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The Arc's Top 10 Things to Consider When Choosing a Support Coordination Agency



As individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities approach adult life, it is important to understand the processes and steps to accessing services. Last month, we discussed the top 10 things to consider as you begin your transition to adult services. This month, we dive deeper into the top 10 things to consider when choosing a support coordination agency:

1. When it is time to choose a support coordination agency, you can opt to pick your top two choices or be auto assigned. It is preferable to do your research and choose as the support coordinator becomes a very important member of your loved one's team. They should be someone who you feel comfortable with and who has knowledge of services that your loved one will need in their adult life.
2. Request a copy of the "Selecting a Support Coordination Agency" Guide from the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. To request a hard copy, [click here](#). An electronic version is [available here](#).
3. Check out the most up to date list of support coordination agencies on the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) [website here](#).
4. Narrow down support coordination agencies based on those that serve the county in which your loved one resides.
5. Develop a standard list of questions that you plan to ask the support coordination agencies that you are interested in. These might include:
 - How long has your agency been providing support coordination?
 - How many individuals do your support coordinators have on their case load?
 - Are you familiar with services in my county?
 - Can you provide references of families using your services?
6. Contact the support coordination agencies of interest to begin the interviewing process.

7. Attend provider fairs hosted by schools or agencies such as The Arc of Essex County. Stay tuned to The Arc of Essex County's website for upcoming "Meet the Support Coordinators" events.
8. Narrow your list of possible support coordination agencies to two.
9. Complete the DDD support coordination agency selection form with your top two agencies. The form is [available here](#).
10. Return the support coordination agency selection form to DDD. The form can be scanned and emailed to DDD.SCHelpdesk@dhs.state.nj.us (preferred) or mailed to New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities Central Office, c/o SCA Selection Forms, PO Box 726, Trenton, NJ 08625-0700.

For more information or questions about selecting a support coordination agency, contact The Arc of Essex County's Senior Director of Supports Program Services Melissa Soules at msoles@arcessex.org or (973) 535-1181 ext. 1262.

Dunk Tank Challenge Concludes with the Dunking of One Final Board Member

On Thursday, September 8th The Arc of Essex County concluded the Dunk Tank Challenge by sending one final board member into the icy water. Marnie McNany, who raised the most funds throughout the month of June for the Camp Hope Create Play Capital Campaign, joined Stepping Stones Principal Marvin Leiken for an afternoon of fun with the students.

Just one week later and in partnership with the Township of East Hanover, Camp Hope's extensive renovations began with the knocking down of the existing buildings. Over the next 6-8 months, the camp grounds will transform with the addition and improvement of indoor and outdoor recreational spaces that will take camp forward for the next 60 years.



The Arc of Essex County continues to strive to reach our \$250,000 Create Play goal by December 31, 2016. Will you help us complete all of the improvements prior to the start of the 2017 camp season? For a complete list of projects please [click here](#). These newly created and enhanced spaces will provide the perfect backdrop for future summers packed with joyful memories.

To donate to the Create Play 2016 campaign, visit www.arcessex.org/createplay or contact Heather Comstock at (973) 535-1181 ext. 1224 or hcomstock@arcessex.org.

Know Your Right to Vote for the 2016 Election

The first step to knowing Your Right to Vote is getting informed. To help you navigate the voter participation process, The Arc of the United States has compiled several resources on how to fully take advantage of your right to vote. Whether you need to know when and

KNOW YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Register and Vote in Your State

This government website includes a voter registration information map of the country. Click on your state to access the website of the Secretary of State, whose office oversees elections. You will also find primary and general election dates and information about online registration, if available in your state.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission
14 Facts About Voting in Federal Elections

Are you unsure of where to get started, or how to have an effect on federal elections? The U.S. Election Assistance Commission has a great resource guide for you! This guide will help you understand how to check current voting eligibility, how to register to vote, and even where to cast your ballot. Be sure to follow the Voter's Checklist of things to do before Election Day!

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission
10 Tips for Voters With Disabilities

In general, everyone should be aware of the voting process and how to vote—but a person with a disability should also know additional

The first step to knowing Your Right to Vote is getting informed. To help you navigate the voter participation process, we have compiled several resources on how to fully take advantage of your right to vote. Whether you need to know when and where to vote, how a disability affects your voting eligibility, how to help someone with a disability vote, or why it's important to vote at all, there are resources at your disposal. If you'd like to learn about

where to vote, how a disability affects your voting eligibility, how to help someone with a disability vote, or why it's important to vote at all, there are resources at your disposal.

