



## **State Support for the First Thousand Days After Birth**

### **State Spotlight: Florida**

*Information current as of December 2025.*

## **1. Care Coordination and Pregnancy Support**

### **1.1 Pregnancy Support**

#### **[Alternatives to Abortion Program](#)**

State funds are provided via a special appropriation from the state's general budget to life-affirming pregnancy help organizations such as pregnancy centers, adoption agencies, maternity homes, etc. Florida's program is titled "[Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program](#)." This program was allocated additional funding (\$25 million) when Governor DeSantis signed [SB300](#) into law in 2023. [This bill also expanded](#) the eligible age range for services provided under this program to women who are up to 12 months postpartum and parents of children under the age of three for up to 12 months.

### **1.2 Care Coordination**

#### **[Strong Florida Moms](#)**

Strong Florida Moms is a website created by the Florida Department of Health in 2025 that provides links to state and private resources for pregnant women and new parents to help them care for their families. This website is a result of [HB 415](#) which Governor DeSantis signed into law in May 2024. The bill directed the Departments of Health, Children and Families, and the Agency for Health Care Administration to create and maintain a website with resources for pregnant women and new parents. The resources cover a variety of topics including breastfeeding, parenting, and financial assistance. The website also includes information on free classes and events on topics such as car seat safety, prenatal health, and breastfeeding support.

## 1.3 Miscellaneous

### The Responsible Fatherhood Initiative

In 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis signed [HB 7065](#) into law. The bill allocated around \$70 million in Florida's FY23-24 budget to go towards this overarching fatherhood initiative which would in turn collaborate and support initiatives and programs meant to support men as fathers and mentoring programs for boys without fathers. The bill stipulates that money should go to programs that help fathers find jobs, transition from prison, and distribute information about effective parenting. Some of the funding from the bill was set aside for three grants:

- The Comprehensive Needs of Fathers Grant - This grant funds services that address fathers' needs such as finding a job, managing child support obligations, and increasing parenting skills.
- The Evidence-Based Education Programs for Fathers Grant - This grant funds parent-coaching education, newborn and infant care education, and parenting skills training.
- The Mentorship Programs for At-Risk Male Students Grant - This grant funds programs that help at-risk male middle and high school students with developing economic, social, and cognitive skills needed for their future success.

## 2. Women's Health

### *2.1 Prenatal and Postpartum Medical Care*

#### Florida Healthy Start

This program offers targeted services that address poor birth outcomes and/or developmental delays that are identified through the state's universal prenatal and infant screenings. This program specifically provides services to pregnant women, infants, and children up to three years old in all 67 counties. Services include information, referrals, and continual care coordination related to nutrition, childbirth, tobacco and smoking cessation, parenting support, and home visits. These services are provided with the goal of lowering risk factors associated with preterm birth, low birth weight, infant mortality and poor developmental outcomes.

#### Bellies, Babies, and Beyond

This is a program within Florida's Healthy Start initiative and it works with women and their families before, during, and after pregnancy (through the baby's second birthday). It provides a variety of classes related to pregnancy and parenting.

#### Family Health Line (1-800-451-BABY) (2229)

This is a statewide, free hotline that offers counseling information and referrals about pregnancy, infant, and toddler issues. It provides callers with information on community resources and answers questions about pregnancy, breastfeeding, childbirth, and other pregnancy-related concerns. It is available in English, Spanish, Haitian, and Creole.

## *2.2 Prenatal and Postpartum Support*

### Count the Kicks

This is an evidence-based stillbirth prevention and awareness program run by the Florida Department of Health that teaches expectant parents the method for and the importance of tracking fetal movement during the third trimester of pregnancy as a way of preventing stillbirths. The program has an app that is available in 12 languages.

### WIC Breastfeeding Support

Florida's WIC statewide program promotes and supports breastfeeding across the state through WIC breastfeeding educators and peer counselors.

### Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) Program

Florida uses federal Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program funding to support [three evidence-based home visiting models](#):

- [Nurse Family Partnership](#) - This is a national program administered at the state level and provides education and support to first time mothers in low-income communities. Trained nurse home visitors visit these families and provide resources and training related to child development. Families can receive these services through their child's second birthday.
- [Healthy Families Florida](#) - This is a national model accredited by Healthy Families America that provides needy families with trained home visitors that provide education and support to families at risk for adverse childhood experiences such as child abuse and neglect. This program focuses on promoting positive parent-child relationships. Services begin prenatally or within the first 3 months after the child is born and lasts until the child's entrance to kindergarten. HFF funds 35 community grants that provide services to families living in at risk areas in all 67 counties in the state. This national program works in collaboration with the Florida Department of Children and Families.
- Parents as Teachers - This is a national program administered at the state level that provides families with home visits, developmental screenings, and a resource network. Families are eligible for these services from pregnancy until the child's fifth birthday. The program is focused on providing parents with knowledge on child development, especially parents of children with special needs.

