



Division Update for Individuals, Families and Providers

February 26, 2026

Agenda

- Next DDD Update Webinar
- Welcome Dr. Stephen Cha, Acting Commissioner
- START Services NJ
- 3rd Annual Choking Prevention Awareness Month in March
- Transition to Adult Life Monthly and Quarterly Webinars
- Spring Family Networking Session
- Spring Peer-to-Peer Networking Session
- Peer EDUcation Series March 2026 Webinar
- Resources

Next DDD Update Webinar

- Reminder – The next DDD Update Webinar is scheduled for Thursday March 26, 2026, at 10:30am.
 - [Register for March Webinar](#)
- The complete 2026 schedule of DDD Update Webinars, including registration links, is available on the Division's [Public Update Meetings](#) webpage.



Welcome!

Stephen Cha, MD, MHSR
Acting Commissioner
NJ Department of Human Services

[Learn more about Dr. Cha](#)

START Services NJ

- In late 2024, following a competitive bidding process, YAI was awarded funding to collaborate with the [National Center for START Services™](#) to develop a START model program to serve the southern region of New Jersey.
- START (Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources, and Treatment) is an evidence-based, community crisis prevention and intervention service model for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and mental health needs (IDD-MH).
 - Designed to develop community capacity while achieving wellbeing for those served.
 - Uses multiple evidence-based practices, including person-centered, culturally competent, whole person, solutions-focused, systemic, positive psychology, and other practices.
 - Provide 24-7 crisis response and stabilization services, often in conjunction with first responders.

START Services NJ

- In late 2025, YAI launched [START Services NJ](#)
 - Provides crisis prevention and response for people (age 21 and older) with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) who present with complex behavioral and mental health needs in specific New Jersey counties.
 - Is a short-term, 12-to-18-month program for people with IDD who have significant behavioral and/or mental health needs.
 - Is delivered by multi-disciplinary teams providing personalized, intensive, time-limited consultative services to enrolled individuals.
 - Seeks to create a network better equipped to respond to crisis needs, by providing community-based, person-centered supports that enable a person to remain in their home or community residence.

3rd Annual Choking Prevention Awareness Month in March

- March 28 is National Choking Awareness Day.
- 2026 will be the third consecutive year that the DDD Resource team will dedicate the month of March to offering workshops and roundtable discussions to provide information about the prevention of choking for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

THE DDD RESOURCE TEAM PRESENTS THE 3RD ANNUAL: CHOKING PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

National Choking Awareness Day is March 28, 2026

In-Person Trainings for Stakeholders

Join the DDD Resource Team for a comprehensive series of live, in-person mealtime safety trainings focused on choking prevention, risk reduction, and best practices for supporting individuals in community setting at 5 Commerce Way, Hamilton, NJ. These sessions will feature hands-on demonstrations of modified diet textures and liquid consistencies, along with practical strategies to reduce choking risks. Participants will also learn about resources available through the Choking Prevention Unit, including individualized consultations, prevention strategies, and specialized trainings.

Virtual Workshops

Can't make it to a live-in-person training? No problem! There will also be virtual workshops throughout March. In addition to the topics above, additional trainings will include:

- Managing Dysphagia in the Community
- Mealtime Supervision
- Mealtime Safety and Documentation
- Choking IRs & Choking Checklist Webinar
- Danielle's Law Refresher

Choking Round Table Discussion

(invite only)

Select Residential Providers and Support Coordination Agencies will be invited to join a group discussion to share experiences with the prevention of choking events. This interactive dialogue will allow attendees to share best practices regarding mealtime safety, discuss staffing needs and challenges, and explore the intersect between providers and SCAs.



Three Sessions in March | 10:00 am - 2:30 pm

Please utilize the links below to register for live, in-person trainings. Space is limited.

- [Wednesday, March 11, 2026](#)
- [Wednesday, March 18, 2026](#)

Trainings for these two sessions will include:

- Managing Dysphagia in the Community
- Diet Textures
- Liquid Consistencies
- Mealtime Risks of Regular Diets
- Mealtime Supervision

Special Focus – [Wednesday, March 25, 2026](#)

This session will focus on in-person BCBA and RN facilitated workshops related to mealtime safety.

Trainings for this session will include:

- Prevention of Food Grabbing
- Introduction to Pica
- Aspiration and GERD



Contact ddd.resourceteam@dhs.nj.gov if you have additional questions.



Please see our website for a complete list of Choking Prevention Awareness Month events and registration links: www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/individuals/healthsafety/



3rd Annual Choking Prevention Awareness Month in March

- The in-person sessions and virtual workshops are **open to all** and will be particularly beneficial for provider staff, including direct support professionals, self-directed employees, family members, and other caregivers. *Register early – space is limited!*
 - [In-person Training Session 1: March 11](#)
 - [In-person Training Session 2: March 18](#)
 - [In-person Training Session 3: March 25](#) (Special Focus with DDD Behavioral Analysis and Nursing Support Units)
- Virtual workshops will be held throughout March. View the full [CPAM 2026 Training Calendar](#) for more details and to register.

