

Many Voices/One Vision

Community Advocacy Coalition for People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

Core Values

(Revised November 2020)

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Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in Washington have much to contribute to the community, yet may need the support of families, advocates and government leadership to live a quality life. Our many voices join in unison for one common vision: a community of full participation.

Our statewide member organizations of the Community Advocacy Coalition (CAC) for people with I/DD represent the interests and goals of about 117,000 individuals, and their families and employees who support them in Washington State.

We collectively agree to the following principles, which we believe are core to full participation in every aspect of life. We want to ensure that these actions are an integral part of all planning and service delivery efforts for individuals with I/DD in Washington State. We affirm the following principles:

- **Full and Meaningful Life:** People with I/DD are equal members of society and have the right to a full and meaningful life of their choosing.
- **Self-Determination and Decision Making:** Individuals' choices and decisions must be supported and respected. Supported decision-making is preferred over taking away legal rights. Individuals with I/DD must be listened to, respected, have their rights protected and have their decisions honored based on the person's preferences. Every individual with I/DD or their family member should have access to opportunities to advocate for themselves.
- **Nothing About Us Without Us:** All individuals with I/DD must be part of all planning, governance, leadership and implementation of the programs which affect them. "Nothing about us without us." We also expect people to use respectful language and eliminate harmful, degrading labels.
- **Supporting Families:** For people with I/DD, the role of family is unique, and often central in the support and care provided across the lifespan. Family members play key roles in identifying and securing opportunities for their family members to participate within their community in meaningful ways and ensuring access to self-determined lives. Parents and other family members of people with I/DD often provide medical, behavioral, financial, and most other daily supports beyond what most families provide. Families need access to timely person-centered supports and services to protect the stability of the family and have equal access to full and rewarding lives.
- **Race, Equity, and Social Justice:** We are committed to ensuring that our healthcare, education and vital systems equitable for all. We acknowledge that individuals with I/DD who are black, people of color or of indigenous, immigrants or LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay,

Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer or other identities) backgrounds also experience racism and other systemic discrimination challenges. Therefore, all of our work must be grounded in race, equity and social justice. We strive for equity and social justice for all individuals by reducing cultural, linguistic, and other barriers to information, education, and services as well as ensure access to accurate translations, interpreters with relevant training, and multiple formats for presentation of information.

- **Free from Abuse:** Individuals with I/DD have a right to live their lives free from abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment. Where abuse happens, it should be responded to promptly, effectively and respectfully and must not re-traumatize the person.
- **Restraints and Seclusion:** Restraints and seclusion for individuals with disabilities have no place in our society, including residential, educational, healthcare, and other settings. A positive behavior support model must be in place, where behavior is recognized as communication.
- **Accessibility: Communities should be accessible** and follow universal design principles including information, services, and environments. Technology should be affordable and accessible to support communication needs and plain language and closed captioning on videos should be used whenever possible. Individuals should have assistance to communicate in whatever form that is accessible and culturally responsive for them. All public buildings and services should be accessible, including timely, safe and affordable transportation.
- **Employment for Individuals with I/DD:** Meaningful careers provide economic stability and freedom. Everyone should have the opportunity to create a life that enriches the mind and spirit. Individuals need opportunities for meaningful jobs based on interest and skills, with minimum wage or higher pay that are up to 40 hours a week. People with I/DD contribute to our communities and the economy. People with I/DD in every community should have the supports to find integrated competitive employment in both urban and rural areas around the state. Individuals with I/DD have the right to direct financial decisions consistent with personal ambition, pursue careers that enable them to grow and be promoted, with work relationships that empower them, and employment supports that protect autonomy.
- **Provider workforce:** Paid caregivers support individual and family stability. Individuals who choose to work directly with people with I/DD must be provided opportunities to develop expertise and a pathway to pursue a professional career. They must be paid a living wage with competitive benefits, medical benefits, paid time off, opportunities for advancement and personal fulfillment. They should not have to work two or three jobs to support themselves or their families. This is essential work that must be valued and compensated accordingly.
- **Early Intervention:** Individualized quality early intervention supports and services must be affordable and accessible for all children with developmental delays or disabilities to maximize their social-emotional, physical, communication, adaptive or cognitive (or intellectual) development. Early intervention should take place and is most effective in inclusive settings and natural environments so that they can have a meaningful life and

be full participants in their communities.

- **Childcare and Early Childhood Education:** Being meaningfully included in all facets of society begins in early childhood and continues into schools, places of employment, and the broader community. All children with I/DD and their families should have access to affordable, inclusive, high-quality early childhood education and child-care settings and the appropriate supports needed to be successful. Inclusive early learning and child-care can set a trajectory for inclusion across the life course.
- **Inclusive Education:** A free and appropriate public education (FAPE)—including early intervention, pre-school, K-12, transition planning, and higher education— must be provided in inclusive settings with peers of the same age and include individualized supports to all students with I/DD to prepare them for full participation in our society.
- **Housing:** People with I/DD have the right to live in their local community and with whom they choose. Public funds must expand opportunities for people to live in accessible, affordable, inclusive communities. Without these opportunities, people with I/DD are at risk of institutionalization or homelessness. A home of one's own is the cornerstone of independence for people with disabilities.
- **Parenthood:** Parents with I/DD should have access to supports to raise their own families, rather than being subjected to enhanced scrutiny and loss of parental rights based on stereotypes. Parents with I/DD should have access to services tailored to their needs, offered in-home, and if needed, available throughout the development of the child.
- **Funding and Services:** All programs must be person-centered and provided in a way that supports individuals' unique needs. Medicaid and other public benefits are vital to individuals with I/DD. All public benefits must be protected and promote inclusion for individuals in their communities. Individuals should be educated and aware of all funding sources spent on them and be able to provide direction for all funds spent on their behalf. We recognize that many people with I/DD do not receive paid services, but we advocate for all individuals to have the services and supports they need to live full and meaningful lives.