

“DDD News”

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Jon S. Corzine, Governor

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Expanded Training for Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities

Did you know that the average age of individuals eligible for services from DDD continues to decrease? Approximately 45 percent of people currently eligible are under age 22.

Families frequently tell us that what they need from DDD is information to help them best support their children. DDD, in response, has contracted with the Family Support Center of New Jersey to develop and present a series of training sessions designed to provide information to families of children at different stages of development. In each training session, families get exposed to advocacy strategies and are encouraged to develop a person-centered approach to planning for their children. A brief description of each training session follows:

Life Line for the Journey is designed for families of children ranging from infancy through age 14. At these sessions, families of young children learn about different systems that exist to serve their children, as well as strategies for negotiating these systems. Through interactive exercises and open discussion, families learn together what might be their next steps.

Pathways to Adult Life is dedicated to the needs of children between the ages of 14 and 19. The session is produced through collaboration between DDD, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), the Department of Education (DOE), the Division of Disability Services (DDS), and the Boggs Center. The purpose of this training is to assist students and their families with making informed choices during the time of transition from school to adult life. Individuals and families meet representatives from DDD, DVRS, DDS, and DOE, and hear an overview of what each agency can offer the transitioning student.

Life after 21 is a two-part training that addresses the needs of students aged 20 and 21, as they approach the end of their school years. This training was developed to help participants plan for the supports and services students will need after graduation.

All of the above training sessions are offered many times, and in a variety of locations around the state throughout the calendar year. People already eligible for services from DDD will receive invitations to the appropriate training by mail. You may also find information on all of these sessions by visiting the Family Support Center's website at <http://www.fscnj.org/>.

Partner Profile: NJACP

DDD is hosting a series of meetings with representatives from key stakeholder groups to share information and discuss ways to improve the service system. The first meeting in this series was held with New Jersey Association of Community Providers (NJACP), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kim Todd, who is well versed in the world of Human Services and joined NJACP “to help consumers and families.” Todd's professional experience includes working at the department as a deputy chief of staff; and at DDD, where early in her career, she was a guardianship worker advocating for DDD consumers.

Todd now leads an organization that includes more than 100 member agencies that provide a variety of services throughout New Jersey for people with developmental disabilities or brain injuries. Todd discussed some of the key NJ ACP concerns; including, the need to increase wages for direct support professionals and the need for agencies to receive a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to meet the costs associated with providing services. Todd said that her agency will work with state legislators to explain the need for the COLA and continue working together with DDD to improve the service system.

NJACP Events & Training:

- ◆ NJACP.org
- ◆ [Path Maps Training](#): October 9, 10 & 11
- ◆ [NJACP “Path to Possibilities”](#): 24th Annual Conference and Pre-Conference Symposium
 - ◆ Pre-Conference Symposium: Thursday, November 15, 2007
 - ◆ Conference: Friday, November 16, 2007

Election Day: November 6, 2007**Get Out the Vote 2007:**

The Arc of New Jersey shares important voting information for individuals with disabilities and their families in their Summer 2007 newsletter entitled *Progress*. There is an important **ballot question** concerning a change in the wording of the New Jersey Constitution of which you should also be aware.

Please check the Division of Elections website for more information and additional [Voter Access Resources](#).