

# Therapy through Kupat Cholim

Throughout the evaluation and placement process, parents are encouraged to contact **Chaim V'Chessed's Special Education department at 072-CHESED (072-243-7733)**. Chaim V'Chessed's Special Education case manager will assist and guide you toward the help that best suits your child's needs.

Children grow and develop at unique rates, and developmental milestones are reached at different times by different children. However, marked delays or difficulties are cause for concern. These include speech or language delays; slow development of crawling, walking and/or motor skills; difficulty in communicating; or difficulty in play and forming attachments with people in his environment. When a red flag arises it is important that the child be evaluated in order to afford him/her the best services available.

It is crucial to provide our children with optimal intervention while they are young and malleable. The decisions and placement process may be difficult and time-consuming, yet the reward of seeing a child flourishing and acquiring new skills is immeasurable. The sooner we help children, the smaller the gap will be between their development and that of typically developing children.

If a child is born with a syndrome or receives a diagnosis later, parents are entitled to financial benefits from Bituach Leumi. The application and approval process is tedious. You can request assistance from the social worker at the hospital, *kupat cholim*, or from Misrad Harevacha.

For a comprehensive list of benefits, visit the Bituach Leumi website at [www.btl.gov.il](http://www.btl.gov.il).

If Bituach Leumi does not approve your request for financial aid, you should apply for an appeal; the outcome may be reversed.

Receiving an Evaluation and Therapy through Kupat Cholim

Sometimes children exhibit behaviors signifying ADHD, sensory issues, social and emotional or speech and language delays, fine or gross motor delays that may necessitate therapy and/or special education school placement. An evaluation ensures that your child receives the appropriate therapy or placement in the proper educational setting. Some children who receive therapy through a *kupah* can stay in their current school or *gan*.

Below are the guidelines for applying for an evaluation and therapy through Kupat Cholim's Child Development Center (Machon L'Hitpatchut Hayered).

## 1. Identifying a Developmental Delay

As soon as you notice a delay in any area of your child's development, bring it to the attention of your pediatrician to assess if the child's development is indeed late. If the doctor or school suggests that intervention is necessary in the areas of gross motor, fine motor, or speech and language, you will need to contact your *kupat cholim's* Child Development Center (Machon L'Hitpatchut Hayered) to start the application process.

## 2. The Application Process

You will need:

- *Hafnayah* (referral) from your family doctor or pediatrician
- Questionnaire for your teacher or *ganenet* (note there are different forms for different ages)
- Questionnaire for the parent
- Eye exam (can be done by any *kupat cholim* eye doctor). Be sure to tell your eye doctor what you need the exam for.
- Hearing test (if concern centers around language issues)

**Referral from your doctor:** Make an appointment at your pediatrician and specify that you are coming for a referral for *hitpatchut hayered*. At this time you can ask the doctor for a referral for a hearing test and the secretary for a *hitchayvut* (payment for the medical procedure) for the hearing test. Note that the *hitchayvut* may have an expiration date.

**Questionnaire forms:** You can obtain the necessary questionnaire forms at your local *kupat cholim* branch or online. Make sure to follow up with the *ganenet* or teacher so that the forms are completed as soon as possible and you can begin the application process.

If your child is in need of a *ganenet* *siach*, *gan safah*, or any other special education environment, his *ganenet* or teacher will need to fill out forms from the Iriyah that will be passed on

to the Psychological Services (Sheirut Hapsychologit) in addition to the evaluations provided by the *kupah*. Sheirut Hapsychologit will then review your child's abilities and needs and invite you for a placement meeting (*vaadat hasamah*).

These forms need to be signed by both parents. It is worthwhile to read them over to better understand your child's abilities and limitations as well as his functioning level in his current educational setting.

**Hearing test:** Contact your local *kupat cholim* clinic for a list of places where hearing tests can be done. Remember to bring a referral from your doctor and a *hitchayvut* from your *kupah*.

**When you finish** getting all the paperwork together, make copies for your records.

You will now need to send the forms to the Hitpatchut Hayered department of your *kupat cholim*, either through internal mail (sent from your local branch) or by hand delivery, as soon as possible. Check with the secretary to make sure the forms were sent, then contact Hitpatchut Hayered to confirm that they received the forms.

If you have any other documents that are pertinent to your child's development or to the issue of concern, such as a report from a neurologist, orthopedist, psychologist, or other professional, include it in the packet with an explanatory note.

As a parent, you have to advocate for your child and make sure that the process gets done as quickly as possible in order for your child to receive the necessary services.

## 3. The Evaluation and Therapy Process

Hitpatchut Hayered should answer you within ten working days from when they receive the application. If they do not contact you, you should contact them.

