

New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

***Parent Counseling Presentation
Syosset School District***

***Presented by:
Lauren O'Rourke
District Social Worker
January 23rd, 2018***

Overview

Office for
People With
Developmental
Disabilities



- OPWDD Vision Statement
- Determination of Eligibility
- Application Process
- Services and Associated Agencies
- Resources and Questions

OPWDD

Vision Statement: “People with developmental disabilities enjoy meaningful relationships with friends, family and others in their lives, experience personal health and growth and live in the home of their choice and fully participate in their communities”.

- OPWDD provides access to supports and services for people with developmental disabilities and their families.
 - ❑ Medicaid funded long-term care services such as clinical services, residential supports and services, and are primarily provided in community settings across the state.
 - ❑ New York State funded family support services; which are designed to assist families in providing care for loved ones who live full-time in their family home, employment supports, and vocational training.

What is required to be eligible for OPWDD services?

- The New York State Mental Hygiene Law requires the presence of a developmental disability that is described by the qualifying conditions:
 - “Developmental Disability” means a disability of a person who is:
 - ❑ attributable to *autism*, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, neurological impairment, familial dysautonomia; or attributable to dyslexia resulting from a disability
 - ❑ or constitutes a substantial handicap to the individuals ability to function normally in society.
 - The disability has occurred before the person reached age twenty-two
 - The disability can be expected to continue throughout their life
 - The disability causes a substantial handicap to a person’s ability to function normally in society

Developmental Disabilities

- ***What is Mental Retardation?***

- People with mental retardation show delays in learning, a slower pace of learning, and difficulty in applying learning. Over 250,000 people in New York are thought to have mental retardation.

- ***What is Cerebral Palsy?***

- Cerebral palsy is a group of conditions that result in limited or abnormal functioning in the parts of the brain that control movement. Cerebral palsy usually is caused by brain injury before or during birth. However, brain damage or injury at any time in life can have the same effect.

- ***What is Epilepsy?***

- Epilepsy applies to numerous nervous system disorders that result in abnormal electrical discharges of brain cells. This produces seizures that may cause convulsive movements, or partial or total loss of consciousness.

- ***What are Neurological Impairments?***

- Neurological impairments are a group of disabilities including disorders of the brain and central nervous system that considerably limit a person's development, understanding, memory, attention span, fine muscle control, use of language, or ability to adjust to new situations.

Developmental Disabilities

- ***What is Familial Dysautonomia?***

- Familial dysautonomia is a genetic disease present at birth, primarily causing dysfunction of the autonomic and sensory nervous systems. Dysfunction is a result of an incomplete development of the neurons (nerve fibers) of these systems.

- ***What is Autism?***

- Autism is a developmental disorder that limits learning and slows intellectual development. People with autism have great difficulty relating and responding to persons, events or objects. People who have mild autism may demonstrate some repetitive actions and a marked lack of sensitivity to other people. People who have more severe autism have difficulty listening to and communicating with others.

- **What is meant by a “Substantial Handicap to a Person’s Ability to Function Normally In Society?”**

- A “substantial handicap to a person’s ability to function normally in society” exists when the person is prohibited from:
 - Engaging in aspects of self-care or self-direction independently; and/or when the developments of self-care and self-direction skills are significantly below age level.
- Substantial Handicap is determined by using a nationally normed, comprehensive, individualized measure of adaptive behavior administered by a Qualified Practitioner.

Documentation Required to Determine Eligibility

- ☐ A psychological report with an assessment of intellectual functioning (IQ) within past 3 years (score of 60 or lower will generally qualify)
- ☐ An assessment of adaptive behavior from within past 3 years (score of 70 or lower will generally qualify, specifically if the IQ is higher than 60)
- ☐ A social history, psycho-social report, or other background report that shows that the person became disabled before age 22
- ☐ Child's current IEP
- ☐ Medical or specialty report documenting the developmental history, and symptom course over time as well as the impact on adaptive functioning for Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, TBI, or Neurological Impairment or Familial Dysautonomia
- ☐ For Autism, a specialty report such as the CARS, ADOS, or ADI-R should be submitted

Acceptable Measures of Intellectual Functioning

- Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children
- Leiter International Performance Scale
- The Stanford-Binet Scales
- Wechsler series of Intelligence Scales
- The Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities

