THE POLICY PAPER ON INCLUSION 1999

CDDPC
COLORADO DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PLANNING COUNCIL
PREFACE

The Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council is pleased to present this revised Policy Paper on Inclusion. This is one of a series of policy papers that present the consensus thinking of the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

In August 1993, the Council invited people with disabilities, parents, advocates and other professionals to join with them in considering a number of key issues facing people with developmental disabilities in Colorado. An underlying assumption was that people with developmental disabilities in Colorado live much of their lives in segregation. They are isolated from their communities, from normal relationships and from full participation in everyday experiences.

After much exploration, deliberation and soul searching, the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council arrived at consensus and established the Policy Paper on Inclusion. This Policy set the Council's focus, dictated Council decisions, permeated all aspects of Council work and established the basis for the use of Council funds. Now, in 1999, this Policy has been revised to allow for continued direction to the Council.

We expect this Policy to challenge the system. We expect to use this Policy to educate our lawmakers. We expect to use this Policy to direct our advocacy efforts. Most importantly, we expect the citizens of Colorado to hold us accountable for our actions based on this Policy.
POLICY

It is the policy of the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to affirm, promote and support the inclusion of all people with developmental disabilities, regardless of age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or ability, in the community of their choice. Inclusion shall be in every aspect of life and in every area of society.
INTRODUCTION

The Mission of the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council is to advocate in collaboration with and on behalf of people with developmental disabilities for the establishment and implementation of public policy which will further their independence, productivity and integration in the community. The Council works to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities receive services, supports and other assistance and opportunities which respect and value diversity in culture and ethnicity. The Council values inclusion.

"Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, contribute to society, and experience full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American Society."

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (S. 1284), August 5, 1993
PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to clearly state the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council’s position and policy on the inclusion of all people with developmental disabilities in the community. The Council’s policies guide its work in all areas of advocacy and are used to promote systems change and competency in the provision of services and supports for individuals who have developmental disabilities throughout Colorado.

The Council believes inclusion will enable the citizens of Colorado to know people with disabilities as their friends and neighbors and to appreciate the diversity and the richness each person brings to a community. The Council further believes that inclusion will give people with disabilities an opportunity for a voice and participation in the affairs of the communities in which they live.

Historically, the emphasis of public policy has been on institutional care and segregated services for people with developmental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities were, and continue to be subjected to a philosophy of services that keeps them isolated and segregated from society. People with developmental disabilities were labeled and often thought of as “sick”. Children with developmental disabilities were frequently
placed into institutions because it was thought they needed a protected environment with life long care. Children who stayed within the family unit were sent to segregated schools and workshops with other children with disabilities. The pervasive philosophy seemed to be one of keeping children and adults out of the community because they might get hurt, might be ridiculed or deemed unsafe to the community.

There are other groups of individuals who have been historically marginalized in our communities. People of color and people of differing religious beliefs are two such groups. However, segregation of any group is incomprehensible in a society that subscribes to democracy, freedom, and the belief that everyone belongs.

We know that segregation is not appropriate and is not good public policy. The last two decades have witnessed the advent of some dramatic changes in the places where people with disabilities live, learn, work and play. In Colorado we are making an effort to welcome people with developmental disabilities into our communities. As people with developmental disabilities leave the institutions and the segregated programs, they move into family homes, host homes, apartments and homes of their own. People with developmental disabilities attend classes with non-disabled peers in neighborhood schools, get jobs in the community, join social and health clubs, attend churches, synagogues and temples and live as full participants with enduring relationships and friendships.
Unfortunately, however, most people with developmental disabilities who move into the community continue to live in isolation and continue to experience segregation. In spite of living in the community, as opposed to living in an institution, isolation and segregation still occur. People are placed in group homes with other people with developmental disabilities. Children are placed in special classrooms or are bussed to special schools. Adults are placed in sheltered workshops and work activity centers. Social and recreational activities focus on all or most participants being people with developmental disabilities. Accessing the community is a group activity as opposed to an individual experience. The “take care of” and “protect” mentalities exist in the community as clearly as they exist in the institutions.

Although public policy has shifted away from institutional care to community services, people with developmental disabilities are not included in their communities. Colorado has yet to implement public policy, which truly supports the integration of people with developmental disabilities in their communities to become participating members of society. Inclusion is not just a place to live, but needs to become a way of life.

Federal legislation lays the foundation for effective public policy on inclusion. The Bill of Rights, Amendment 14, ratified on July 9, 1868, states, “...nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”
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More recently, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act states: “Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, contribute to society, and experience full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of American Society.”

Finally, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act, the Higher Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Education Act and the Technology Related Assistance For Individuals With Disabilities Act and a host of other federal statutes all support the concepts of inclusion in the community for people with developmental disabilities.

