

THE CONNECTION

DISABILITY CONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 2016 - NOVEMBER 2016

Happy Holidays!

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This year has been a wonderful year for Disability Connections. We have grown and added new faces and taken on new programs to better assist our community. We are proud to say that throughout all of our changes we have remained focused on our philosophy of independent living and full inclusion for all.

From all of us here at Disability Connections, we wish you a most wonderful holiday season and hope the new year finds you being all you can be! Looking forward to serving you in 2017!



Hours of Operation
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(325) 227-6624

Happy Holidays,
Disability Connections Staff

Supported Decision Making



Guardianship is a legal tool, which allows a person to make decisions for another person. It removes the civil rights and privileges of a person by assigning control of a person's life to someone else. Although the state directs a court to "design a guardianship to encourage the development or maintenance of maximum self-reliance and independence of the incapacitated person," it is not uncommon for courts to create full guardianships, which deprive persons with disabilities of the right to make fundamental decisions about their lives.

The vast majority of Texans with disabilities and the elderly can make sound decisions for themselves with appropriate supports. Guardianship removes the person's personal and civil rights, including the right to say where you live, work, and what you do with your free time.

Supported decision-making is "A process of supporting and accommodating an adult with a disability to enable the adult to make life decisions, including decisions related to where the adult wants to live, the services, supports, and medical care the adult wants to receive, whom the adult wants to live with, and where the adult wants to work, without impeding the self-determination of the adult."

In a supported decision-making agreement the person chooses someone (called a "supporter") they trust to help them get information they need to make an informed decision, consider their options, understand the risks and communicate their decisions to

others. The State does not place any restrictions on who may become a supporter. Typically, the supporter may be a family member, relative or friend. But, the adult with a disability may only enter a supported decision-making agreement voluntarily, without being influenced by others.

The person and the supporter fill out and sign a legally valid supported decision-making agreement form and have it witnessed or notarized, as required by law. There is a Supported Decision-Making Agreement form in the Texas Estates Code. There is also a simplified form featured on this website. Both are legally valid. The form you use does not have to be exactly like these two forms, but it has to have all of the same information. The simplified version on this website was reviewed by Disability Rights Texas, the state's legal protection and advocacy agency.

The agreement does not require attorneys or court filing. It does not allow a supporter to make decisions for the person or act in their place. Both parties keep a copy of the agreement and present it when needed. If they decide to use an attorney, the attorney can keep a copy, too.

The agreement can be created at any time. It can also be ended at any time (A) by the person or their supporter, (B) on a date determined at the beginning of the agreement, or (C) by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services if they find the supporter is abusing, neglecting or exploiting the person being supported.



Medicaid Cuts



Last year, the Texas legislature approved a \$350 million cut in Medicaid reimbursement rates to early childhood intervention therapists and providers. The cuts, made to help balance a billion dollars in property tax relief, affect the most vulnerable Texas children — those born extremely prematurely or with Down syndrome or other genetic conditions that put them at risk for developmental delay.

As news of the cuts became public, parents and grandparents of children who have disabilities flocked to Austin in March to implore the state Senate not to do this. Mothers wept in frustration as they testified before the Texas Senate Finance Committee about the vital these early interventions play in their children's quality of life.

Republican Senator Jane Nelson who heads the Texas Senate's finance committee, tried to reas-

sure Castro and other anguished parents that the state would make sure there would be no interruption of services, whatsoever.

But that's been a promise the state has not been able to keep, and it's in the rural parts of Texas where collapse of service has already begun.

It's not uncommon for early childhood intervention therapists to have to drive an hour each way to get to far-flung patients. For children who are prone to seizures, or who have to be connected to machines for daily living, long trips in the car several days a week for treatment this is simply not an option.



Medicare	vs	Medicaid
Federal insurance program		State assistance program for the uninsured
Primary and acute care coverage		Covers children, parents, disabled and ages 65+
Ages 65+ and disabled		Low income required (64 percent of the Federal Poverty Level)
No income limit		Funded by state's general funds
Funded by payroll deduction		Pays for nearly all medical expenses
Responsible for 19 percent of all nursing home funding		Responsible for 42.9 percent of all nursing home funding
Source: U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services		TheNewsOutlet.org/Richard W. Darbey IV



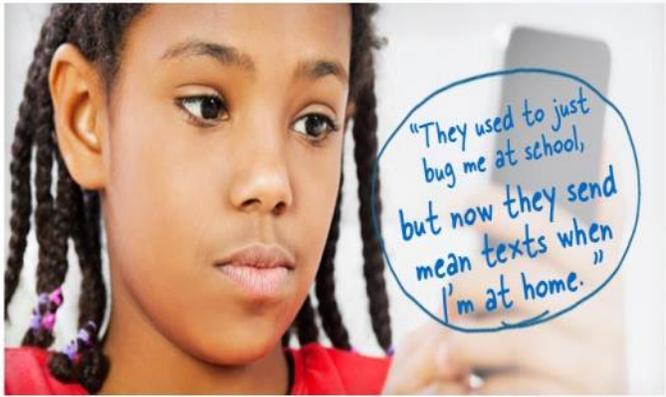
Stomp Out Bullying!

