

THE MISSOURI VALUES TEST

The Missouri Values Test is a set of decision-making criteria for evaluating the necessity and reasonableness of services and supports that may (or may not) be purchased with state tax dollars for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

A. Is the service/support requested a *need* or a *want*?

In other words, how will the individual's and the family's lives be impacted if they do not receive this particular service/support?

- Will the health/safety of the individual or others be at risk?
- Will it impede the individual in his or her activities of daily living – communication, mobility, self-care, etc?
- If the individual is a child, will it impede his/her learning or development?
- If the individual is an adult, will it impede his/her opportunities for independent living?
- Will it impede the family's ability to care for their family member in their home?
- Will the individual and/or family face additional obstacles in participating fully in their community?

B. Is the *amount* of the service/support requested justified by the individual's and family's circumstances? Sometimes it is not so much the *type* of support in question, as it is the *level* or *amount* of support.

- Does the individual really *need* a nurse to provide respite care?
- Does the individual really *need* 12 hours a day of personal assistance?
- Is the amount of service/support justified in the Support Profile?

Excessive amounts of any service will be carefully scrutinized. It is *not* in the best interest of the individual (or the family) to replace the family in their role as the primary caregivers, nor to wrap individuals so tightly in paid supports that they are unable, or unlikely, to participate fully in their families and their communities.

C. Is there a *natural support option* that is better for the individual and their family, and more cost-effective as well?

The goal is to bring together family, community, and system resources to provide necessary supports. Department of Mental Health funding should be considered *only after other family and community supports have first been explored*.

The Support Partner should document in the Support Profile or Plan other resources that have been, or will be, pursued.

D. Is the service/support something that is needed *now* or in the *near future*?

We cannot go back and reimburse, nor give families credit for supports that have been purchased in the past. This includes paying credit card bills for items and services they have purchased for their family member with a developmental disability, *unless* those services/supports were *prior authorized through the Choices for Families Program*.

E. Will providing this service/support constitute “*fair and equal treatment in like and presenting circumstances*”? This is the core of the Missouri Values Test.

1. Will other families who do not have a member with a developmental disability support it?

You should be able to sit down with two families –the one who is making the request and another who does not have a member with a developmental disability – explain what the request is and why it is necessary, and both families should agree that this is an acceptable use of state tax dollars and that it’s something we ought to do.

2. Does the service/support have a direct relationship to the impact of the disability on the lives of the individual and his/her family?

You can also ask whether or not it helps to ameliorate some of the differences that exist between the two families because one of them has a member with a developmental disability. In other words, this service/support will help to place both families on an equal footing, rather than creating a situation in which the family who has a member with a developmental disability has an unfair advantage or is somehow better off than the other family.

3. Does the service/support pass the “headline news” test?

Would you be comfortable if the front page of your local newspaper started out their next issue with the headline “Department of Mental Health purchases _____ for the _____ family....”?
Would the community of tax-paying local citizens support our actions?

4. Is the service/support perceived by the general public to be a “luxury” item or service?

The following are items that will *not* be purchased with state tax dollars:

- Automobiles
- Cellular telephones or pagers
- Home Remodeling (distinct from home *modifications*, which have a direct relationship to the impact of the disability)
- Swimming Pools
- Vacations

F. Is the service/support requested something *all* parents typically provide for their children or their families?

1. Daycare for young children CANNOT be purchased. All working parents must provide care for their young children; therefore, purchasing daycare simply because the child has a disability is not an acceptable use of state tax dollars.

What are the differences that exist because of the disability? Does the child require additional support? Does the family pay more for daycare because of that additional support? Or are they unable to access typical daycare services or settings because of the child's disability? While we cannot pay for the typical costs of daycare that all families are responsible for, we can help to fund the cost of *extra assistance* that may be required by the child to be successful in the daycare setting. We can also look at special equipment that may be needed for the child.

2. Basic need such as housing, food, and clothing CANNOT be purchased. However, home *modifications, special foods, or nutritional supplements related to the unique dietary needs of the individual with a developmental disability, or adaptive clothing* may be provided when the supports are necessary and reasonable, and are justified in the individual's ISP.

In addition, if a family has unmet basic needs, such as housing, food, and clothing, their Support Coordinator (formally known as Service Coordinator) will connect them with other sources of community and system support that may be able to provide the necessary assistance.

G. Are there other, more reasonable ways of meeting the need besides simply purchasing the service/support?

If an individual needs aquatic therapy, buying a swimming pool is NOT the most cost effective way of meeting this need.

An individual who needs support to participate in activities in the community doesn't necessarily need a paid personal assistant. Perhaps there is a natural support option – someone who also participates in the activity, or who would be willing to do so, who could provide necessary supports. This natural support option might also enhance the individual's opportunity to develop friendships with the person providing support and with others.