## *2.3 General Medical Care for Women*

### Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (BCCEDP)

Also known as the Mary Brogan Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, this program provides breast and cervical cancer screenings for free or at a low cost for those who meet program eligibility requirements. Breast and cervical cancer screenings include clinical breast exams, mammograms and pap tests. The program also has a limited amount of funding for diagnostic services, but those services are reserved for women screened through the program.

## [Medicaid](#)

Florida Medicaid (State Medicaid Managed Care, SMMC) provides health coverage to eligible Florida residents who meet the income guidelines and are U.S. citizens or have satisfactory immigration status. In February 2025, the state launched SMMC 3.0, which contains several program enhancements related to how eligible members receive services. Another core focus of the new version of SMMC is making the plans and related programs more family friendly. Some examples of new services covered by the new Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) plan include prenatal services, mother and baby supplies, technology for pregnant women, tutoring, vocational training, and job readiness services.

SMMC has three components- MMA, Long-Term Care (LTC), and Dental. Most Medicaid recipients must enroll in MMA plans, while those with disabilities or those 65 years of age or older can voluntarily enroll in LTC plans, which include Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers. All Medicaid recipients in MMA plans receive dental coverage, while most LTC members do as well. To learn more about the changes made to Florida's Medicaid program, visit this helpful [chart](#).

Eligibility groups for Florida's Medicaid program include:

- [Pregnant women](#) - Pregnant women are eligible for full coverage Medicaid as long as they meet certain family size and [income limits](#). With the passage of [SB 2518](#) into law in June 2021 and a subsequent Section 1115 waiver, postpartum Medicaid coverage was extended from 60 days to 12 months.
- [Parents and caretakers](#) - Parents with children (under the age of 19) living in their home who also meet resident, citizenship, and income requirements are eligible for full-coverage Medicaid.
- [BCCEDP enrollees](#) - This Medicaid program covers breast and cervical cancer treatment as well as the full range of other covered Medicaid services to those diagnosed by the state's Breast and Cervical Cancer Diagnosis program. This program has a federally determined income limit (250% of the FPL).
- [Family Planning Waiver](#) - Limited Medicaid coverage is available to women ages 14 through 55 who no longer can receive full Medicaid coverage because of aging out of a category, a change in income, etc. This waiver provides coverage for preconception counseling, pregnancy tests, screening and treatment for STIs, contraception, outpatient sterilization procedures, postpartum coverage, etc.
- [Adults ages 19 and 20](#) who are unmarried and either live independently or with relatives are eligible for Medicaid coverage in the state of Florida.

Pregnant women are eligible for presumptive eligibility ([PEPW](#)) which provides temporary coverage for pregnancy services for up to 45 days while their regular Medicaid application is being processed.

Lastly, those who would otherwise be [eligible](#) for Medicaid apart from their citizenship status can receive Medicaid coverage for emergency services only.

For more information on disability-specific Medicaid programs, see section 6.1. See section 7.2 for child-specific Medicaid programs, section 7.4 for adoption-specific Medicaid programs, and section 7.5 for foster care-specific programs.

### Medically Needy Program

Otherwise known as the “Share of Cost” program, this is a health care coverage program for those whose income is too high, making them ineligible for traditional Medicaid coverage. Enrollees pay a monthly “share of cost” which is like an insurance deductible and is determined by gross monthly income and household size. The program helps cover unpaid medical bills, health insurance premiums, co-pays, medical services prescribed by a doctor, and transportation by ambulance, bus, or taxi.

### Vaccines for Adults Program

This program provides free vaccines to adults who can’t afford to get routine vaccines for preventable diseases. The vaccines are administered at county health department facilities as well as FQHCs. [Vaccine availability is different at each participating clinic](#). To be eligible for this program, one must be either:

- An uninsured adult (19+)
- An underinsured adult (19+). An underinsured adult is an adult who has health insurance that does not cover the cost of the vaccine.

