

Inside this issue:

<i>Disability Awareness Month—March</i>	1
<i>Parent Check List</i>	2
<i>People First Language Extended School Year</i>	3
<i>Hurry Up and Wait—Eligibility for Services</i>	4
<i>Continuation of Hurry Up and Wait</i>	5
<i>Developing Safe and Successful Relationships</i>	6
<i>Membership & Donation Recognitions</i>	7
<i>Membership Application</i>	8

*Intellectual Disabilities
Awareness Month—March 2010*

People with developmental disabilities can be a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker, a volunteer, a teammate, or a classmate. In other words—they are just like you.



During March, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas encourages you get to know someone with a disability.

You'll see that everyone has something to offer!

Our Mission

The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas uses advocacy and education to include all children and adults with disabilities and their family members in their community

Contact Information
8100 E Arapahoe Road
Suite 208
Centennial CO 80112

303-220-9228
303-220-0994 fax
www.arc-ad.org



Education/Children Topics and Issues

Parent Checklist for Preparing to Meet with your Child's School Staff

By Cg La Scala, Director of Advocacy

Parents receive a "Notice of Meeting" telling them that the school has set a date and time to review or develop or add or delete/or otherwise change your child's IEP. Located near the end of the notice is a statement similar to, "If the scheduled time and place is not convenient, please contact me immediately so that we can arrange a mutually agreeable time and location for the meeting." Check your own calendar and the calendars of your private providers, spouse, advocate, other family members or friends who support you before confirming with the school that you can attend or if you need to reschedule.

Review your child's existing IEP. Look carefully at the goals and objectives he/she has worked on during the last year. Review the progress monitoring reports that should accompany your child's report card and parent-teacher conference. Has progress occurred? Enough progress should occur to warrant retaining the objective or discussion about revising the objective. Write down any concerns or changes or questions you have.

In reviewing the existing IEP, pay attention to the accommodations listed on the IEP. Are you comfortable that they are being adequately implemented by school staff? Do you need to write a brief report to be disseminated to the team members on the importance of the accommodations and how they impact your child academically? Are there additional accommodations that you feel should be added to enhance your child's success at school? Add these things to your list.

You will want to refresh your memory on what services your child receives and the amount of service in each area by looking at the page of the IEP that itemizes: what the service is, who offers it, where it is offered, how many minutes are offered, and how often it is offered. It is a grid-like section that may be labeled "Special Education and Related Services", or Service Delivery, or page 8 for some school districts. Does your child respond better to services outside the classroom in a small group? Does your child shut down when he/she is removed from the classroom? Do you feel that your child will be more motivated by spending more time in the general classroom? Add these thoughts to your list.

During the past year, are there things that you have thought would help your child or visited with a parent who offered some suggestions you feel would be helpful? Keep a running list of all these important features that can be considered at the IEP meeting.

As each school professional will have a brief report at an annual review to recap the previous school year or a more detailed document if it is a reevaluation year, so should you as a parent. You can report on your child's growth over the last school year, what seemed to work, what didn't, how relationships have gone, what academics were more challenging and what your child "breezed" through, what major changes took place (moves, passing of family members, illnesses, hospitalizations,) and generally, any significant changes that occurred that could have affected your child over the last year. A page or two that catches a brief glimpse of how your child has grown and changed over time from last year. Make enough copies to provide to each team member.

As years go by, you will review these "parent" reports. I hope you will be pleasantly amazed by your advocacy for your child!

People First Language—

A disability descriptor is simply a medical diagnosis; People First language respectfully puts the person before the disability; and a person with a disability is more like people without disabilities than different. Click on the link to learn more: <http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/images/PDF/pflchart09.pdf>

A Reminder—Just in Time for Spring Extended School Year

By Cg La Scala, Director of Advocacy

Now is the time, before spring break, to write a note to your child's teacher requesting that they collect data on your child's current levels of performance on his/her objectives. This is information necessary to help determine your child's eligibility for Extended School Year services.

After spring break, the school staff will need to collect data again to determine if skills have been lost. If the skills are not recovered within a couple of weeks following spring break, then it is likely your child will be eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) services. Unlike summer school, which parents must pay for, ESY is part of a "free, appropriate public education", (FAPE). Extended School Year is available for eligible students at no cost to the parents.

Be sure to inform your school staff that you want this information collected and that you want to see the data results, so that you are well informed on this perspective of your child's performance.