Children with disabilities are at an increased risk of being bullied. .

Threats and harassment come to children via text message, social media and online exploitation.

Anti-bullying experts says it's a pervasive problem among young people, resulting in an alarming number of suicides.

"Cyberbullying is huge because they get to hide behind their online device, whether it's a cellphone, iPad, or social media and send hate messages, threats, impersonations, says Ross Ellis, a national bullying prevention expert and founder and CEO of STOMP Out Bullying.



Experts say parents need to be alert and assertive, but also rational when talking to their children or confronting a bully, his parents or the school.

"The most common signs to watch for include anxiety, depression and low self-esteem; unexplained bruises or injuries, ripped clothes or missing belongings; excessive crying or moodiness, becoming withdrawn, or a loss of interest in school; and headaches, stomachaches and other physical symptoms.

For those being bullied by peers or teachers, they may fake an illness, miss the bus or find reasons to stay home from school. They may be on and off with friends, avoid school functions or experience other forms of social exclusion.

Although there are red flags parents should look for, each child deals with bullying in their own way.

"A parent knows their child better than anyone else, especially when they get closer to middle school," says Lowell Levine, founder and president of the anti-bullying nonprofit Stop Bullying Now Foundation in Lake Worth, Fla. "If their grades are falling, they're not in afterschool activities, not eating properly, not able to sleep, having bad dreams or they start to get abusive, or don't want to go to school or come back home with some bruises, all of these are definite red flags that there is something going on."

Thanks to new laws, bullying is viewed as a civil rights violation, which gives more teeth to civil lawsuits, Levine says.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide was the third leading cause of death among kids ages 10-14 in 2015.

Children who mention suicide should be taken to the emergency room.

"Even if they're just saying it, it must be taken seriously."

"If your child is being cyberbullied, the first thing they should never do is respond," Ellis advises.

"The Internet is like the Wild West frontier. If you see a mean post, do not respond, delete it and

block the person."

Keep your child busy and build confidence, whether through sports, theater, music, academics or community service.

The worst thing a parent can do is rush into the school and start making threats or demands. It's best to remain calm, make an appointment with the principal, and ask how the administration can help find a solution. One way might be talking to the alleged perpetrator or helping to facilitate a transfer to another school.

"If you pound your fist and say I want this child suspended or arrested, the school will shut down," Ellis says. "Walk in with everything documented, dates, times, tell the principal like you're telling a story, keep it short and concise and ask 'how can you help me?'"

OMG! I have Bed Bugs!

We all grew up hearing “Don’t let the bedbugs bite” and we didn’t think anything about it. No one had bedbugs anymore! But, guess what? They’re baaaack!

It’s not pretty, but we need to discuss...BEDBUGS! First of all...What are bedbugs? They are very small parasites that are mostly active at night and feed off human blood. They cannot live without a host. They were thought to be eradicated by the 1930’s, but around 1995, there was a resurgence of cases.

How can you tell if you have them?

Bedbugs are elusive and usually nocturnal, which can make them hard to spot. They often lodge unnoticed in dark crevices, such as the edge of a mattress or couch, and eggs can be nestled in fabric seams. Aside from bite symptoms, signs include fecal spots, blood smears on sheets, and skin molts. They can be detected by trained dogs by their smell of rotting raspberries.

Since bed bugs are nocturnal, they hide throughout the day and wait until we are sound asleep before seeking their dinner. Their peak biting activity is usually just before dawn. Bed bugs can obtain their meal in as little as three minutes, leaving trails of itchy, red bites in straight lines on the skin, usually around the arms or shoulders. We don’t feel their bites because they inject a numbing agent into the body, along with an anticoagulant to keep your blood flowing as they suck.

How did you get bedbugs?

Dwellings can become infested with bedbugs in a variety of ways, such as:

- Bugs and eggs inadvertently brought in from other infested dwellings by visiting pets, or a visiting person's clothing or luggage**
- Infested items (such as furniture, clothing or backpacks) brought in**
- Nearby dwellings or infested items, if easy routes are available for travel (through duct work or false ceilings)**

- Wild animals (such as bats or birds) that may also harbor bedbugs or related species**
- People or pets visiting an infested areas apartment, subway, movie theater, or hotel) and carrying the bugs to another area on their clothing, luggage, or bodies**

What can you do about bedbugs?

