



# Informing Families ... Today and Tomorrow

A project of the Washington State DD Council



## Q&A with DDA

### What to Ask When You're Not Sure What to Say

**W**ith new funding available to serve thousands of DDA eligible children and adults waiting for services, we've been getting questions from family members who are concerned that they don't know what to ask for when they call to ask for services.

We contacted DDA to clear up some of the confusion around requesting services. The following Q&A is the result of our conversation.

**IF:** *What happens when someone calls the Toll-Free DDA number?*

**DDA:** When you call, you will receive a recorded message that will ask for your name, contact information, and the services you are requesting. The No Paid Services voice mail system is checked daily by DDA staff and forwarded to the appropriate staff persons who will call you back.

**IF:** *What if I don't know what services to ask for?*

**DDA:** If you don't know what services you want to request, just state that in your voice message. For example: "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, my telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_, and I would like to talk with someone about



the services that are available through DDA."

When a staff member calls you back, they will explain services and supports available through DDA, answer any questions that you have, and help you identify the supports that may meet your need.

**IF:** *How long does it typically take to hear back after leaving a message?*

**DDA:** Our aim is to call back within 2 business days; however, we are experiencing a significant increase in the number of calls, so it could be 5 business days at most. If you do not receive a call back within 5 days, please call again and make sure you clearly state your contact information.

**IF:** *What should I be prepared to talk about when my call is returned?*

**DDA:** The staff person who contacts you will discuss your needs and potential services or supports. If it looks like there's a service that could meet your needs, a case manager will

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### Increasing Independence Community First Choice

**C**ommunity First Choice (CFC) is a new program offered by DDA that strives to help children and adults be as independent as possible while living at home.



CFC is an entitlement. This means that if someone meets the financial and functional eligibility for CFC, they can receive it.

CFC services include:

**Personal Care** assistance with everyday tasks, such as bathing, dressing, meal preparation and essential shopping. (Parents of minors cannot be a paid provider; however, a trusted friend or relative can contract to be a paid provider for your child.)

**Skills Acquisition Training** on daily living skills such as cooking, housekeeping tasks or hair care.

**Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS)**, an electronic device which allows you to call for help in an emergency.

**To learn more, call the toll-free DDA number in your area (see below) and ask about CFC.**

**To request services, or learn more, call the Toll-Free DDA number closest to you:**

#### Region 1

Spokane: 800-319-7116  
Yakima: 866-715-3646

#### Region 2

Seattle: 800-974-4428  
Everett: 800-567-5582

#### Region 3

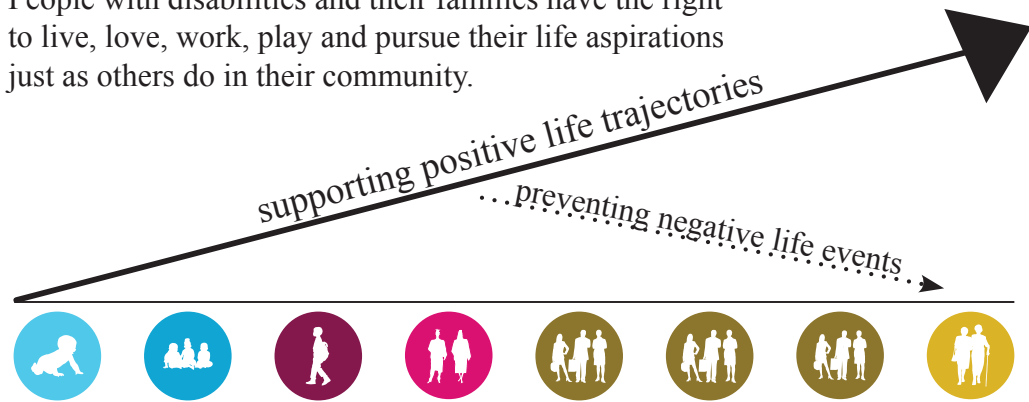
Tacoma: 800-735-6740  
Olympia: 888-707-1202



# Community of Practice: Having a Good Life

## Core Belief:

People with disabilities and their families have the right to live, love, work, play and pursue their life aspirations just as others do in their community.



Source: Community of Practice @ [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com)

Washington is one of five states awarded a Community of Practice grant to look at ways children and adults with I/DD can be supported to live a full and inclusive life at every age. It's about living a life defined by the person, not a system.

### Person-Centered Practices

A big part of changing the way individuals are supported to lead full, inclusive lives means making sure that all planning is based on person-centered practices.

Just this year, DDA began a person-centered approach to service planning that begins with a conversation about an individual's skills, interests, and goals.

From information provided by the person and family, case managers and clients look for ways that services can support those goals.

A great way to create a vision that may or may not include services is through person-centered planning. Traditionally, this is led by a trained facilitator and takes place with a team of people (selected by the individual) over the course of several meetings.

This more formal type of planning is a paid service through the Individual & Family Services (IFS) waiver;

however, there are lots of tools to help individuals and families plan with a person-centered approach in all areas of life--personal, educational, employment, financial—and it doesn't cost a dime.