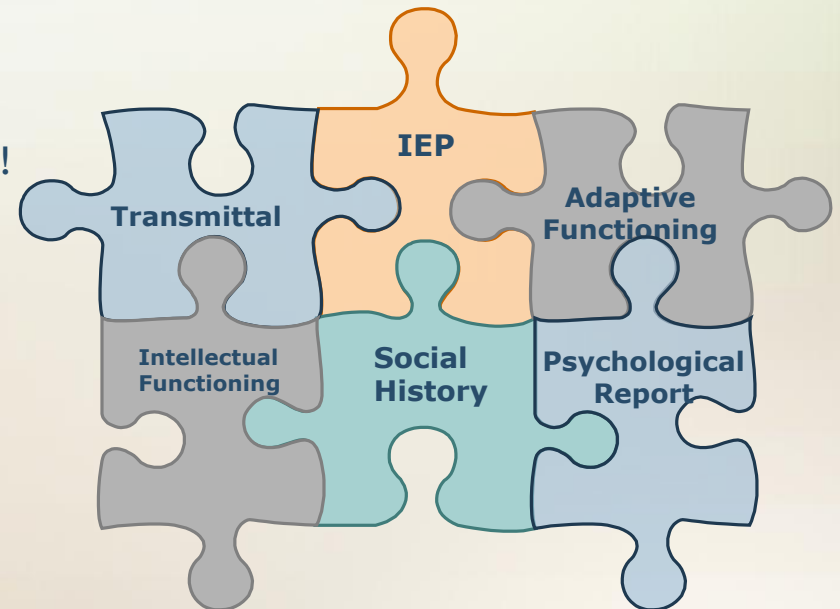


Acceptable Measures of Adaptive Behavior

- AAMR Adaptive Behavior Scale
- Adaptive Behavior Assessment System
- Comprehensive Test of Adaptive Behavior
- Scales of Independent Behavior
- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales
- Other adaptive behavior measures if they are comprehensive, structured, standardized, and have up-to-date general population norms

Application Process

1. Fill out the “Eligibility Transmittal Form”
2. It is important to include your child’s Social Security Number in Section 1. It is also important for Syosset School District to be listed as “Referring Agency” in Section 3.
3. Gather the necessary documents needed from doctors and the school
4. Make a copy of the application and the supporting documents
5. Mail the packet to the OPWDD regional office.
 - Make a note of the date that you mailed it!



Eligibility Determination Process

- **1st Step:**
 - Regional Office staff review your child's eligibility request for completeness.
 - After this review, you will receive a letter (within 10-12 weeks) informing you that:
 - (1) Your child is eligible.
 - (2) Additional documentation is required.
 - (3) Your child is determined not to be eligible.
- **2nd Step:**
 - If your child is determined to have a developmental disability, a letter will be sent informing you of your child's eligibility.
 - If the Developmental Disabilities Regional Office determines that, based upon the information provided, the child does not have DD and is not eligible, you will receive a denial letter.
- **Appeal Process**
 - If you receive a denial letter, you can:
 - (1) Meet with Regional Office staff
 - (2) Request a third step review
 - Third step reviews are done by an independent Eligibility Review Committee of licensed practitioners not involved in the 1st and 2nd steps.

What is Provisional Eligibility for Children from Birth - Seven?

- ❖ Regional Offices may grant Provisional Eligibility, based on clinical judgment, when a young child presents with developmental delay and evidence of functional limitations, but without specification of a named or unnamed condition.
- ❖ You must re-submit documentation for eligibility after age seven.



The Front Door

- Attend a *Front Door Information Session* at your earliest convenience!
 - Once your child has been found eligible, you **MUST** attend a Front Door Information Session
- Sessions are held monthly at the OPWDD office, or weekly by phone.
 - To register for a Front Door Information Session call: (631) 434-6000.
- During the Front Door, staff will administer the Developmental Disabilities Profile (DDP2) questionnaire in order to assess the applicant's strengths and identify supports needed.
 - To prepare for the assessment, consider the following: your child strengths, goals, areas your child may need assistance to complete everyday tasks, medical history, current supports, how often your child currently sees medical/behavioral professionals.