You will then be put on a waiting list for an appointment for the appropri-

ate evaluation (speech and language, occupational, physical, psychological, neurological or interdisciplinary) that best suits your child's needs, either in Hitpatchut Hayered or in a local clinic. You should be aware that there may be an extended waiting period. Depending upon the needs of your child, this may affect your child's opportunities for proper educational placement. If you are on a waiting list for an evaluation or therapy for more than three months, you are entitled to go to a private therapist and be partially reimbursed from your *kupah*. However, you must check with your *kupat cholim* to be sure that the specific therapist you choose to use will be approved by your *kupah*.

## Tips for the evaluation process

On the day of the evaluation, make sure your child is well rested, comfortable and not hungry. It is important for children to be at their best so that they will cooperate with the testing procedures. Bring any medical reports or documents and be ready for questions regarding your child's development, any medical conditions or hospitalizations, and anything else of importance to your child's history.

Once the evaluation is complete, you will be notified as to whether your child was approved for therapy and what services he is entitled to. If you don't receive a written report within two weeks, with specific recommendations, call Hitpatchut Hayered or the clinic where the evaluation was done. After you are approved for services, you can choose where to receive the therapy — either at a *snif* (branch) of Hitpatchut Hayered, or at a *machon hesder* (cooperating clinic service provider).

Contact your individual Hitpatchut Hayered for a complete listing of locations that offer therapy.

Once your child is approved for therapy, you may contact Chaim V'Chessed to help you choose the place that best suits your child's therapy needs.

## 4. Optimal Educational Placements

During the evaluation process, or once your child begins to receive services, the professionals may suggest looking into a different educational setting for your child. Especially young children, between the ages of three and six, can benefit greatly from a modified educational setting for a few years to help them resolve issues and acquire skills to assist in future learning. There are both Hebrew- and Yiddish-speaking placements.

## Vaadat Shiluv

The first step in placing your child in the optimal educational setting is a *vaadat shiluv* (preliminary meeting). In order to register in a *gan meshulav*, you only need to have a *vaadat shiluv*. *Vaadot shiluv* take place in March and April.

Bring your child's eye exam, hearing test and all other evaluations that have been done to the *vaadat shiluv*. It is not necessary to bring along your child unless your *ganenet* or teacher specifies that you should.

At the meeting, your child's *ganenet* will describe his functioning level in the *gan* or classroom. You will be asked questions about your child's development and functioning level at home. The professional staff at the meeting will make a recommendation for your child based on the information they are given. You may be told that additional evaluations are necessary, such as that of a *rofeh hitpatchuti* (developmental doctor) or a psychological evaluation. These evaluations will help determine which educational setting is best for your child.

## Vaadat Hasamah

After the *vaadat shiluv*, you will be notified of the meeting's outcome. If your child has been placed in a special education setting, you will need to complete all necessary evaluations and submit them to the Iriyah. After the evaluations are submitted, you will receive an appointment for a *vaadat hasamah* (placement meeting).

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Vaadot hasamah begin taking place in May. The process is extremely time sensitive. Contact Chaim V'Chessed to make sure your application is submitted on time.

Though the bureaucratic procedure is unfortunately complicated and time-consuming, the benefits of early intervention are well worth the effort.

**Note:** Parents of a child with a differential diagnosis (down syndrome, cerebral palsy, delayed mental development, autism spectrum disorder, etc.) receive guidance from the educational staff at the child's maon or gan as to continued educational services and the vaadat hasamah (placement meeting). However, if your child has been integrated into a regular preschool program without any assistance from Revachah (Social Services) or Misrad Hachinuch (Ministry of Education), you will need to follow the

procedure listed above.

The protocol for the vaadat hasamah is similar to that for the vaadat shiluv. Before your vaadat hasamah, be sure you have all the necessary evaluations and therapy sessions. Additionally, do some research beforehand about the optimal placement setting for your child. You are entitled to request a specific placement for your child, but the vaadat shibutz will make the final decision.

#### **Vaadat Shibutz**

After the vaadat hasamah, there will be an additional meeting, a vaadat shibutz (final placement meeting). The parents and teachers of the child do not come to the meeting. At this meeting, a final decision is made regarding where the child will be placed for the upcoming school year.

At any time throughout the process

of the vaadot (meetings), parents who are not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting can request a vaadat irur (appeal committee). At each meeting you will receive the forms necessary to begin the appeal process. If the proffered explanations are not clear, you can ask the psychologist at the vaadot for clarification.

