

**A  
ROAD MAP TO SERVICES  
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
IN TIOGA COUNTY**



A guide designed to help people with developmental disabilities and their families find services in Tioga County



Presented by the  
Mental Retardation and Developmental Disability Subcommittee  
of the  
Tioga County Community Services Board

**TIOGA COUNTY**  
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## Introduction

We are pleased to offer our guide to help people with developmental disabilities, and their families, locate and obtain services in Tioga County. This guide provides information on various services available in Tioga County, including contact numbers. It also includes information on the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee of our Community Services Board.

This guide was developed to provide a reference for families who may face the challenges of organizing services for a family member and those that provide assistance to those families. We encourage you to share this reference with anyone who may benefit from seeing it. Please feel free to make copies as needed.

Our intent is to facilitate the connection of those in need with services that can help. Please contact us if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

John Crosby, Chair

Paul LeBlanc, LMSW, Director of Community Services

**TIOGA COUNTY  
MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE**



The Tioga County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disability (MRDD) Subcommittee is part of the Tioga County Community Services Board. This subcommittee is responsible for ensuring quality services related to education, housing, employment, and healthcare for people with developmental disabilities. We are also responsible for the preparation of our local government plan that supports services for people with disabilities.

Meetings are held monthly, generally on the first Tuesday of the month, at 9:00am at the Tioga County Health and Human Services Building,  
1062 State Route 38, Owego, NY.  
Visitors are always welcome.  
Contact (607) 687-0200 for more information.

**DEFINITION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY**

A developmental disability is a disability that originates before the age of 22 and can be expected to continue throughout life. Examples of developmental disabilities are mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, neurological impairment, and autism. Also included are other conditions that result in similar impairments and require similar treatment and services.

## **HOW TO USE THIS ROAD MAP TO SERVICES:**

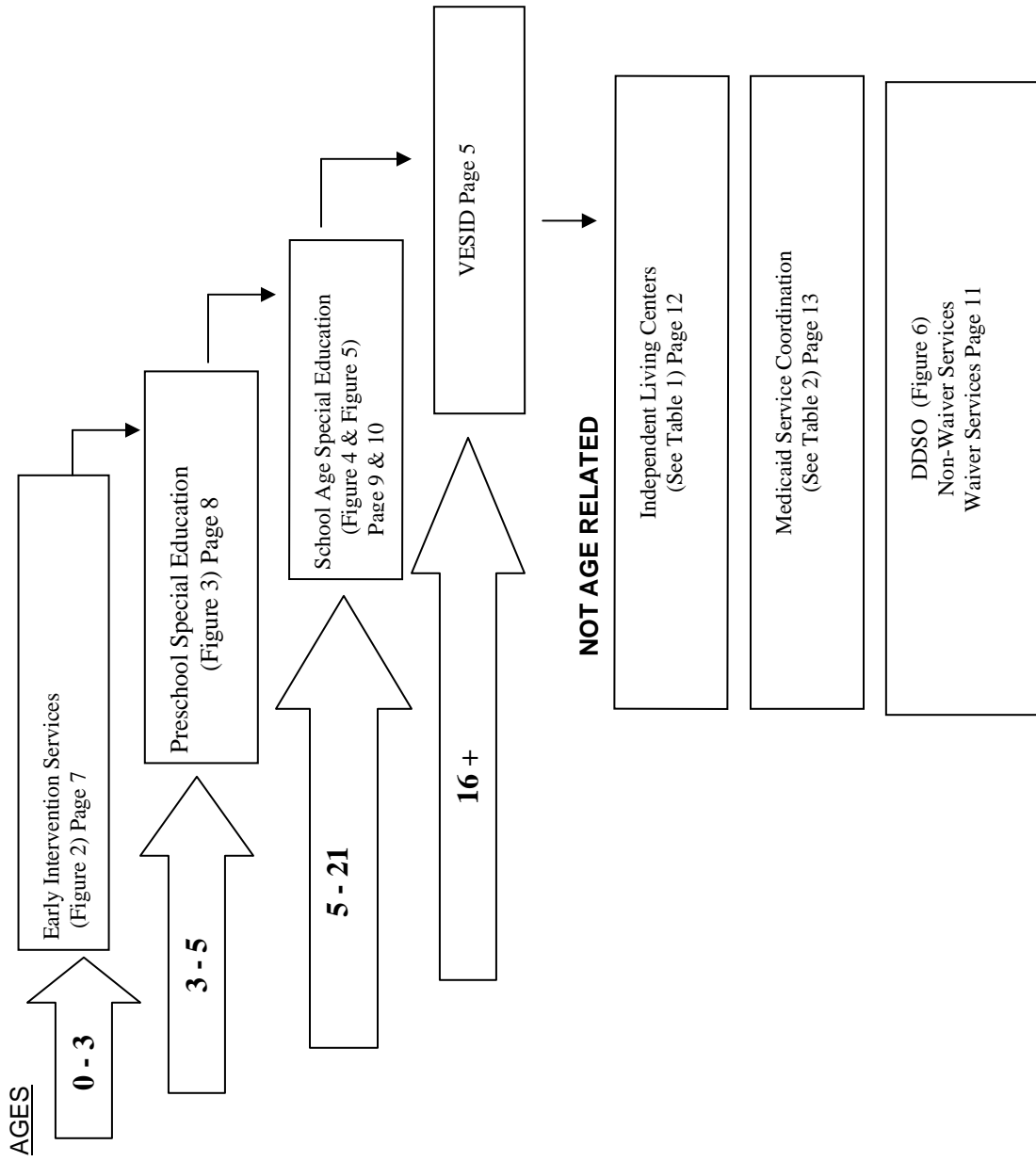
A comprehensive listing of agencies from Tioga and adjacent counties that provide developmental disability-related services to individuals and families from Tioga County includes over 70 listings. This can produce a bewildering array of options. This roadmap attempts to simplify that situation by focusing on the 7 broad categories of services, and the gatekeepers that allow access to the services.

