



Division Update for Individuals, Families and Providers

May 28, 2026

Agenda

- Next DDD Update Webinar
- Launch of Direct Care Professional Advisory Council
- Water Safety Awareness for Adults with IDD
- National Core Indicators (NCI) Surveys
- Transition to Adult Life & Employment Webinars
- Spring Family Networking Sessions
- DDD Clinical Resource Team Trainings/Webinars
- The Arc of NJ Health Care Advocacy Program Webinar Series
- In-Person Workshop: Using Conversations & Tools to Build a Person-Centered Life
- 2026-2027 New Jersey Resources Directory Released
- Resources

Next DDD Update Webinar

- Reminder – The next DDD Update Webinar is scheduled for Thursday June 25, 2026, at 10:30am.
 - [Register for June Webinar.](#)
- The complete 2026 schedule of DDD Update Webinars, including registration links, is available on the Division's [Public Update Meetings](#) webpage.

Launch of Direct Care Professional Advisory Council

Overview

- Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha recently announced the launch of the Direct Care Professional Advisory Council.
 - Stems from [Direct Care Workforce Strategic Plan](#)
 - Held first meeting on May 13, 2026 and will convene over the next year to provide feedback on state programs and policies

Purpose

- Support, grow, and stabilize the direct care workforce
- Strengthen job quality and stability
- Ensure workers' voices inform policy decisions

Launch of Direct Care Professional Advisory Council

Direct Care Workers

- Direct support professionals
 - Personal care aides
 - Self-directed employees
 - Home health aides
 - Certified nursing assistants
 - Youth development specialists
 - Certified peer recovery specialists
- [Read the Human Services' May 20 press release \(Lea el comunicado de prensa de Servicios Humanos del 20 de mayo\)](#).

Water Safety Awareness for Adults with IDD

- May is [National Water Safety Month](#), an annual campaign to educate the public about water safety and drowning prevention, particularly as people prepare for summer recreational activities.
- While water activities can provide enjoyment, exercise, and social opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are at much greater risk for water-related injury and drowning.

Water Safety Awareness for Adults with IDD

- The DDD Clinical Resource Team has developed a new Prevention Bulletin, Swimming and Water Safety Awareness


NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Developmental Disabilities

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Division of Developmental Disabilities

HUMAN SERVICES

DDD PREVENTION BULLETIN | SWIMMING & WATER SAFETY AWARENESS

Water activities can provide enjoyment, exercise, and social opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Adults with IDD face a significantly elevated risk around water compared to the general population. Drowning is fast, silent, and preventable. Safe participation requires active supervision, preparation, and consistent safety practices.



Disability-related risk factors:

- Motor and balance challenges
- Low muscle tone/weakness
- Seizure disorders
- Communication barriers/ Limited safety awareness/ Sensory Differences
- Wandering/Walkaway/Elopement

Common misconceptions:

- Drowning is loud, slow, obvious and only happens in deep water
- Strong swimming skills and pool fences prevent drowning
- Leaving someone alone for a few minutes is safe

Practical Steps to Keep Adults with IDD Safe around Water

Environmental Safety

- Use caution around lakes, rivers, beaches, and water parks due to currents, waves, and uneven surfaces.
- Swim only where a lifeguard is present.
- Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets for all water activities.
- Use bright-colored swimwear for increased visibility.
- Consider GPS devices for individuals at risk of wandering.
- Call 911 first and check the water areas first if someone is missing.
- Avoid swimming during hazardous weather, strong waves and rip currents.
- Empty inflatable pools immediately after use.
- Conduct routine inspections of pools, docks, life jackets, alarms, gates, and other water safety equipment year-round.

5/26

DDD PREVENTION BULLETIN | SWIMMING & WATER SAFETY AWARENESS

Practical Steps to Keep Adults with IDD Safe around Water (cont.)

Water Safety Preparation

- Ensure staff know CPR and emergency procedures.
- Ensure proper staffing ratios for community outings.
- Review missing-person and emergency response plans regularly.
- Clearly assign supervision responsibilities during outings.
- Practice water emergency drills and rescue steps.
- Post/Reinforce water safety rules using visual supports, social stories, and repetition.
- Secure pools with locked gates and fencing.
- Never rely on pool covers or inflatable items for safety.
- Encourage swimmers to practice "Stop and Wait" rules.

Supervision/Individualized Supports:

- Never leave individuals unattended near water.
- Collaborate with local swim facilities (YMCA's, JCCs, Special Olympics, recreation departments, swim schools, etc.) to promote adaptive swim lessons for individuals as appropriate.
- Provide sensory supports, shaded areas, hydration, and rest breaks as needed.
- Designate a "Water Watcher" responsible for active supervision without distractions (i.e., side conversations, phones).
- Provide touch/arm's length supervision for individuals with seizure disorders and challenges with judgement.
- Ensure 1:1 support for individuals with mobility issues.
- Ensure individuals are wearing SPF 30 or higher sunscreen and SPF-protected clothing and hats.


Emergency Preparedness:

Always know:

- Who will call 911.
- Who will perform rescue efforts.
- The exact location/address of the water site.
- Follow first aid, CPR and aquatic emergency response training.
- Where rescue equipment and emergency contacts are located.
- Incident report notifications can be made to DDD 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by dialing **1-800-832-9173**.

Water Safety Saves Lives

With proactive supervision, preparation, and individualized supports, adults with IDD can safely enjoy swimming and water activities while reducing preventable risks.



