Finding Help for Your Family in Texas

A practical guide to childcare, developmental services, basic needs, healthcare, and parent advocacy

You do not have to figure everything out alone. This guide helps you identify a starting point, prepare for calls, and take one manageable step at a time.

START HERE: THREE SIMPLE STEPS

- Choose your most urgent need. Food, housing, childcare, health, development, or school support.
- Contact one trusted starting point. Ask about eligibility, application steps, waitlists, and referrals.
- Write down what happens. Record the date, person, next step, and documents requested.

If you need help locating community services, call 2-1-1 in Texas or visit 211 Texas. For immediate danger, call 911.

Educational information only. Program availability, eligibility, and contact details can change. Confirm requirements directly with the provider. Destiny Steps of Greatness does not provide diagnosis, clinical therapy, legal representation, or individualized case management through this guide.

1 Childcare and Early Learning

Need help paying for childcare or finding a program? Start with your local Texas Workforce Solutions child care services office. Financial assistance is based on eligibility and available funding; waiting lists may apply.

• Texas Workforce Commission - Child Care Services: twc.texas.gov (search for Child Care Services and your local workforce board).

• Texas Child Care Search: childcare.hhs.texas.gov to research regulated childcare operations and inspection histories.

• Head Start / Early Head Start: Head Start Center Locator for qualifying families with young children.

Questions to ask

• Do I qualify for childcare financial assistance?

• What documents should I bring, and is there a waiting list?

• Can you help me locate a program that can support my child's developmental needs?

2 Developmental and Disability Support

If you have concerns about how your child communicates, moves, learns, or interacts, you can request an evaluation. You do not have to wait for a formal diagnosis to ask questions.

• Birth through age 2: Texas Early Childhood Intervention (ECI). Learn how to request a referral through Texas HHS ECI.

• Ages 3 and older: Contact your local public school district to ask about Child Find and evaluation for special education eligibility, including for children not yet enrolled in public school.

• Developmental milestones: CDC Learn the Signs. Act Early. offers parent-friendly checklists.

Questions to ask

• How do I request an evaluation, and what happens next?

• Is there a cost? What timelines should I expect?

• What support can my family use while we wait?

3 Food, Housing, and Basic Necessities

• SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and other Texas benefits: Check eligibility and apply through Your Texas Benefits.

• WIC: Nutrition support for eligible pregnant/postpartum people, infants, and young children. Start at Texas WIC.

• Food pantries, rent/utilities assistance, and emergency community resources: Search by ZIP code at 211 Texas or call 2-1-1.

• North Texas food resources: North Texas Food Bank provides pantry-location information in its service area; Tarrant Area Food Bank serves Tarrant County and surrounding communities.

Questions to ask

• Is help available in my ZIP code today?

• Do I need an appointment or proof of address/income?

• If this program is full, who else should I contact?

4 Healthcare and Emotional Wellbeing

• Children's health coverage: Apply for Medicaid or CHIP at Your Texas Benefits.

• Community health services: Find a federally funded health center through HRSA Find a Health Center. Ask about sliding-fee options.

• Emotional or mental health support: Call 2-1-1 for local services. For a mental health crisis or emotional distress, call or text 988 (U.S. Suicide & Crisis Lifeline).

Questions to ask

• Do you serve children or caregivers, and do you accept my insurance?

• Are low-cost or sliding-scale appointments available?

• Can you refer me to a provider with experience supporting young children?

5 School Support and Parent Advocacy

If your child is struggling at school, you can ask the school to explain its evaluation, intervention, and special education processes. Keep requests and responses in writing.

• Texas Education Agency: tea.texas.gov provides special education information and parent resources.

• SPEDTex: spedtex.org offers Texas special education information and support.

• Partners Resource Network: prntexas.org offers training and support for parents of children with disabilities.

A simple request you can use

"I am concerned about my child's learning, development, or behavior at school. I would like to understand the evaluation process and what supports may be available. Please tell me how to submit a written request and what happens next."

For disputes or questions about legal rights, seek qualified advocacy or legal advice. This guide does not replace professional legal advice.

6 Starting Locally in Grand Prairie and DFW

Grand Prairie families may be served by different school districts, workforce boards, and county programs depending on their home address. Always confirm the correct service area.

• Grand Prairie and nearby Dallas/Tarrant County families: Begin with 211 Texas and ask for ZIP-code-specific childcare, housing, food, and family-support referrals.

• Dallas County food assistance: North Texas Food Bank.

• Tarrant County food assistance: Tarrant Area Food Bank.

• School services: Contact the special education or Child Find office of the district serving your home address.

Your Family Resource Action Plan

My most urgent need: _____

My first organization to contact: _____

Phone / website: _____

Date contacted and person spoken to: _____

Documents requested: _____

My next step and deadline: _____

Second option if the first cannot help: _____

Before You Call: Quick Checklist

• Have your ZIP code and a brief description of your need ready.

• Ask which documents are required; do not send sensitive information to an unverified contact.

• Ask about language access, accessibility, fees, waitlists, and alternatives.

• Write down the contact name, reference number, and next step.

Phone Script

"Hello, my name is _____. I live in ZIP code _____. My family needs help with _____. Can you tell me whether your program serves my area, how to apply, what documents I need, and whether there are other programs I should contact?"

A NOTE FROM DESTINY STEPS OF GREATNESS

Every child deserves support. Every family deserves guidance. Our free educational resource library is available to help families take informed first steps. We are developing additional family support and advocacy programming; personalized guidance is not currently offered through this guide.

Learn more: destinystepsofgreatness.org | Email: hello@destinysteps.org