



## Executive Director Speaks on Pix11News About Effects of COVID-19 on People with I/DD

Executive Director Tom Baffuto was interviewed on Pix11 News this month to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Tom highlighted the outstanding work of the local County Chapters of The Arc as well as the Direct Support Professionals who remain on the front line every day to ensure people with I/DD are assisted and care for during this incredibly challenging time. Click the image to the right to view the clip which originally aired live on Tuesday, May 5.



## COVID-19 Related Advocacy Takes Center Stage

The current health crisis and its impact on people with I/DD is continuously evolving and The Arc of New Jersey continues to be at forefront fighting for the best possible outcomes for those we represent. Our advocacy in recent weeks has included the Governor's Office, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health to ensure the health and well-being of both individuals with I/DD, their families, and the Direct Support Professionals who remain our front line heroes during this very difficult time. We are pleased to report a number of positive outcomes, including:

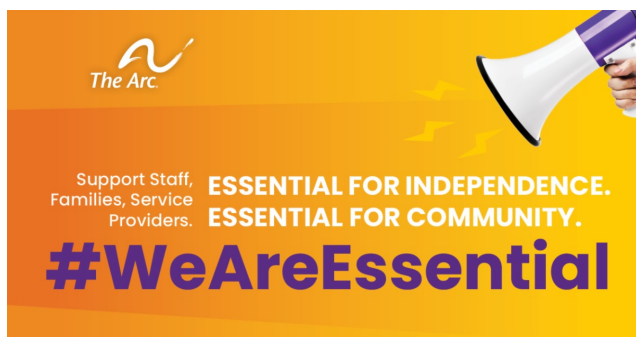
- The Department of Health issued the Allocation of Critical Care Resources During a Public Health Emergency document which prohibits discrimination against people with I/DD
- The Department of Health announced guidance requiring hospitals to allow a designated support person to accompany an individual with a disability during a hospitalization despite other restrictions on visitors at this time. The designated support person may be a family member, personal care assistant or another disability service provider and is subject to screening by the hospital and required to be asymptomatic for COVID-19.
- The Department of Human Services announced \$24 million in state and federal resources for temporary wage increases for the direct support professionals who care for adult individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in group homes and supervised apartments. With these funds, beginning May 1 the Department of Human Services will implement a temporary \$3 per hour wage increase for these professionals for three months, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, we have been advocating on a number of issues impacting students receiving special education services, including working with the NJ Department of Education to ensure students have access to the technology they need to receive services from their school remotely.



## Advocacy Needed: Tell Congress

# #WeAreEssential



If you haven't done so already, it's not too late to take action on the most recent action alert from The Arc US. Representatives in Washington are moving forward with legislation that will have a significant impact on people with I/DD, their families and the community provider organizations who support them. Please take a moment to engage with your congressional representative using this link:

- [#WeAreEssential: Tell Congress to Include the Disability Community in](#)

## [COVID-19 Relief Bills](#)

[Click here](#) for a video update from Nicole Jorwic, Senior Director of Public Policy at The Arc US, for a federal policy update on COVID-19 Response for People with Disabilities.

## *Virtual Conference to Feature The Arc's Exec Director*

Executive Director Tom Baffuto will present "Advocacy in Challenging Times (It is Always Challenging Times)," on Monday, May 11 at 7 pm as part of Hinkle Prior & Fischer's Virtual Parent Empowerment Conference. This free conference will run May 11-16, 2020 and you can register [here](#). During his presentation, Tom will share proven skills which can empower parents to identify topics of broad interest to our community, organize stakeholders, build coalitions, communicate with elected and government officials, and utilize existing resources to leverage influence and maximize success. The presentation will also cover the current critical issues facing the disability community.

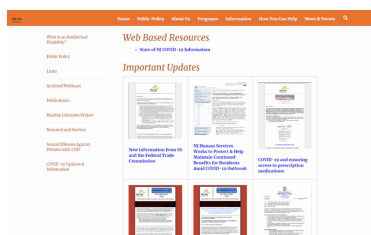


## DD Training Resources Site Adds COVID Items



DD Training Resources is an online database, funded by a grant from The NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities and run by The Arc of New Jersey's Family Institute. It provides a wide range of information about trainings and support resources for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families throughout the State of New Jersey. In response to the recent health crisis, the site now includes a search field for COVID-19 related resources that individuals with I/DD and their families may find useful at this time. Check it out by [clicking here](#).

## *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

## Criminal Justice Advocacy Program Starts Newsletter

With generous funding provided by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, The Arc of New Jersey's [Criminal Justice Advocacy Program](#) (CJAP) began issuing a monthly publication - the "Equal Justice Talks Newsletter." This newsletter will help keep stakeholders connected and up to date on many of the issues CJAP is working on while conferences and in-person trainings are not permitted due to COVID-19. If you are interested in receiving the CJAP newsletter, simply email Jenn Lynch at [JLynch@arcnj.org](mailto:JLynch@arcnj.org).



