

The Common Thread



The latest news, views and announcements from The Arc Mid-South

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DIDD Rules Going Back into Effect After Being Waived for COVID-19

For several months, Governor Lee's Executive Orders included provisions that suspended certain statutes and rules. This allowed agencies working with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Dept. of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) waiver programs to: delay background checks and for DIDD to extend medication administration certifications. The Executive Order provisions gave agencies more options while people were quarantined and in-person processes were on hold due to the pandemic. These provisions were not extended in Governor Lee's Executive Order 63, and therefore expired. Read more in DIDD's Special Edition of Open Line. Also, quality assurance reviews of providers will resume. "Quality assurance" is the process DIDD uses to make sure service providers are delivering services according to the state's rules and regulations. Click on the following link for more information.

<https://tndidd.tumblr.com/post/630882266385711104/background-checks-update>



TICKET
to **Work**

Proposal: Transfer Ticket to Work Program from Social Security to Dept. of Labor

The federal government is seeking comments about a proposal to transfer the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program to the US Department of Labor. According to the Federal Register, the Ticket program is intended to help people who receive social security benefits to become employed. But relatively few people have successfully participated in the program. The intent of moving the program to the Department of Labor is to better integrate the program into the public workforce system and better connect to people with disabilities who want to work.

The Ticket to Work (Ticket) program is a good fit for people who want to improve their earning potential and are committed to preparing for long-term success in the workplace. The Ticket program offers beneficiaries with disabilities access to meaningful employment with the assistance of Ticket to Work employment service providers called Employment Networks (EN). Read more here: <https://www.ssa.gov/work/>

OPEN LINE

Department of
Intellectual &
Developmental Disabilities



Important - IDD Integration Overview Document and Stakeholder Presentations

DIDD and TennCare released an Overview of Proposed Amendments and Changes to Integrate and Transform Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). This overview was developed after receiving feedback from families, stakeholders, providers, family advocates and legislators over the past several months. The overview is attached to this Open Line email, and can also be found here: <https://www.tn.gov/didd/for-consumers/didd-waiver-information/idd-program-integration.html>. Following the announcement and release of a Concept Paper in early July, DIDD and TennCare partnered to begin engaging with stakeholders to gather additional input that would help to inform a more detailed plan. The two agencies received more than 100 pages of detailed comments online, as well as detailed letters from many advocacy groups. Read the Stakeholder Input Summary by clicking this link. It can also be found on the IDD Program Integration webpage listed above. We hope that this overview helps to further establish understanding of the current design approach and paves the way for continued dialog from people supported, their families and our stakeholder community at large. Read here for more information : <https://tndidd.tumblr.com/>

Tips to help children with autism wear face masks



Wearing a face mask has become essential in these times. For any child, wearing a mask can be difficult and it is even more challenging for a child with autism. Here are some tips to help make the task somewhat easier. The coronavirus pandemic has forced many changes upon us. One of them is the necessity of wearing a face mask at all times when you step outdoors. For certain people, especially those on the autism spectrum, this can be very hard. Given their sensory issues, wearing a face mask can feel suffocating. Here are some ways that parents and caregivers can help the child get comfortable to the idea. To the extent that is appropriate for the child, you could consider giving information about why it's important to wear the face mask. This can be done in a story form using pictures. "We should explain to them the importance of wearing masks", says Deepthi Biju, Autism Club Ernakulam. "We could also show them videos on what will happen if we don't wear a mask. This way they see that everyone is wearing masks and feel they should too". Ease the child into wearing a mask. Start off with a few minutes at first and then increase the timing gradually. "If the child likes a certain fragrance, we can spray that lightly on the mask", suggests Deepthi. If your child is older, you can even get him/her involved in making a face mask. They can choose the fabric they find most comfortable and design masks that match their favourite clothes for instance. In case of sensory difficulties, it might be a good idea to start off with scarves. "Create a tolerance for face coverings", says Seema Lal, Special Educator and Co-founder of TogetherWeCan, a parent support group. More here: <https://newzhook.com/story/sensory-disabled-disability-coronavirus-covid-pandemic-safety-tips-to-help-children-with-autism-wear-face-masks/>

Why it is imperative to ask autistic adolescents about bullying



Adolescents with autism are more likely than their neurotypical peers to experience bullying¹. They are also more likely to have suicidal thoughts and behavior. When the news covers a young person's tragic death by suicide, bullying is often mentioned. This anecdotal evidence is borne out by research: Young people who experience bullying are 1.4 to 10 times as likely to develop suicidal thoughts or behavior as their non-bullied peers are. Most of the time, having suicidal thoughts and behaviors goes hand in hand with having a psychiatric condition, something that is also more common among adolescents with autism than among typically developing children. Read full article here: <https://www.spectrumnews.org/opinion/viewpoint/why-it-is-imperative-to-ask-autistic-adolescents-about-bullying/>

PRESS RELEASE



Absentee By-mail Voters Can Track Their Ballot Online

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee voters who request an absentee by-mail ballot for the Nov. 3 election can track the status of their ballot on the Secretary of State’s website using the Absentee By-Mail Ballot Status Tracker tool. Through this tool, Tennessee voters can easily and securely track their absentee by-mail ballot’s status starting when the county election commission mails the ballot to the voter and ending when the completed ballot has been received by the county election commission. Visit the Absentee By-Mail Ballot Status Tracker at tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup. “We saw a record number of Tennesseans voting absentee by-mail in the August election and we expect to break that record in November,” said Secretary of State Tre Hargett. “Many of these voters are voting absentee by-mail for the first time. Our online tracking tool takes some of the uncertainty out of the process so voters can be confident about their ballot.” Voters must have a legal reason to vote absentee by-mail. A list of legal reasons to vote by-mail may be found at sos.tn.gov/products/elections/absentee-voting. <https://convention.thearc.org/> To receive an absentee by-mail ballot, you must submit a written request to your local election commission by mail, fax or email. Voters can find the contact information for their county election commission on our website, tnsos.org/elections/election_commissions.php.

Upcoming Events

October 15th

ECF Choices Community Forum Virtual Resource Fair

November 7th-14th

Virtual Auction

November 14th-

70th Anniversary Virtual Event

Kroger donates a portion of each purchase to The Arc Mid-South!



The Kroger Community Rewards Program makes fundraising easy by donating to local organizations based on the shopping you do every day. Once you link your Card to an organization, all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Shopper’s Card! The process is quick and easy and can be done from any mobile device, pc, or tablet. For detailed instructions on how you can shop and support The Arc Mid-South at the same time, click the link below and follow the easy instructions. After registration, enter our organization code "81469"

<https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>