To check out the Your Right to Vote toolkit from The Arc of the United States, [click here](#).

...with current voting equipment, how to register to vote, and more where to cast your ballot. Be sure to follow the Voter's Checklist of things to do before Election Day!

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission

10 Tips for Voters With Disabilities

In general, everyone should be aware of the voting process and how to vote—but a person with a disability should also know additional information such as what voting method is right for them. This two-page resource has ten steps on how to ensure your vote counts, including helpful advice on checking the accessibility of your polling place, as well as knowing your rights as a voter.

Nonpartisan Election Protection

Voter Hotlines

What should you do if you feel your rights as a voter have been violated? This nonpartisan Election Protection coalition was formed to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Through their hotlines: 1-866-OUR-VOTE (administered by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law) and 1-888-Vote-Now (administered by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund), this website—and voter protection field programs across the country—provide Americans with comprehensive voter information and advice on how they can make sure their vote is counted.

...help to help someone with a disability vote, or why it's important to vote at all, there are resources at your disposal.

If you'd like to learn about a topic that is not included in these resources, please contact Mai Daniel, Daniel@arcusa.org

The Arc of Essex County Seeks Letters of Support from Program Attendees & Families

The Arc of Essex County consistently strives to improve its programs and services for children and adults of all ages. We do so by applying to private and corporate foundations for funding to help offset program operating costs. As you can imagine, the number of non-profit organizations competing for these funds continues to grow. You can help The Arc to strengthen our applications by writing a short "Letter of Support," detailing how The Arc has assisted both your family member and you.



Please mention in your letter the personal accomplishments your family member has made and the benefits your family has received from The Arc's programs and services. Feel free to include a particular experience or activity that your family member may have enjoyed on a day that sent him or her home with a smile.

The Arc will use your "Letter of Support" when requesting funding from foundations and businesses to support our programs. Please send your letter to the address below or via email at hcomstock@arcsex.org.

Heather Comstock
Senior Director of Development and Communication
The Arc of Essex County, Inc.
123 Naylor Avenue
Livingston, NJ 07039

Saturday Adult Respite Programs Get Creative at Pinot's Palette

On Saturday, September 17th participants from The Arc of Essex County's three Saturday adult respite programs enjoyed an afternoon of creativity and fun at Pinot's Palette in Montclair. Attendees enjoyed painting their own master pieces and expressing their unique styles.



The Arc of Essex County's Saturday adult respite programs operate out of Maplewood, Caldwell, and Orange. Attendees enjoy a day with their peers, immersed in the community while family and caregivers are able to relieve stress, restore energy, and manage family life. To learn more about The Arc of Essex County's adult respite programs, [click here](#).



Third Annual Uncorked & Uncapped **Sets New Records!**

On Thursday, September 29th, The Arc of Essex County held its third annual Uncorked & Uncapped: Wine, Beer, and Food Fest at the Westminster Hotel in Livingston. The night was one for the record books, attracting more vendors and attendees than ever before. The evening featured a 50/50 raffle, silent auction, awards ceremony, and capped off with fine wine, craft beer, spirits, and restaurant samplings from more than 40 local establishments.



The funds raised will directly support The Arc's many programs and services that assist people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in Essex County.

As attendees perused the local fare, they silently bid on a variety of auction items, such as a dream Disney vacation, round-trip airfare, and a wine and cheese party for 12 with limo service, to name a few.



As always, The Arc honored the individuals and groups who have been integral to the agency's success, including:

- **Corporate Partner Award:** Embassy Suites of Parsippany
- **Public Partner Award:** John Duthie, Mayor of Roseland
- **Community Partner Award:** Rotary Club of Livingston

A special **Lifetime Achievement Award** was presented to Herb Lev, a past president, committee chair, trustee, member at large, and current advisor on the Board of Directors for The Arc of Essex County, for his amazing and unwavering support of The Arc for more than 40 years.

"On behalf of The Arc of Essex County, I'd like to congratulate all of our honorees on their well-deserved recognition," said Linda Lucas, Chief Executive Officer for The Arc of Essex County. "The 2016 honorees have lent tremendous support and leadership to The Arc of Essex County for many decades. Their contributions are instrumental to our success and it is our honor to recognize them for their efforts."

