



THE FAMILY ADVOCATE

A PUBLICATION OF THE ARC OF NEW JERSEY FAMILY INSTITUTE

MARCH 2023

[The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute](#) provides caregivers with the necessary resources and education to access the appropriate supports and services for their loved ones with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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Governor Murphy's FY24 Budget Proposal Includes Funding to Address Many IDD Issue Areas



On February 28, Governor Murphy delivered his annual Budget Address at the State House, outlining a tremendous and incredible budget for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Please note that we are still delving into the facts and figures we've learned about the Budget thus far and that it will take additional time to fully understand the line items and the entirety of their potential impact on those we represent. From what we know so far, the Governor's Budget proposal includes \$72 million in state and federal funding for an across-the-board increase to the fee for service rates. This has been a major component of our budget advocacy to this point, as we have worked to highlight the challenges created by current rates and the impact inflation has had on service provision. We are very pleased to see this recognition and funds to increase rates. [To continue reading, click here.](#)

Pictured Above: Executive Director Tom Baffuto with Governor Murphy on the left, and with DHS Commissioner Adelman on the right.

31 Resources To Better Understand Guardianship and the Supported Decision-Making Process

31 RESOURCES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND GUARDIANSHIP AND THE SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING PROCESS



MARCH 2023

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
		1 Guardianship Fact Sheet	2 Supported Decision-Making Fact Sheet	3 Future Decisions Fact Sheet	4 Decision-Making Supports	5 Guardianship Myths
6 Guardianship of the Person: Duties and Responsibilities	7 Guide to Guardianship Reporting Forms	8 Low Cost Guardianship Services Provided By Community Health Law Project	9 Guardianship Go Bag	10 The Arc's position on Guardianship	11 Bureau of Guardianship Services (BGS)	12 Guardianship FAQ's
13 Family Guide to Court Process	14 Role of the Legally Appointed Guardian	15 PLAN/NJ Directory of Attorneys	16 Disability Rights New Jersey	17 SCARC Guardianship Services	18 National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making	19 Supported Decision Making and Understanding My IEP
20 Supported Decision Making Form for IEP Meeting	21 Pairing Advance Directives with Supported Decision-Making	22 A Guide to Alternatives to Guardianship	23 Prepare Your Child for Age of Majority and Transfer of Rights	24 Spanish Resources	25 Center for Public Representation: Supported Decision-Making	26 Future Planning Webinars
27 Let's Talk About Supported Decision-Making	28 Disability Rights New Jersey Supported Decision-Making	29 Stand By Me: An Overview of Supported Decision-Making and Guardianship Alternatives	30 The Family Guide to Transition Services in New Jersey (pages 22-24)	31 Supported Decision Making Brainstorming Guide		

[Download The March Calendar Here](#)

Virtual Information Session

Our next session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21st from 6:00 pm - 7:00.



[Click Here to Learn More About The College Internship Program \(CIP\)](#)

College Tours and Information Sessions

Garden State Pathways Program at Camden County College
In-Person College Tour
Thursday, January 26th
From 9:30 am - 11 am

Kach at Brookdale Community College
In-Person College Tour
Friday, February 10th
From 10 am - 12 pm

The College Support Program (CSP) at Rutgers University
Virtual Information Session
Wednesday, February 15th
From 6 pm - 7 pm

College Internship Program (CIP)
Virtual Information Session
Tuesday, March 21st
From 6 pm - 7 pm



To register for these events visit:
bit.ly/collegetoursandinfosession

[Register Here](#)



Michael Brower



Kelly McGuire



[Learn More About Disability Rights New Jersey](#)

New Webinar

Your Right to Appeal a Medicaid Termination

Monday, March 20, 2023 at 12:00pm

We are pleased to announce a webinar titled, "Your Right to Appeal a Medicaid Termination" with speakers Michael Brower and Kelly McGuire from Disability Rights New Jersey (DRNJ).

The DRNJ attorneys will share essential strategies to protect your Medicaid coverage in preparation for the largest review of Medicaid eligibility in the state's history. For the first time since March 2020, the NJ Medicaid program (also known as DMAHS or NJFamilyCare) will begin terminating benefits for people who it thinks do not meet the eligibility standards. While NJ Medicaid reviewed eligibility during the pandemic, it did not terminate anyone's benefits because of the federal COVID-19 public health emergency. Starting in April 2023, NJ Medicaid will resume mailing termination notices for people it finds ineligible for continued coverage.

If you get a termination notice and disagree, you must act fast to preserve your rights! This webinar will give you the information you need to:

- Update your address with Medicaid
- Recognize a termination notice
- Request a Fair Hearing
- Keep your benefits during an appeal
- Find legal help

[Register Here](#)

Achieving A Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act

The ABLÉ Act allows individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to set up tax-deferred savings accounts to save for any expenses including but not limited to:

- Education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, personal support services, health, prevention and wellness, financial management and administrative services, legal fees, funeral and burial expenses and basic living expenses.
- *Distribution for non-qualified expenditures will be subject to tax consequences and may affect eligibility for federal means tested benefits.

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act

Why the need for an ABLE Account?

The ABLE Act allows individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to set up tax-deferred savings accounts to save for any expenses including but not limited to:

- Education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, personal support services, health, prevention and wellness, financial management and administrative services, legal fees, funeral and burial expenses and basic living expenses. *Distribution for non-qualified expenditures will be subject to tax consequences and may affect eligibility for federal means tested benefits.