Medicaid

- Medicaid is a health insurance for individuals who are disabled and/or are low income
- Most OPWDD services are funded through Medicaid
- Who is eligible for Medicaid?
 - ❑ Children with developmental disabilities under age of 18 who live at home with their families, may be eligible for the Medicaid HCBS Waiver based on their own income and resources. Their family income and resources are not looked at when applying for the Medicaid HCBS Waiver.
 - ❑ Individuals with disabilities age 18 years or older are eligible for Medicaid if their income and resources (bank accounts, life insurance, etc.), are below a certain amount. Programs like the Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working People with Disabilities can help working adults keep more of their income and still get Medicaid.
 - ❑ If an individual has too much income or resources, he or she can spend that money on medical expenses to qualify for Medicaid. This is called a spenddown.



New York State Medicaid Waiver Services

- ❖ Waiver Services provide services and supports to children and adults with long-term needs to enable them to remain at home and in the community.
- ❖ Waiver services are designed for people who, without these services, would require the Level of Care provided in a long-term care facility.
- ❖ Waiver services allow Medicaid to pay for some services not provided through “regular” Medicaid, such as case management, respite and home adaptations.
- ❖ Although the Medicaid funding obtained only applies to the child, it can be used to defray the costs of caring for the child in the family home.



The Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS)

The goal of this program is to enable individuals with developmental disabilities to obtain the supports and services needed to reach his or her goals in life. A person's independence and inclusion in the community are the primary concerns in designing this package of supports and services.

- ***Who is eligible to receive the HCBS Waiver?***
 - To be eligible a person must have a documented developmental disability; must otherwise need Intermediate Care Facilities' (ICF) level services; be enrolled in Medicaid; and live with family, in a Family Care home, their own home, an Individual Residential Alternative (IRA) or a Community Residence.
 - Under the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers, parental income and assets are not considered when determining the child's eligibility for Medicaid. Only the child's income and assets are counted.

Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC) / Care Coordination

- A Medicaid State Plan service provided by OPWDD which assists people with developmental disabilities in gaining access to necessary services and supports.
- MSC is provided by qualified service coordinators and uses a person centered planning process in developing, implementing and maintaining an Individualized Service Plan (ISP).
- ***Core services of MSC / Care Coordinator :***
 - Assessment
 - Development, Implementation and Maintenance of Service Plans
 - Linkage to the community and referrals
- ***Who is eligible to receive a MSC / Care Coordinator?***
 - In order to receive MSC, a person must:
 - ☐ Have a documented diagnosis of a developmental disability
 - ☐ Be enrolled in Medicaid



INFORMED CHOICE!



The Medicaid Service Coordinator uses a person-centered planning approach to develop the Individualized Service Plan (ISP). They work with individuals and their families to identify the desired goals of a person, and the supports and services that person wants and needs to achieve those outcomes.

IMPLEMENTING THE ISP

The Medicaid Service Coordinator:

- Uses knowledge of the community and discovery of available resources to support the person with a developmental disability to make informed choices about how to achieve his or her valued outcomes
- Coordinates access to and the delivery of supports and services identified in the ISP
- Helps to locate and/or create natural supports and community resources
- Makes referrals and locates funded services
- Facilitates visits and interviews with family members, service providers, housing options, etc.
- Ensures essential information is made available to the person, providers and others, to the extent permitted by federal and state privacy and confidentiality rules (e.g., Mental Hygiene Law Article 33.13 and 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 164, HIPAA), and assists the individual or other authorized parties in signing consents for disclosure of information where required.

Self-Direction

- Self-direction gives you flexibility to choose the mix of supports and services that are right for you so you can *live the life you want*. With self-direction, YOU choose your services, the staff and organizations that provide them, and a schedule that works best for YOU.
- **Who can Self-Direct their services?**
 - Anyone who is eligible for OPWDD services and enrolled in the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver can choose to self-direct their services.
 - Self-direction may be right for you if you can make your own decisions (or have help to) and if you want more flexible supports and services.
- **How does Self-Direction work?**
 - You can choose if you want an agency to help you self-direct or if you'd like to manage your own budget and staff with help from a Fiscal Intermediary and Support Broker.

