

Coarc Organizational Service and Support Philosophy

The Coarc Board of Directors (the Board) unequivocally believes that individuals with disabilities have the right to self-determination, to learn how to make informed decisions and have the right to take reasonable risks. The Board realizes that each individual's interest in and ability to make their own decisions varies. The Board believes that we should begin with the assumption of capacity in the absence of evidence to the contrary. The services and supports the Agency provides should help the individual learn how to make good decisions that improve their lives and help them achieve their personal goals.

The Board expects that individuals will be informed of their rights as citizens, receive training and support in understanding and exercising those rights and that specific training about informed decision making and choice is provided on an ongoing basis. Thus the Board supports individuals with disabilities to make their own decisions, within their legal rights and to expect assistance from employees in evaluating the potential consequences, good or bad, of their decisions.

While there is the assumption that individuals are capable of making decisions, at times there may be a need to assess their skills and understanding about certain more complex decisions, especially if there is a history of poor decision making or a demonstrated lack of information about issues such as: health care, money management or how to spend money, spending time alone in the general community or public places, sexual relationships and/or friendships. Assessments should be done as a means to identify skills present and skills needed and this information should then be used in written plans in order to assist the individual in learning to make better, informed decisions. Assessments are not intended to control or deny services and supports needed by the individual, who wants to improve their independence and achieve their desired outcomes.

At times, members of the individual's "Circle of Support" may disagree with an individual's choice or decision and employees are expected to assist the individual in achieving consensus if possible. However, should there be continued disagreement; employees will support the individual's right to make their own decision. This does not mean that Coarc is supporting the actual decision or choice the individual is making, but that we support the individual's right to make that decision. Regardless, employees will provide support (emotional, psychological, therapy, financial counseling, health related, spiritual, etc.) to the individual throughout the decision making process. Supports will also be provided based on the natural consequences occurring from the decision or choice the individual made.

Note: This Service and Support Philosophy applies to decisions and actions within the scope of the law and employees are expected to advise individuals when they are thinking about decisions or choices that have legal ramifications.

This Service and Support Philosophy is meant to be a guide to assist employees when faced with difficult support situations. The risks associated with an individual exercising their right to make decisions, must not be impeded by excessively cautious actions by employees or caregivers. Employees should always document conversations and discussions with individuals in the record for future reference and to demonstrate the informed decision making process.

Approved by the Coarc Board of Directors
4/15/2019