The entire event could not have been possible without the help



of our sponsors: PwC, Oratory Prep, TD Bank, Bird Pharma Consulting, LLC, Primepoint, LLC, Walsh Pizzi O'Reilly Falanga LLP, and PSE&G.

This year's Uncorked & Uncapped: Wine, Beer, and Food Fest was a success thanks to every vendor, sponsor, honoree, attendee, volunteer, donor, and staff member who assisted. The event will return next fall! If you know of any restaurants, breweries, or wine vendors interested in participating, please contact The Arc of Essex County's Director of Development and Communication, Heather Comstock at 973-535-1181 x 1224.

Employees Honored at Annual Recognition Event



On Thursday, October 6th, The Arc of Essex County honored the long standing commitments and dedication of employees at a luncheon at The Manor in West Orange. Recognizing employees who celebrated 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 year anniversaries, The Arc's CEO Linda Lucas, COO Kathy Hinnigan-Cohen, and Board President Brad Hopton presented certificates of achievements to the following employees:

35 Years:

- Anne Rotonda

30 Years:

- Minerva Delgado

25 Years:

- Cecilia Jackson
- Howard Knight
- Meleta Stewart



20 Years:

- Kathleen Acox

15 Years:

- Adeline Michel Clesca
- Barbara Griffin
- Sharline Griffin
- Mary Harris
- Peggy Harrop
- Lorraine Jackman John
- Shabana Khan
- Sebrina Staton
- Marie Veix



10 Years:

- Bwana Banks



- Manuel Burse
- Olguita George
- Timothy Hall
- Tameka James
- Rebecca Lorusso
- Glenda Mayorga
- Venus Meadows
- Kiana Roulette
- Shanay Strothers

5 Years:

- Jason Acton
- Samuel Adonoo
- Aleshaw Barratt
- Manno Barthelemy
- Dianne Bonner
- Nakita Conley
- Anita Denton
- Junie Dorceus
- Courtney Dunnell
- Lydia Holmes
- Ezinwanyi Ihuoma
- Neville Isaac
- Christine Kessler-Fillimon
- Nicole Leach
- Ernest Lindsay
- Erin Lombardozzi
- Kristi Middleton
- Brittany Miller
- Ben Morumbwa
- Ifeoma Okolo
- Edwin Osore
- Julius Oyewole
- Joseph Rullis
- Fatimo Shittu
- Al-Leesah Veney
- Michelle Warren



Thank you to all employees celebrating a milestone year with The Arc of Essex County.

Halloween Tips for Kids with Sensory Issues

Originally printed on parents.com

Halloween can be stressful for kids with sensory issues, but following this advice can help keep the holiday fun for everyone.

Halloween is my favorite holiday, and when my son Liam was born, I couldn't wait to dress him up, take him trick-or-treating, and generally immerse him in the sugary highs of the day.



We made it through two years.

On his first Halloween, Liam tolerated a Batman costume over his pj's just long enough for me to snap some pictures. When he was 2, I dressed him in an adorable gnome costume, but he tugged at the itchy beard and immediately got a lollipop tangled in it, fussed through the pictures, and was asleep by the time the first trick-or-treaters arrived.

By Liam's third Halloween, he had an autism diagnosis, and I'd learned that many of his behaviors were products of a hypersensitive sensory system. When things are too loud, bright, or unfamiliar, kids with sensory issues often shut down or melt down -- or both.

Halloween -- with its literal parade of new faces, uncomfortable costumes, and bright, loud, unpredictable elements -- can be a time of stress for a child with sensory issues, but it doesn't have to be totally avoided. We asked experts, as well as parents of kids with sensory issues, for their tips on how help make the holiday more fun for everyone.

Think through all the senses: Do a sensory inventory -- considering a child's sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell, movement, and body awareness -- when prepping for Halloween, advises Carol Kranowitz, the author of *The Out-of-Sync Child*. Figure out what may cause the most sensory stress for your child and modify accordingly.

Avoid face paint and masks: Masks can irritate a child's face, and many kids with sensory issues can't tolerate face paint. Kranowitz notes that masks that narrow or limit a child's vision can interfere not only with the child's line of sight, but also with balance and movement, causing inherently challenging tasks like going up or down stairs to be even trickier.

