

Arc/Muskegon
Strategic Plan
for
2006-2011

Goal One: Advocate Effectively

Arc/Muskegon will advocate effectively to advance and protect the interests of people with cognitive and developmental disabilities, and their families.

Objectives

A. Pertaining to people with cognitive and developmental disabilities:

- Increase awareness of services available to them and their families and how these services can be accessed,
- Identify gaps in existing services and work to eliminate those gaps,
- Increase Arc/Muskegon membership and participation,
- Discover their expectations, issues, and needs across all generations,
- Encourage and promote their active full participation and contribution to the life of their community,
- Assist them and their families, to develop typical life enriching relationships.

B. Pertaining to educators:

- Encourage better training, and education of general education teachers, and support staff in the field of cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Advocate for the necessity of support staff in the classroom,
- Increase awareness of assistance at IEP (Independent Education Plan) meetings and build collaboration between members of the education staff (administrators, teachers, all support staff, and bus drivers), the student, parents, and local agencies,
- Increase awareness of Arc/Muskegon and other services in the community for students with cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Promote inclusion and maximum potential for all students.

C. Pertaining to professionals:

- Use Arc/Muskegon as a resource pool for: collaboration, networking, building community awareness, consultation, and committee and board representation,
- Develop a formal network of professionals to be a resource to Arc/Muskegon for purposes of consultation and active participation regarding advocacy issues,
- Enhance collaborative relationships with related advocacy organizations.

D. Pertaining to public officials:

- Provide written and oral communication with local and state policy makers.

E. Pertaining to members of the community:

- Use the media to increase awareness of needs and quality of services for people with cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Develop and encourage volunteerism in Arc/Muskegon and with the people we serve,
- Challenge inaccurate and demeaning representation of people with cognitive and developmental disabilities within the print and electronic media,
- Identify and advocate to remove barriers to full participation in community activities.

Goal Two: Monitor Assertively

Arc/Muskegon will assertively monitor local private and public entities and hold them accountable for delivery of appropriate and needed service to individuals with cognitive and developmental disabilities and their families.

Objectives

A. Pertaining to community life:

- Increase awareness of the concept that people with cognitive and developmental disabilities can live, learn, work, play, and worship independently in communities of their choosing,
- Inform the community of the variety of ways to support independent living for people with cognitive and

- developmental disabilities,
- Promote opportunities for people with cognitive and developmental disabilities so they may live where, with whom, and in the manner they choose,
- Promote access to quality health care for people with cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Advocate for accessible and realistic public transportation options in our communities.

B. Pertaining to the job market:

- Promote meaningful job training for people with cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Challenge programs to move participants from transitional services into community employment,
- Identify and advocate to remove the barriers to employment, retirement, and volunteer activities,
- Work to raise the income level of people with cognitive and developmental disabilities.

C. Pertaining to residential settings:

- Evaluate the quality of life of people living in publicly funded residential settings,
- Train volunteers to effectively monitor publicly funded residential settings,
- Expand voluntary access to residential setting environments for monitoring purposes,
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training of group home staff to assure that the needs of the residents are met.

Goal Three: Prevention

Arc/Muskegon will provide education to families, communities,

and professionals as to known preventable causes of cognitive and developmental disabilities.

Objectives

- Inform and educate the Arc/Muskegon membership and the community of research and prevention efforts,
- Promote prevention efforts that are carried out in a manner which values the lives of people with cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Encourage the debate of social and ethical implications of research affecting people with cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Disseminate information on preventable causes of cognitive and developmental disabilities (accidents, lead poisoning, alcohol and drug misuse, and other environmental factors).

Goal Four: Program Services

Arc/Muskegon will deliver direct program service, to individuals with cognitive and developmental disabilities and their families, as needed.

Program Components

ADVOCACY SERVICES

(The following program is made possible through funding by United Way of the Lakeshore, Arc/Muskegon membership, events, general contributions, and grants.)

Information & Referral

- Answer questions about local programs and options,
- Distribute written materials (such as laws, articles, and information packages),
- Collaborate with other parents/parent organizations,
- Refer to professionals and agencies and connect with other parents/parent groups,
- Provide workshops (such as guardianship, general advocacy, self empowerment, and education laws).

Coaching & Consultation

- Interpret laws and policies,
- Offer strategies regarding advocacy issues.

Direct Representation

- Gather and prepare the necessary and pertinent information to appropriately represent people with cognitive and developmental disabilities,
- Provide input advocating for the individual's best interest,
- Attend meetings with people with cognitive and developmental disabilities to provide support.

System Advocacy

- Hold systems accountable for services mandated by polices and laws,
- Staff and Arc/Muskegon membership participate on relevant

local, state, and national boards and committees.

DIGNIFIED LIFESTYLES

(The following program is made possible through funding by Arc Michigan.)

- Monitoring the quality of life of people with cognitive and developmental disabilities in their home and work environment,
- Report the above findings to the Michigan Department of Community Mental Health, Arc Michigan, local service providers, consumers, and Muskegon County Mental Health.

COMMUNITY LIVING SUPPORTS

(The following program is made possible through funding by Community Mental Health of Muskegon County (Medicaid) or private pay.)

- Provide one-on-one training skills to adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities to maintain or increase independent living.

CONSUMER VOICE

(The following program is made possible through funding by Community Mental Health of Muskegon County.)

- Recruit, train, and support the active and meaningful participation of people with cognitive and developmental disabilities and/or their family members to serve on Community Mental Health Committees and Workgroups.

NEW INITIATIVES

(The following requested programs are currently seeking funding.)

- Respite care,
- Healthy interpersonal relationships,
- Life long parenting,
- Family dynamics,
- Aging population,
- Self advocacy.