



POSITION STATEMENT



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTS

Individual supports, such as assistive technology and personal assistance, make it possible for all people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities¹ to function in daily life.

ISSUE

Our constituents frequently are unable to perform unassisted in basic areas of everyday life such as communicating, interacting with others, completing daily living routines, and moving in and around the home and community. All too often, individual supports are denied because of restrictive criteria such as age, disability label, severity of the disability, problem behavior, motor or sensory limitations, or test scores.

POSITION

Our constituents must receive the supports necessary to lead a meaningful life in the community. These supports should be available based upon functional needs, not eligibility criteria such as diagnosis or income. Common areas of individual support include:

- **Communication.** People learn to communicate in many ways, such as personalized gestures and sounds, picture symbols, manual signs, and spoken language. Support must be available to help improve an individual's communication and social interactions as well as reduce challenging behaviors.
- **Assistive technology.** People must have access to devices, services, and training that improve independence, mobility, communication, environmental control, and self-determination. Designers, manufacturers, service providers, educators and our constituents with their families should be educated about the benefits of technology.

- **Personal assistance.** Adults (and parents of children under 21) should be able to hire and fire personal assistants to help them perform everyday activities, make decisions, and exercise control over their lives. Supports must be individually planned and applied according to the principles of person-centered planning, self-determination and individual outcomes, and team collaboration. The individual supports must be independently and regularly monitored for quality, safety, and effectiveness.

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July 18, 2010

Board of Directors, The Arc
August 23, 2010

Congress of Delegates, The Arc of the United States
November 6, 2010

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.