Family Support Services

- Family Support Services are designed to enhance a family's ability to provide in-home care to their family members with a developmental disability.
- Goals:
 - To maintain family unity
 - to prevent premature or inappropriate out-of-home placement
 - to enhance parenting skills
 - to maximize the potential of the family member with a developmental disability
- **What services are offered through Family Support Services?**
 - ❑ Family Reimbursement: Provides the possibility of purchasing services and goods that are not funded through any other sources
 - ❑ Recreation: A planned program of social, recreational and leisure activities for people with developmental disabilities that include opportunities to interact with and participate as part of a community, such as summer camps, recreation programs, parent / sibling support groups
 - ❑ Counseling, Training and Supports: Counseling, training and educational activities and supports may be available for parents, siblings and caregivers, as well as for individuals with developmental disabilities through the local DDSO and/or other locally based programs.
 - ❑ Advocacy: Information and referral services, outreach, parent networking and service assistance for individuals and their families. It is possible to make connections with diagnostic, residential, habilitative, educational, vocational, medical and recreational services, and to other programs such as Medicaid and SSI.
 - ❑ In-home and Center-based Respite
 - ❑ Non-Medicaid Service Coordination

Family Support Services

The Grant List

- ☐ You may directly contact the agency that provides a program that you are interested in.
- ☐ Alternatively, you may work with a Non-Medicaid Service Coordinator who can help place your child in Family Support Service programs.
- ☐ Each program will ask that you submit a completed Universal Application and may want to meet your child to ensure that the program is an appropriate fit.
- ☐ Scan or make a copy of the Application so you don't need to fill it out each time.

Family Support Services

The Grant List

New York State Office for People with Developmental
Disabilities

Family Support Services Grant Programs

Respite, Family Training, Advocacy, Counseling & Support Services,
Crisis Intervention, Voucher Reimbursement, Senior Day Programs,
Recreation, Non-Medicaid Service Coordination

Long Island Developmental Disabilities Service Office
415A Oser Avenue
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 434-6000
<http://www.opwdd.ny.gov>

The grant list is available on line at www.lifssac.com

Revised: September 2015

Agencies Associated with OPWDD on Long Island

- Family Residences and Essential Enterprises (FREE), Islandia, 631-234-8694
- YAI, Westbury, 516-338-9264
- Head Injury Association (TBI), Hauppauge, 631-543-2245 x. 4038
- LIFE'S WORC INC. Customized Employment, Garden City, 516-741-9000 x. 800
- (TRI) The Rehabilitation Institute, Westbury, 516-741-200
- Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Hempstead, 516-485-1234 x. 610
- Independent Support Services (ISS), Hauppauge, 631-864-2536
- The Long Island Home (South Oaks Hospital), Amityville, 631-608-5008
- Mill Neck Services, Mill Neck, 631-924-5900
- Quality Services for the Autism Community QSAC, INC, Floral Park, 718-728-8476 x.1058
- SKILLS UNLIMITED INC., Oakdale, 631-567-3320 x. 102
- (ACLD) Adults and Children With Learning Disabilities, Bethpage, 516-336-5909
- ABILITIES, INC., Albertson, 516-465-1507
- Community Mainstreaming Association INC, Garden City, 516-683-0710 x. 233
- HALO Network INC, Amityville, 631-789-7373

Overview of Services

- Family Counseling in or out of the home
- Parent Training for DD Parents: Parent skills and training
- Case Management / Care Coordination
- Non-Medicaid Service Coordination
 - Short term coordination to assist developmentally disabled individuals with planning for and accessing desired supports
- Respite
 - Short-term caregiver relief
 - In-home respite: scheduled in-home respite by trained individuals
 - Overnight Respite: in certified agency operated respite homes weekends or weekdays
 - Respite recreation: Care through recreation and social activities at various agencies, after school/respite programs and school vacation respite
- Crisis intervention
 - Behavioral assessments and intervention, training for families, and linking families to resources (in-home and out-home)
- Sibling Support
 - Support groups, individual counseling, or recreational activities for siblings
- Town Recreation: provides recreation and social activities
- Voucher/ Reimbursement: Families can be reimbursed for purchased goods or services for their developmentally disabled person which cannot be funded through other resources.
- Day Programs / Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS)
- Supported Employment
- Housing
 - Residential, Public Housing