**Important note:** Evaluating a child can be both timely and costly. It can be done privately or at your kupa cholim. Many of the kupa cholim have an excellent staff who provide a professional, inclusive assessment of your child. Parents often choose to do evaluations privately so that their child is evaluated by a specialist in the specific field they need. Sometimes you can receive reimbursement from your kupa cholim. Be sure to verify the reimbursement policy before the private appointment.

# Your Advocate in Jerusalem Hospitals

## Chaim V'Chessed's Medical Department Expands

This October, Chaim V'Chessed's medical department welcomed a new team member, Mrs. Shani Wahrsager. Mrs. Wahrsager is devoted to the intake of calls in the medical field, where numbers have swelled to an average of 15 cases daily. English speakers turn to Chaim V'Chessed for assistance with medical and surgical appointments, advocating for kupa cholim coverage, and guidance on navigating health care procedures. Chaim V'Chessed also provides real-time assistance in Jerusalem-area hospitals, where English speakers often feel stranded and misunderstood.

The team's newest member is working in tandem with Mrs. Nechama Nulman, director of the medical department. Currently, the two are based in Chaim V'Chessed's Jerusalem office, where they handle technical medical-related issues. But the coming months will see Mrs. Nulman taking up more of a presence in Jerusalem hospitals. "Most cases involving hospital appointments or billing issues are passed on to our hospital representatives, Zevi and Aralla Weingarten"—the native Israelis who have already transformed the hospital experience for hundreds of English speakers. "They have a daily presence in Shaare Zedek and Hadassah Ein Kerem. When necessary, we also work together with the patient advocate in Hadassah Har Tzofim."

However, there is a clear advantage to being a native English speaker. As Mrs. Nulman relinquishes more of the in-house work to Mrs. Wahrsager, she plans to circulate throughout the hospitals more often, too. "Our expanded service will include a greater presence in the hospital, offering patients calming support. I'll be there for those in need of understanding, explanations, or just a holding hand," she says. Ultimately, Mrs. Nulman's visits will be as often as four mornings a week, in addition to the current representatives' schedule.

Chaim V'Chessed aims to ease navigation for English speakers in all aspects of life in Israel. By expanding its medical and hospital services, the organization furthers its efforts on behalf of the English-speaking community. To contact Chaim V'Chessed, dial 072-CHESED (243-7733) or visit [www.chaimvchessed.com](http://www.chaimvchessed.com).

## In order to understand and best help your child, it is important to have a thorough and accurate evaluation and report.

### JERUSALEM ORGANIZATIONS THAT ASSIST SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

#### **Aleh**

Rehabilitative care for disabled children  
HaRikmah 9, Romema  
02-501-1000

#### **Av Israel**

Center for children with impaired hearing, teaching deaf children through auditory verbal approach, guidance for cochlear implants, private hearing tests, hearing aid fittings and therapy  
02-673-0244

#### **Bizchut**

Promotes rights for people with disabilities. Offers information and advocacy services for people within the entire range of disabilities.  
Kanfei Nesharim 3,  
02-652-1308

#### **Chaim V'Chessed**

**Special Education Department**  
Guidance and assistance for English speakers in Israel struggling with special education  
072-CHESED  
(072-243-7733)

#### **Count Me In – Beyachad**

For children with Down syndrome  
Shaul HaMelech  
02-582-9983  
Fax: 02-581-9164

#### **Ezer Mizion**

Various programs and services for families and special needs children  
03-614-4444

#### **Keren Malki**

Funding for additional therapy for children who are already using kupa cholim services  
02-567-0602

#### **Kesher**

Information center for parents of children with special needs  
Yad Charutzim 4, 02-623-6116

#### **Machon Mayim Chayim**

Therapeutic swimming and hydrotherapy, pool with wheelchair accessibility  
Moshav Beit Chilkiya,  
08-859-4640

#### **Machon Mikelson**

Assists children and adults with vision impairments: evaluations, guidance and lending library  
Hadassah Ein Kerem  
02-625-7552

#### **Shalva**

Assistance for families with children with special needs  
Ibn Denan 6, Har Nof, 02-651-7607/9555

#### **Ta'atzumot**

Helps empower families of children with special needs and provides therapies  
Givat Moshe 5, 02-537-0906

#### **Tvunot**

Child guidance and educational intervention  
02-651-6837

#### **Yad Sarah – Play Center**

Provides supervised play and instruction for children with motor and cognitive problems. The center has rooms for creative play, gross motor play, fine motor play, didactic play, computer games and lending library for toys.  
Sderot Herzl 124, 02-644-4488

#### **Yated (Yaldei Tismonet Down)**

English-speaking representative to help parents of children with Down syndrome. They provide advice and support.  
Yad Charutzim 19, Talpiot  
02-672-1115

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