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## Individual Supports\*

**People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) must be able to get the individual supports they need to live the lives they want at home and in the community.**

### Issue

Individual supports are supports that help people live the way they want at home and in the community. Each person chooses how they want to be supported. Their supports are based on their individual needs, wants, and choices.

When people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) get the individual supports they need, they do better at things like:

- Communicating with others.
- Getting along with people.
- Doing their everyday activities.
- Moving around their homes and communities.

Too often, people with I/DD do not get the help they need. They might be turned away because of things like:

- Their age.
- The type of disability they have.
- How serious their disability is.
- Behavior issues.
- Having difficulty moving around, seeing, or hearing.
- How they did on tests that look at how their disability affects their lives.

Many people cannot get individual supports, or must wait for them, because there is not enough money to help everyone who needs it. Laws and rules can also make it harder to get individuals supports in the community when compared to in an institution.

## **Position**

People with I/DD must get the supports they need to live a good life in the community. Supports should:

- Be based on what each person needs to live at home and in the community.
- Be based on people's choices.
- Help people get involved in their community and do the things they like.

Individual supports may include:

- Personal care attendants. Adults with I/DD should be able to hire and fire personal care attendants to help them with everyday activities, make decisions, and be in control of their lives. The same is true for parents of children with I/DD who are younger than 18 years old.
- Communication. People communicate in many ways. This includes:
  - Moving their hands, eyes, head, or other parts of their body.
  - Making sounds.
  - Pointing at pictures and letters to spell messages.
  - Sign language.
  - Speaking.
  - Speech generating devices (Assistive Technology)

People with I/DD should get support to help them:

- Communicate.
  - Have good relationships with others.
  - Behave in ways that are good for them and others so they can be a part of the community.
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- Assistive technology. People must be able to get assistive technology when they need it. This means equipment, tools, services, and training that help them:

- Be independent.
- Get around their home and community.
- Communicate with other people.
- Be more in control of their lives.
- Make their own decisions,

People with I/DD and their families, teachers, service providers, and people who make assistive technology should be taught how it improves people's lives. Supports must:

- Be based on what each person wants and needs.
- Use person-centered planning to figure out what the person wants and needs.
- Help people make their own decisions and choices.
- Use money for supports in ways that meet each person's needs and change when their needs change.

People with I/DD, their families, service providers, and others should work together to put in place the best supports possible. Supports must be monitored (checked) to make sure they are:

- Good quality (doing a good job supporting the person the way they want).
- Keeping the person safe.
- Meeting the person's needs.

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**\* The DE DD Council's position statement is based on the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) and The Arc United States position statement on individual support.**

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