## 3. Finances, Work, and Education

### *3.1 Help Paying Bills*

#### Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)

This is Florida’s federally funded TANF program. It provides cash assistance to families with children under the age of 18 or 19 (if the child is a full-time high school student). Able-bodied applicants must participate in work activities to receive cash assistance. However, Regional Workforce Boards help applicants find work. Pregnant women may also receive TCA, either in the third trimester of pregnancy if unable to work, or in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy. Participants must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Have an income at or below 185% of the FPL and the countable income can’t be higher than the payment standard for the family size.
- Be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen
- Be a Florida resident
- Have countable assets as a family that are equal or less than \$2,000
- Must cooperate with child support enforcement as a parent, caretaker, or relative of the children
- Make sure children under age 5 are up to date with childhood vaccines
- Attend school conferences as a parent or caretaker and ensure children ages six to 18 attend school

In 2024, Governor DeSantis signed [HB 1267](#) into law. The legislation implemented a new case management system for TANF. The system was designed to help families avoid childcare and housing benefit cliffs.

Those who do not have to participate in the program's work activity requirement [include](#) the following groups:

- Custodial parents with children under three months old
- Minor children under 16 who are not the payee of the TCA benefit
- Full time students, ages 16 to 18, who are not the payee of the TCA benefit
- Individuals receiving SSI or disability benefits
- Those caring for disabled family members

### [Relative Caregiver Program](#)

This program falls under the TCA program and provides monthly cash assistance to relatives who meet eligibility requirements and have custody of a child under age 18 who has been placed in the caretaker/relative's home by a contracted provider of the Department of Children and Families. Eligibility requirements are similar to the ones listed above for the main TCA program.

### [Optional State Supplementation](#)

This program falls under the TCA program and provides monthly cash payments to disabled individuals who live in residential living facilities such as mental health residential treatment facilities. To obtain this cash assistance, one must need assistance with daily activities due to physical and/or mental conditions. Eligibility requirements are similar to the ones listed above for the main TCA program.

### [Other Forms of TCA Assistance](#)

- Relocation assistance - Families that need to flee a domestic violence situation or move to an area for a job can receive a lump sum TCA payment instead of a monthly benefit.
- Up-front diversion - This is a one-time \$1,000 payment to TCA families facing unexpected financial hardship. This is allocated in place of ongoing TCA benefits.
- Cash severance benefit - This is a \$1,000 one-time payment to certain recipients who terminate their TCA benefits such as those who become employed while enrolled in TCA.

## ***3.2 Employment Support***

### [Welfare Transition Program](#)

This is the mandatory work program for Florida's TCA program (see section 3.2). It helps TCA enrollees find work, become self-sufficient, and reach independence from public assistance.

## ***3.3 Education and Training***

No applicable and/or known programs.

### *3.4 Financial Advice or Education*

No applicable and/or known programs.

## **4. Material or Legal Support**

### *4.1 Transportation*

#### Transportation Disadvantaged Program

This program provides low-cost or free transportation services to people with disabilities, at-risk children, and low-income residents who cannot provide their own transportation. This service is available in all 67 counties, and each county has a community transportation coordinator that helps participants enrolled in the program connect with rides.

#### Non-Emergency Transportation (NET)

This is a Medicaid benefit that reimburses enrollees for rides to non-emergency medical appointments for both the Medicaid member and a personal care attendant if one is required. To receive reimbursement, Medicaid members must not have any other way of getting to the appointment.

### *4.2 Food and Nutrition*

#### WIC

This is a federally funded nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding services, and referrals for pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, and children (under the age of five) at no cost. For a pregnant woman, each unborn baby counts as one extra person in the household size. To be eligible for WIC, one must meet WIC income guidelines or are already enrolled in Medicaid, TCA, or food assistance.

#### SNAP

This federally funded program is administered by the Florida Department of Children and Families. It provides financial assistance for low-income families so they can purchase healthy foods for themselves and their families. Eligibility requirements can be found [here](#). In Florida, individuals are ineligible to receive SNAP benefits if one or more of the following pertains to them:

- Have been convicted of drug trafficking
- Are running away from a felony warrant
- Purposely break SNAP rules
- Are an illegal immigrant or are a noncitizen without a qualified status
- Are a student who attends college at least half time (in some circumstances)

## [Online Purchasing Pilot](#)

In May of 2021, several grocery chains (Amazon, Walmart, Aldi, BJ's Wholesale Club, Publix, etc.) across the state started accepting SNAP payments online.

## [Fresh Access Bucks](#)

An initiative of Feeding Florida, this program is a USDA funded statewide nutrition incentive program that encourages SNAP recipients to redeem their benefits at farmers markets and produce stands.

## [Special Nutrition Programs](#)

The National School [Breakfast](#) and [Lunch](#) Program

This is a USDA funded program that provides reimbursement funds to schools for serving nutritious meals to children, allowing qualifying students to obtain nutritionally balanced low-cost or free breakfasts and lunches each school day. School breakfast programs must be operated at no cost to students in schools where 80% or more of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

- [Afterschool Snack Program](#) - This is a component of the National School Lunch Program and fills the afternoon hunger gap for children in after school or sports programs through the school they are enrolled in. The program reimburses participating schools and childcare institutions. Children aged 18 or under are eligible for the program.

