

CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACT FOR AT-RISK YOUTH AND FAMILIES

What is the Children's Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families (CSA)?

It is a 1993 Virginia law designed to help troubled youths and their families. State and local agencies, parents and private providers work together to plan and provide services. In each community, local teams decide how to do this. The Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) looks at the strengths and needs of individual youths and families, recommends what services to provide, and prepares a service plan for each family. The Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) coordinate agency efforts, manage the available funds, and sees that eligible youths and their families get help. Both teams include parents, staff from community services boards, court service units, the department of health and social services, the schools, and private service providers.

Intent and Purpose

It is the intention of this law 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 2.1-745)

How did it get started?

In 1989 the General Assembly became concerned because the cost of providing residential treatment to high risk youth was increasing at approximately 22% each year. Because of this a study of children in residential care was conducted. Fourteen thousand records from four different state agencies were examined and turned out to be only 4,993 different youth. In addition 9 out of 10 of these children returned to their home communities and, unfortunately, if necessary changes in the child's community environment had not been made the progress achieved in the residential facility were often lost. At that point, it was decided that high quality, less restrictive, community-based services would be provided to these children if the funds were managed at the local level. There is a local cash match required to access the state CSA funds.

Where does the money come from?

The Children's Services Act established, effective July 1, 1993, a pool of state funds to be expended for public or private residential or nonresidential services for troubled youth and families. The purposes of this pool of funds, as stated in the Code of Virginia, Section 2.1-757, are to:

- a. Place authority for making program and funding decisions at the community level;
- b. Consolidate categorical agency funding and community responsibility for the provision of services;

- c. Provide greater flexibility in the use of these funds to purchase services based on the strengths and needs of youths and families; and
- d. Reduce disparity in accessing services and reduce inadvertent fiscal incentives for serving children according to differing required local match rates for funding streams.”

The sources for the Pool funds include eight agency funding streams that were used to purchase residential and nonresidential services of individual children. The funding streams previously provided state support for foster care, private special education placements, certain placements by the juvenile justice and mental health systems. All federal and state regulations pertaining to each of the individual agency funding streams included in the pool must be followed. The table below illustrates the existing funding streams and the agencies where they originate.

<p>Department of Social Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ State and Local Foster Care ❖ Foster Care Purchased Services 	<p>Department of Juvenile Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ “286” Funding for Special Placements ❖ “239” Funding for Special Placements
<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Private Tuition ❖ Interagency Assistance 	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Interagency Consortium ❖ Dept. of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services Purchased Beds for Adolescents

Who is eligible for services?

Services under CSA may be available to a child who meets at least one of the following descriptions:

- ❖ has serious emotional or behavioral problems
- ❖ need residential care or resources beyond normal agency services
- ❖ needs special education through a private school program
- ❖ receives foster care services
- ❖ receives services to prevent foster care placement
- ❖ is under supervision of the juvenile and domestic relations court
- ❖ is a ward of the Department of Juvenile Justice