

## *Life in the Community Summary*

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**All people, regardless of disability, deserve the opportunity for a full life in their community where they can live, learn, work, and play alongside each other through all stages of life. People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities<sup>1</sup> need varying degrees of support to reach personal goals and establish a sense of satisfaction with their lives.**

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### *Aging*

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who are 55 years of age or older have a right to the same opportunities to enjoy full lives as other older people. They are entitled to full access to community supports, including support from those agencies that serve all older people.

### *Behavioral Supports*

A full and active life supported by caring relationships can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviors in people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. However, if such behaviors occur, people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and those who support them must have access to positive behavioral supports that focus on improved quality of life as well as reductions in the behaviors.

### *Early Childhood Services*

All young children who are at-risk for or who have been identified with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities should have access to high-quality, affordable developmental services in natural environments. These services should build on the strengths of the child and family, address their needs, be responsive to their culture and personal priorities, and be delivered through research-based practices.

### *Education*

Children and youth with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) must receive a free, appropriate public education as guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Education must include individualized supports and services, quality instruction, and access to the general education curriculum in age-appropriate inclusive settings, in preparation for adult life.

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## *Employment*

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) can be employed in the community alongside people without disabilities and earn competitive wages. They should be supported to make informed choices about their work and careers and have the resources to seek, obtain, and be successful in community employment.

## *Family Support*

Family support services and other means of supporting families should be available to all families to strengthen families' capacities to support family members with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) in achieving equal opportunity, independent living, full participation, and economic self-sufficiency.

## *Health*

All people, including people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD), should have timely access to high quality, comprehensive, accessible, affordable, appropriate health care that meets their individual needs, maximizes health, well-being and function, and increases independence and community participation.

The health care system must be aligned to principles of nondiscrimination, comprehensiveness, continuity, appropriateness, and equity. Both comprehensive public and private health insurance must provide for necessary health care without regard to the nature or severity of disability, pre-existing conditions, or other health status.

## *Housing*

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD), like all Americans, have a right to live in their own homes, in the community. Children and youth belong with families. Adults should control where and with whom they live, including having opportunities to rent or buy their own homes, and must have the freedom to choose their daily routines and activities.

## *Individual Supports*

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) must have access to individual supports, such as assistive technology and personal assistance, to support their participation in daily life.

## *Opportunities for Financial Asset Building*

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) must have the same opportunities to advance their economic and personal freedom by earning and saving money to enhance their physical, social, emotional, and financial well-being and the right to exercise choice in investment and spending decisions as their peers who do not have disabilities.

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# *Parents with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities*

The presence of an intellectual and/or developmental disability does not in itself preclude effective parenting; therefore, the rights of parenthood must not be denied individuals solely on the basis of intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Parents with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities should have access to support as needed to perform parental roles just as they are supported in other valued social roles and activities.

## *Sexuality*

People with intellectual disabilities and/or developmental disabilities, like all people, have inherent sexual rights. These rights and needs must be affirmed, defended, and respected.

## *Spirituality*

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have the right to choose their own expressions of spirituality, to practice those beliefs and expressions and to participate in the faith community of their choice or other spiritual activities. They also have a right to choose not to participate in religious or spiritual activity.

## *Transportation*

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must have access to both public and private transportation to lead full, independent lives.

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<sup>1</sup> “People with intellectual disability (ID)” refers to those with “significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18”, as defined by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) in its manual, *Intellectual Disability: Definition, Classification, and Systems of Supports* (Schalock et al., 2010), and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5)*, published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013). “People with developmental disabilities (DD)” refers to those with “a severe, chronic disability of an individual that- (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments; (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22; (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely; (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: (I) Self-care, (II) Receptive and expressive language, (III) Learning, (IV) Mobility, (V) Self-direction, (VI) Capacity for independent living, (VII) Economic self-sufficiency; and (v) reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated,” as defined by the *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act 2000*. In everyday language people with ID and/or DD are frequently referred to as people with cognitive, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

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