

Principles for Inclusion of People with Disabilities

General Principles

1. Individuals with disabilities should have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play as those without disabilities.
2. Individuals with disabilities should have the opportunity to work in competitive wage jobs in integrated work settings, have a place to call home, contribute to their communities, control personal resources and be engaged in the community with family and friends.
3. Supports must allow a person with a disability to achieve full access to the greater community.
4. Families with children with disabilities should be able to participate in their communities like all other families. They should be able to plan and live a life, with supports where necessary, that is consistent with their vision for their entire family, including the member with a disability.
5. Individuals with disabilities should have control over their own day, including which job or educational or leisure activities they pursue.
6. Individuals with disabilities should have control over where and how they live, including the opportunity to live in their own apartment or home with supports. Living situations that require conformity to a collective schedule or that restrict personal activities limit the right to choose. Individuals with disabilities should get to decide where they live, with whom they live, when and what they eat, and who they invite as guests.
7. Families should be supported at the earliest possible stages to understand and envision the benefits of an independent, integrated life, with supports where necessary, for their child with a disability.
8. Parents of children with disabilities should be supported in their role as parents.
9. Communities should be universally designed to be accessible for people of all abilities (taking into account physical, cognitive and social differences) so activities and programs that are available to the general public are inclusive and welcoming to all.
10. Systems should be designed and funded in such a way to support the ability of people with disabilities to live an integrated life to the fullest extent possible.
11. The disability service system must provide services in manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate, and respectful and inclusive of people of diverse identities.

Diverse identities refers to people of various races, cultural and ethnic heritages, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, ages, and religions.

Housing

12. Individuals with disabilities should have access to affordable, accessible housing other than group homes, congregate arrangements, and multi-unit buildings or complexes that are primarily for people with disabilities. They should have access to housing throughout their community, with ownership or control of a lease. Housing should not be conditioned on compliance with treatment or with a service plan.
13. Families should have access to the necessary supports to raise their minor children at home.

Choice

14. Individuals with disabilities should have the meaningful opportunity to make informed choices. They must have full, unbiased and accurate information about their options, including what services and financial support are available in integrated settings. They should have the opportunity to visit integrated settings and talk to individuals with similar disabilities working, living, and recreating in integrated settings. Their concerns about integrated settings should be explored and addressed.
15. Individuals with disabilities should have access to a person-centered planning process that provides necessary information and support to ensure that the individual directs the process to the maximum extent possible, and is enabled to make informed choices and decisions. Individuals should be informed of all the possibilities from which they may choose, as well as the consequences of those choices, in a manner that is meaningful to the recipient and easily understood.

Public Funding

16. Entitlement and other disability benefit programs are essential lifelines and safety nets for people with disabilities who also experience poverty at significantly higher rates than the general population. Supports and services that are critical to the well-being of people with disabilities (including income, housing and food supports) must be protected and improved while ensuring meaningful programmatic access and preserving the principles of independence, choice and self-determination. Examples of some programs which need to be maintained or expanded include: SSI, SSDI, TANF, Housing Assistance and FoodShare.
17. Government funding for services should support implementation of these principles, supporting and encouraging individuals with disabilities to age in place and remain in their communities and to support families in raising their children with disabilities.