There are 7 primary entry ports for obtaining MRDD and related services. Where you start is both a function of the age of the individual needing services, and the type of services desired. You may be eligible for more than one service.

All of the listed services require a formal evaluation to determine eligibility. Only VESID and Independent Living Centers have provisions for charging for some services based on income and/or family resources. All other services are provided free of charge to eligible individuals and families.

See Figure 1 on the next page for an overview of the 7 described service categories and their interrelationships.

**FIGURE 1.  
OVERVIEW OF MRDD SERVICES**



## **EARLY INTERVENTION (0 – 3 years)**

Early Intervention (EI) is a program for children ages 0 to 3 with developmental delays or disabilities and is administered by the County Public Health Department. While referrals can come from many sources, evaluations and services are provided only with parental/guardian approval. There is a wide range of services available from therapies such as speech, physical, and occupational to services such as health and social services. The Health Department assigns a Service Coordinator for each individual to help guide the family through the recommended services. See Figure 2 on page 9.

## **PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION (3 to 5 years)**

Preschool Special Education is a program for children ages 3 to 5 with developmental delays or disabilities and is administered by a Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) at your local school district. Services include a range of therapies (speech, physical, occupational), itinerant special education teachers, and special education classrooms. Referrals come from parents, the EI program, or other professionals. See Figure 3. For a listing of CPSE contacts in the 6 county school districts, see Table 1.

## **SCHOOL AGE SPECIAL EDUCATION (5 to 21 years)**

School Age Special Education is a program for children ages 5 to 21 with the whole gamut of disabilities including developmental delays and disabilities. Services range from consultant teachers, to therapies such as speech and occupational, counseling and psychological services, and special classes. Referrals can come from parents, from within the school system, and from the CPSE. All services are provided within the school system. See Figures 4 and 5.

## **VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (> 16 years)**

VESID, an office of the New York State Education Department, provides vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals, ages 16 and older, to prepare them for suitable jobs. These jobs might be in the competitive work force, in self owned businesses, in the home, in sheltered workshops, or in supported employment in the community. VESID can also help people with disabilities who are having problems keeping their jobs. Referrals come from parents, individuals, and School Age Special Education.

## **INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS (> 0 years)**

Independent Living Centers are available to anyone who has a disability, and can help people learn to have more control over their lives and to live more independently, in their communities. Referrals come from parents, individuals, and VESID. Table 1 lists the Independent Living Centers closest to Tioga County.

