



## Advocacy Needed: Tell Congress #WeAreEssential

While most of us are staying home to prevent the spread of COVID-19, representatives in Washington, DC are moving forward with legislation that will greatly impact people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We ask you to please take a moment to engage with your congressional representative using these links below:

- **Item #1:** [#WeAreEssential: Tell Congress to Include the Disability Community in COVID-19 Relief Bills](#)
- **Item #2:** [Act Now to #FixtheGlitch for SSI!](#)



[Click here](#) to learn more about the critical advocacy happening in our nation's capital and why decision-makers and lawmakers must hear from the disability community. #WeAreEssential.

## The Arc of NJ Responds to COVID-19 NYT Article

The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director Tom Baffuto released the following statement regarding the, ["It's Hit Our Front Door': Homes for the Disabled See a Surge of COVID-19"](#) article that appeared in the New York Times on April 8. "Our hearts go out to the families and caregivers of the individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in New York who have lost their lives due to COVID-19. We recognize that we are living in an incredibly unsettling time, but it's important for people with I/DD and their families to understand the multitude of precautions taking place in New Jersey. All of the day programs across the state were closed by March 17 when the threat of the virus became apparent and Chapters of The Arc implemented shelter in place procedures immediately thereafter. Comprehensive emergency response plans were enacted and our local county Chapters, and their extraordinary Direct Support Professionals, are continuing to assist and support clients while abiding by screening policies, monitoring staff and clients for potential symptoms, and engaging in intense sanitizing of homes. While a portion of those served in the community have tested positive for COVID-19, we are working diligently to care for those who are ill while protecting and shielding others. In this unprecedented time, we are doing our very best for those we serve and represent. The Arc of New Jersey is here to advocate and support anyone in need of help as we push through toward better days ahead."

*'It's Hit Our Front Door':  
Homes for the Disabled  
See a Surge of Covid-19*



# I/DD & COVID-19 in the News

News outlets in New Jersey have recently published a number of articles detailing the ways in which people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are affected by COVID-19. Some of the articles include quotes from The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director Tom Baffuto. Please see the links below to access these publications.

- [COVID-19 Threat Means Fewer Services for Developmentally Disabled](#)
- [How to volunteer and donate in New Jersey during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Coronavirus: NJ reports 12 deaths, 86 positive cases in group homes for disabled](#)
- [COVID-19 Starts to Take a Toll on New Jersey's Disabled Residents](#)



## Visit The Arc COVID-19 Updates & Information Web Site



During these extraordinary times, we at The Arc of New Jersey are working diligently to provide support, answers and advocacy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and the community. Please know that our staff are working, some remotely, and will try to help in any way they can. Please call or email us as needed and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Don't forget that valuable information can be accessed through our fact sheets and recorded webinars which you can find [here](#) and [here](#). Also, please be sure to check our [COVID-19](#)

[Updates & Information page](#) for news and resources impacting people with I/DD during this time. This is a challenging period, but our organization is here to support you as best we can in the days and weeks ahead. You can also [click here](#) to download our new infographic detailing the services we offer.

## Upcoming Webinars!

We've added additional webinars to help individuals with I/DD and their families during this difficult time. Register today and be sure to check out our [calendar](#) for other events coming in May.



### Webinar: COVID-19 Information & Resources for Advocates Tuesday, April 14 at 2 pm

Presented by Ashley Ritchey, this webinar will present facts and credible information about COVID-19, aka "the coronavirus". We will explore healthy ways of coping with stress and debunk myths & misinformation about the coronavirus. We will also review common questions about COVID-19, social distancing rules, and review resources for the self-advocacy community.