Eradication of bed bugs frequently requires a combination of pesticide and/or non-pesticide approaches. Chemical pest eradication can be costly. For an inexpensive option that may eliminate and prevent bedbugs, try a non-chemical approach with inexpensive products such as diatomaceous earth or silica dust, which are available on Amazon, and home & building supply stores.

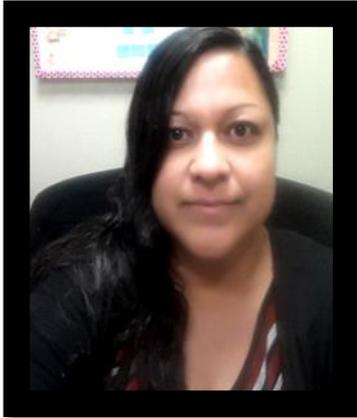
Mechanical approaches, such as vacuuming up the insects and heat treating or wrapping mattresses, have been recommended.

Recommendations

Be cautious about taking someone’s used furniture or clothing. If you need it, make sure you give it a thorough examination. Watch for traces of the bugs. Wash it down carefully and if possible, wrap and seal in plastic and let it sit for a few weeks. At the first sign of a problem, such as itching or bite marks, do something. They will not go away by themselves. Vacuum your mattresses, furniture and floors frequently, examine your furniture periodically, launder your bedding often and watch for bites. Good Luck!



New Staff



“Working here, I have learned that I can make a difference, we shouldn’t take things for granted and everyone has potential“

Angel Ramon
Community Integration Specialist



“There is nothing that compares to the satisfaction that I have at the end of my day, knowing that I make a difference in someone’s life.“

Sandra Tobias
Resource Navigator



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

San Angelo Police Dept.	325-657-4315
Tom Green County Sheriff	325-655-8111
Atmos Energy Report Gas Leak	1-886-322-8667
AEP-Power lines down	1-877-373-4858
Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
Red Cross	325-658-4409
Shannon Hospital	325-653-6741
Community Medical Center	325-949-9511



“I enjoy working with Disability Connections because it allows me to help people on a daily basis and the staff here is amazing! “

Amanda Pinkston
Information and Referral Specialist

Closed for Holidays

The Center will be closed Friday, December 23rd at 12 pm through January 1st. We hope you all have a wonderful Holiday Season and a very Happy New Year!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				23 Close at 12 pm
26	27	28	29	30



In the event of inclement weather, the Center may close or cancel activities for Consumer safety. During bad weather, please call in advance before you come. You can also refer to our website for closures or cancellation @ www.dcciltx.org.

Braille Smart Watch

Dot is a wearable that is also the world's first Braille smartwatch. Dot is a practical solution that is more affordable than regular e-Braille devices which may cost thousands, yet still works well for the blind. Dot helps the blind access messages, tweets, even books anywhere and at any time.



Braille Smart Watch



Technically, this tool functions with six dots on four cells found on the surface of the smartwatch. These dots will rise or lower to form 4 letters in Braille at any time. It can connect via Bluetooth to any smartphone then retrieve and translate the text (from an email or messaging app) into Braille for its owner. **Goto: www.dotincorp.com for more infor-**



Your donation to Disability Connections Center for Independent Living is tax deductible. It will be used to further enhance the quality of services offered to Consumers, and to promote equality, dignity, independence and the full inclusion of people with disabilities into every aspect of their communities.

To give, please clip this and mail it with your donation to:

**LIFE Inc.
Re: Disability Connections
8240 Boston Avenue
Lubbock, TX 79423**

I would like to donate: \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$1,000 ___



2809 Southwest Blvd.
San Angelo, Texas 76904

Disability Connections - A Center for Independent Living

- Michelle Crain** **Executive Director**
- Nancy Penland** **Director of Programs**
- Anita Guy** **Center Coordinator**
- Dana Sercos** **Special Projects Coordinator**
- Lupe Perez** **Independent Living Specialist**
- Amanda Pinkston** **Information and Referral Specialist**
- Terri Irby** **Relocation Specialist**
- Kristi Ramirez** **Independent Living Specialist**
- Sandra Zarate** **Independent Living Specialist**
- Sandra Tobias** **Resource Navigator**
- Angel Ramon** **Community Integration Specialist**

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Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of Disability Connections' funding sources.

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dcciltx.org

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