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Hurry Up and Wait—Eligibility for Services and the Waitlist

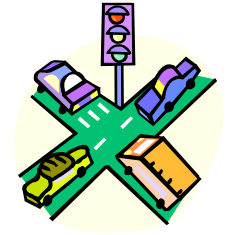
By Lee Ray, Adult Advocate

The month of March has been designated Intellectual Disability Awareness Month. In the spirit of awareness one might ask what exactly qualifies as an intellectual disability. In Colorado people with Intellectual Disabilities receive services through the developmental disabilities system. ‘Intellectual Disabilities’ is not defined by law in Colorado, but developmental disability is. That definition can be found in the Colorado Revised Statutes under Section 27-10.5, and more specifically in the Rules and Regulations governing the Division for Developmental Disabilities (DDD) under section 16.120. This definition is important because it is used to determine who is eligible for services through the developmental disabilities system in Colorado.

Who is eligible?

Eligibility for services under the DDD Rules and Regulations is defined differently for children and adults. Children less than 5 years old have to meet the criteria for a developmental delay or have factors putting them at risk for a developmental disability.

As an adult a person needs to meet the state’s definition of developmental disability under section 16-120 of the DDD Rules and Regulations in order to be eligible for DD services. The disability must have occurred during the ‘developmental’ period. The disability also must be an intellectual or cognitive disability. In general terms this means a testable IQ of 70 or less. A person with a ‘borderline’ IQ (71-75) may also qualify if they have significantly compromised adaptive skills (such as communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work). These adaptive skill deficits must be connected to intellectual deficits and not caused by only a physical disability, sensory impairment or mental health issue.



This definition has been interpreted differently by different people or agencies and at different times. There has been much discussion of changing the law in order to more clearly define ‘developmental disability’. For the present there is a process to determine eligibility under that definition.

How and by whom is eligibility determined?

In Colorado, a person must be determined eligible by a Community Centered Board (CCB). In Arapahoe and Douglas counties that is Developmental Pathways (303-360-6600).

Contacting the CCB and speaking with an intake coordinator is the first step in this process. An application is completed and submitted with certain documentation and releases. These include any IQ tests, school records, medical records etc. and/or permission to contact schools and medical providers to gather information. The CCB determines if the person has a developmental disability under Colorado law. That determination has to be made within thirty days of getting all the necessary information.

Developmental Pathways has a committee that meets and reviews applications. The applicant and family or other supporters have the right to appear before that committee. Once the committee has made their decision a written statement will be sent indicating whether the applicant is eligible. This should include the rationale for the determination. If the applicant is found ineligible it will include a description of the appeal process, including the right to a ‘dispute resolution’ under guidelines defined in Rules and Regulations. If you need to appeal a decision you can get help with that appeal through The Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas.

If the applicant is found eligible, the written notice should include a description of what happens next. An Individualized (or Service) Plan will be held within 30 days to determine what services

are needed. The eligibility determination must be accepted throughout the state by other community centered boards, service agencies and regional centers. Most importantly the written notice includes the effective date of eligibility. This date is the basis for the waiting list.

The Waiting Part

For adults with developmental disabilities when you would start receiving services is driven by your eligibility date. The earlier the date the sooner the services will be offered. Unfortunately that time frame is currently quite significant. Prior to the current statewide fiscal crisis the wait was long, but for now no new services are available with the exception of an extremely small number of emergency placements statewide.

There have been numerous unsuccessful attempts to reduce or eliminate the waiting list over the years and those efforts will continue. An eventual economic recovery will ease the fiscal crisis and limited resources will again be available. So, even though the wait seems daunting and no immediate help is on the horizon getting on the list is still extremely important.

The earliest a person can be on the **list for adult services is their 14th birthday**. For individuals already determined eligible and receiving services this should be a fairly seamless process. In the yearly planning meetings approaching the 14th birthday the subject should come up. You certainly want to make sure it does. If a person has been determined eligible for services prior to 14 but is not currently receiving any services they may have to be re-determined eligible. You will want to be sure to contact the CCB in the year before the 14th birthday to make sure.

You will indicate, in broad terms, what adult services you are waiting for in that initial Individualized Plan. You likely will want to indicate a desire for both broad categories; Supported Living Services (SLS) and Comprehensive Services.

Supported Living Services for adults are designed to provide assistance to meet the daily living and safety needs of persons who live on their own or with family. The services are intended to augment available supports for those individuals.

Comprehensive Services provides 24 hours

of services and supports (residential) each day. They are responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of the individual, as well as providing opportunity and support for the individual to gain skills and independence.

