



Division Update for Individuals, Families and Providers

July 23, 2026

A Special Note of Thanks

- ✦ **March 18, 2020:** DDD held its first update webinar in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- ✦ **March to May 2020:** DDD conducted weekly update webinars.
- ✦ **June 2020:** DDD transitioned to bi-weekly update webinars.
- ✦ **July 2021:** DDD established its current monthly webinar schedule.

A Special Note of Thanks

These adjustments and your commitment have led us to an exciting achievement...

July 2026 marks our 100th update webinar!!!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your time, attention, and unwavering commitment!

Agenda

- Next DDD Update Webinar
- National Core Indicators (NCI) Surveys – State of the Workforce Survey
- New “Laws” tab and P.L.2025, c.280 (Penalties Law) Webpage on OPIA Website
- Redesigned DDD Website
- Transition Webinars
- DDD Clinical Resource Team Trainings/Webinars
- Caregiver Resources
- Resources

Next DDD Update Webinar

- Reminder – The next DDD Update Webinar is scheduled for **Thursday**, August 20, 2026, at 10:30am.
 - [Register for August Webinar](#).
- The complete 2026 schedule of DDD Update Webinars, including registration links, is available on the Division's [Monthly Public Update Webinar](#) webpage.



2025-26 NCI-IDD State of the Workforce Survey

- DDD participates in [National Core Indicators® - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(NCI®-IDD\)](#), a national effort to measure and improve the performance of public developmental disabilities agencies through the use of surveys.
 - **The deadline for the State of the Workforce Survey has been extended to July 31, 2026.**
 - DDD urges all agencies that employ Direct Support Professionals to complete this survey. If you did not receive an email with a link, contact DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov.
- Send questions to DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov



New “Laws” Tab and P.L. 2025, c.280 Webpage on OPIA Website

- The Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) added a new “Laws” tab on their website, with a dropdown menu that has links to the existing Stephen Komninos’ Law webpage and a new [P.L. 2025, c. 280](#) (penalties law) webpage.



New “Laws” Tab and P.L.2025, c.280 Webpage on OPIA Website

- The new [P.L.2025, c.280](#) webpage includes:
 - A link to the actual law;
 - 6/25/2026 “Overview of New Enforcement Authority Law” webinar recording and slide deck;
 - Sample “Failure to Report” curriculum and poster;
 - Information and templates for provider internal investigation reports;
 - Email address for questions, comments and feedback.
- Visit [OPIA](#) on the web and [sign up to receive OPIA email updates](#)

Redesigned DDD Website

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Home 

About ▼

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Rules and Policies ▼

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- The redesigned DDD website went live mid-July.
- Changes are intended to make the website more user-friendly and make it easier for visitors to quickly find the information they're looking for.

Redesigned DDD Website

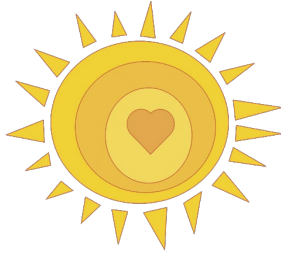
Website updates and new webpages

- **Rules and Policies** – this is a new tab on the top navigation bar that makes it easier to quickly find links to rules, laws, and policies related to DDD-funded services.
- **Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation** – while we continue to have a dedicated “Report Abuse” tab (in multiple locations) and webpage, the new [Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation](#) webpage goes into greater detail, including potential warning signs and prevention strategies.
- **Self-Direction Options and Education** – the Self-Direction webpage and Office of Education on Self-Directed Services (OESDS) webpage have been consolidated into a single page, [Self-Direction Options and Education](#), located under “For Individuals and Families.”

Redesigned DDD Website

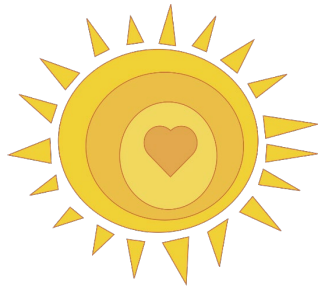
Website updates and new webpages

- **Events** – we now have a dedicated [DDD Events](#) webpage (under “News and Events”) that lists all upcoming webinars, trainings, and other events.
- **DDD Monthly Public Update Webinar** – the [Monthly Public Update Webinar](#) webpage, which has dates and registration links for all upcoming DDD Update Webinars, recordings, and slides of previous update webinars is now easier to find. It is listed directly under the Events tab and also linked to from the [Events](#) webpage.
- **Caregiver Resources** – this is another new webpage, found under the “For Individuals and Families” tab, that is dedicated to resources for paid and unpaid caregivers. As we learn more about available resources, we will add content to the [Caregiver Resources](#) page.



