

What does it mean to be high risk?

Section 393.063(23), Florida Statutes defines high risk as a child from 3 to 5 years of age with one or more of the following characteristics:

- a. A developmental delay in cognition, language, or physical development.
- b. A child surviving a catastrophic infectious or traumatic illness known to be associated with developmental delay when funds are specifically appropriated.
- c. A child with a parent or guardian with developmental disabilities who requires assistance in meeting the child's developmental needs.
- d. A child who has a physical or genetic anomaly associated with developmental disability.

Children between ages 3 and 5 who are at high risk for a later diagnosis of one of the disabilities listed above cannot be placed on the waiting list for waiver services until a confirmed diagnosis of a qualifying disability is given.

How does the agency determine if my child is high risk?

Per [Rule 65G-4.017\(7\), Florida Administrative Code \(F.A.C.\)](#), a determination of high risk status requires verification by APD that a medical diagnosis of developmental delay evidenced by the child indicates a high probability that the child is likely to have an eventual diagnosis of a qualifying condition under [Rule 65G-4.014, F.A.C.](#), if early intervention services are not provided, or the child has one or more physical or genetic anomalies associated with a developmental disability, such as:

- (a) Genetic or chromosomal disorders (such as Down syndrome or Rett syndrome);
- (b) Metabolic disorders (such as phenylketonuria);
- (c) Congenital malformations (such as microcephaly or hydrocephaly);
- (d) Neurological abnormalities and insults;
- (e) Congenital and acquired infectious diseases;
- (f) Chronic or catastrophic illnesses or injuries;
- (g) A parent or guardian with developmental disabilities who requires assistance in meeting the child's developmental needs; or
- (h) Other conditions or genetic disorders generally associated with developmental disabilities, such as tuberous sclerosis, congenital syphilis, fetal alcohol syndrome, or maternal rubella, as documented by a physician.
- (i) If a child between three and five years of age already has been determined to have a developmental disability in one of the five categories identified in Chapter 393, F.S., that child shall be eligible for services from the agency under the appropriate diagnosis and shall be added to the waiting list.
- (j) If a child served under the category of high risk does not have a confirmed diagnosis by his or her fifth birthday, they shall be given a notice of case closure and the case will be closed at the agency. The agency shall make the child's parent or guardian aware of appropriate agencies, programs, or school programs which the agency is aware of which might be able to assist the child.

What happens next if my child is determined high risk?

APD will send a notice informing you that your child has met the criteria to be considered high risk and has been made a client of the agency. APD can provide information and referrals to help you connect with other programs that are responsive to your child's needs.

For your child to be considered for waiver service or be placed on the waiting list for future services from APD, you will need to provide APD with proof of a formal diagnosis of a developmental disability for your child. If this information is not provided after the age of 5, your child will not remain eligible as a client of APD. Documentation of a developmental disability may include, but is not limited to school records, testing, or medical records. More information about the specific tests or records APD needs to establish eligibility can be found in [Rule 65G-4.017, Florida Administrative Code](#).

What resources are available to help my child?

Please visit [APD's Resource Directory](#) for additional information on available resources and organizations throughout the State of Florida which offer services to individuals with disabilities and their families.

[The Florida Navigator](#) is an online tool designed to empower and inform individuals with developmental disabilities, caregivers, and professionals about specific state government programs and services.

Children under the age of 3 with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay are served by the **Florida Early Steps Program** within the Department of Health. For more information, please contact them at 1 (800) 218-0001 or visit their website at: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/early-steps/index.html>

Florida Kidcare offers healthcare coverage for children from birth to age 18. There are 4 possible programs, including: Medicaid, MediKids, Florida Healthy Kids, or the Children's Medical Services Managed Care Plan. The eligibility for the various programs is determined based on the age of the child, family income, and household size. For more information please contact Florida Kidcare at 1-888-540-KIDS (5437) or visit their website at: <https://www.floridakidcare.org/>

First Steps: A Guide for Parents of Young Children with Developmental Disabilities is a free publication published by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. It is available in downloadable chapters, in English and in Spanish, and in both a full color version and a black and white version via the following link: <https://www.fddc.org/publications/first-steps>.