Important Updates

The ABLE Age Adjustment Act, which increases the age of disability onset to access an ABLE account from **age 26 to age 46**, was included in the FY2025 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The change becomes effective in 2026. ABLE accounts are generally exempt from counting as a resource for public benefits but are capped at \$100,000 for purposes of Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Who is eligible?

- ABLE accounts are available to individuals with disabilities with an age onset of disability before turning 26 years of age.
- If an individual meets this age criteria and also receives benefits under SSI and/or SSDI the individual is automatically eligible to establish an ABLE account.
- If an individual meets the age criteria but is not a recipient of SSI and/or SSDI, the individual can still open an ABLE account if they meet social security's definition and criteria regarding functional limitation and if they receive a letter of certification from a licensed physician.
- Note:** An individual can be over 26 and open an account, but must have had the age of onset of disability before the individual's 26th birthday.

What are the benefits?

ABLE accounts are beneficial because they financially empower an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They provide more choice and control for an individual and family. Accounts do this by:

- Offering tax-deferred growth potential that is tax free as long as withdrawals are used for qualified disability related expenses (<https://bit.ly/2S3M9pC>)
- Not affecting eligibility for SSI, Medicaid, and other public benefits as long as certain conditions are met.
- Note:** 529 College Savings Account Rollover Provision allows funds in a 529 college savings account to be rolled over into a 529A account (ABLE Account). This is capped at \$7,000 a year and this provision will expire in 2026.

Account Information

- Total annual contribution is \$17,000
- Maximum account balance is \$100,000 in NJ (varies by state)
- "This could change over time"
- If there is more than \$100,000 in the ABLE account, an individual's SSI payments will be suspended (not terminated). Medicaid benefits are SSI suspended.
- Note:** Medicaid Payback: Any assets remaining in the ABLE account when a beneficiary dies can be used to reimburse a state for Medicaid payments made on behalf of the beneficiary after the creation of the ABLE account.

Resources

- The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute ABLE Act Go Book (<https://bit.ly/2S2513x>)
- New Jersey ABLE Account Information Page (<https://bit.ly/2m13k4b>)
- Social Security and ABLE Accounts (<https://bit.ly/2c3Tf29>)
- ABLE Now (<https://bit.ly/23ve4fnc>)
- How to Enroll (<https://bit.ly/2c3Tf29>)
- ABLE Accounts for People with Disabilities (<https://bit.ly/2D3k31d>)
- Roadmap to Enrollment (<https://www.ableact.org/get-started/>)

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act was enacted on December 19, 2014.

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute | 782.242.2025 | info@newjerseyfamilyinstitute.org | www.thearcfamilyinstitute.org | Updated 2.23

[Click Here to Learn More About Acheiving A Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) Act](#)

New Webinar Series on Dual Diagnosis

The Mainstreaming Medical Care Program of The Arc of New Jersey is pleased to present the 2023 webinar series:

Exploring Mental Health and Behavioral Health Challenges in People with IDD

This 5-part webinar series will examine the issue of dual diagnosis - co-occurring mental health and/or behavioral health disorders in persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Topics will include diagnosis, treatment options, best practice, etc.

Join us the 4th Tuesday of every month, February through June, for this informative series.

[Learn More About Mainstreaming Medical Care](#)



Webinar #2 Assessment of Behavior Change in Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Tuesday, March 28

from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Behavior has multiple causes, including mental health conditions, discomfort, grief, trauma, the environment, and other unmet needs. Accurate assessment is valuable to understanding mental health symptoms, as well other factors that may contribute to behavior change. This session will address how to recognize and evaluate behavior change in people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) to identify appropriate treatment and support.

Presenter:

Melissa Cheplic, MPH, NADD-CC

- Senior Training and Consultation Specialist
- The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities
- Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

[Register Here](#)

Kids Corner

Navigating the System





Diggerland USA is a JCB-themed construction adventure park in West Berlin, NJ. They host events for special needs children and their families. They offer the ability to dig and drive construction equipment rides while the park is closed to the general public.



[Learn More Here](#)

Public Forums Hosted by Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Rehabilitation Council

The New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) and its State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) are seeking the public's input about topical issues impacting consumers, vendor communication, and dialogue with employers.

Your voice is extremely important to both the DVRS and the SRC and will help to shape program delivery and policy to ensure that people with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in employment.

We are particularly interested in hearing from people with disabilities, family members of people with disabilities, educators and others about their lived experience with transition planning and/or services. We want to learn about the issues, concerns, strengths, and suggestions you may have about transition from school to work in our state generally, and as it pertains to DVRS specifically.

Representatives from DVRS and the SRC will be available to provide information on available services, and to hear public comments and testimony.

Registration closes March 28, 2023.

[Register Here](#)

From Our Local Chapters of The Arc

Monthly Dances

The Arc of Burlington County is hosting monthly dances for men and women over 18 years of age with intellectual or other developmental disabilities and their families. There is a theme for each month. March's dance will take place on Friday, March 17th at 7pm. The theme is St. Patrick's Day/ Sport's Team attire.



[Click Here For More Information](#)

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute | 732.828.2022 | thefamilyinstitute@arcnj.org

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