medicaid, called Medical Assistance (MA) in PA. A family need not be low-income for the child with a significant disability to be eligible for MA (for more info, see our [Fast Facts on EPSDT](#)). Once your child is enrolled in MA, you will need a letter of medical necessity from a physician that must then be submitted to your child's MA physical health managed care organization, or directly to the Office of Medical Assistance Programs if your child is not in a managed care plan. If your child also has private insurance, you may need to submit the request to them as well. Many home health agencies are able and willing to assist with this process.

### How to get started:

- If you haven't done so already, enroll your child in MA at your local County Assistance Office or online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).
- Get a letter of medical necessity for home health aide services from your child's doctor.
- Find a home health agency that accepts your child's insurance and hires parents.
- Work through the authorization, hiring and training process with the home health agency.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[PH-95: A Guide to Getting Medicaid for a Child With a Disability \(PHLP\)](#)

Pennsylvania Health Law Project [www.phlp.org](http://www.phlp.org)

DHS [Operations Memo](#) providing guidelines for paid parent caregivers and home health agencies

Disability Rights Pennsylvania  
[www.disabilityrightspa.org](http://www.disabilityrightspa.org)