

MYTHS and FACTS about STUDENTS and the DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

DDD MYTHS

- Any special education student will be eligible for DDD services.
- Students cannot register with DDD until they reach a certain age.
- The school will help my child become eligible for DDD services.
- The school district will automatically provide all needed educational records to DDD for the application.
- Families only need to provide their child's current IEP with their DDD applications.
- Students who are made eligible by DDD are entitled to receive the services they believe they need.
- A student who is made eligible for DDD will automatically begin receiving services.
- My child will be assigned a DDD case manager who we can call with questions about services.
- Parents of children with developmental disabilities can expect DDD to provide all the services they need.
- All special education students need a guardian when they turn 18.
- There is no alternative to guardianship.
- Guardianship is needed to release medical information about individuals 18 and older.
- Parents can still make decisions for their child after age 18.

DDD FACTS

- Special education students are not automatically eligible for DDD. DDD determines eligibility by reviewing specific criteria that include an evaluation of the student's ability to function in certain life areas. (See N.J.S.A.30:6D-25(b) and N.J.A.C. 10:46.)
- Students do not "register" with DDD as they do for school. However, they can apply to DDD for eligibility at any age.
- Families are responsible for requesting and completing the application for DDD eligibility and submitting it to DDD. The Child Study Team can help families prepare their application and should be sure students apply before they graduate. DDD's Community Service Office can also help families complete the application.
- No. School districts only release records with the consent of a parent or guardian, or the student if he or she is 18 or older.
- In addition to a student's current IEP, DDD also requires supporting clinical documents such as psychological or neurological reports, as well as historical information about the developmental disability.
- There is no automatic entitlement to DDD-funded services. DDD's ability to provide a service to any individual is contingent upon 1) eligibility 2) assessed need and 3) availability of resources.
- A student may be able to receive some DDD-funded services, based on availability of resources and a determination of need.
- Everyone eligible for DDD-funded services is assigned a contact they can call with any questions. That contact will either be a case manager at DDD or nationally certified Information and Referral specialists at the Division of Disability Services.(DDS)
- Families should only look to DDD when the services they need are not available from other providers such as the school district, local and county government or private agencies. DDD-funded services are designed to assist individuals with the most intensive needs related to their developmental disability.
- Many special education students do not require a guardian. Guardianship should be viewed as a course of last resort.
- In New Jersey, an individual may appoint a Power of Attorney to make certain decisions on his or her behalf. See <http://www.ganji.org> (Guardianship Association of New Jersey).
- Individuals without guardians can use a HIPPA Release Form to authorize the release of medical information to others.
- At age 18, all individuals become adults and the role of parents as sole decision-maker changes.

DDD MYTHS

- Only DDD can process guardianship for someone with a developmental disability
- Once a child turns 18, parents can no longer participate in IEP meetings unless they have guardianship.
- Services my child receives in school, such as speech therapy, will continue to be funded by DDD after he or she graduates.
- DDD automatically provides day services for children with developmental disabilities as soon as they graduate
- Young people should first go to DDD for day services.
- A young person must be rejected by DVRS to receive DDD-funded services.
- Students must put their names on a DDD day services waiting list before they leave school.
- All day programs are similar, widely available and easily accessible statewide.
- Transportation to day services will be provided, just like the school busses that come to pick my child up for school.
- My DDD case manager will attend my child's IEP meeting and help us with any questions we may have.

DDD FACTS

- The DHS Bureau of Guardianship Services is one option for pursuing guardianship. Families also can retain a private attorney or pursue guardianship “pro se,” which means without an attorney. See <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/services/guardianship/>
- Parents continue to participate in IEP meetings without being the legal guardian as long as their son or daughter does not object.
- Speech therapy and other services that students receive through their educational entitlement only continue after they leave school if covered by their health insurance, including Medicaid, or by private funding.
- Day services are provided by private agencies through contracts with DDD. Young people cannot participate in these services until their educational entitlement ends. DDD strongly encourages students to stay in their educational entitlement until age 21.
- DDD encourages students to first consider their employment options and suggests that families explore services offered by the Division of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) and *NJ Workability*, which is administered by the Division of Disability Services.
- Individuals may receive services from both DDD and DVRS at the same time if made eligible by DVRS. DDD can augment whatever services DVRS is able to provide up to about 35 hours per week.
- Students may contact DDD to begin talking about transition and day service options as early as age 14. Students should certainly be in touch with DDD by the time they are two years away from completing their educational entitlement.
- Traditional day programs are designed to pick up the structure of a typical school day by providing 25 to 35 hours of activity, five days a week. However, there are differences among day programs, and their availability varies across the state. Families should begin exploring their options, including the possibility of self-directing their own day services, before their child completes his or her educational entitlement.
- Transportation can be difficult. Traditional day programs provide transportation within a specific geographic area.
- DDD case managers can, but are not always able to, attend IEP meetings. To assist families looking for information, DDD funds a series of workshops that are provided by the Family Support Center of New Jersey. These workshops are “*Life Line for the Journey*,” (ages birth to 14), “*Pathways to Adult Life*,” (ages 14 to 19) and “*Life After 21*” (ages 19-21). For more information, see www.fscnj.org.