~ Equal Justice Talks Newsletter ~

**A Newsletter for the Disability and Criminal Justice Communities**

Dear Colleagues and Friends: The Criminal Justice Advocacy Program of The Arc of New Jersey has created this newsletter to bring information to you when we are not able to conference and train in person, full of links, articles and information to help you work with people with I/DD. Our hope is that this newsletter can keep you apprised of many of the issues that we have worked on together and will continue to address as we go forward.

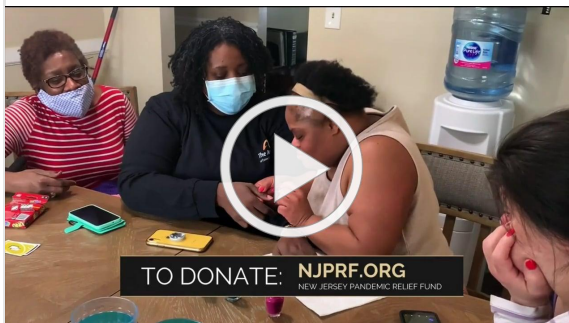
For anyone working with a person with disabilities looking for the most up-to-date connection to services, please visit this link for information: <https://www.arcnj.org/information/covid-19-updates-information.html>



## Chapters Covert Step Up Walks to Virtual Events as a Result of COVID-19

In light of the COVID-19 social distancing protocols, Chapters of The Arc are converting their in-person Step Up for The Arc Walks into fun, virtual events. This gives you the chance to support your local County Chapter of The Arc while abiding by the necessary safety precautions we must currently follow. Check out the upcoming "walks" below for more information.

- [SCARC](#)
- [The Arc of Somerset](#)



## The Arc of Essex County Featured in the Jersey 4 Jersey COVID-19 Relief Benefit

The Arc of Essex County and their Nutley Group Home manager Tia were recently featured on the Jersey 4 Jersey COVID-19 Relief Benefit. We continue to be so very thankful to all the Direct Support Professionals who remain on the front line during this incredibly challenging time. Click the image on the left to view the video clip.

## 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 upcoming events.

### Webinar: Working Hard or Hardly Working: Maintaining Your Well-Being and Productivity While Working From Home

**Tuesday, May 12 at 2 pm**

Presented by Ashley Ritchey, this webinar will focus on work from home etiquette and tips for staying connected while working remotely. This includes creating and maintaining professional boundaries as





well as finding ways to achieve a healthy work/life balance during the stay at home order.  
[Register here!](#)

**Webinar: Step by Step: Small Changes That Can Lead You to a Healthier Life**  
**Tuesday, May 19 at 2 pm**

Presented by Kelly Mulvaney, this webinar will explore practical changes we can make in our daily lives to ramp up our overall health and wellness routines. Tune in to learn about simple "life hacks" that can lead to improved health outcomes and reaching your personal fitness goals. Tips on adaptive exercise and nutrition will be discussed.

[Register here!](#)

**Webinar: Equal Justice Talks: Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Co-Occurring Disorders**

**Wednesday, May 20 at 2 pm**

Please join us for our next webinar discussion of People with Developmental Disabilities and Co-Occurring Disorders. Speakers Dr. Clare Allely, University of Salford, who specializes in Autism Spectrum Disorder and developmental and forensic psychology and attorney Elizabeth Kelley, Esq. will address the important topic of identifying and working with people with I/DD who also have a co-occurring disorder such as an issue with mental health or substance abuse.

[Register here!](#)

**PFAL Webinar Wednesday Series: Navigating the DDD Service System**

**Wednesday, May 20 at 3:30 pm**

Topic will include the relationship between Medicaid eligibility and program eligibility, available Medicaid Waiver services, the support coordination agency process and the role of the support coordinator as well as sharing the RECIPE for a meaningful life. Presenter: Nkechi Okoli, Senior Coordinator of Transition to 21 Education, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

[Register here!](#)

**PFAL Webinar Wednesday Series: HOW@home: Getting the Most Out of Your Student's High School Experience**

**Wednesday, May 20 at 6 pm**

As a parent, you want to help your child make choices that are best for his or her needs. This workshop will explore the role your school district will play in the transition process and how you can prepare your child for adult life.

[Register here!](#)

**Webinar: Let's Stick Together: Navigating the Web of Online Communications for Staff and Self-Advocates**

**Tuesday, May 26 at 2 pm**

Presented by Erin Smithers, this webinar will focus on staying connected during shelter in place. We will explore a variety of teleconferencing and video chat options that self-advocates, staff, and agency personnel can use for both professional and personal purposes. Phone and computer safety tips will also be discussed.

[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.



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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

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!

