

Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

Margaret M. O'Neill Building, 2nd Floor

410 Federal Street - Suite 2 Dover, Delaware 19901

Phone: 302.739.3333 ♦ Fax: 302.739.2015 ♦ Website: www.ddc.delaware.gov



2019 DDC Community Living Position Statement

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) supports and adopts the following as our position statement on Community Living.

A group of advocates came to together for a summit to provide CMS with a definition of “community” that captures the most vital elements of community life from the standpoint of self-advocates. This information was taken from the report that followed “Keeping the Promise: Self Advocates Defining the Meaning of Community Life.” Summit participants were leaders from the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, the National Youth Leadership Network, Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered, and allies.

What is a genuine community:

- Genuine community means having real choice in assistance, friends, partners, supports and living circumstances.
- Genuine community happens in inclusive, diverse, and mixed neighborhoods.
- Living in genuine community means making your own decisions and being an independent and self-sufficient citizen.
- Living in genuine community is enjoying all the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities of every other citizen.
- In genuine communities people have names not labels, live in neighborhoods not on campuses, make their own choices, and enjoy privacy and genuine relationships of equality.
- Self-advocates demand for themselves and their peers a community that places them in a position of equality to their neighbors.
- Self-advocates reject the old models of “care” and “charity” for a world that is instead ruled by rights, interdependence and true community.

Community living is:

- Choice and Agency—we can do what we want when we want to do it, instead of having to decide as a big group of people and move together. This does not mean being alone in our independence, but exercising our self-determination.
- Full Citizenship—we should be able to contribute fully in the community. This should include voting and participating in civic organizations.
- Making a contribution—we believe in reciprocity (two-way relationships), to be able to pay forward society’s support. For example, if friends drive us somewhere, we might watch their kids in return. We should have the opportunity to volunteer and participate in civic life like everyone else.



- Knowing what is going on in the community-We want to know what events and activities are happening. We want support to understand information about important community issues to make good decisions and have opinions.
- Access to community resources-If we have a problem, we want to know where to go in the community to help us with solutions. Libraries, service systems, governments, and churches should be accessible sources of information and support for us.
- Being a part of a neighborhood-We should live in a neighborhood where we can connect with community members who live next door. We would like to be treated like neighbors, and have the opportunity to work to make the neighborhood a better place.

This is the link to the full report: <https://autisticadvocacy.org/policy/briefs/keeping-the-promise-self-advocates-defining-the-meaning-of-community-living/>