



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities



POSITION STATEMENT

Life in the Community

All people, regardless of disability, deserve the opportunity for a full life in their community where they can live, learn, work, and play alongside each other through all stages of life. People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities¹ need varying degrees of support to reach personal goals and establish a sense of satisfaction with their lives.

Summary

- **Aging.** Many people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who are aging deserve the same opportunities to enjoy full lives in their communities as other older people. They are entitled to community support, including help from those agencies that serve the needs of all senior citizens.
- **Behavioral Supports.** People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities should have access to behavioral supports that are individually designed, positive, help them learn new skills, provide alternatives to challenging behaviors, offer opportunities for choice and social integration, and allow for environmental modifications.
- **Early Intervention.** All quality early intervention supports and services must be available, affordable, appropriate, accountable, and accessible for all children with developmental delays as well as those with already-identified intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to maximize their social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development.
- **Education.** A Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) must be provided in inclusive settings with peers of the same age and include individualized supports to all students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to prepare them to participate in our democratic society.
- **Employment.** People with intellectual and/or developmental

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disabilities can be competitively employed in their communities. They should be supported to make informed choices about their work and careers and have the resources to seek, obtain, and be successful in integrated community employment.

- **Family Support.** Most people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities need the support of their families, communities, and government to develop to their fullest potential. Family support must be expanded to strengthen the capacity of family members to support each other at home.
- **Healthcare.** People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must have dependable, high quality health care in the community and affordable, comprehensive health insurance.
- **Housing.** All people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have a right to live in communities of their choosing and be fully included with people who do not have disabilities. Children belong with their families. Adults should control where and with whom they live, with increasing opportunities to rent or buy their own homes.
- **Individual Supports.** Individual supports, such as assistive technology and personal assistance, make it possible for all people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to function in daily life.
- **Sexuality.** People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, like all people, have inherent sexual rights and basic human needs. These rights and needs must be affirmed, defended, and respected.
- **Spirituality.** People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have the right to choose their own expressions of spirituality, to practice those beliefs and expressions, and to participate in the religious community of their choice or other spiritual activities. The person also has a right to choose not to participate in religious or spiritual activity.
- **Transportation.** People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must have access to both public and private transportation to lead full, independent lives.

¹“People with intellectual disabilities and/or developmental disabilities” refers to those defined by AAIDD classification and 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.

Achieve with us.