



For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities



# POSITION STATEMENT

## Rights

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities<sup>1</sup> have the same basic legal, civil and human rights as other citizens. They may need accommodation, protection and support to enable them to exercise these rights. Their rights should never be limited or restricted without due process.

### Summary

#### Advocacy

Advocacy is essential in maintaining or improving the quality of life for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

#### Criminal Justice

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, like other residents of the United States, have the right to justice and fair treatment in the criminal justice system, including reasonable accommodations as necessary.

#### Guardianship

The majority of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities can manage their own affairs with informal assistance and guidance from others, such as family and friends. If guardianship<sup>2</sup> is necessary, it should be tailored to the person's needs. It must be adequately monitored to ensure that the best interests of the individual are protected.

#### Human and Civil Rights

The human and civil rights of all people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must be honored, protected, and enforced.

#### Inclusion

All Americans gain when people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities are fully included in their communities.

#### Protection

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must be protected from harm and injury and must have the tools and sup-

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ports so that they can protect themselves.

### **Self Determination**

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have the same right to self-determination as all people. They must have opportunities and experiences that enable them to exert control in their lives and to advocate on their own behalf.

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<sup>1</sup>“People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities” refers to those defined by the AAIDD classification and the DSM IV. In everyday language they are frequently referred to as people with cognitive, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities although the professional and legal definitions of those terms both include others and exclude some defined by DSM IV.

<sup>2</sup>Terminology for guardians differs by state and can include tutor, conservator, etc.

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Board of Directors, AAIDD  
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Congress of Delegates, The Arc of the United States  
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