If you have any questions regarding this material or would like to schedule a training, please contact the DDD Resource Team at ddd.resource@dhhs.nj.gov

Water Safety Awareness for Adults with IDD

- On Thursday, May 28 at 12pm, DDD is pleased to host a water safety webinar, presented by Children's Specialized Hospital (part of the RWJBarnabas Health Network).
 - Webinar is open to ALL and may be especially beneficial for families, provider agency management and direct support staff, and self-directed employees.
 - [Register for May 28 Webinar: Water Safety For Adults with IDD](#)



2025-26 NCI-IDD Surveys

- DDD participates in [National Core Indicators® - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(NCI®-IDD\)](#), a national effort to measure and improve the performance of public developmental disabilities agencies through the use of surveys.
 - In-Person Survey
 - Adult Family Survey
 - Family/Guardian Survey
 - State of the Workforce Survey
- Send questions to DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov
- **Deadline to complete is June 30, 2026.**

DDD Office of Transition to Adult Life & Employment

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES



**Division of
Developmental
Disabilities**

**Office of Transition to
Adult Life & Employment**

DDD Welcome Sessions

- July 2, 12 pm to 1 pm: [Register for July 2 Lunchtime Welcome Session](#)
- July 23, 6 pm to 7:30 pm: [Register for July 23 Evening Welcome Session with Topic Breakouts](#)

Transition Thursdays Webinar Series

- June 11, 12 pm to 1 pm: [An Overview of the NJ Transition Toolkit](#)
- June 18, 12 pm to 1 pm: [Advocacy: Speak for Yourself](#)

Learn more at [Transition to Adult Life](#)

DDD Office of Education on Self-Directed Services (OESDS)



Family Networking Sessions – Spring 2026

Family networking sessions are for family members with a loved one who is self-directing their services or interested in self-direction.

In-Person Family Networking Sessions

- June 2, 1 pm to 3 pm, Essex County: [Register for June 2 Session](#)
- June 8, 1 pm to 3 pm, Monmouth County: [Register for June 8 Session](#)
- June 17, 1 pm to 3 pm, Cape May & Atlantic Counties: [Register for June 17 Session](#)

[Family Networking Sessions: Spring 2026](#) (PDF calendar)

DDD Clinical Resource Team: June 2026 Training Schedule

Behavior Analysis

- June 15, 10 am to 11 am: [Introduction to Pica](#)
- June 18, 10 am to 11 am: [Prevention of Food Grabbing](#)

Choking Prevention

- June 16, 10 am to 11 am: [Managing Dysphasia in the Community](#)
- June 16, 2 pm to 2:45 pm: [Diet Textures](#)
- June 23, 2 pm to 2:30 pm: [Communicating With Individuals with IDD](#)
- June 30, 10 am to 10:45 am: [Hearing, Hearing Aids, and Care](#)

Nursing Support

- June 11, 2 pm to 3 pm: [Safeguarding Health in IDD, Part 1](#)
- June 22, 2 pm to 2:30 pm: [Updated! Seasonal Health Concerns: Hot Weather](#)



Questions? Email:
DDD.ResourceTeam@dhs.nj.gov

The Arc of NJ Health Care Advocacy Program Webinar Series

- The Arc of New Jersey's Health Care Advocacy program, funded by DDD, offers webinars throughout the year, open to ALL. Coming in June 2026:
 - **June 2 at 1 pm:** [Lifelong Gynecology Needs and Hormonal Interactions with Other Common Medical Conditions for Women with IDD](#)
 - **June 18 at 1 pm:** [Sexuality and IDD](#)
- For both new and archived health-related webinars, visit the [Health Care Advocacy Annual Webinar Series](#) webpage.



Using Conversations & Tools to Build a Person-Centered Life

AN IN-PERSON WORKSHOP

This workshop is for self-advocates, families/caregivers, support coordinators, and provider agencies who support individuals moving **out of** a family home, a nursing facility or other congregate setting and **into a home or apartment in the community.**

You'll walk away with practical tools and skills to support choice, community inclusion, and person-centered supports. We'll also share helpful resources to build a life of choice in the community.



Dates (Choose just one!)

Wednesday, June 10 | 8:30am - 3:45pm

Professional Conference Center at ESQ
1690 Shelton Road Piscataway (Middlesex County)

Tuesday, June 16 | 8:30am - 3:45pm

Burlington County Emergency Services Training Center
53 Academy Drive • Westampton (Burlington County)

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

OR
SCAN
HERE!



Click here to learn about Carmela!

In-Person Workshop: Using Conversations & Tools to Build a Person-Centered Life

- Co-sponsored by DDD and the Rutgers Community Living Education Project (CLEP), *Using Conversations & Tools to Build a Person-Centered Life* is an in-person workshop being offered in Piscataway on June 10 and 16, 2026, 8:30 am to 3:45 pm.
- Self-advocates, families/caregivers, support coordinators, and providers who support people moving out of a family home, or a nursing facility or other congregate setting, into the community will gain practical tools and skills to support choice and community inclusion.
- [Register for June 10 or June 16 In-Person Workshop](#)



NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

New Jersey Resources

2026-2027



2026-2027 NJ Resources Directory Released

- The updated NJ Human Services' [New Jersey Resources](#) ([Recursos de New Jersey](#)) directory was released in March 2026 by the Division of Disability Services.
- Comprehensive guide to helpful programs and services the Department of Human Services offers to residents, caregivers, and advocates, and resources and programs offered by DHS partners.

Resources

Community Resources

- [Disability Rights New Jersey](#)
800-922-7233 (toll-free in New Jersey only)
- [Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and their Families](#)
609-984-7764
- [New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities](#)
800-792-8858
- [The Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development](#)
732-235-9300

DDD Resources

- For issues, call the DDD [Community Services Office](#) for your county or 800-832-9173.
- For routine questions:
DDD.FeeForService@dhs.nj.gov
- To report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation:
Call 800-832-9173, then press 1