



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

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What a perfect month to Advocate! Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is all about making everyone aware of the importance of including people with developmental disabilities in all areas of community life, as well as educating about the barriers people with disabilities still sometimes face in connecting to the communities in which they live.

What is a Developmental Disability (DD)?

A DD is a group of conditions that impair physical, learning, language or behavior areas. They begin during the 'developmental' period and usually last throughout a person's lifetime. Most DDs develop before a baby is born but some can happen after birth because of injury, infection, or other factors. About one in six children in the US have one or more developmental disabilities or other developmental delays. The most common developmental disabilities are ADHD, intellectual disability (Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, fragile X syndrome, and other genetic conductions), autism spectrum disorder, and Cerebral palsy.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) created the Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program in 1986. The purpose is to reduce the delays in development and improve outcomes for children before they enter school. In Iowa, if a child is under three years, Early ACCESS can provide early intervention services. Early intervention is important because a child's brain will grow the most during the first 5 years of life, reaching 90% of its final size. When young children do not achieve the milestones linked to healthy development, they are at risk to do poorly in the early school years, putting them at increased risk for school failure, juvenile delinquency, adult mental health concerns, and other problems. High quality early intervention services can change a child's developmental trajectory and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

In 1987 President Ronald Reagan proclaimed March "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month." The deinstitutionalization movement of the seventies and early eighties had laid the foundation for significant social change, and the presidential proclamation called upon Americans to provide the "encouragement and opportunities" necessary for people with developmental disabilities to reach their potential.



While we have made great progress since 1987, we still have room to grow to eliminate the barriers people with DD face in education, employment, and full inclusion in the community. We invite you to join our advocacy work and help us continue to create awareness and community change all year long. If interested, please email Theresa at tlewis@arceci.org on more information for how to get involved!

Achieve with us.®