Employment Services



- ❖ All individuals with disabilities who want to work, should be supported to achieve their goals.
- ❖ Through work, people can earn wages, increase their independence, gain self-confidence and develop relationships in their community.
- ❖ OPWDD offers several employment programs to assist individuals with support needs. All employment services provide employment staff or “job developers and coaches” to assist individuals with the goal of integrated community employment.
 - ***Job Developers and Coaches:***
 - Use person centered planning to help identify strengths, skills and interests
 - Develop employment opportunities to match the right person with the right job
 - Help with creating a resume and preparing for job interviews
 - Provider travel training assistance
 - Will often accompany applicants to the interview
 - Help with learning the job duties and the work environment
 - Help with learning workplace appropriate social interactions
 - Can help individuals increase their hours or secure a new job

Employment Programs

- *Employment Training Program (ETP)*

- ETP offers individuals an opportunity to work in a paid internship that will lead to permanent employment in a community business. During the internship, wages will be paid by through ETP while the individual learns the skills needed for the job. At the end of the internship, participants are hired as an employee of the business. ETP participants also attend job readiness classes. ETP services include increased job development and job coaching as well as assistance with other employability skills.

- *Supported Employment (SEMP)*

- SEMP provides the supports individuals need to obtain and maintain paid competitive jobs in the community. Individuals with developmental disabilities will typically transition to SEMP after they have received intensive supported employment services funded by the NYS Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) and require extended job coaching to successfully maintain their employment.

- *Prevocational Services*

- Prevocational services provide the opportunity for individuals to participate in general training activities to build on their strengths and overcome barriers to employment.
- These services assist individuals who want to work, but who need extra help to develop the skills needed to be successful in the workplace.



Housing Options

Home of Your Own (HOYO)

OPWDD's Office of Housing Initiatives & Supports assists individuals with developmental disabilities to fully realize their independence and ability to self-direct their lives through its "Home of Your Own (HOYO)" program. The Office of Housing Initiatives and Supports is approved by HUD as a Housing Counseling Program that offers a variety of counseling sessions, educational workshops, projects, and programs that assist people with living independently in the home and community of their choice within typical constraints experienced by the general population. The home one lives in, the neighborhood, nearby amenities, and the proximity to needed services all play a key role in an individual's overall quality of life.

- ***Individual Supports and Services (ISS)***
 - ISS assists adults with developmental disabilities to live independently in non-certified settings by providing funds to pay for rent and utilities. The subsidy is based on the individual's income/benefits. Funding is only available to individuals living independently.
- ***Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRA)***
 - An IRA is a certified setting that meets identified health and safety regulatory standards in which support services are delivered using residential habilitative waiver services. Each person's needs are defined within their individualized service plan (ISP). Based upon the persons identified needs additional plans of care are developed to guide responsible staff in the implementation of needed supports and treatment. IRAs vary significantly in size, location and individuals' needs; there is not one consistent IRA model as the supports provided are dependent on the identified needs of the individuals living there.

Housing Options

- ***Family Care***
 - Family Care offers an option for individuals to live within a family environment and receive supports and services consistent with their defined needs. Family care homes are certified settings with defined environmental and provider requirements. Most typically, family care settings serve one or two individuals. Individuals' needs are defined within plans of care that are implemented by the family care provider.
- **Campus-Based Treatment: Developmental Services (ICF/DC)**
 - These settings are for individuals with the most significant need for support. All of the campus settings, operated by OPWDD, provide supports to individuals who have specialized needs in areas such as intensive treatment for risk management and severe behavioral challenges.



Parent to Parent of New York State

Parent to Parent of New York State builds a supportive network of families to reduce isolation and empower those who care for people with developmental disabilities or special healthcare needs to navigate and influence service systems and make informed decisions.

- ❑ Parent to Parent of NYS
415 A Oser Ave.
Hauppauge, NY | 11788
- ❑ www.parenttoparentnys.org
- ❑ Valerie Colavecchio, Regional Coordinator
 - ❑ vcolavecchio@ptopnys.org
 - ❑ (631) 434-6196

Parent to Parent Webinars

Transitioning from High School into the Adult World after Graduation

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Start Time: 12:00 PM | End Time: 1:00 PM

Contact: Shannon McCracken Phone: 716-675-0239

Webinar: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/9169277551455507457>

Event Cost: FREE

Event: Transitioning from High School into the Adult World after Graduation on Tuesday, Feb. 13 from 12 to 1 p.m. This training gives parents, grandparents and guardians an understanding of high school transition. This transition from high school to young adulthood is a critical stage for all teenagers; for students with disabilities this stage requires extra planning and goal setting. Factors to consider include post-secondary education, the development of career and vocational skills, as well as the ability to live independently. The first step in planning for a successful transition is developing the student's transition plan. A transition plan is required for students enrolled in special education who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). We will define and describe transition planning and how it can be utilized to maximize your child's future.



