



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities



Position Statement Housing

All people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities¹ have a right to live in communities of their choosing and be fully included with people who do not have disabilities. Children belong with their families. Adults should control where and with whom they live, with increasing opportunities to rent or buy their own homes.

Issue

Public policy has not kept pace with changes in what people want and need in housing. Historically, families that had a child with a disability either had to do without supports at home or place the child in an institution to get help. Institutions enforce an unnatural, isolated, and regimented lifestyle that is not appropriate or necessary. They also consume a disproportionate share of limited public resources.

As people left institutions and their family homes, they were frequently placed into group homes, often larger than family-sized, owned by provider agencies or other entities. They still lacked control of where and with whom they lived. It is now clear that with carefully tailored and individualized supports and services all people can grow and develop in housing they control, be it a house, an apartment, or a condominium, no matter how significant their disabilities.

However, people with disabilities who receive SSI cannot afford housing because they are among the poorest in the nation. They are, in fact, the low-income group with the highest level of unmet need for housing assistance. To add to the problem, Medicaid, the principal source of funding for services and supports, does not allow for its funds to be used for housing-related costs. In addition, a serious lack of accessible and affordable housing throughout the nation limits our constituents' ability to find a home.

Position

Our constituents should be empowered to live in accessible and affordable housing similar to that of people without disabilities. Necessary individualized supports and adaptations should be of their choosing and under their control or the control of their substitute

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decision-maker.

Community over Institutional Placement

- Large congregate facilities are unnecessary and inappropriate for our constituents, regardless of type or severity of disability;
- People must receive individualized supports, including housing, as they leave institutions, as well as their family homes. Public funds must be shifted from institutions to the community to accommodate these moves; and
- The health and safety of people must be safeguarded wherever they live, including when a facility is closing, and whenever a person is transitioning from one living environment to another.

Children

- All children need a home with a family that provides an atmosphere of love, security, and safety; and
- Many families need individualized accommodations to enable them to provide a home for the child with a disability.

Adults

- People with disabilities should no longer be “placed” or made to fit into a program or

facility. Rather, flexible supports and services must follow the person to the location he or she chooses, including their family home.

People with disabilities must be empowered with the opportunity to control their housing by renting or buying their own homes, whether a house, apartment, or condo. Thus public policies must ensure that they receive their fair share of all local, state, and national housing resources.

- Individuals with disabilities should live together only when they freely choose to do so.
- Adults with disabilities should be encouraged and supported to live lives outside the family homes whenever feasible.
- People should have as much privacy as possible within their homes

¹“People with intellectual disabilities and/or developmental disabilities” refers to those defined by the AAIDD classification and DSM IV. In everyday language they are frequently referred to as people with cognitive, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities although the professional and legal definitions of those terms both include others and exclude some defined by DSM IV.

Adopted:

**Board of Directors, The Arc
August 4, 2008**

**Board of Directors, AAIDD
August 18, 2008**

**Congress of Delegates, The Arc of
the United States
August 8, 2008**

Achieve with us.