



EASTERSEALS
OF THE
BIRMINGHAM AREA

Consumer Handbook

529 Beacon Parkway West, Suite 214

Birmingham, AL 35209

(205) 942-6277

WELCOME TO EASTERSEALS OF THE BIRMINGHAM AREA!

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting you in meeting your vocational and life goals.

At Easterseals of the Birmingham Area (ESBA):

- We are accredited by The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- Our Job Readiness Instructor has a Master's and Bachelor's Degree in Education, and a Master's in Counseling
- Our Computer Instructor has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology
- Our programs find jobs for over 100 persons each year
- Consumers give us a high rate of satisfaction on the services provided

Easterseals is our nation's leading charitable organization in the use of donated funds for program purposes. We network with many additional organizations to help you meet your goals.

You may reach our office Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m.

until 4:30 p.m. by calling 205.942.6277.

YOUR RIGHTS

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Ask for a new counselor or employment specialist
- Decide the kind of job you want to search for
- Ask for a reasonable accommodation(s)
- Be informed about your program choices
- Plan your own program
- Access ESBA records and reports about your program
- Make a complaint or file a grievance using the ESBA grievance procedure (pg. 5)
- Deny services
- Legal entities for representation and advocacy

CONFIDENTIALITY/ACCESS TO YOUR FILE

Only Easterseals staff who are working with you or have a need to know about you will have access to your file. All

information about you is strictly confidential and is released to outside parties only with your prior written permission. There are some exceptions to this policy. They are:

1. Situations where there is a clear and immediate danger to you, other individuals, or the community.
2. Emergency medical personnel who may be treating you.
3. When outside auditors review our files for quality and accreditation purposes. Any outside reviewer will sign a confidentiality agreement before seeing any file.
4. When we are ordered by a court to disclose information about you.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Participating fully in your program
- Keeping all appointments on time and returning calls
- Not harming yourself or others
- Remaining drug-free

HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

ESBA values the dignity and protects the rights of every consumer served. Consumers will be treated with respect in every aspect of consumer/staff relationships. Privacy will be valued at all times and no personal or disability related information will be divulged without a signed Release of Information form. Consumers are not to be criticized in the presence of others. When it is necessary to counsel a consumer it will be done privately and in a non-threatening manner that is not humiliating or frightening to the consumer. We will ensure that the consumer is protected from physical, sexual, psychological, and monetary abuse as well as harassment, physical punishment, and humiliating, threatening, or exploiting actions.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

You have the right to have your concerns or grievances addressed. No retaliation or interruption of your program will result from a complaint. ESBA will make an effort to resolve any conflict or concern you may have. Please talk with your ESBA counselor about any problems before using the grievance procedure. The Executive Director may be reached at 205.942.6277.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

You are responsible for voicing any concerns or grievances you have. If you have any problems while you are a customer of ESBA, or if you have complaints that should be brought to the attention of management, the following three steps should be followed:

1. Discuss the issue with your ESBA Program Manager. If you are unable to resolve the issue fill out a grievance complaint form. These can be obtained and returned to the Consumer Advocacy Specialist.
2. The Operations Manager will review the complaint and discuss with you within two working days. If the complaint is not resolved here it will be forwarded to the ESBA Administrator. The ESBA Administrator will make a decision within two working days, and inform you in writing of any decision.
3. You will be notified in writing of any action taken on your complaint. Should you be unhappy with any decision made, you may contact the State of Alabama Client Assistance Program or your referring Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services counselor for help.

STATE OF ALABAMA CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The State of Alabama Client Assistance Program is for all past, present, or future consumers of the State Department of Rehabilitation Services.

If you think you have been denied services, or if you don't understand why a decision has been made about you, then you can call 1. 800.228.3231. You may speak to Rachel Hughes about your issue. She will be glad to work with you to solve problems. You may also write:

Client Assistance Program
400 South Union Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Note—please talk to your ESBA counselor before calling the Client Assistance Program. We will try to help you resolve your problem locally.

