



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities



Position Statement Employment

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities¹ can be competitively employed in their communities. They should be supported to make informed choices about their work and careers and have the resources to seek, obtain, and be successful in integrated community employment.

Issue

The majority of our constituents are either unemployed or underemployed, despite their ability, desire, and willingness to engage in meaningful work in the community. Of those employed, many have had no choice but to work in sheltered, segregated programs that separate people from their communities. Whatever the setting, few have had the opportunity to earn much money, acquire benefits, advance their careers, or plan for retirement. Without appropriate education, career development, job training, technological assistance and support, people cannot enjoy the benefits of employment.

Position

All of our constituents should be prepared for careers and have the opportunity for jobs alongside non-disabled workers based upon their preferences, interests, and strengths.

Employment opportunities should include:

- Ongoing career planning, job advancement, and retirement planning;
- Flexible and comprehensive individualized supports to ensure the person's employment success;
- Wages and benefits that are fair and reasonable; and
- Micro-enterprises or small businesses.

Employment preparation should include:

- Instruction regarding principles of career development and social skill development, starting in the early grades and continuing through graduation;

- General and specific job skill training and actual paid work experiences in the community;
- A comprehensive plan for transition to adult life; and
- Training in how to travel in the community so they can get to different jobs and enhance their independence.

In addition, employed individuals must have the opportunity for continued education or specialized training to enhance their marketability and to help them advance in careers or chosen areas of interest.

¹“People with intellectual disabilities and/or developmental disabilities” refers to those defined by 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
November 8, 2008**

Achieve with us.