"Inclusion in schools means:
1) physical so that all parts of the room are accessible, 2) social inclusion as a pre-requisite to learning, and 3) instructional inclusion with full participation with the class."

Pat Daly-Tokens, Parent
VALUES

We celebrate diversity and believe in equality. We believe all people, including people with developmental disabilities, have the right to live, learn, work, play and have friends in their community.

The value society places on persons with developmental disabilities has evolved over time. In early America, families were responsible to keep their sons and daughters with disabilities at home and out of sight. Later, people with developmental disabilities were locked in state run institutions. In Colorado, in 1909, the “Colorado State Home and Training School for Mental Defectives” was established.

The perception was that people with developmental disabilities were a group of individuals who were sick, who were broken and who needed to be fixed. Programs and entire systems were built and sustained on models that relied upon diagnosis, treatment and cure. People with developmental disabilities were required to achieve certain skills before being given the opportunity to live in the community.

We want to ensure that American society accepts disability as part of the human condition, a part of the human experience. By valuing individuals with disabilities in our lives, we enrich our own experiences. When such a value is not present, the problem is not within people with developmental disabilities but in society.
Individual Choice And Inclusion

Inclusion is only possible when it encompasses self-determination and choice.

Individual choice gives people control over their lives. Through choice, individuals live and participate in communities as they wish and form relationships of their choosing. Through the exercise of choice, citizens are able to contribute to the diversity and the richness of their community.

Individuals, including those with developmental disabilities, know what they want and how they want to live. Choice is a natural part of living in community. The choices people make are based on their upbringing, personal experiences, current circumstances and the influence of family and friends. Individuals routinely make choices about where they live and work, who they have as friends, what they purchase, what they do with their time and what goals they set. Choice must be present as a part of community life.

If there is only one option presented, there is no true access to the community, for the community involves multiple options. In inclusive environments, individuals must be able to choose from among an array of options and they must have information about those options. Access to the community begins with the expression of personal preferences through choice. By failing to acknowledge choice, access to the community is denied. Inclusion, therefore, is denied.
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The following are some examples of the characteristics of inclusion:

- living with dignity and respect;
- being able to establish relationships and have friends;
- having the opportunity to change and shape your life and reputation;
- having a home that is personal and more than a physical space to return to at the end of a day;
- having choice and control over your life, including control over resource allocations for services and supports, if desired;
- personalizing supports for people with developmental disabilities;
- having a sense of security and belonging;
- having access to protection and advocacy;
- having barrier free communities in which to live;
- using public transportation to access the community;
- having accessible assistive technology;
- having access to policy makers at all levels;
- having access to personal assistance;
- going to neighborhood stores, restaurants, libraries, and museums;
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- attending classes in neighborhood schools with non-disabled peers;
- having friends and family in as close proximity as desired;
- having opportunities to pursue a career;
- having access to jobs and volunteer opportunities in the community; and
- not separate.

In summary, we will have inclusion when all individuals are woven into the fabric of the community of their choice.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE COUNCIL

1. To raise the awareness of policy makers at all levels.
2. To use Council funds for projects that support and implement this Policy.
3. To assure that inclusion is promoted in every aspect of Council work.
DESCRIPTION

The Planning Council

The Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council is a 24 member body appointed by the Governor. At least fifty percent (50%) of the Council members are individuals who have developmental disabilities and parents of children who have developmental disabilities. The Council advocates for systems change which will support people with developmental disabilities as they move toward independence, productivity and integration. The Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Governor and the General Assembly.

DEFINITIONS

Inclusion:

The concept that people with disabilities are to have lives where they are completely woven into the fabric of the community of their choice.

Developmental Disability:

As used by the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, the term “developmental disability” means a severe, chronic disability of a person 5 years of age or older which—

(A) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;

(B) is likely to continue indefinitely;
(C) results in functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity:

(i) self-care,
(ii) receptive and expressive language,
(iii) learning,
(iv) mobility,
(v) self-direction,
(vi) capacity for independent living, and
(vii) economic self-sufficiency; and

(D) reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services which are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated; except that such term, when applied to infants and young children means individuals from birth to age five, inclusive, who have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental disabilities if services are not provided.

REVIEW DATE

This position on inclusion is the Council's official policy. The Council, in response to a rapidly changing world, may review this policy at any time. However the Council must conduct a full review of this policy statement for revision or reaffirmation no later than December 2002.
REFERENCES


Home and Community Based Waiver, Title XIX Social Security Act (Medicaid).


Older Americans Act P.L. 102-375


Rehabilitation Act (1993) P.L. 102-596


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