



For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities



# Position Statement Education

To prepare them to participate in our democratic society, students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities<sup>1</sup> will receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that includes individualized supports and access to a general education curriculum in inclusive settings with peers of the same age.

## Issue

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent possible with students who are not disabled. Despite this law, many students within our constituency remain segregated in self-contained classrooms in separate schools, with limited or no opportunities to participate academically and socially in general education classrooms and school activities. Segregation of students in schools perpetuates the alienation of these students. Many do not have access to the same academic and extracurricular activities and services provided to other students. Frequently, these students leave school unprepared for adult life in the community.

Additionally, many schools lack sufficient and/or trained educators and support personnel to provide an appropriate education. Despite some gains, special education programs continue to be under funded, particularly by the federal government. Some communities still oppose special education and seek to limit educational opportunities for students in special education. Indeed the education of students with disabilities has been under assault on numerous fronts by the press, school officials and the public.

## Position

Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for students within our constituency must:

- Be provided to the maximum extent possible with students who do not have disabilities;
- Be constructed around an Individualized Educational Program that meets the student's needs and offers the necessary supports to ensure adherence to the IEP;
- Be sensitive to linguistic, cultural, gender, and socioeconomic differences

as well as individual family circumstances;

- Provide access to regular curricula and extracurricular services and experiences with peers of the same age without disabilities, including access to post-secondary education;
- Provide necessary related educational support services to maximize the educational experience;
- Provide students the opportunity to participate in all general assessments and evaluations. For those students unable to do so, even with appropriate accommodations, alternative assessments and evaluations must be provided;
- Extend the school year when necessary to ensure continuing educational success but do so with an inclusive educational program to the extent feasible;
- Be provided by properly qualified, prepared, and supported teachers, related services personnel, and other staff;
- Include transition into employment or further post-secondary education; and
- Be fully funded to meet identified needs of eligible children.

The educational process must:

- Involve students, family members, their chosen advisors, and guardians in designing and moni-

toring the educational program;

- Make students, family members, and guardians aware of resources that help them understand their rights;
- Afford due process to students and their families; and
- Be actively monitored and enforced by local, state, and federal officials to ensure the mandates of IDEA are met.

To provide quality educational programs, school districts, colleges, and universities must prepare teachers and related services personnel to help students with disabilities access the general education curriculum, as much as possible, in inclusive school programs.

**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  
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