Water Safety Awareness for Adults with IDD and Their Caregivers

- With summer in full swing, New Jersey residents and visitors are spending lots of time in or near the water. While water safety is important for everyone, it is critical for families and caregivers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), who are at significantly greater risk for water-related injuries or drowning.
- View this [Water Safety for Adults with IDD](#) webinar, hosted by DDD and presented by Children's Specialized Hospital during National Water Safety Month in May.



Water Safety Awareness for Adults with IDD and Their Caregivers

- The DDD Clinical Resource Team developed a new Prevention Bulletin, Swimming and Water Safety Awareness

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Developmental Disabilities

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Developmental Disabilities

DDD PREVENTION BULLETIN | **SWIMMING & WATER SAFETY AWARENESS**



Water activities can provide enjoyment, exercise, and social opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Adults with IDD face a significantly elevated risk around water compared to the general population. Drowning is fast, silent, and preventable. Safe participation requires active supervision, preparation, and consistent safety practices.

Disability-related risk factors:

- Motor and balance challenges
- Low muscle tone/weakness
- Seizure disorders
- Communication barriers/Limited safety awareness/Sensory Differences
- Wandering/Walkaway/Elopement

Common misconceptions:

- Drowning is loud, slow, obvious and only happens in deep water
- Strong swimming skills and pool fences prevent drowning
- Leaving someone alone for a few minutes is safe

Practical Steps to Keep Adults with IDD Safe around Water

Environmental Safety

- Use caution around lakes, rivers, beaches, and water parks due to currents, waves, and uneven surfaces.
- Swim only where a lifeguard is present.
- Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets for all water activities.
- Use bright-colored swimwear for increased visibility.
- Consider GPS devices for individuals at risk of wandering.
- Call 911 first and check the water areas first if someone is missing.
- Avoid swimming during hazardous weather, strong waves and rip currents.
- Empty inflatable pools immediately after use.
- Conduct routine inspections of pools, docks, life jackets, alarms, gates, and other water safety equipment year-round.

5/26

DDD PREVENTION BULLETIN | **SWIMMING & WATER SAFETY AWARENESS**

Practical Steps to Keep Adults with IDD Safe around Water (cont.)

Water Safety Preparation

- Ensure staff know CPR and emergency procedures.
- Ensure proper staffing ratios for community outings.
- Review missing-person and emergency response plans regularly.
- Clearly assign supervision responsibilities during outings.
- Practice water emergency drills and rescue steps.
- Post/Reinforce water safety rules using visual supports, social stories, and repetition.
- Secure pools with locked gates and fencing.
- Never rely on pool covers or inflatable items for safety.
- Encourage swimmers to practice "Stop and Wait" rules.

Supervision/Individualized Supports:

- Never leave individuals unattended near water.
- Collaborate with local swim facilities (YMCA's, JCC's, Special Olympics, recreation departments, swim schools, etc.) to promote adaptive swim lessons for individuals as appropriate.
- Provide sensory supports, shaded areas, hydration, and rest breaks as needed.
- Designate a "Water Watcher" responsible for active supervision without distractions (i.e., side conversations, phones).
- Provide touch/arm's length supervision for individuals with seizure disorders and challenges with judgement.
- Ensure 1:1 support for individuals with mobility issues.
- Ensure individuals are wearing SPF 30 or higher sunscreen and SPF-protected clothing and hats.

Emergency Preparedness:

Always know:

- Who will call 911.
- Who will perform rescue efforts.
- The exact location/address of the water site.
- Follow first aid, CPR and aquatic emergency response training.
- Where rescue equipment and emergency contacts are located.
- Incident report notifications can be made to DDD 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by dialing 1-800-832-9173.

Water Safety Saves Lives

With proactive supervision, preparation, and individualized supports, adults with IDD can safely enjoy swimming and water activities while reducing preventable risks.



If you have any questions regarding this material or would like to schedule a training, please contact the DDD Resource Team at ddd.resource@dhhs.nj.gov

Transition Webinars

Transition webinars are an opportunity for students in grades 6 through 12 and other young adults with IDD and their families, as well as school personnel, to learn about the DDD system, including the application process and services available.

DDD Quarterly Welcome Sessions

- July 23, 6 pm to 7:30 pm – [Register for July 23 Evening Welcome Session with Topic Breakouts](#)
- October 1, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. – [Register for October 1 Lunchtime Welcome Session](#)
- October 22, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. – [Register for October 22 Evening Welcome Session with Topic Breakouts](#)

DDD Clinical Resource Team Trainings

Behavior Analysis

- **August 5**, 2 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. – [Walkaway Prevention](#)
- **August 12**, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – [Understanding Pica from a Behavioral Perspective: Managing the Environment for Prevention](#)
- **August 12**, 2 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. – [Token Economy](#)
- **August 13**, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – [An Organizational Perspective on Successful Behavior Supports](#)
- **August 17**, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – [Best Practices in Behavior Supports](#)
- **August 18**, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. – [Behavior Supports and Medical Involvement](#)

