



Pediatric I/DD FAQs

Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority is here to help EBCI families find the information and services they need. We want to make each step as clear and easy to understand as possible. The contacts below can help answer questions and connect you or your loved one with resources for intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism.

Q

What is I/DD?

A

I/DD stands for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This includes various conditions that begin in childhood and can affect the cognitive functioning, learning and adaptive skills of a person. Examples include Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fragile X Syndrome, etc.

Q

How do I know my child has an I/DD Diagnosis?

A

Your child's doctor will monitor their growth and development during regular well-child visits. These visits include screening for developmental milestones to ensure your child is progressing as expected. If the doctor identifies any concerns or delays in reaching certain milestones, they may recommend additional evaluation or testing.

Further assessments may be completed by your child's doctor or through a referral to a specialist. These evaluations help identify your child's strengths, challenges, and areas where additional support may be beneficial.

Additional testing may include, but is not limited to:

- Psychological evaluations
- Genetic testing
- Observational assessments
- Educational testing
- Adaptive and functional skills assessments
- Developmental evaluations

The results of these assessments can help determine whether your child may benefit from specialized services, therapies, educational supports, or other interventions to support their development.

Q

My child just received a new Diagnosis, what do we do next?

A

The first step is to remember how unique and wonderful your child is. Diagnosis can illustrate areas of need for children and ways they best learn and interact with the world around them. Become familiar with the diagnosis, understand what it means and work to get proper support for your child. Education of the diagnosis can come from your doctor and/or the professional who assessed your child. Care Managers from Tribal Option and/or from Primary Care can navigate support recommendations and resources. Follow up with care management to identify community-based supports that can help your family.



Pediatric I/DD FAQs

Q What is Care Management and how can they help?

A Care Managers help coordinate your healthcare services and aid with navigating the system to meet your needs. Your Care Manager is a specially trained health professional who works with you, your doctors, other providers, and agencies to make sure you get the right care and support when and where you need it most. Care Management from EBCI Tribal Option is committed to providing support and individualized care for members through the Care Coordination Program. It recognizes that a person's overall well-being is dependent upon much more than just health.

Q What supports are there for my family?

A EBCI Tribal Option is available to help you navigate the service system for your child. EBCI Tribal Option Care Managers can assist in identifying if your child qualifies for services. If you do not know if you have EBCI Tribal Option or who your EBCI Tribal Option Care Manager is, you can reach out to Jenny Hornbuckle 828-497-9163 x 6778. Additionally, CIHA has an IDD/Autism Team that can also provide guidance. This team is working to establish the EBCI IDD/Autism Enrichment Center. Services can be utilized, if your family meets qualifications before the Enrichment Center is open and operationalized.

Q What is the Enrichment Center?

A The EBCI IDD/Autism Enrichment Center will be a place for the community to access resources and learn more about the I/DD Community, interventions and supports available to them. CIHA completed groundbreaking on the center in August 2026 with hopes of being open in the fall of 2027. Services for community members who have an I/DD Diagnosis can be established before the center is open. Follow the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority online for future updates: <https://cherokeehospital.org/idd-enrichment-center-project-progress/>

Q Who do I contact if I have questions?

A If you have additional questions or need additional support, you can contact our IDD/Autism Team:

Paige Epley-Williams, I/DD Director
JEpleyWilliams@cherokeehospital.org
Office – 828-497-9163 x 7640

Candy Ross, I/DD Assistant Director
Candy.Ross@cherokeehospital.org
Office – 828-497-9163 x 7595

Feel free to reach out to the EBCI Tribal Option Care Management team for additional support.

Tribal Option Care Management – Jenny Hornbuckle – 828-497-9163 x 6778

Primary Care Care Management – Stephanie Brown – 828-497-9163 x 6441