



Real Life Choices for Transitioning Students

The Arc of Monmouth is a Real Life Choices Provider agency. For more information on the flexible services we can provide or other service system questions, please contact: The Arc of Monmouth Social Services Department by calling 732-493-1919.

Who is Eligible?

Students must be determined eligible for services with DDD. Students are encouraged to apply for DVRS services at least one year prior to graduation. DDD may require DVRS funding be exhausted prior to receiving RLC funds.

DDD is currently notifying eligible students' families of Real Life Choices at least two years prior to the student's graduation date, based on the student's 21st birthday. Families are invited to attend workshops entitled "Pathways to Adult Life", which are offered throughout the state. If you have not received notification, contact your DDD case manager.

What is the process?

- o The student's family member should contact the DDD case manager and express an interest in RLC funding no later than September of the school year in which graduation will occur.
- o The student should apply for DVRS services no later than one year prior to graduation. If the student is determined by DVRS as ineligible for services then:
 - o The student is assessed for needs by DDD
 - o A plan of care is written
 - o A budget is established
 - o A Support Coordinator is assigned
 - o Services are determined
 - o Service providers are interviewed
 - o Service providers are contracted
 - o A Fiscal Intermediary pays for services

What is the assessment process?

To determine the needs of individuals DDD contracted with the Developmental Disabilities Planning Institute, New Jersey Institute of Technology, to develop a tool to assess the individual's strengths and weaknesses and determine their level of need. The assessment focuses on cognitive abilities, communication, self-care and mobility.

The assessment should be conducted no later than November of the school year in which the student will graduate (e.g., students graduating in June 2008 should be assessed by November 2007). If you are not contacted, call your DDD case manager.

Results of the assessment determine the level of need. There are four levels under Real Life Choices.

Level I	Lowest Support Time Needed	A majority of people can do all activities of daily living, but may need help with public transportation
Level II	Low Support Time Needed	A majority of people can eat, drink, toilet, care for clothing, make bed, clean room, use microwave, prepare foods, and wash dishes. Not able to shop, count change, or do laundry.

Level III	Medium Support Time Needed	A majority of people can eat, drink, toilet, and dress. Not able to care for own clothing, use money, or count change. Caregivers spend a lot of time supporting consumers.
Level IV	High Support Time Needed	Many people may not be able to do anything for themselves, but a majority can eat and drink. Unable to toilet or dress themselves. Caregivers spend most time providing support.

How is a plan created?

The tool used to create the student's plan is a Person-Centered Thinking model known as an Essential Lifestyle Plan (ELP). The Boggs Center and Neighbours Inc. offer workshops throughout the year to assist individuals and their families in the plan development. Workshop dates and sample plans are available at the Boggs Center Website: http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/training/essential_lifestyle.htm. The website for Neighbours Inc. is www.neighbours-inc.com

The plan is written, you've received your budget....Now what?

Individuals and families will be provided a Support Coordinator whose function is to assist the individual and family through the RLC process. The Support Coordinator is the primary point of contact.

Family mentors (families that have been through the process) will also be made available.

Families can begin the process of purchasing services by interviewing DDD approved providers. A database has been established by The Family Support Center of New Jersey. The database can be accessed at www.fscnj.org

The Support Coordinators and mentors, along with the individual and family, are the team who are responsible for the development and implementation of the Essential Lifestyle Plan.

How is the budget handled?

DDD does not provide funds directly to individuals to pay for services.

Easter Seals of New Jersey has been identified as the fiscal intermediary and will pay for the services and supports as identified in the Essential Lifestyle Plan.

More questions?

Contact your DDD case manager.

Information for this fact sheet was obtained from multiple sources including the DDD and Family Support Center websites. This information, although believed to be accurate, is subject to change without notice Revised: June 19, 2008