DDD Clinical Resource Team Trainings

Choking Prevention

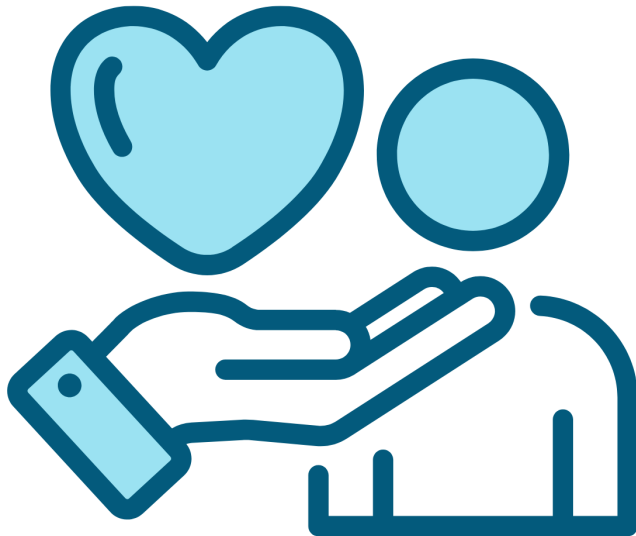
- **August 10**, 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. – [Diet Textures](#)
- **August 13**, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. – [Managing Dysphagia in the Community](#)

Nursing Support

- **August 6**, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. – [Safeguarding Health in IDD, Part 3](#)
- **August 17**, 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. – [Seasonal Health Concerns: Hot Weather](#)

Caring for an adult with disabilities is a deeply meaningful and loving role, but it can also bring emotional, financial, and practical challenges. DDD is committed to promoting the services and resources available through DHS and our community partners to help caregivers safeguard their well-being and access the mental health support they deserve.

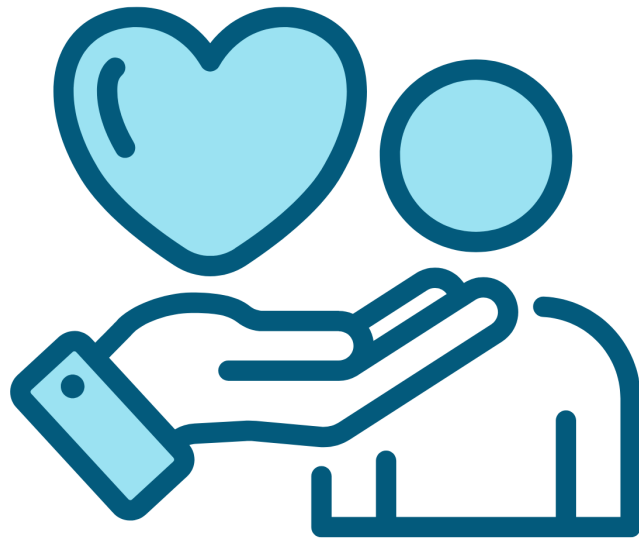
Caregiver Resources



- [NJ Disability Information Hub: Resources for Families and Caregivers](#)
- [Aging and Disability Resource Connection](#)
 - An Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is designated in each of New Jersey's 21 counties to serve as the primary entity responsible for developing comprehensive, coordinated systems of community-based services for older adults. AAAs also serve as Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) lead agencies in their county, ensuring seniors, adults with disabilities and their caregivers have easy access to information and long term services and supports.
- [Mom2Mom](#) **877-914-6662**
 - A 24/7 mental health and peer support helpline for parents of adults with special needs. Staffed by trained peer counselors who are caregivers themselves and can provide emotional support, guidance, and shared experience.

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Caregiver Resources



- **[NJ Mental Health Cares](#) 866-202-HELP (4357), TTY Relay 711**
 - A free, confidential helpline offering emotional support, information, and referrals to behavioral health services, including legal, housing, employment, rehabilitation, inpatient/outpatient care, self-help groups, and more. Available to all New Jersey residents. 8 a.m. to p.m. daily
- **[NJ Self-Help Clearinghouse](#) 800-367-6274**
 - Helps individuals find or form self-help support groups for a wide range of challenges, ensuring caregivers and families do not feel alone. 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily
- **[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) Call or Text 988**
 - A national 24/7 hotline providing one-on-one support for mental health, suicide, and substance-use crises. Call, text, or chat 988 to reach a trained crisis counselor. Support available in English and Spanish, with interpreter services in 240+ languages. In New Jersey, four Lifeline centers respond to 988 contacts.

Resources

Community Resources

- [Disability Rights New Jersey](#)
800-922-7233 (toll-free in New Jersey only)
- [Office of the 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