

# Information for Parent/Caregiver/Child/Youth Regarding Environmental Modifications

## What is an Environmental Modification (EMod)?

EMods are physical changes to the inside or outside of your home which help your child be healthy and safe. EMods can help you care for your child safely at home for as long as possible. EMods may also help your child assist with self-care, mobility, safety, and independence.

**Examples of EMods** include, but are not limited to: ramps, generators, lifts and ceiling track systems, accessible bathrooms, widened doorways, accessible shelves, handrails, grab bars, alarm systems, and fencing for children's safety.

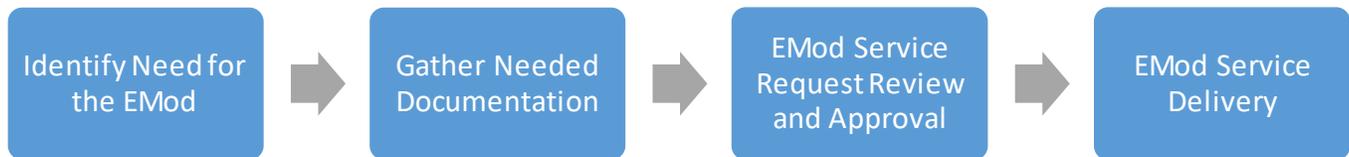
## Who is Eligible for an EMod?

- ✓ Children and youth up to the age of 21 years old,
- ✓ Must be enrolled in Medicaid,
- ✓ Must be eligible for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS),
- ✓ Must be enrolled in the Children's Waiver,
- ✓ Must have a medical need for an EMod, **and**
- ✓ When the EMOD cannot be paid for another way

### **What is the fiscal responsibility of the parent/caregiver?**

The parent/caregiver is **not** fiscally responsible for any approved EMod project costs, if it stays within the outlined scope.

## What is the Request Process?



- Your Care Manager will assist your child/youth/family with the request process.

### **WHAT IS NEEDED:**

- Determine the need for a specific Environmental Modification (EMod)
  - Update your child's/youth's Plan of Care to reflect their need for the medically necessary EMod service.
  - Obtain a Physician's Order explaining the medical need for the EMod from your child's/youth's doctor.
  - In some cases, a Clinical Justification is required (i.e., a written letter from your child's/youth's therapist explaining how the requested EMod will assist your child/youth in obtaining their goals).
  - A pre-project evaluation is **Recommended** for EMods. This process may involve a pre-project evaluator taking measurements and discussing options for the proposed EMod. The pre-project evaluation makes sure proposed EMods are safe for your child/youth and home.
  - If any documentation is missing when the request is submitted, project approval could be delayed.
- The Care Manager will work with your family to obtain necessary medical documentation along with any required evaluations.
  - The Care Manager will submit all required documents for review.
    - Once reviewed, you will receive a Notice of Decision (NOD) that informs you whether your request has been approved or denied.
    - If denied, the NOD will include information on your right to seek a Fair Rights Hearing.

### **What do I do if my family determines that we're unable to go through with the requested EMod?**

Contact your Care Manager immediately and notify them of your decision to withdraw your request.

If you decide to re-open your application at a later date, updated information/assessments may

*Costs associated with any pre-project evaluations will be covered under the Children's Waiver regardless of project completion.*



Department of Health

Office of Health Insurance Programs

## Role of the Parent/Caregiver

Your primary role as a parent/Caregiver is to advocate for the needs of your child/youth. You have the best knowledge of the day-to-day needs of your child/youth, and you have a better understanding of what types of changes will work best for your home environment and lifestyle. Please work with your Care Manager on the EMod request process.

When selecting an EMod, consider the long-term needs of your child/youth. As your child/youth grows, their needs may change, and they may require different equipment and/or supplies.

EMods are available only for your child's/youth's **primary** residence.  
Permission from the property owner to install an EMod is required.

Once an EMod project scope is approved, any changes to the approved project must receive **prior approval** from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) or risk nonpayment. It is the parent's/caregiver's responsibility to contact the Care Manager if any changes to the EMod are needed or requested.

*Parents/Caregivers do not have authority to authorize changes to previously approved projects, otherwise the parent/caregiver will be responsible for the cost.*

## Are there Modifications that Cannot be Requested?

Examples of items that cannot be requested under the Children's Waiver include but are not limited to: adaptations or improvements to the home that are of general use and are not of direct benefit to your child/youth, adaptations that exceed the necessity of the service (e.g., roll-in showers or accessible tubs will not be provided if a shower chair will meet the need), adaptations that add to the total square footage of the home, pools, and hot tubs.

***What if I'd like to upgrade the materials used in my EMod? For example, if I'd prefer the installation of marble tile instead of construction grade tile in a bathroom modification.***

- The Children's Waiver will cover the cost of construction grade materials **only**.
- If your family would like upgraded materials, the family will be fiscally responsible for the cost difference of the materials and any involved labor.
- Families looking to upgrade building materials are responsible for making arrangements with their contractor.

### Items NOT Covered or Need Consideration:

- ❖ *The cost of maintenance and repairs due to normal wear and tear on an EMod is the parent's/caregiver's responsibility.*
- ❖ *Service contracts are not provided under the Children's Waiver.*
- ❖ *Families should not alter or significantly change spaces that have or will undergo a modification pre-project evaluation. Significant alterations may result in additional evaluation or cost requirements, project delays, and/or project denials.*
- ❖ *Prior authorization of repairs or replacement of nonfunctioning EMods is decided on a case-by-case basis by NYSDOH.*

### ***Who is responsible for obtaining permits and approvals for an EMod?***

The selected contractor/vendor is responsible for obtaining any necessary permits or approvals in accordance with State, federal, and local/town regulations.

### **Who do I contact if I have questions?**

You can reach out to your Care Manager **OR**

You can speak to someone at NYSDOH by email: [EModVModAT@health.ny.gov](mailto:EModVModAT@health.ny.gov) or by phone: 518-473-5569