## **SERVICE COORDINATION (> 0 years)**

Service Coordinators are knowledgeable about the whole array of available services and are skilled in helping individuals and families negotiate through the system. Eligibility for service coordination is determined by the DDSO, however, service coordinators will generally offer preliminary advice and assist the individual in getting through the DDSO approval step. Table 2 lists the organizations that provide service coordination for residents of Tioga County.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION (>0 years)**

The DDSO is a state run organization that controls access to a wide ranging set of services from service coordination to residential and day habitation, respite, supported employment, and environmental modifications and adaptive technology. Individuals in all 6 of the above listed programs may also be eligible for the DDSO services.

## THE DDSO PROCESS

The DDSO controls access to two broad sets of services called "Non Waiver" and "Waiver" services. Non Waiver Services include:

- a) Medicaid service coordination (MSC) – a state service wherein Medicaid pays for service coordination
- b) Housing – assistance in locating, leasing, or buying individualized living arrangements
- c) Sitter Services – provide regularly scheduled substitute supervision for certain specified circumstances
- d) Recreation – leisure and social activities
- e) Counseling – structured sessions to help an individual or family address issues of concern

Waiver Services (flexible array of services not provided through "regular" Medicaid) include:

- a) Residential Habitation – services that enhance skills necessary to perform activities in the home
- b) Day Habitation – services that enhance skills necessary to perform activities outside the home
- c) Respite – service provided to an individual because of the need for relief for the persons normally providing care (home & residential)
- d) Pre-vocational Training – support and training related to the ability to obtain and retain employment
- e) Supported Employment – services that assist individuals in finding and keeping meaningful employment
- f) Environmental Modifications – changes to home environment necessary for the individual to function with greater independence
- g) Adaptive Technology – devices and aids necessary to allow a person to live at home with independence and safety

The first step is having the DDSO determine eligibility for DDSO services. This includes approval to pay a Medicaid Service Coordinator. (MSC)\*

Next the individual/family and the MSC prepare a plan for services which they bring back to the DDSO for approval. In the process of approving the plan the DDSO will coordinate with the Department of Social Services to assure that the individual/family has Medicaid coverage.

If only non-waiver services are requested, the plan can be implemented.

If waiver services are requested, there is an additional step where DDSO must approve the waiver.

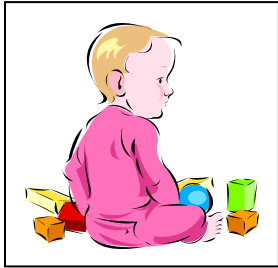
The plan including waiver services is brought before the county MRDD subcommittee for approval and DDSO authorization to spend funds.

These steps are illustrated in Figure 6.

\*A MSC is only required for the first 3 months, however, if the individual opts out of MSC, they must have a Plan of Care Support Services (PCSS) approved.

**FIGURE 2.**

**EARLY INTERVENTION STEPS**



**Family Concern**

**1. Referral (unless parent objects)**

- Referral source or parent suspects child of having developmental delay or disability
- Family informed of benefits of Early Intervention Program (EIP)
- Child referred to Early Intervention Official (EIO) within 2 days of identification
- Early Intervention Official assigns Initial Service Coordinator

**2. Initial Service Coordinator**

- Provides information about EIP
- Informs family of rights
- Reviews list of evaluators
- Obtains insurance/Medicaid information
- Obtains other relevant information

**3. Evaluation**

- Determine eligibility
- Family assessment, optional
- Gather information for Individual Service Plan
- Summary and report submitted prior to IFSP

**4. The Individual Family Service Plan Meeting (IFSP) (if child is eligible)**

- Family identifies desired outcomes
- Early Intervention services specified
- Develop written plan
- Family and EIO agree to IFSP
- Identify Ongoing Service Coordinator
- EIO obtains social security number(s)

*Early Intervention Services*

- assistive technology devices and services
- audiology
- family training, counseling, home visits and parent support groups
- medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- nursing services
- nutrition services
- occupational therapy
- physical therapy
- psychological services
- service coordination
- social work services
- special instruction
- speech-language pathology
- vision services
- health services
- transportation and related costs

*Areas of Development*

- cognitive
- physical (including vision and hearing)
- communication
- social/emotional
- adaptive development