Parent to Parent Webinars

Webinar: Preventing Parent Burnout for Parents of Children with Special Needs

Wednesday, February 28, 2017

Start Time: 6:00 PM | End Time: 7:00 PM

Contact: Shannon McCracken Phone: 716-675-0239

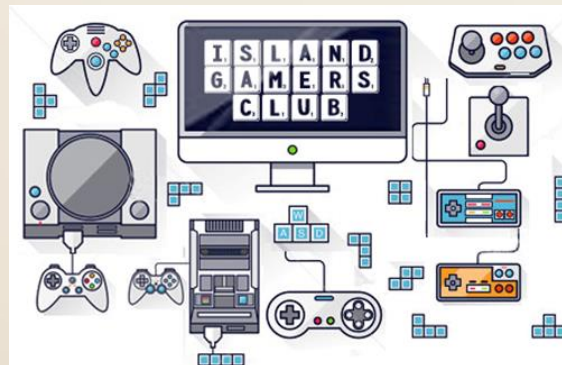
Event: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2138882555710467329>

Event Cost: FREE

Event: Preventing Parent Burnout for Parents of Children with Special Needs on Wednesday, Feb. 28 from 6 to 7 p.m. Extraordinary parenting responsibilities create extraordinary pressures on parents. At the same time, parenting a child with special needs requires energy, focus, and enthusiasm to be effective in our role. The better off we are emotionally and physically, the better off our families will be. Join us for this webinar on Preventing Parent Burnout and discover positive ways to cope with and effectively manage stress.

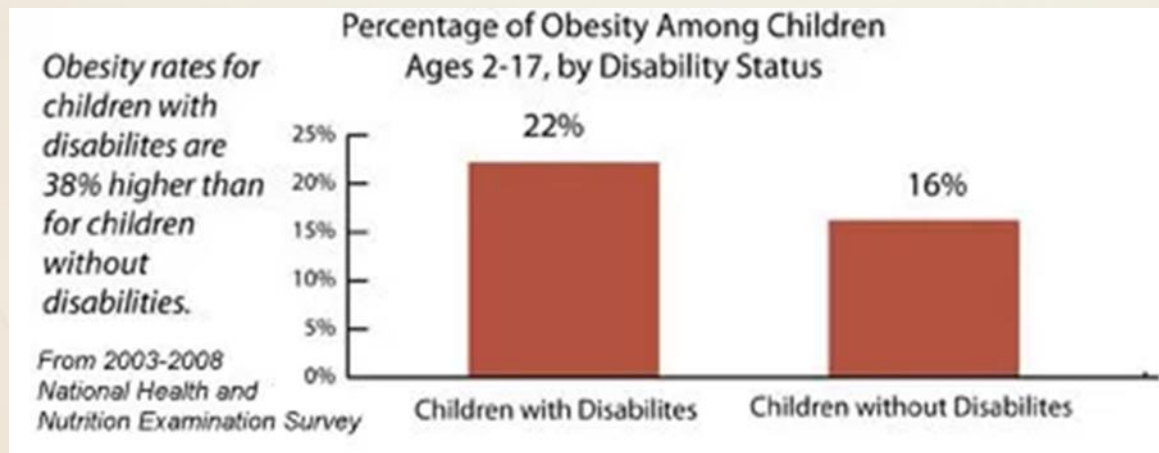
Community Resources

- **Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck:** Center Moriches, NY
 - Individuals with both physical and developmental disabilities, as well as their families, can experience year-round recreational and respite care activities in a camp setting. The camp provides opportunities for social and personal growth within a supportive environment. Campers learn to try a variety of creative and challenging activities and experience success. Campers develop enhanced self-esteem which carries over to work, home, or school environments.
- **CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD):** Levittown, NY
 - A non-profit organization serving individuals with ADHD and their families.
 - Nassau County CHADD: nassau-county@chadd.net
- **Island Gamers Club:** Bohemia, NY
 - Socialization Game Club welcomes those with and without special needs, specializing in Asperger's, PDD, HFA. Imagine two children or young adults, who may have difficulty socializing, excitedly battling Pokémon on their DS, taking part in Super Smash Bros, or discussing all the latest video games that you know nothing about, and seeing the person on the other end who couldn't be happier or having more fun listening. Interests include video games, board games, Pokémon, Anime, Drawing, Minecraft, arts and crafts and more. Many lasting friendships have been made at Island Gamers Club.