POLICY REGARDING MEDICATIONS/DRUGS

- ESBA does not dispense or store medication for you.
- You are responsible for the proper use of your own medication.
- You may not share your medication with anyone else.
- Illegal drugs or alcohol are not allowed at ESBA. Bringing any of these onto ESBA property could result in your program being ended.

INTERPRETERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are in need of an interpreter, please notify your ESBA program manager. We will work with your referring agency to secure interpreter services when needed.

You may ask for any reasonable accommodations needed to complete your program. ESBA will make every effort to meet your needs.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is the responsibility of each consumer. If you need assistance using public transportation or resolving transportation needs, please discuss this with your ESBA program manager.

SAFETY RULES

1. Report any injury to an ESBA staff person immediately. The staff has access to first aid kits for minor needs.
2. If you are in the ESBA building for a class or other meetings, learn the fire exits and where to go in case of an emergency.
3. Observe safety signs throughout the building.
4. If attending class or meetings at ESBA, please notify your instructor or other staff if you are leaving the building.
5. Do not leave personal items unattended.
6. Report any concerns you may have about safety.

SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Easterseals of the Birmingham Area provides leadership in our local communities by being a resource for the recruitment, education, and successful development of employment opportunities for people with disabilities and other special needs.

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

- By participating in job fairs and employer networking opportunities
- By assisting employers in the elimination of architectural, attitudinal, procedural, instructional, and communication barriers to the employment and advancement of people with disabilities and other special needs
- By educating employers about various disabilities, assistive devices, and job accommodations as well as any current disability-related legislation
- Participation in the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority's Para-Transit Committee
- By advocating through legislative action and education

HANDICAPPED PARKING/ACCESSIBILITY

Handicapped parking and a wheelchair-accessible ramp are available.

There is a wheelchair assessable restroom located just inside the building.

Please notify a staff member if you encounter accessibility issues while in our building.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Your program at Easterseals is designed to help you get and keep a job. We ask that you handle attendance as though you are on a job. If you must be absent or late for class or an appointment, please call the center and notify the operator. Being dependable is part of job readiness and affects your ability to keep a job. The same is true at Easterseals. We want you to get in the habit of being on time.

WHAT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES AND WORK ARE PROVIDED?

Evaluation: ESBA offers different types of evaluations. You may be referred for assistance in determining if you are ready to participate in a vocational program. You may be referred to answer specific questions about your future vocational needs. Consumers who are referred for an evaluation are given a series of tests that provide important information on job readiness, job goals, training needs, and barriers to employment. This is done to help you make career plans.

Employee Development Program: The overall purpose of the Employee Development Program is to identify and remove barriers to employment. These include but are not limited to punctuality, interpersonal skills, general work stamina, work habits, dress and grooming, and work-related skills that would lead to employment or further training.

Classes may include:

Computer Technology Assessment: Consumers are placed in Computer Technology to assess keyboarding and computer skills.

Keyboarding: Involves learning typing/keyboarding skills as well as developing speed and accuracy. Consumers are taught the correct format for memos and letters, columns, outlines, and reports. Numerical data entry is taught.

Computer Class: This is a self-paced class that involves learning to operate a computer including Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Windows.

Job Readiness Class: This is a structured job preparation class that gives an individual information on how to find and maintain employment. This class consists of job etiquette, locating potential employers, job retention, conflict resolution, resume preparation, job application, and interviewing skills.

Placement Services: If employment is your goal, Easterseals' staff will assist you in finding employment. It is your responsibility to work with your placement team by keeping appointments and communicating regularly with them during the placement process. After you have found a job, we will contact you weekly for 90 days to monitor your progress and help with any needs.