### My Life Plan

My Life Plan ([mylifeplan.guide](http://mylifeplan.guide)) is a free tool designed to help with planning at any age. Use it to identify interests, goals and support needs at home, school, work, and in the community in a variety of ways:



- ▶ preparing for an IEP meeting
- ▶ identifying employment goals;
- ▶ identifying specific tasks to increase independence and skill building;
- ▶ preparing for annual DDA assessment/planning meeting.

My Life Plan is also a great tool for sharing your son/daughter's goals and vision with those who play an important role in his/her life—family members, personal care staff and others who provide support.

### Star Form: Identifying Supports

A big part of creating a good life is looking at the individual's whole life, beyond paid services. The Star Form

helps kick start this process. Use it to identify helpful people, community resources, technology and paid services to help meet any goal or task.

Example: Ben is 25 years-old and lives at home with his parents. He had very little experience being by himself. Through the use of his iPad (apps to occupy him and FaceTime to communicate with people he trusts), he is able to stay alone for up to an hour.






The use of technology increased his personal assets & strengths. Family helped him set up a Facebook page so he can talk to his friends (which increased his relationships).

Using a Star Form to identify support can go a long way toward reaching goals of any type. Download one and try it out: [informingfamilies.org/star](http://informingfamilies.org/star).

## Get Organized for Life

No matter your son/daughter's age, chances are, you will need to apply for services, benefits or enrollment in a program throughout many stages of life. Save yourself some time and start giving all your important documents a good home so that you'll be able to find what you need when you need it.

Here are some easy ways to store your files:

-  **Low cost file box.** Most stores have lots of fun organizing supplies. Buy an accordion file or portable box with file hangers in a color that stands out from the crowd—something that's easy to spot.
-  **Free organizer.** Seattle Children's Hospital also offers an expandable plastic file folder that some families have found really helpful. You can request a file folder here: [cshcn.org/planning-record-keeping/care-organizer](http://cshcn.org/planning-record-keeping/care-organizer).
-  **Thumb drive.** Many services have online applications to determine eligibility. Scanning and dropping files onto a thumb drive makes it really easy to upload the necessary documents. It also a great way to back up your paper files and take with you in case of an emergency.



## Most Commonly Requested Documents

### ID

Birth Certificate, Social Security card, picture ID and proof of Washington State residency (e.g., utility bill, voter registration).

### Approvals

Many services use eligibility for another program as criteria for their own, so be sure to keep all approval letters, but especially those from SSI, DDA, Apple Health, and any housing assistance program.

### Assessment(s)

Medical, psychological, and educational assessments/evaluations that identify disability and/or a disability-related need for services/treatment.

### Diagnosis

Proof of disability is required when applying for disability-related benefits and services in all areas of life: education, medical, housing, employment, home & community supports, special needs trusts, and programs you might not even know exist until your son/daughter needs it.

### Education

Psych eval and test results from the school psychologist, notes from school, as well as a log of any school-related incidents or behaviors. Keep copies of all IEPs, and ask your child's school for a copy of the full school file at the end of the year (or anytime, really).

### Financial

Most benefits and services have a financial eligibility component to them. If your child is under 18, keep copies of your previous year's tax return, as well as a list of resources and assets. If your child is 18 or older, only his/her income and resources are counted; keep monthly pay stubs for reporting to SSI.

### Legal

Guardianship papers, Representative Payee, Power of Attorney for Medical and/or Financial, as well as a Letter of Intent stating what your wishes are for your son/daughter.

### Medical

Health insurance; test results; medication; therapies, immunizations; most recent dental/doctor visit; and contact information for all health care professionals.

### Plans

Whether it's a person-centered plan for life and/or services, planning documents are an important part of ensuring that everyone is working toward goals driven by the individual and family. In some cases, such as guardianship duties, having a documented plan of care is required.

### Trust(s)

Special needs trust account information, records and accounting.

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schedule a time to come to your home to complete an assessment.

**IF:** *Can I call for any kind of need, or does it have to be a crisis?*

**DDA:** There is no need to wait until there's a crisis or emergency to ask for services. We encourage individuals to call us and let us know what they need!

**IF:** *Are there any services that someone is guaranteed to receive if they meet eligibility for a specific service?*

**DDA:** The new Community First Choice Program (CFC) is an entitlement program, which means if you meet financial and functional eligibility for CFC you can receive it (see front page side bar for more information on CFC services). There is no waiting.

**IF:** *I keep hearing there's still a long waiting list. Why should I bother calling if there's a chance of not getting services?*

**DDA:** At this point, we have capacity on many of DDA's programs (such as the new Individual & Family Services waiver and Community First Choice). We encourage clients (or family members), who believe they have a need, to contact DDA and pursue services that could meet that need.

If, for any reason, you need a service for which we currently do not have funding, you are helping us provide accurate information to the Legislature on the current needs in our state. And that, in turn, helps to plan for the future.

For more information about DDA services and eligibility, visit: [dshs.wa.gov/dda](http://dshs.wa.gov/dda).

## Technology Corner



### Smart Living

Are you or someone you know using technology to improve accessibility and safety in your home?

- Medication reminders
- Voice activated devices
- Key-less locks
- Apps that connect appliances to your smart phone
- Emergency response systems

If so, we'd love to hear from you. Visit: [informingfamilies.org/smart-home](http://informingfamilies.org/smart-home), and let us know how technology is helping you or your family member become more independent.

Mailing Label