

## Building Bridges

Connecting Foster Care and  
Developmental Disability Supports

## Who contributed

- **Katharine Hill**- Assistant Professor University of St. Catharines/UST School of Social Work
- **Anni Simons**-Senior Policy and Program Manager, The MN Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
- **Jae Ran Kim**, MSW, LGSW  
Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare University of Minnesota, School of Social Work
- **Wendy Watson**- Advocate Arc of Greater Twin Cities
- **Anne Gueinzus**, Managing Attorney, Children's Law Center of Minnesota

### Americans With Disabilities Act: Definition of Disability

“...a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities....which include but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working” (P.L. 110-325).

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Definition of Disability

- A student may receive special education services and supports if they have an impairment involving one of thirteen conditions:

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Intellectual Disability                  | Traumatic brain injury         |
| Hearing impairments (including deafness) | Other health impairments       |
| Speech and language impairments          | Specific learning disabilities |
| Visual impairments (including blindness) | Deaf-blindness                 |
| Serious emotional disturbance            | Developmental delay            |
| Orthopedic impairments                   | Multiple disabilities          |
| Autism                                   |                                |

### Prevalence of Youth with Disabilities in Child Welfare

- Youth with disabilities are overrepresented in child welfare system
  - Incidence of maltreatment of children with disabilities is 1.7 times greater than the incidence among children without disabilities (Crosse et al, 1992).
  - Children with disabilities are 3.4 times more likely to be maltreated (Sullivan & Knutsen, 2000)
  - School-aged children with disabilities are 2.16 times more likely to be in out-of-home placement (Lightfoot, Hill, & LaLiberte, 2011).

## Method

- State administrative data
- Sources include:
  - DHS
    - Child Welfare
    - Disability Services
  - Minnesota Department of Education
  - Minnesota Department of Corrections

## Findings: Prevalence

- 2,188 young people in the sample
- 60% had a disability diagnosis (were in special education)
  - Most common was emotional disturbance (50%)
  - Learning disabilities (13.6%)
- 57.2% male, 58.6% Caucasian, 63% in Metro area
- Females are 40% as likely to have a disability diagnosis
- Caucasian youth are 70% as likely to have a disability diagnosis
- Native American youth were 1.5 times more likely to have a disability diagnosis.

## Youth with disabilities

- 94.7% were in special education
- More isolated settings within special education-
  - Only 28.4% in general education classroom (compared to 52.1% of general population)
- 12.7% received DD services (both before and after turning 18).

## A Bridge to Nowhere?



## Here's what YOU said

- Adoption Workers Survey (Fall 2010)
  - 40 Respondents
  - 279/372 kids
  - 75%

## Good Enough?

- Current IEP
- Safe place to live
- Least restrictive conditions

## Would you be Satisfied if...

- Your son
- Your daughter
- Sister
- Brother

## Parents and People with Disabilities become Advocates

- Challenge the limits
- Think outside the box
- Learn to never accept a low level “No”

## Impact

- Federal legislation
  - EHA- 1975
  - IDEA- 1990
  - IDEIA- 2004
- \* Section 504 of Rehab Act- 1973
- \* ADA- 1990

## Shared Outcomes

Permanency and Advocacy (DD)

- Social inclusion
- Independent Living
- Employment (Supported)
- Respite
- Natural Supports

## Natural Supports

- Are independent of funding
- Benefit many
- Improve one’s connections in the community
- Promote permanency
- Offer a potential source for family recruitment

## 2-Way Bridge

- Here today and on adoption list serve
- Talk to DD community to increase their awareness of kids in foster care
- Ask for your help!

## What the disability community should know

... about children and youth in foster care with disabilities

## We need your feedback

Help us craft a message about the kids we know:

- »What would be helpful?
- »How can we connect?
- »What can we do to stay informed?

## Please Respond

- Hand in written suggestions today from handout
- Reply to the message on the list serve

MN has a number of disability organizations that offer individual advocacy services

### Examples

- **Minnesota Disability Law Center**  
(Locations throughout MN)
- **PACER**
- **Arc** (chapters throughout MN)
- **MN Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**
- **NAMI** (affiliates throughout MN)
- **MN Centers for Independent Living**  
(Locations throughout MN)

These organizations provide a variety of services, including:

- Information and resources (including lists of community supports available by county)
- Classes (one-time and ongoing; on topics such as living with specific disabilities, how to construct an impactful IEP and more)
- Dispute resolution assistance (with school systems and other public systems)
- Activities accessible to individuals with disabilities (cooking classes, book clubs)
- Legal advocacy
- and much more

### Specific example:

#### **Arc Greater Twin Cities**

- accompany parent/guardian/student to IEP meetings
- assist with appeals
- host support groups and workshops for parents/caregivers and self-advocates
- work on transition and employment issues
- provide assistance obtaining MA
- provide lifetime assistance planning
- host workshops around special education, early childhood, abuse and guardianship issues
- provide phone and e-mail information and assistance on issues related to Intellectual and developmental issues
- numerous "Arc Guides" on specific topics of interest.

## **Disability Linkage Line**

**1.866.333.2466**

### **What is Disability Linkage Line?**

- The Disability Linkage Line (DLL) is a free, statewide information and referral resource that provides Minnesotans with disabilities and chronic illnesses a single access point for all disability related questions. DLL provides service to the entire state from four locations: St. Paul, Rochester, Bemidji and Brainerd.

**Thank You!**

