

MORRIS-UNION JOINTURE COMMISSION

Parent Series – Recap of Meeting

Date & Time: September 27, 2021
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Presenter(s): MUJC Transition Coordinators

TOPIC PRESENTED:

MUJC Transition Coordinators provided parents an opportunity to learn about some of the many online resources available to families of individuals with special needs. These resources provide useful and critical information on the transition from school to adult life. Four (4) websites that were highlighted were: The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD); The ARC of New Jersey Family Institute, Autism New Jersey, and Autism Speaks.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/> The Division of Developmental Disabilities assures the opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities to receive quality services and supports, participate meaningfully in their communities and exercise their right to make choices. Available services include assistive technology, behavioral supports, day programming, a variety of employment options, various therapies, transportation, and the option to self-direct both employees and support services, including classes in the community. Individuals access these services through one of two Medicaid waiver programs. The Community Care Program (CCP) was originally approved by CMS in 1985 to provide a community-based alternative to institutional care. Over 11,000 individuals now use the CCP to live in licensed group homes or received comprehensive in-home supports. In 2016, the Supports Program (SP) launched in order to expand access to critical in-home and family supports to about another 11,000 individuals. MUJC transition coordinators highlighted the fact that DDD re-structured their website to be more user-friendly/accessible. In addition, DDD created a link to Register Ready NJ, a service that allows New Jersey residents with disabilities or access and functional needs and their families, friends, caregivers and associates an opportunity to provide information to emergency response agencies so emergency responders can better plan to serve them in a disaster or other emergency.

The ARC of New Jersey Family Institute

<https://www.thearcfamilyinstitute.org> The Family Institute was developed as a resource for families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) starting in January of 2014. The goal of the Family Institute is to help families find the tools and resources they need to navigate the system of care. They are dedicated to providing timely information and bridging the gap between service changes and families. They accomplish this by providing advocacy and education on services, transition and system issues, individual issues and so much more. MUJC transition coordinators highlighted a section under the “Resources” tab of the main page called Go Bags. Go Bags are a simple collection of necessary resources about a specific topic. Topics include guardianship, ABLE Accounts, Special Needs Trusts, Step by Step Process for Applying to D.D.D., and more.

Autism New Jersey

<https://www.autismnj.org> Autism New Jersey is a nonprofit agency committed to ensuring safe and fulfilling lives for individuals with autism, their families, and the professionals who support them. Through awareness, credible information, education, and public policy initiatives, Autism New Jersey leads the way to lifelong individualized services provided with skill and compassion. We recognize the autism community’s many contributions to society and work to enhance their resilience, abilities, and quality of life. MUJC transition coordinators brought attention to the organization’s 39th Annual Conference, held via a virtual platform on October 21st and 22nd, 2021. This conference provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to learn, share, and network with various agencies, professionals, and other parents.

Autism Speaks

<https://www.autismspeaks.org> Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. This is done through advocacy and support; increasing understanding and acceptance of people with autism; and advancing research into causes and better interventions for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions. MUJC transition coordinators highlighted various links, information, and resources on this website. They also brought attention to Autism Speaks' Next10 Vision. Autism Speaks will relentlessly pursue strategies that make significant progress toward the following outcomes over the next 10 years:

- A better understanding of the causes and typology of ASD
- Children with an autism spectrum disorder being diagnosed before the age of 2
- Children having access to appropriate intervention, services and resources immediately following diagnosis
- The availability of better treatments both for underlying pathology as well as co-existing conditions that decrease quality of life for those with autism
- People with ASD and their families have transition plans that result in more independent adult life that is meaningful to the individual
- Individuals with ASD will have effective interventions, services and supports throughout their lifetime