## [Child Care Food Program](#)

The Bureau of Child Care Food Programs reimburses childcare facilities and organizations who provide their enrolled children with nutritious meals and snacks at no cost. Childcare facilities include childcare centers, family day care homes, recreational centers, after school programs, domestic violence and homeless/runaway shelters. Two related programs are the Afterschool Meals Program and the Homeless Children Nutrition Program.

- [The After School Meals Program](#) provides reimbursement to afterschool programs that serve low-income children supper or nutritious snacks.
- [The Homeless Children Nutrition Program](#) reimburses public or nonprofit organizations that provide nutritious meals to homeless children in temporary residential settings. Eligible programs must operate in a family shelter or a battered women's shelter. The program will fund up to three meals a day or two meals and a snack a day.

## [Special Milk Program](#)

This program provides milk to children in schools, childcare facilities, and eligible camps that do not participate in other federal child nutrition programs. Every child's family must apply annually for eligibility. Parents and primary caregivers should check with their child's school for specific eligibility requirements, though general eligibility requirements may be found [here](#).

## [Summer Food Service Program](#)

This federally funded program, called Summer BreakSpot in Florida, provides free meals to children aged 18 and under during summer break. Meals are available at participating schools, nonprofit organizations, and government entities (libraries, parks, etc.). Florida has two summer meal programs: the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option.

#### [The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#)

TEFAP is a federally funded program that provides states with 100% American grown foods which are allocated to participating food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens. Low-income individuals and families can go and receive supplemental food boxes from these entities. These supplemental food boxes contain three to five days' worth of food. Monthly income limits apply, and eligible households must meet income limits.

### *4.3 Clothing, Household Goods, and Baby Supplies*

No applicable and/or known programs.

### *4.4 Housing, Shelters, and Maternity Homes*

#### [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#)

This is a federally funded program that provides grants to local governments and non-profits to assist low-income Floridians in paying for the costs of home heating and cooling. Funds usually go towards utility payment assistance but also can be used for crisis assistance and weather-related or supply shortage energy crisis assistance. To be eligible, one must be a resident of Florida and in need of financial assistance. A person or family who participates in other benefit programs like SNAP or TANF automatically meets the income eligibility requirement.

#### [Florida Weatherization Assistance Program](#)

This federally funded program provides grants to community agencies, local governments and Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations to fund energy saving repairs to low-income homes across the state. Measures that could be funded include the repairing or replacement of furnaces and air conditioning systems, insulation, weather stripping, water heater wraps, and reduction of air infiltration. This program is available to families with one or members with a disability or families with children. Individuals enrolled in the TANF program are automatically income eligible to receive weatherization assistance.

### *4.5 Legal Support*

No applicable and/or known programs.

## **5. Recovery and mental health**

### *5.1 Addiction Recovery*

#### [The Housing Assistance Pilot Program](#)

This is a pilot Medicaid waiver program that provides housing to Medicaid members ages 21 and older who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness or substance use disorder. This waiver is available to eligible Medicaid members in healthcare regions five and seven and provides mobile crisis and peer-support services.

### [Treatment for Substance Abuse](#)

The Department of Children and Families provide treatment for substance abuse through a community-based provider system that offers detoxification and treatment services as well as recovery support.

### [Florida's State Opioid Response Project](#)

This project is a federal grant administered through the Florida Department of Children and Families. The focus of the project is addressing opioid and stimulant misuse and overdoses in the state. The program focuses on uninsured and underinsured Floridians who abuse stimulants or opioids and/or have been diagnosed with an opioid or stimulant use disorder. Covered services include outreach, assessment, crisis support, intervention, medical services, day care, day treatment, case management, etc. Special projects within the program include hospital bridge programs, naloxone nasal spray distribution, and evidence-based prevention programs.

### [Tobacco Free Florida](#)

This program is a result of Florida's 2006 state constitutional amendment that mandated the establishment of a comprehensive tobacco education and use prevention program using the state's tobacco settlement fund. This program is run by the Florida Department of Health's Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida. It follows the CDC's *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs*. This program is responsible for media campaigns, tobacco cessation services, county-level grants that advance tobacco free policies, a youth led prevention campaign and movement, and school-based interventions. For example, the program provides free nicotine replacement therapy when a participant signs up for the program's Quit Your Way services.