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES



**Division of
Developmental
Disabilities**

Office of Transition to Adult Life & Employment

Transition Thursdays Monthly Webinar Series

- March 12, 6 – 7 pm: [Transition to Adult Services and DDD Intake Process](#)
- March 19, 12 – 1 pm: [An Overview of Division of Disability Services \(DDS\) Programs and Services](#)

Quarterly Virtual Welcome Sessions

- April 2, 12 – 1 pm: [Lunchtime DDD Welcome Session](#)
- April 23, 6 – 7:30 pm: [Evening DDD Welcome Session with Topic Breakouts](#)

Visit [Transition from School to Adult Life](#) to learn more and see a full schedule of upcoming webinars.

Office of Education on Self-Directed Services (OESDS)

Family Networking Sessions

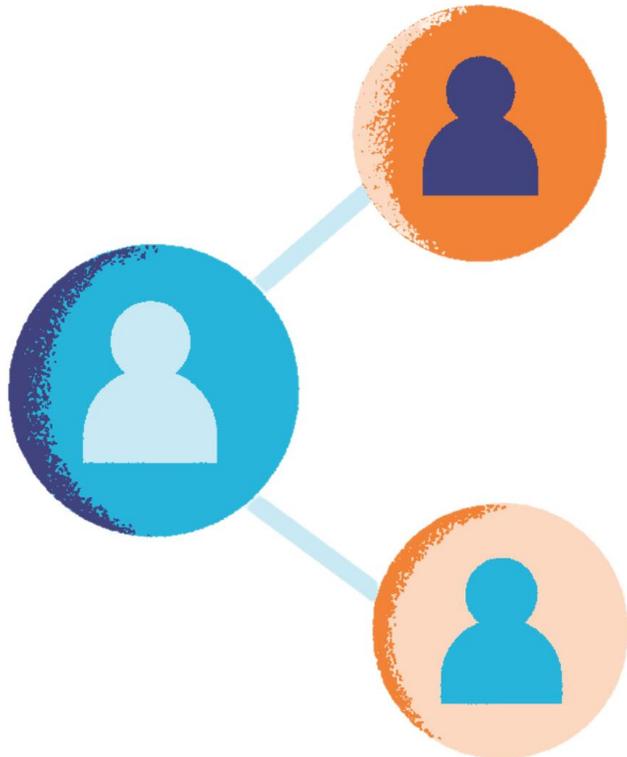
In-person and virtual sessions for family members who have a loved one with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who is self-directing all or some of their DDD-funded services or who is interested in learning about self-direction.

Spring 2026 Virtual Family Networking Session

Wednesday, April 28, 2026

6-7:30 p.m. on Zoom

[Register for Spring 2026 Family Networking Session](#)



Office of Education on Self-Directed Services (OESDS)

Peer-to-Peer Networking Sessions

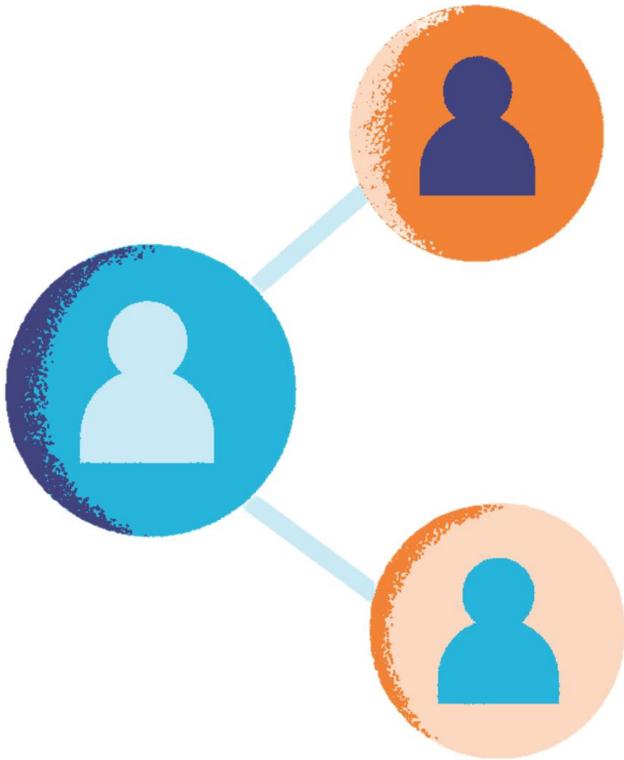
Virtual sessions for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who are self-directing all or some of their service or are interested in learning about self-direction.

Spring 2026 Peer-to-Peer Networking Session

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

6-7:30 p.m. on Zoom

[Register for Spring 2026 Peer-to-Peer Networking Session](#)



Peer EDUcation Series March 2026 Webinar



- Are you or a loved one preparing for the transition to adult life? Join the Peer EDUcation Series for an interactive webinar led by self-advocates who share their lived experiences navigating the service system in New Jersey.
- This session provides a roadmap for the transition process, focusing on key priority areas like person-centered planning, self-direction, and self-determination. Whether you are a student, family member, or professional, this webinar offers practical tips and insights to help you build a more independent future.

[Speaking Up for Your Future: Self-Advocacy in the Transition Process](#)

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 12:30 – 2 PM

Resources

Community Resources

- [Disability Rights New Jersey](#)
800-922-7233 (toll-free in New Jersey only)
- [Ombudsman for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and their Families](#)
609-984-7764
- [New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities](#)
800-792-8858
- [The Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development](#)
732-235-9300

DDD Resources

- For issues, call the DDD [Community Services Office](#) for your county or 800-832-9173.
- For routine questions:
DDD.FeeForService@dhs.nj.gov
- To report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation:
Call 800-832-9173, then press 1