



OUR SERVICES

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Welcome

We are Delaware's largest provider of non-residential behavioral health services for children and families.

DGS' mission is "to provide quality therapeutic services to children, youth, and their families to increase their social, emotional, and behavioral wellness" and its vision for Delaware is "to have resilient families nurturing children's well-being."



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Family-Based Mental Health Services

The **Family-Based Mental Health Services** program (FBMHS) provides care for children and families with the most complicated behavioral health needs. Children who benefit from FBMHS are usually at risk for out-of-home placement such as a hospital, residential treatment center, or a correctional facility.

For children receiving FBMHS, a team of DGS clinicians is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week to provide care in the child's home and community. Care includes behavioral health treatment for the child, medication management, individual therapy, family therapy, and school and community support. The goal of FBMHS is to help the family develop a strong set of supports including school, church, neighborhood, and friend -- to help the family become healthy and strong and to serve as resources in times of crisis. FBMHS usually lasts about eight months after which the family typically steps down to a less intense type of therapy.



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24 Hour Community-Based Crisis Response

DGS' **Crisis program** dispatches skilled crisis intervention clinicians to provide counseling and support when children are in a mental health crisis. Calls can be made to the statewide Youth Crisis Hotline by children, parents, friends, school staff, or any person concerned for the mental well-being of a child.

Using evidenced-informed risk assessments, clinicians work with each child and family to figure out challenges and strengths. Clinicians help children and families work through difficult situations; calm down anyone who is angry, upset, or out of control; make sure everyone is safe; and provide short-term support by creating a path forward.

Our statewide youth crisis response services are available 24-hours a day and 365 days a year for children and teens (ages 2-17) who:

- Have been identified as a risk of harm to themselves or others
- Have experienced recent trauma
- May be experiencing mental health crisis
- Are seeking help for managing emotional and/or behavioral health problems



Call **1-800-969-HELP (4357)**

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Outpatient Therapeutic Support for Families

Our statewide **Outpatient/Therapeutic Support for Families** (OP/TSF) program is for children and teens who need more than one counseling session per week. Children who benefit from OP/TSF are often dealing with complicated behavioral health issues and may have been unsuccessful in traditional outpatient therapy. OP/TSF may also be helpful for children transitioning out of a higher level of care, such as a residential treatment center or a hospital. Care is primarily provided out of the office, in the family's home, the child's school, a community center, and/or anywhere the family feels comfortable. OP/TSF clinicians work in teams of two. The lead therapist spends about five hours per week of intensive therapy meeting both with the family and the child—sometimes separately and sometimes together. Another clinician meets with the child for about five hours per week and focuses on reinforcing positive behavioral change. OP/TSF treatment usually lasts 9 to 12 months.





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Outpatient Counseling

Outpatient counseling is a process of courageous conversations with a trained counselor that can help children, teens, and parents or guardians in difficult situations. Some children need to heal from the effects of a traumatic event, abuse, neglect, or family breakdown. Others need help to overcome anxiety, depression, or another kind of mental health concern.

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Our clinicians help children learn constructive ways to deal with problems or issues. Typically, children and teens see their therapist once a week for a 50-minute appointment. At the beginning of treatment, the therapist and the child work together to create an individualized treatment plan with specific goals. On average, treatment lasts about four months. Therapists connect with the child's parents/guardians and family members and consult with the child's school as needed. For more complex problems, psychiatric services are added as an important part of multidisciplinary treatment. When children have extremely difficult problems to overcome, medication can help with mood and behavior and put children back on track more quickly. Our psychiatry staff can determine if medication is necessary, prescribe it, follow up frequently to make sure the medicine is helpful, and watch for side effects.



Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

Most every parent has experienced a young child's occasional temper tantrum. But when meltdowns, testing limits, throwing things, hitting, and shoving begin to make life impossible, it's time for an intervention. **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)**, now available statewide through DGS, can help. It's a short-term, evidence-based treatment in use for more than 30 years. In PCIT, both parent and child participate in treatment together. As parents learn and practice effective parenting skills, children's behavior improves; together, the parent and child have a better relationship. PCIT is typically for children ages 2-7 with moderate to severe behavioral problems.

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School-Based Services

School-based services help improve students' attendance, classroom behavior, and academic performance. Our school-based clinicians listen, guide, and encourage students while advocating on their behalf. Clinicians facilitate individual, group, and family counseling sessions, and collaborate with teachers and school staff to develop the tools to recognize and address effects of trauma that might be misunderstood as misbehavior, acting out, or simply "being bad". Our school-based clinicians view themselves as one component of a larger team comprised of families, teachers, administrators, and support staff working together to meet students' behavioral health needs.

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Professional Development

Our **Professional development** curriculum includes 10 stand-alone training modules grounded in trauma-informed care, building effective relationships, and effective classroom and student management. In one-on-one and group settings, DGS clinicians work directly with teachers and administrators to build skills that promote social-emotional well-being, good citizenship, appreciation of diversity, and resilience among students.

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Our **Professional development** curriculum has been implemented successfully within Delaware school systems, and modules are customizable to each school district and school. Our clinicians also work directly with teachers and administrators to design new training modules to meet the specific needs of student populations.



Locations

Wilmington: (302) 652-3948
Newark: (302) 455-9333

Dover: (302) 678-3020
Lewes: (302) 645-5338

Seaford: (302) 262-3505