### [Tobacco Free Moms and Babies](#)

This is a program within the Tobacco Free Florida program that helps pregnant women and new mothers quit smoking by providing free counseling, resources, and incentives. This program is available to any woman who is able to get pregnant, is currently pregnant, or has given birth in the last 6 months. Upon completion of the cessation class, eligible participants get a \$15 voucher for each session completed.

## ***5.2 Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Trafficking Recovery***

No applicable and/or known programs.

## ***5.3 Mental Health***

### [Medicaid Specialty Plans](#)

There are two versions of SMMC plans- standard and specialty. Specialty plans have mandatory care coordination programs and are designed to provide additional services on top of the services already offered by MMA and LTC plans. The three specialty plans active in 2025 include:

- Serious Mental Illness (SMI)- This plan is for those six years or older with a diagnosed serious mental illness, which typically includes psychotic disorders, bipolar disorder, major depression, schizophrenia, delusional disorder, or OCD.
- HIV/AIDS
- Child Welfare (CW)- This plan is for those under the age of 21 with a child welfare case or post adoption case open for services in the Florida Safe Families Network database.

### Mobile Response Teams

These teams are meant to provide 24/7 emergency behavioral health care to anyone in the state who is experiencing several emotional or behavioral health crises. These teams provide screening and assessments, de-escalation and stabilization services, care coordination, development of crisis plans, psychoeducation, and crisis counseling. There are 50 teams across the state, and each team is composed of a licensed mental health professional and a certified peer recovery specialist.

### Adult Mental Health

The state's public mental health system is funded by federal block grant dollars and the Florida legislature but is run by the Florida Department of Children and Families. The state directly operates some mental health treatment facilities, but Florida's community mental health system is privatized. Public funding is contracted through local Mental Health Program offices, mostly with non-profit local Community Mental Health Centers.

### Children's Mental Health Program

This program is a coordinated network of youth-guided and family-driven community-based services that provides funding for in-home and outpatient services, crisis services, and residential treatment for children with mental health disorders.

### Community Action Treatment (CAT) Teams

These statewide teams help children and young adults with serious behavioral health concerns to recover at home. These teams also help children with complex needs that cause family disruption or increase the risk of family separation. Such complex needs include multiple behavioral health hospitalization, involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice or law enforcement, or poor academic performance or suspensions. There are over 60 CAT teams across the state with three main types of teams- Traditional CAT Teams, Family First Prevention Services Act Teams, and Family Support Teams. Each team has a team leader, mental health clinicians, a psychiatrist or APRN, an RN or LPN, a case manager, certified peer specialist, and support staff. These teams offer care coordination and case management services as well as crisis intervention, therapy, mental and substance use treatment services. Other services include psychoeducation, respite care, and transportation assistance.

## 5.4 Abortion Recovery and Healing

No applicable and/or known programs.

## 5.5 Miscellaneous

### [Juvenile Incompetent to Proceed Program](#)

This program provides competency restoration services to juveniles who have been convicted of a felony prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and can't participate in legal proceedings due to mental illness, intellectual disability, or autism.

## 6. Disability Assistance

### [Florida Early Steps](#)

This is Florida's early intervention system which serves eligible infants and toddlers (birth to 36 months) who are experiencing serious developmental delays and/or disabilities. Most of this program's services are provided via home visits. This program is free and open to all families regardless of income.

### [Disability and Health Programs](#)

This program works to improve the health of those with mobility limitations and intellectual/developmental disabilities through public health interventions. This program has an adapted Diabetes Prevention Program as well as an adapted Physical Activity Program. The [adapted Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program](#) educates schools on how to provide opportunities for children with disabilities to be physically active for 60 minutes each school day.

### [Tuition Support Programs for Exceptional Student Educators](#)

These tuition reimbursement programs provide financial support (in return for fulfilling a service obligation) to teachers who specifically want to be trained in reading, autism, or prekindergarten disabilities; paraprofessionals earning a bachelor's degree in special education; and educators earning a master's degree in speech/language pathology.

### [Disability-Specific Medicaid Programs](#)

As noted in Section 2.3, [Long-Term Care](#) is one of the three main components of Florida's Medicaid program. This Medicaid option provides coverage for disability-related services that one would typically receive in a nursing facility or assisted living facility for individuals aged 18 and older. Services covered by this program include adult day health care, attendant nursing care, home-delivered meals, care coordination services, etc. To be eligible for coverage under long-term care, one must meet a nursing home level of care or hospital level of care for people with Cystic Fibrosis.

