



For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities

**Achieve with us.**

## The Arc of NJ Will Continue Fight for Higher DSP Wages

Governor Christie delivered his annual Budget Address earlier this week and while we are grateful for increased state and federal dollars for community-based supports and services in the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Budget, we are very disappointed that the spending plan did not include additional funding to increase wages for our Direct Support Professionals. **Although this is not the outcome we were hoping for, the fight is far from over.** Now we will focus our attention on the legislature and specifically, members of the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees. As for community-based services and supports, we are pleased to report that the FY18 proposed budget includes an increase of \$89.7 million - a mix of state and federal dollars - and is broken down as follows: [Click here to continue.](#)



## Self-Advocates Plan DD Awareness Month Celebration



*Pictured Above: Self-Advocates visit the State House during last year's DD Awareness Month event.*

In honor of Developmental Disability Awareness month, members of the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Network will travel down to Trenton today to raise awareness about the issues impacting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They will speak to legislators in Goldfinch Square and highlight this important occasion. In addition to their trip to the Capital, the NJ Self-Advocacy Project is sponsoring their annual DD Awareness Month Bulletin Board Student Contest. This year's theme is: "Developmental Disabilities Awareness: It Matters to Me." The student contest is a way of promoting inclusion and education to students in elementary, middle and high school. Winning submissions will be exhibited at the State House as part of the Self-Advocates' display. For more information, click [here](#).

## Governor Takes Action on I/DD Bills



Governor Christie signed a number of bills in February that will impact people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Each bill touched on a different area of importance to The Arc of New Jersey, including: special education, prevention and transportation. The legislation signed into law is as follows:

**A3267/S2519** - This bill provides for voluntary contributions by taxpayers on their gross income tax returns to support autism programs. The bill establishes a special fund in the Department of the Treasury, to be known as the "Autism Programs Fund," to which all donations collected from voluntary contributions will be deposited. All monies deposited into this special fund will go to the Department of Health for distribution to autism programs throughout the State. [To continue reading, click here.](#)

## Survey aims to learn more about family caregivers



*For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

The Arc of the US is inviting people to participate in the 2017 Family and Individual Needs for Disability Supports (FINDS) survey. The goal of the survey is to learn more about the experiences of parents and family members who provide support to a family member with an intellectual or developmental disability. To participate, the individual must be 18 years or older and provide primary unpaid and frequent support to a person with an intellectual or developmental disability living in the United States. To learn more and to participate in the survey, [click here.](#)



**DON'T CUT OUR  
LIFELINE**

### **Do you or a loved one benefit from Medicaid, SSI, Medicare or the ACA (Obamacare)?**

These "lifeline" programs are critical to supporting millions of Americans with disabilities to access healthcare, support services and community living.

### **Lifeline programs are under attack!**

Every voice must be heard to educate the public and elected officials about the importance of preserving these vital programs.

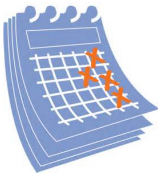
**We need your help to "Protect the Lifeline"!  
Go to [bit.ly/protectthelifeline](http://bit.ly/protectthelifeline) now!**

## **NJ Sprout Film Festival Returns Due to Popular Demand**



*Pictured Above: Attendees at the 2016 Sprout Film Festival waiting for the screening to begin.*

After a very successful inaugural year, the Sprout Film Festival will be back in New Jersey on **Saturday, April 29, 2017 Middlesex County College West Hall, Parkview Room**. Come join us for a screening of some of the most creative and heart-warming short films by and about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities from around the world. For more information go to [Sprout](#).



## Save the Date!

**The Annual Spring Into Advocacy Luncheon** hosted by the NJ Self-Advocacy Project and the NJ Statewide Self-Advocacy Network will be held Saturday,

April 8 at The Imperia, Somerset. Information and registration can be found at [www.njselfadvocacyproject.org](http://www.njselfadvocacyproject.org).

**The 28th Annual Conference on Medical Care for Persons with Developmental Disabilities** hosted by the Mainstreaming Medical Care Program of The Arc of New Jersey will be held on Friday, June 2 at the Westin, Princeton. More information can be found at [www.mainstreamingmedicalcare.org](http://www.mainstreamingmedicalcare.org)



*Pictured Above: Staff and speakers at the 2016 Mainstreaming Medical Care Conference.*

## Check Out These Upcoming Events, Webinars

- **Transition from School to Adult Life: Building Supports for Independence for Teens with Disabilities**  
[Monday, March 13 at 6 pm](#)

The main goal of special education is simple: to prepare students with disabilities for further education, employment and independent living. In this webinar, attendees will learn from the firm Hinkle, Fingles, Prior & Fischer, P.C., Attorneys at Law about how to engage in transition planning, and secure services and supports needed for success. Topics will include: elements of transition planning, considerations around graduation, community-based learning, behavioral supports for adults, guardianship, surrogate decision-making and voting rights, and options in higher education and adult services.

- **Free IEP Review with the Attorneys of Hinkle, Fingles, Prior & Fischer, Attorneys at Law**  
[Wednesday, March 15 at 6 pm in Morris County](#)

Are You Looking For Professional Guidance With Your Child's IEP? We are offering regional IEP reviews for families who may have questions or concerns about their child's plan. Families will have an opportunity to sit down with an attorney from Hinkle, Fingles, Prior, & Fischer to review their child's IEP, ask questions and discuss any concerns they may have about their school district. Space is limited and **registration is REQUIRED to attend**. Families will receive a free 30 minute IEP



review. Contact Kristina Tosti at (609) 896-4200 to reserve your time slot.

- **Webinar: Public Policy and Advocacy - A How-To Guide**

[Tuesday, March 21 at 12 pm](#)

Public policy and advocacy are most effective when families, Self-Advocates and professionals work together. Join The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute as we discuss the importance of becoming involved and ways to make a positive impact on policies at the national, state and local levels.

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## Thank A Social Worker During March

Social workers stand up for millions of people every day. These include people who are experiencing devastating illnesses and mental health crises, our veterans, children, families and communities. Yet many people still misunderstand who social workers are and the invaluable contributions they bring to society.

To help educate people about their many contributions, we invite you to celebrate March as Social Work Month in join the "Social Workers Stand Up!" Campaign. To learn more, [click here.](#)

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## NEW FEATURE! Highlighting Resources in the Community



### NJ Relay and CapTel Service

Relay Services can be a great help to people with hearing or speech loss who have to depend on others to make telephone calls. These services allow a person with a disability to make telephone calls independently. If you would like to learn more about Relay Services and how they may be able to assist with your communication needs, visit: [NJRelay.com](http://NJRelay.com) or [NJCapTel.com](http://NJCapTel.com).

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## 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](#)

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