[Register here!](#)

### PFAL Webinar Wednesday Series: Creating a Transition Plan: Why it is Important for Your Student's Future Wednesday, April 15 at 3 pm

The transition planning process includes evaluating the student's skills, abilities, strengths, challenges, and preferences to envision their life after leaving school. Planning involves setting goals for the student to strive toward and identifying the need for supports. Carrying out the transition plan can begin and should be a part of the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Students and families must be actively involved in the transition planning process as early as possible and keep it moving forward. This presentation discusses the importance of planning, the steps necessary to plan, and provides hands-on tools to put a plan in place.

[Register here!](#)

### Webinar: Preparing for Next Steps While Still in School Wednesday, April 15 at 12 pm

Each year, multitudes of students prepare to leave school in search of the perfect job, place to live, relationships, and lifestyle. For a person without a disability, this change from the secure world of school to the uncertainty of adulthood can be stressful and challenging. Join us as we discuss how to tackle a transition plan and what steps you can take to make sure that your child is ready to transition into adult life.

[Register here!](#)

**Webinar: Sexual Rights, Autonomy and Disability Part 2**  
**Thursday, April 16 at 2 pm**

Please join us for the second half of a two part webinar, with guest speakers Professor Jasmine Harris, University of California at Davis and Professor Natalie Chin, City University of New York School of Law and Co-Director of the Disability and Aging Justice Clinic, who will be discussing issues around sexual autonomy and sexual rights as civil rights for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

[Register here!](#)

**Webinar: Healthy Communication & Staying Connected**  
**Tuesday, April 21 at 2 pm**

Presented by Erin Smithers, Information and Referral Coordinator, this webinar is all about healthy communication & boundaries during the "stay at home" order, as well as ways to stay connected while we are apart. Erin will present various ways to stay active and engaged as a self-advocate. We will also discuss how self-advocates are currently using technology instead of in-person meetings and how you can get involved in advocacy activities.

[Register here!](#)

**Webinar: Healthy Stress Management & Outdoor Safety Tips**  
**Tuesday, April 28 at 2 pm**

Presented by Kelly Mulvaney, Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator, this webinar will focus on more ways to manage stress in a healthy way. Even though we're spending more time at home, it is still important to maintain a routine and stick to your health goals! Kelly will discuss outdoor safety tips and share at-home adaptive exercises to maintain your wellness routine.

[Register here!](#)

**PFAL Webinar Wednesday Series: Yes, Your Child Can Work: Exploring the World of Work**  
**Wednesday, April 29 at 3 pm**

For many people, a job is something that helps define who they are. It gives us a meaningful place to go everyday, a way to explore our interests, a means of earning money, and a way to be a part of our community. This workshop will discuss different employment options available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and hands-on tools for preparing students for employment.

[Register here!](#)

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## A Message from The Arc of New Jersey

Thank You

Thank you to all our generous donors who, over the past few weeks, have made donations to support us. These critical funds will help us in our efforts to assist individuals with I/DD and their families, as well as our local county chapters, through the COVID19 crisis. To put your donation to work for individuals with I/DD and their families, [click here](#). If you have questions or need assistance, our staff is here to help. [Click here](#) to access information about our Programs.

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### Use Your Amazon App to Support The Arc of New Jersey

If you are an AmazonSmile customer, you can now support The Arc of New Jersey, Inc. in the Amazon shopping app on your Android device! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. If you have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, open the App on your Android device.
2. View Settings and select AmazonSmile.
3. Follow the in-App instructions to complete the process.

If you do not have the latest version of the Amazon shopping App, update your App. Click [here](#) for instructions.



## Need help or more information? Want to become active in our advocacy network?

- **Visit our website** to access lots of great information that can help you navigate service systems, find resources and keep you informed as to the important issues facing children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.
- **Join our advocacy network** to add your voice to the thousands who are working hard to promote and protect the quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

[Visit our website](#)

[Join an Advocacy Network](#)

The Arc of New Jersey | 732.246.2525 | [info@arcnj.org](mailto:info@arcnj.org) | [www.arcnj.org](http://www.arcnj.org)

STAY CONNECTED

[DONATE NOW!](#)