Driver's Test Prep: Consumers referred for Job Development/Placement can obtain assistance in preparing to take the written portion of the State of Alabama Driver's License Examination. A copy of the Driver's Exam will be provided and the instructor will work with the consumer to ensure understanding of the laws and rules of the road. Practice tests will also be administered.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Dress for Success: We ask that you come dressed each day in clothing appropriate for work. Blue jeans are acceptable but should be neat and clean. We ask that you refrain from wearing halter tops, tank tops, or shirts with inappropriate written messages.
2. Do not bring more money than you need. Please do not bring valuable items to the facility with you. **We are not responsible for any money or items that are lost or stolen.**
3. If you become sick during the day, notify a staff member.
4. Persons who intentionally damage or lose facility property will be charged for the full extent of damage, and the proper authorities will be notified.
5. Please do not leave the building during the day without informing your instructor or counselor/evaluator. Should there be a fire or other emergency we need to know where you are.
6. It is the policy of Easterseals to have unscheduled emergency drills on a monthly basis. You will be given instructions at the time of any drill.
7. Please turn off your cell phone while in class or meetings.
8. Please treat your program at Easterseals like a job. Do not ask other consumers or staff for personal information or date.

9. The following are not permitted at Easterseals:

- Buying, swapping, possessing, or taking any drug which is not prescribed by your doctor to you
- Stealing
- Possession of guns or any other dangerous weapons
- Fighting or threatening others
- Physical contact with other persons in the program
- Gambling
- Using profane or abusive language

Following these guidelines will help you prepare for employment and keep you safe!

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS EASTERSEALS A SCHOOL?

No, we are not a school or an employment agency. You will not be given grades. Your program is designed to help you prepare for and keep employment. Our goal is to help you become the best employee you can be.

Your program will help you develop work habits, ethics, and etiquette that will equip you to enter the world of work and discover ways to solve job-related problems.

AM I AN EMPLOYEE OF EASTERSEALS?

No, but we do participate in the Paid Work Experience program (PWE) with ADRS. In these instances, a consumer may receive a check from Easterseals but this is reimbursed to us by ADRS.

WILL MY PROGRESS BE REPORTED?

Yes. Progress notes and updates will be forwarded to your referring Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Counselor or other referring agency.

FEES & COSTS FOR SERVICE

Potential consumers may choose to pay for services privately. Typically, at present, consumers are referred from Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. If you are referred from ADRS then fees and costs are paid for you.

WILL EASTERSEALS HELP ME FIND A JOB?

Each person is here for a different reason. Some people come for an evaluation to help find out what kind of job they can do. Some people come for assistance in locating employment. Your referring counselor and your Easterseals program manager/evaluator will work with you to design a program that meets your specific needs.

WILL EASTERSEALS MONITOR MY MEDICATION?

No, each person is responsible for taking their medication on time. We do not have a place for you to store medication.

WILL I RECEIVE A CHECK AT EASTERSEALS?

You will not be paid for attending Easterseals. Some people receive transportation assistance from their referring agency.

HOW WILL I KNOW MY SCHEDULE?

Consumers attend classes between 8:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Your Easterseals program manager or evaluator will discuss your schedule with you.

WHAT ABOUT BREAKS?

You will receive a 15-minute break. You are welcome to use the refrigerator and microwave in the break room.

SMOKING

Easterseals is a smoke-free facility. There is a smoking area outside the building.

IS THERE A TELEPHONE I MAY USE?

Please see your ESBA program manager or evaluator if you need to make a call.

MAY I HAVE VISITORS?

Only in case of emergency. We ask that you practice good work habits and behaviors while attending your program, and most employers do not allow visitors at a job site.

CAN I BRING MY CHILDREN TO EASTERSEALS?

Easterseals does not provide daycare for your children. You will need to make arrangements for your child care needs while attending your program.

WHAT IF I NEED TO BE ABSENT OR LATE?

Attending and being on time is very important. Before we begin the job search process, we need to know that you are dependable and can get to work on time. There are times when being late or absent cannot be avoided. We ask that you practice good work behaviors by calling us if you know you will be late or absent. Please call 205.942.6277 and notify the operator or your program manager if you will be absent or cannot avoid being late.