**5. IFSP Review Six Months Evaluate Annually**

- Decision made to continue, add, modify or delete outcomes, strategies, and/or services
- If parent requests, may review sooner
- If parent requests an increase in services, EIO may ask for an independent evaluation

**6. Transition**

- Plan for transition included in IFSP
- Transition to
  - services under Section 3310 of Educational Law (3-5 system)
- OR
- other early childhood services, as needed

*Parent/Guardian consent is required for evaluation, Individual Service Plan, provision of services in Individual Family Service Plan, and transition.*

**FIGURE 3.**

**NYS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM  
FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

**UNDERSTANDING PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**School District Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) Process**

For preschool children, ages 3-5, suspected of having a developmental delay or disability

**If a parent is concerned**

about their preschool child's development or a disability they should contact their local school districts CPSE or the Early Childhood Direction Center. Referrals may also come from Early Intervention or other professionals.

1. **Referral** to local School district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)

Parents may request a CPSE meeting at any time during the year

2. **Parent provided list** of Approved Preschool Evaluation Sites and oriented to the system.

3. **Parent signs consent** for evaluation to be conducted and selects an Evaluation site.

30 school days maximum

4. **Evaluation team** observes child, seeks parent input, evaluates child and reports to CPSE.

5. **CPSE Meeting**  
Review of evaluations, eligibility determined, needs identified. If eligible, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed, specifying goals and services in the least restrictive environment.

If eligible, a classification of Preschool child with a disability will be assigned.

If the child is found to be ineligible or If there is disagreement over the IEP, Parents have a right to Due Process.

Parents consent to initiate services

Child may be deemed not eligible

**Mediation and/or Impartial Hearing** may be held to resolve disputes.

Child receives agreed upon services or remains in current placement until resolved.

6. **Child receives services** within 30 day maximum.

Early Childhood Direction Center & other community supports identified to family

7. **Annual Review**  
Update of goals, services & transition to school age services

FIGURE 4

NYS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM  
for PARENTS of PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

## TRANSITIONING from PRESCHOOL to SCHOOL AGE for PRESCHOOL CHILDREN turning FIVE YEARS OLD

**Transitions** are times of change, times for new opportunities and growth, times to take pride in the gains made. Transitions are also a time when you are likely to have many questions. Talk over your questions with family members, your school district representatives, other parents and the people working with your child. Check with your school district and the personnel serving your child about the specific timetable used in your district to transition your child from preschool to school age services.

<b>What Happens?</b>	<b>When?</b>
1. Start talking to your school district's personnel about what services might be available for your child during the next school year. Ask them what you can do to help prepare.	<b>Fall – Early Winter</b>
2. The Preschool program your child attends or the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) refers your child to the school district's Committee on Special Education (CSE) if services may need to continue.	<b>Early Winter</b>
3. A meeting for parents of preschoolers should be held by your district or the program serving your child to explain the transition process and answer any questions you may have.	<b>Winter - Early Spring</b>
4. School personnel observe your child, conduct any necessary evaluations and discuss recommendations with teachers and therapists. Be sure your child's immunizations are up to date for school registration.	<b>Winter - Spring</b>
5. Further discussions may take place between you, the CSE chairperson, school principal and others about future program options for your child.	<b>Spring</b>
6. Formal reviews are conducted by your school district with you. The CPSE annual review may result in your child exiting from special education services or, if your child has a continued need for special education, a CSE meeting will be held. This may be done jointly with the CPSE meeting. Recommendations are made for any services your child will need and a school age Individual Education Program (IEP) will be developed.	<b>Spring</b>
7. Visit the school age program. Whenever possible and appropriate, participate in the regular kindergarten orientation activities offered by the district. Get to know the teachers and staff that may be working with your child. Ask them any questions you have.	<b>Spring – Early Summer</b>

*Adapted from **Moving On – From Preschool to Kindergarten** developed and edited by Dianne Apter and Anne Winschel, Syracuse NY.*

**FIGURE 5**

**Does Your Child Need Educational Supports?**

The School District process for determining abilities, needs and securing services for children with learning difficulties or a disability for preschool children transitioning to school age services and children, ages, 5-21.