The state of Florida also offers four disability-related Home and Community-Based (HCBS) waivers. [These waivers include:](#)

- Familial Dysautonomia Waiver - For the medically fragile ages 3-64 who meet a hospital level of care. Examples of covered services include respite services, adult dental services, and behavioral health services.
- iBudget Waiver - For those with autism, developmental disabilities, or intellectual disabilities ages 3 or older who need an ICF/IID level of care. Examples of covered services include life skills training, speech therapy, and dietician services.
- Long-Term Care Waiver - This waiver provides many of the same services as the iBudget waiver as well as assisted living services. This waiver is for those who are 65 or older and the medically fragile, ages 18-64, who need a hospital or nursing facility level of care because of physical disabilities, a brain injury, or HIV/AIDS.
- Model Waiver - This waiver provides respite and case management services as well as environmental accessibility adaptations to those who are medically fragile from 0-20 years old and meet a hospital or nursing facility level of care.

In 2024, the [Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Comprehensive Managed Care \(ICMC\)](#) pilot program was approved by the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This program covers all medical services covered under SMMC plus HCBS services like those provided by the iBudget waiver. To be eligible for this program, one must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be on the pre-enrollment list for the iBudget waiver
- Be a Florida resident
- Being 18 or older
- Be on Medicaid or Medicaid-eligible

## 7. Care for Children

### 7.1 Childcare

#### [Florida School Readiness](#)

This program offers financial assistance to eligible low-income families for early education and childcare so they can become financially self-sufficient. This program is federally funded, and the Florida Division of Early Learning runs the program in collaboration with 30 local early learning coalitions statewide. Parents can choose from private centers and schools, public schools, and family childcare homes. Eligibility requirements for parents include meeting all of the following criteria:

- Must work or participate in an educational activity (attending college or a trade school) at least 20 hours per week
- Have gross income at or below 55% of the state median income for family size
- Must pay a co-payment for childcare based on income and family size

Other families may be eligible if they have children with special needs or who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, or if the parents are homeless, victims of domestic violence, or are low-income migrant families or farm workers.

## 7.2 Children's Health Care

### Medicaid for Children

Florida residents under 19 can qualify for Florida Medicaid if they meet immigration or citizenship requirements and meet [income guidelines](#).

In Florida, children, depending on their age and family income, have several Medicaid/CHIP options. Those three options include:

- Medicaid (SMMC full coverage Plan) - This plan is for children from birth through 18 years old whose family income is at or below 147%-133% of the FPL, depending on the child's age.<sup>1</sup> There are no monthly premiums associated with this option. Florida's Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment ([EPSDT](#)) benefit provides health coverage for well-child visits and diagnostic screenings for all children with actual or potential health issues, from birth to age 21, who are enrolled in Medicaid. This mandated Medicaid benefit screens children with actual or potential health problems to treat them before they become permanent disabilities. Preventive health services are also available to Medicaid-eligible children under age 21.
- [MediKids \(CHIP\)](#) - This option is for children between the ages of one and four. If the child's family income is between 133.01% and 158% of the FPL, the family pays a \$15 monthly premium. If the child's family income is between 158.01% and 200% of the FPL, the family pays a \$20 monthly premium. Lastly, if a child's family income is at 200.01% of the FPL or above, the family is considered "full pay" and pays a monthly premium of \$248.21 per child. See the list of covered services [here](#).
- [Florida Healthy Kids \(CHIP\)](#) - This option is for children ages five through 18. If the child's family income is between 133.01% and 158% of the FPL, the family pays a \$15 monthly premium. If the child's family income is between 158.01% and 200% of the FPL, the family pays a \$20 monthly premium. Lastly, if a child's family income is at 200.01% of the FPL or above, the family is considered "full pay" and pays a monthly premium of \$276 per child, which includes dental care. See the non-exhaustive list of covered services [here](#).

In addition to the standard SMMC and CHIP plans for children, Florida offers a collection of specialty programs for children with special health care needs. To be eligible for these specialty programs, children must meet both financial and clinical eligibility requirements. To learn more about the enrollment and eligibility determination processes, go [here](#). Some of these specialty programs include the:

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<sup>1</sup> The 5% difference between the stated income limits for different eligibility groups within the Florida document linked above and the amount listed in this document is because the Florida document didn't account for the 5% disregard that applies to Medicaid eligibility groups.

