



Florida
Developmental
Disabilities
Council, Inc.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2018

1 PAY FAIR FOR CARE

During both the 2016 and 2017 legislative sessions, the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and its stakeholders worked on increasing iBudget waiver provider compensation. Although some progress was made with compliance of the Department of Labor rule and a small increase for several major services, systems change efforts targeted to increase direct care provider service rates and reimbursement is critical since this remains an essential and underfunded service.

Florida families and providers must be able to recruit and retain dedicated people to work with the direct care needs of persons with developmental disabilities. Higher wages for direct care staff are needed to resolve a shortage of direct care workers that has become a crisis and must be resolved.

2 STRENGTHENING THE IBUDGET DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES WAIVER

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities continues to address the needs of persons with developmental disabilities who have come off of the waitlist over the past two years, re-structure cost plans for existing waiver recipients, and incorporate the cost of waiver growth for the individuals on the waiver. With healthcare system changes being discussed at a federal level, preservation of critical services through the iBudget waiver is important.

It is essential to include funding to meet the federal Department of Labor wage requirements in the regular base budget of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and fund the growth of the iBudget program so that the Florida legislature can continue their commitment to transition individuals off the iBudget waitlist.

3 GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF RESTRAINT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Research confirms that physical restraint and seclusion are not therapeutic, nor are these practices an effective means to calm or teach children. Restraint and seclusion can re-traumatize children who have had prior abuse in their lives. These practices seem to decrease a child's ability to learn and therefore, restraint and seclusion should not be included in a child's Individual Educational Plans.

Last year there was great legislative interest to improve statutory guidelines for the prevention and reduction of restraint and the prohibition of seclusion in the public school system. Statutes have not been improved since gains were made in reporting and data collection requirements in 2011.

Research indicates that best practices include a state policy where physical restraint in the school system shall be only used as a last resort when there is a demonstrable and imminent physical danger to the student or others and the use of seclusion, mechanical restraints and prone restraint is banned entirely.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE

Barriers to local and specialized transportation services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities was at the forefront for the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and other advocates during the 2017 legislative session. Transportation Issues included affordability, safety, inability to cross county lines and long travel times. Our advocacy resulted in a legislated Transportation Task Force, of which the Council is a member, to address recommended solutions by December 2017.

Stakeholders will urge the Florida Legislature to provide resources and explore alternative approaches for transportation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that are recommended by the Transportation Task Force in December 2017.

5 WORKING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM

Forty -seven states have a government program that improves the ability for an individual with a developmental disability to work, keep vital health coverage and lower their dependence on government assistance.

The legislature needs to support new legislation that proposes a program that will allow individuals with disabilities to make more than \$25,000 a year without losing costly services and therapies that allow these individuals to work and contribute to the workforce.

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