Community Resources

- **Down Syndrome Connection of Long Island: Halesite, NY**
 - The Down Syndrome Connection of Long Island is a parent-run, volunteer organization made up of families and individuals touched by Down syndrome. They are an affiliate of both the National Down Syndrome Society and the National Down Syndrome Congress. Unites the community to share information, support, resources and experiences.
- **HOPEFitness Sports Foundation: East Meadow and North Bellmore, NY**
 - Provides, coordinates, and supports the inclusion of individuals with all types of abilities in fitness and sport training.
 - Services include:
 - Group Fitness Classes: promotes socialization and pushes participants to meet their goals while working in a fun, high-energy environment beside their peers. Classes offered
 - Home Visits/On-Site Training: available for group homes, day programs, private residences, schools and those who are unable to visit a HOPEFitness location.
 - Individual (1 on 1) Personal Training: provides additional support. Six to eight sessions are recommended for maximum success. Each session is one hour.



Community Resources

- **Long Island Blues Special Hockey:** Bethpage, NY
 - Offering children and young adults with a disability the opportunity to play ice hockey.
 - This program teaches skating and hockey skills, as well as gives the player the opportunity to play in a team sport. Prior skating and hockey experience is not required.
- **Long Island Center for Independent Living:** Levittown, NY
 - LICIL's Mission is to serve as a down-to-earth home base where persons with disabilities access services and information that can open doors for a more productive, healthy and secure life.
- **NSASA-The Nassau-Suffolk Autism Society of America:** Wantagh, NY
 - NSASA is a volunteer organization of parents who have children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. Though not a service provider, NSASA fundraisers enable them to assist families with social, recreational and educational opportunities. All of the funds raised go right into community-based programs.
- **Korean American Alliance for Families with Disability:** Bayside, NY
 - Korean American Alliance for Families with Disability is a community group for families who have children with developmental disabilities and cognitive delays. The purpose of the organization is to help Korean families' better advocate for their children and adults with disabilities. The organization hopes to improve knowledge for the families and their caregivers, ensure family rights and services of people with disabilities and to improve the quality of service for Korean families with state agencies and agency services.

Community Resources

- **Sensory Beans Children's Gym:** Wantagh, NY
 - Sensory Beans is a parent-facilitated, open play sensory gym for children of all ages and abilities. Children and their families will strengthen their relationships with one another, as well as with their community. Children will gain confidence and develop skills to become part of a group. Sensory Beans is a place where children can learn vital skills and develop strong bonds with family and peers through functional and safe play. Every child is free to be themselves without feeling judged or excluded. Every child is unique, but all children need to have fun!
- **Ooooh the Possibilities! Farm:** East Islip, NY
 - A self-directed, self-sustaining farm in East Islip, NY managed and maintained by young adults with special needs. Founders, Dawn Meany, a parent of a child with special needs, and Melissa Kearns a special education teacher and career counselor, embarked on this adventure to create a place where individuals can work together alongside one another and their community. A farm can offer a perfect opportunity to create a sustainable business for individuals with special needs, in order to obtain skills that will lead to a productive life. Farming teaches concepts of time, patience, nurture, life, and environmental awareness. You cannot spell disabilities without abilities, and by working together there are Ooooh! So many possibilities!



RESOURCE LIST

**Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
Long Island Developmental Disabilities Regional Office
(LIDDRO), Region 5
415A Oser Avenue
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 434-6100**

- ☐ **Kerri Huber, Eligibility Social Worker**
 - (631) 416-3948
- ☐ **Shannon Morse, Eligibility Social Worker**
 - (631) 416-3955
- ☐ **Lambert Lui, Local Schools Transition Coordinator**
 - (631) 416-3915



Questions?



Lauren O'Rourke

District Social Worker

Syosset School District

LORourke@syossetschools.org

(516) 364-5685