**Prevention First:**

At any time of the school year, if a parent or teacher is concerned about a child's educational performance or suspects a disability they should contact their School Principal or building level support team. It may be possible to make adaptations to the child's educational program without additional services. It may be possible to provide Educationally Related Support Services (ERSS) such as Speech Therapy or Counseling prior to making a referral to the Committee on Special Education (CSE). If these efforts have been attempted in the General Education setting and were unsuccessful in meeting the child's needs then a referral to the CSE could be the next step.

Adaptations may be made to the child's general education program prior to support services being provided.

1. **Pre-referral** efforts to provide supports to child's program

Child may receive Educationally Related Support Services (ERSS) without being classified

2. **Referral to Committee on Special Education (CSE) Services based on**

**Abilities, and Needs:**

If a child's mental, physical or emotional Development is having an adverse effect on his or her educational performance, he or she may be referred by the child's parent or teacher to the School districts Committee on Special Education (CSE). Following a comprehensive evaluation the CSE will determine if he or she is eligible for services. If services are indicated, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed in consultation with the child's parents. (See the School Age Services)

3. **Parent signs consent** for evaluations to be conducted

60 School days from consent for evaluation to Board of Education review

4. **District's Evaluation** team seeks input, evaluates child and reports to CSE

5. **CSE Meeting**  
Review of evaluations, eligibility determined, needs identified.  
If eligible, an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** is developed specifying goals, and services to be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment

Child may be deemed Not eligible

If the child is found to be ineligible or if There is disagreement with the IEP, Parents have a right to Due Process.

**Mediation or Impartial Hearing** may be held to resolve disputes

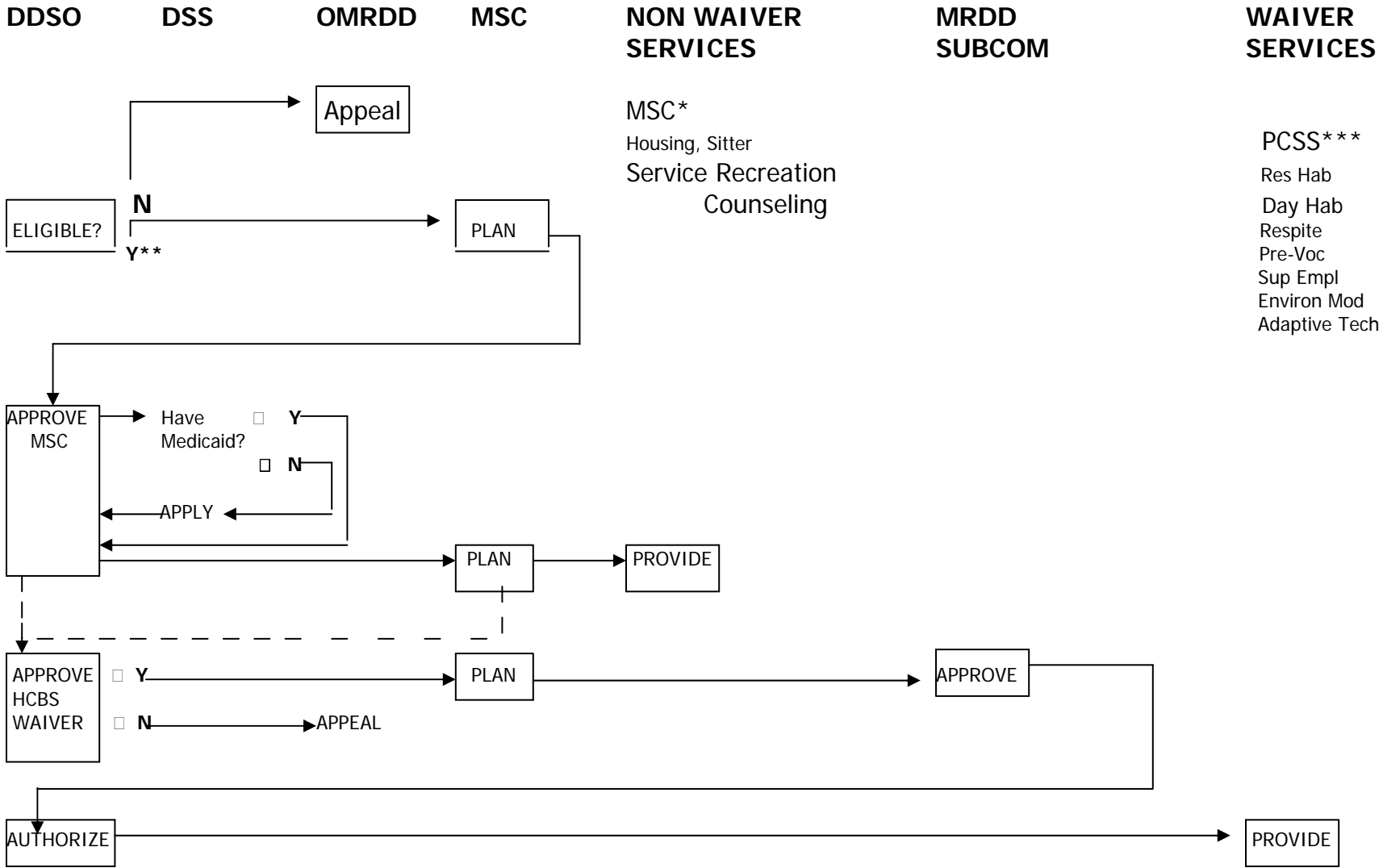
Child receives agreed upon services Or remains in current placement until Disagreement is resolved.