Create a costume from familiar clothing: Store-bought costumes are often made of cheap material, may smell funny, and can irritate kids' skin -- all of which can cause a child sensory stress, Kranowitz says. Kelly Lynch, a Milwaukee mom to a 7-year-old with a rare genetic disorder and many sensory issues, uses normal clothes for her daughter's Halloween costumes, and skips the masks, face paint, and accessories. "Last year my daughter was Emily Elizabeth from *Clifford the Big Red Dog*," she says. "The year before she was a ballerina. We just use clothing from her closet, which she's already comfortable with. This makes it more fun for all of us."

When trick-or-treating, keep it familiar: If you do trick-or-treat, stay close to home. "We go to a few of the neighbors my daughter knows well, and then she lets us know when she's had enough," Lynch says.

Maintain routines: It's easy for Halloween festivities to throw routines off-track, but resist the urge to stay out trick-or-treating past bedtime or to pack too many fun activities into the day. "When my daughter was younger, her bedtime routine was an important part of her ability to function and be happy," says Katie Dimmel, of St. Paul, Minnesota, whose preteen is on the autism spectrum and has sensory issues. "When something disrupted that routine it meant meltdown and stress for her and us. So we celebrated Halloween with daytime activities."

Modify school celebrations, if possible: In a school setting, kids with sensory issues benefit from modification, preparation, and accommodation. "In some schools, we do a costume parade rather than a party, we use social stories to prepare kids for what to expect, and we work on sensory integration by allowing kids to do things like play with the insides and outsides of a pumpkin," says Shawna Vasquez, an occupational therapist in the Milwaukee Public Schools. "These activities allow kids with a range of sensory issues to enjoy the Halloween theme without it overwhelming them."

When Liam was in a school setting, I met with his teacher so we could brainstorm ways to modify

class Halloween celebrations for him. She was happy to let me pack fruit in lieu of candy; he walked in the Halloween parade with his classmates, but only as long as his sensory issues allowed; and, when he got overwhelmed, he and his one-on-one returned to the classroom for some quiet time. Talking to his teacher about simple modifications like these ensured that he could still participate in the fun.

Keep things as calm as possible: It's not easy keeping any kid calm during Halloween festivities, but doing so is an especially important goal for children with sensory issues. Help your child stay centered and focused by practicing calming activities that can be done before or during the festivities, Kranowitz says. "Calming the child's mind with quiet and encouraging words is good, calming the child's body is better, and teaching the child to calm his or her own body is best."

Activities that deliver strong sensory input to the muscles and joints are always calming and organizing, she adds, and can include:

- Jumping on a trampoline to get some good, rhythmic jolts into your child's body.
- Sucking applesauce through a straw, chewing on ice chips, or gnawing a bagel for oral-motor input.
- Lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling heavy loads, such as lifting a pumpkin and carrying it to the party, or pulling it in a wagon.
- Having your child crouch and wrap his arms tightly around his legs.
- Pushing against a tree or wall.

I've found that when Halloween celebrations get too loud or the parade of trick-or-treaters ringing the doorbell starts to overwhelm Liam, everybody wins if we step away from the stressful situation. This can mean taking a break from trick-or-treating; heading into a quiet room and giving him his iTouch; or just talking to him in a soothing voice and following his lead for what he'd like to do (usually snuggling quietly).

Find fun that works for your family: "We don't do Halloween in the traditional sense, but we do things that work for our girls," says Dani Rossa, a Milwaukee mom to two school-age girls on the autism spectrum who both also struggle with sensory issues like tactile defensiveness and auditory sensitivity. "Sometimes my husband and I actually dress up, stand in the bedroom, and the kids come and knock on the door. Other times we just go on a walk in costume, and if people are sitting outside, the kids get candy without having to knock on doors. And sometimes even these activities are too much, and we do nothing -- and that's okay."

Join The Candle Lighters & The Nerds on Saturday, November 5th for Cocktails for a Cause

The Candle Lighters, in its 42nd year helping children and adults with Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities, will "Celebrate Our Children" at Cocktails for a Cause on Saturday, November 5th at the Hanover Manor from 7 - 11 p.m.

Featuring the sensational Jersey band The





Nerds, an open bar, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and music and dancing, as well as a tricky tray, auction, and 50/50 raffle, the event will raise money for unfunded and under-funded programs of The Arc of Essex County.

To purchase tickets online, visit www.thecandlelighters.org/cocktailsforacause2016.

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The Arc of Essex County

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