- [Comprehensive Children's Kidney Failure Center \(CCKFC\) Program](#) - This program is for children who have experienced less than 75% of normal kidney function for more than six weeks. Some services provided by this program include medical evaluation and treatment, social services, care coordination, and dialysis.
- [Craniofacial/Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate Program](#) - This program provides services through a multidisciplinary team who can provide children with surgical interventions, dental/orthodontic care, and speech therapy.
- [Hematology and Oncology Program](#) - This program provides children with blood diseases (ex., sickle cell disease) or cancer with care coordination services provided through a network of nine participating centers.
- [HIV/AIDS Program](#) - This program is for children under the age of 21 who have been exposed to or diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The program provides services that promote healthy living behaviors despite their diagnoses. Examples of services include medical evaluations and treatment, social services, care coordination, and nutritional counseling.
- [Medical Foster Care Program](#) - This program provides foster children (under the age of 21) with special health care needs an opportunity to receive medical care within their foster homes. Foster parents are trained in CPR and first aid and taught how to care for their foster child's complex healthcare needs.
- [Regional Perinatal Intensive Care Centers Program](#) - Participating centers provide obstetrical services to women with high-risk pregnancies and care for newborns with special health care needs such as critical illnesses or low birth weight. There are 11 participating hospitals and two obstetrical satellite clinics.
- [Youth Transitions Program](#) - This program helps transition youth with or without complex medical needs from a pediatric model of healthcare to an adult model.
- [Safety Net Program](#) - This program can help pay for some medically necessary health services and family needs for families with children who suffer from chronic health conditions but aren't enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. This program operates on a first-come, first-served basis and has limited funding. This program will pay for services and care coordination for up to two qualifying health conditions. Examples of covered services include outpatient specialty physician services, diagnostic testing, and prescription medications.

### School Health Services Program

Every Florida public school is legislatively mandated to provide basic school health services. All 67 counties do so. These services include nursing assessments, health counseling, referrals, and follow-up care, as well as in-school care management of chronic and acute diseases, medication administration assistance, and more. Forty-six counties receive funding to implement comprehensive school health services programs, such as programs that reduce high-risk behaviors (substance abuse, self-harm, STDs), prevent pregnancy, and support services to promote a return to school after giving birth. Lastly, 66 counties receive funding to provide full-service school programs in schools with high numbers of medically underserved, high-risk students. These services include job placement services, parenting classes, counseling services for abused

children and substance abuse, and adult education for parents. The Florida Department of Health provides funding, technical assistance, and oversight to Florida's public schools.

### Newborn Screening

Florida's screening program requires that all babies born in the state are screened for 48 blood disorders, hearing loss, and critical congenital heart disease. The program is a partnership between the state's Department of Health and the state's Bureau of Public Health Laboratory in Jacksonville. It is important to note that while this program is required, parents pay for these services as a part of the cost to deliver their child.

### Vaccines for Children

This is a federal program run at the state level, and it provides participating doctors' offices with free vaccines to administer to Florida resident children under the age of 19 whose families could otherwise not afford to vaccinate their children. Other eligibility requirements include meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Be an American Indian or Alaska Native
- Be Medicaid-eligible
- Be uninsured or underinsured (can only receive vaccines through FQHCs, rural health clinics, or local public health districts).

## *7.3 Family and Parenting Education*

### Florida Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

This program provides free home-based early childhood education for children ages two through five alongside the child's parent(s) who the program believes is the child's first teacher. The parent is given age and developmentally appropriate curriculum materials aimed at improving their child's cognitive and literacy skills as well as their social and physical development. This program is offered in 12 Florida communities. This program does not replace preschool for a child, rather it supplements it. HIPPPY works in collaboration with the University of South Florida and is partially funded by the State of Florida's Department of Education Division of Early Learning.

### Florida Head Start and Early Head Start

This is a federally funded program that coordinates with service sites to educate low-income parents of children from birth to age five on child development and school readiness. Head Start typically serves children between three and five, and Early Head Start serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant women. The program is free to low-income families at or below federal [poverty guidelines](#). Children whose families receive public assistance, are in foster care, or are experiencing homelessness are also eligible regardless of income. The state's Head Start program is administered by the federally funded Florida Head Start Collaboration Office.

### Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

The state offers free prekindergarten for all four-year-olds in the state regardless of family income. Children must be four years old on or before September 1 of the current school year. The pre-K

program provides 540 instructional hours during the school year and 300 instructional hours during the summer. The program also has a Specialized Instructional Services Education Program to provide instruction for four-year-olds with special needs who have current individualized education programs (IEPs) from local school districts.

### [Safe Kids Florida](#)

This program aims to prevent and reduce the number of unintentional injuries and deaths among children by employing Safe Kids coalitions across the state (in 42 counties). Services include virtual car seat checks, delivering car seats, social media and virtual webinar education events. The Florida Department of Health is the main program lead for Safe Kids Florida. This program also supports public programs that reduce unintentional injuries among children and provide safety education to children in the major risk areas of traffic, water, and fire safety as well as poisoning, falls prevention, and suffocation.