6. **Board of Education** reviews recommendation and provides services

Other community supports identified to family including ECDC's & SETRC's

7. **Annual Review**  
Update of goals, IEP services, Program in Least Restrictive Environment

**FIGURE 6  
ROADMAP TO MRDD SERVICES**



\*Medicaid Service Coordinator only required first 3 months \*\*Provisional eligibility may be granted for age < 8 yrs \*\*\*Plan of Care Support Services must have if opt out of MSC

**TABLE 1  
CONTACTS**

Early Intervention – Tioga County	-----	607-687-8600
Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) And Committee on Special Education (CSE)		
	Candor-----	607-659-7727
	Newark Valley-----	607-642-5524
	Elmira-----	607-735-3100
	Ithaca-----	607-274-2264
	Owego Apalachin-----	607-687-6226
	Spencer Van Etten-----	607-589-7111
	Tioga-----	607-687-8002
	Union Endicott-----	607-757-2109
	Vestal-----	607-754-2244
	Waverly-----	607-565-2841
VESID	<a href="http://www.vesid.nysed.gov">www.vesid.nysed.gov</a>	-----607-721-8400
Independent Living Centers		
	Finger Lakes <a href="http://www.fliconline.org">www.fliconline.org</a>	-----607-272-2433
	Southern Tier <a href="http://www.stic-cil.org">www.stic-cil.org</a>	-----607-724-2111
MRDD	<a href="http://www.omr.state.ny.us">www.omr.state.ny.us</a> State Information Line	-----1-866-946-9733
	Broome DDSO Regional Center	-----607-771-0586
	Tompkins DDSO Regional Center	-----607-273-0811

**TABLE 2**

**ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING MEDICAID SERVICE COORDINATION**

Broome Tioga ARC ----- <a href="http://www.BTARC.org">www.BTARC.org</a>	607-723-8361
Catholic Charities of Broome----- <a href="http://www.catholiccharitiesbc.org">www.catholiccharitiesbc.org</a>	607-729-9166
Chemung ARC ----- <a href="http://www.chemungarc.org">www.chemungarc.org</a>	607-734-6151
Epilepsy Foundation ----- <a href="http://www.epilepsy-uny.org">www.epilepsy-uny.org</a>	607-723-4203
Franziska Racker Centers ----- <a href="http://www.rackercenters.org">www.rackercenters.org</a>	607-687-8929
Handicapped Children's Association ----- <a href="http://www.hcaserves.com">www.hcaserves.com</a>	607-798-7117
Penn-York Opportunities, Inc ----- <a href="http://www.pennyorkopp.org">www.pennyorkopp.org</a>	570-888-5891
Southern Tier Independence Center ----- <a href="http://www.stic-cil.org">www.stic-cil.org</a>	607-724-2111
Tompkins Tioga County Regional DDSO----- <a href="http://www.omr.state.ny.us">www.omr.state.ny.us</a>	607-273-0811