



About Us

The Florida Directory of Early Childhood Services (Central Directory) has provided services to thousands of families and providers seeking advocacy, education, training, resource and referral, and information on disability services available in their communities.

Currently Florida's Department of Health, Department of Education, and Office of Early Learning contribute to the funding of this program. Since 1992, the Central Directory has been housed and managed at the Children's Forum within the Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs Unit in Tallahassee, Florida. The Forum Office is responsible for the national toll-free number, 1-800-654-4440, monthly reporting of received calls, e-mails, follow-ups, services requested, unmet needs, and training and technical assistance. The Central Directory maintains a database which contains a wide range of information on community services, counseling, diagnosis/evaluation, early intervention services, education and training, equipment, medical screening, special education services, support groups, and therapies for children and youth birth to 21 years.

The Central Directory toll-free line is also utilized as the electronic link for callers to be connected to State and Local Department of Health/CMS/Early Steps Offices, State and Local Department of Education/Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS), and the Office of Early Learning Inclusion Contacts.

Effective September 1, 2004: The toll-free line hours of operation are extended. A Resource Specialist will be available to answer calls from 8:00am – 8:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Since the inception of the Central Directory in 1986, many changes have occurred in order to improve access for families and professionals to high quality information and services regarding disabilities and special health care needs. Utilizing advancements in technology including phone systems, computers, internet access, and websites, in combination with creative ways of staffing the toll-free line, we look forward to providing even more access to information and delivery of services to families and providers.

The Federal register of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of Section Part C mandates the Central Directory. All states that receive Part C funds have to have a Central Directory. The Florida Directory

of Early Childhood Services serves as Florida's Central Directory.

Another initiative of the Children's Forum/Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs Unit coordinates with Florida's Inclusion Advisory Council to begin the implementation process for Florida's Inclusive Child Care Strategic Plan. The Plan was developed to ensure access, availability and quality of early care and education services to families with children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs.

The objectives of this program are to create buy-in of the concept and philosophy of inclusion by department heads of government agencies, local and state leaders, business and family organizations in order to establish groups that will be responsible for implementation of the plan from both governmental and non-governmental areas.

For more information call the Children's Forum, Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs Unit at 1-800-654-4440 or (850) 487-6301; Fax (850) 922-9156; Email: :

[Lou Ann Long](#), Director of Central Directory