## *7.4 Adoption*

### [Adoption Assistance for Families with Special Needs Children](#)

In Florida, three forms of federal and state-funded adoption assistance are available for families who adopt a special needs child:

- Monthly adoption subsidies
- Medical assistance (through Medicaid)
- One-time reimbursement of adoption-related expenses

### [Medicaid for Adoption Assistance Recipients](#)

Medicaid is available, as mandated by federal law, for those receiving Title IV-E adoption assistance. Income is not considered for this eligibility group. The state of Florida [electively](#) covers those receiving non-IV-E adoption assistance.

## *7.5 Foster, Kinship, and Short-term Care*

### [Foster Care Subsidy](#)

The state gives \$200 per month to assist foster parents and relative or nonrelative caregivers with covering the cost of childcare.

### [SB 7034 \(2022\)](#)

This bill was signed by Governor DeSantis. It expands support for foster parents and opportunities for foster children.

### [Independent Living](#)

The state provides one-on-one help for young people (between the ages of 18 and 26) who are about to or have recently transitioned out of foster care. Services include connecting young adults with existing resources in their area, accessing special services as needed, and providing participating young adults with a support system.

- [Step Into Success Pilot Program](#) - This is a component of the state's independent living services. It serves former foster youth ages 16 to 26. It provides a 40-hour workforce education training and a workforce internship experience. The education training program teaches participants about life skills like resume building, interview skills, leadership, etc. The internship experience provides enrollees with an onsite internship (80 hours per month) and a stipend of \$1517 per month. To be eligible for this pilot program, one must live in Tallahassee County or surrounding counties.
- [Educational and Training Voucher Program](#) - This federally funded program is a component of the state's independent living services and provides college tuition waivers to those who are in foster care when they turn 18 and those in the state's kinship-guardianship program. Youth can receive up to \$5,000 per year for tuition or other qualified school-related expenses. Other eligibility requirements include:
  - Must be enrolled in a Title IV, accredited college or vocational/technical training program and make progress toward completion of the degree
  - Apply annually for a voucher

ETV funds can be accessed for a maximum of five years until the youth's 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### [Postsecondary Education Services and Support \(PESS\) Program](#)

This is a state program for eligible former foster youth. It provides them with the skills and education they need to transition from the foster care system to adulthood. Some program participants may be eligible for a monthly payment of \$1,720. The money can be used to pay for housing, utilities, and the cost of living while attending a Florida Bright Futures-eligible college. Eligibility requirements can be found [here](#).

### [Medicaid for Foster Care Assistance Recipients](#)

Medicaid is available, as mandated by federal law, for those receiving Title IV-E foster care assistance. Income is not considered for this eligibility group. The state of Florida electively covers those receiving non-IV-E foster care assistance. Former foster care children are also eligible for Florida Medicaid if they were enrolled in Medicaid when they aged out of foster care. Income is not considered for this eligibility group.

## ***7.6 Safe Haven and/or Baby Boxes***

### [Safe Haven Law](#)

Florida's Safe Haven law allows parents to anonymously surrender unharmed newborns to a designated facility without fear of prosecution. Designated facilities include hospitals, EMT stations, and fire stations staffed with full-time firefighters, EMTs, or paramedics. In June 2024, due to Governor DeSantis signing [HB 775](#), the age limit for when parents could lawfully surrender newborns was increased from 7 to 30 days. The new legislation also added an additional method of surrender to the list of legal methods- dialing 911 and asking an EMT to meet at a specified location to surrender the newborn.

## Miscellaneous

### Hope Florida

This is an initiative of the First Lady of Florida, Casey DeSantis. It is a collaboration between the public and private sector, faith-based communities, and nonprofits. It empowers Hope Navigators, non-governmental volunteer experts, to create a pathway for Floridians to live the American dream of prosperity and economic self-sufficiency. Navigators work with individuals to identify and break down the barriers in their life that are stopping them from living the American dream. This initiative serves single parents, individuals on government assistance, and pregnant mothers.

### Choose Life License Plates

The program was started in Florida and now runs in [34 states and DC](#). [Choose Life, Inc.](#) was formed in Florida in 1996 with the idea to use license plate sales to help fund efforts for prenatal care for women considering adoption services and to help pro-life pregnancy centers and other life affirming agencies provide services to women who needed them. Florida drivers can purchase “Choose Life” plates from the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Department.

**This is a non-exhaustive list of programs, current as of January 2026, intended to make information easily accessible to moms and families. CLI does not take a position on the merits of any specific program.**

*This document was compiled by Mia Steupert, Elyse Gaitan, and Tessa Cox.*