Even if you do not envision needing or wanting residential services any time in the future getting on the waiting list for them is still a good idea. In addition to being a fall back in case of emergency or changed circumstances in the future, residential services can be quite different than it has been in the past. There are exciting changes in the ways Comprehensive Services can be used by individuals including services in the family or individual's home, and family provided services. Group homes, apartment setting and host homes will remain as options but will no longer be the only game in town.

You will determine your waiting list 'status' to indicate whether you desire the service 'as soon as available' or simply as a 'safety net'. You can change that status any time you need to. If your status is 'as soon as available' when they have resources to begin serving people with your eligibility date (you come up on the waiting list) they will contact you to begin the process of finding or creating the right situation. If your status is 'safety net' and your eligibility date reaches the top of the list you will not be contacted for available services.

The 'other' eligibility

To further confuse this process there is also a second type of eligibility that will be determined usually at the time a person comes up on the waiting list for any type of services. This is not specific to the developmental disabilities system but is rather a determination made by Medicaid. In order to start receiving services (as opposed to being eligible for those services) the individual must meet this second level of eligibility. This is because virtually all services for adults are funded through Medicaid. Eligibility for Medicaid funded programs for persons with developmental disabilities is determined by the use of a Level of Care Assessment. There is an appeal process for denial of eligibility that includes a potential hearing before an Administrative Law Judge.

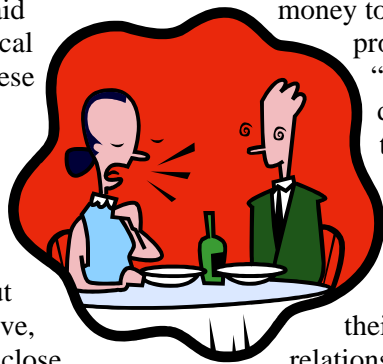
Developing Safe and Successful Relationships

By Cynde Vaughn, MSW

We live in a social world. Almost everything we do requires interaction with people in some way on a daily basis. In order to develop successful interaction skills, it is essential to first identify and recognize differences in the types of relationships we have with others. Some of the important relationships to define and learn to distinguish include those of friends, acquaintances, and helpers. It is also important to explain the concept of strangers, and why this topic is often confusing to understand.

The following are some definitions you may find helpful in explaining the terms “community helpers”, “acquaintances”, “friends”, and “strangers”.

“Helpers” often referred to as “Community Helpers” are people who do things to help you as part of their job. They are (almost always) paid “helpers” include teachers, medical



counselors, and clergy. These by wearing a special uniform or need assistance to complete ac- cooking, or balancing a check- are often known as “caregivers”

“Acquaintances” are know their name, but that’s about such as what kind of car they drive, have children. You don’t have a close life. You may occasionally have a reason to interact with them, and have a casual conversation from time to time. Examples of acquaintances might include a grocery store clerk, a waiter/waitress, the director of your place of employment, the principal of your school, a neighbor down the street, or the new student at school.

“Friends” are people who like to do things together, share personal feelings or information, like each other for who they are and not for what they have, and have gotten to know each other over a period of time. Examples of friends would be people that you have spent a lot of time with doing something you both enjoy and who you look forward to being with. Close friends are those “friends” you have known for a long time and have learned you can trust.

“Strangers” are people you don’t know. You have not been introduced to them and they have not been introduced to you. They don’t know your name, and you don’t know their name. They are part of your life but you are not close to them. Examples of strangers include people you see at the mall, grocery store, bank, or bus stop, Strangers may also include co-workers or fellow students you have not met. This category is often confusing because you may notice that sometimes strangers will have a brief interaction such as when someone in line at the store checkout says “excuse me” or “you have a cute baby” to another person they do not know.

The roles that different people play in our lives vary, and may change over time. Developing the ability to know how to accurately identify and appropriately interact within a variety of different types of relationships is a critical social skill; especially from a safety perspective.

It is important that you establish and maintain minimum standards of behavior and consistent boundaries for the different types of relationships in your life. For example, a safety standard to protect yourself from exploitation would be that you do not give out personal information to a stranger or acquaintance such as your phone number, social security number, home address, or how much money you have in your wallet or checking account. Learning effective ways to communicate your choices, standards or personal boundaries will help you maintain and safeguard your different types of relationships. In other words, that you know when it is appropriate to say “yes” or give out personal information; and how to say “no” when you recognize exploitive or unsafe behavior.

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