

**New Jersey Direct Support Professional Workforce Development Coalition
Career Path Forum
May 25, 2006
Summary Report and Next Steps**

Background

The New Jersey Direct Support Professional Workforce Development Coalition was formed in 2004. (See Appendix A for a summary history.) It is composed of representatives from three provider networks (The Arc of New Jersey, the Alliance for Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities, Inc., and the New Jersey Association of Community Providers), the Division of Developmental Disabilities, The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, the New Jersey Direct Support Professional Association, and the Consortium on Workforce and Economic Development of the NJ Council of Community Colleges.) It has been working on strategies to strengthen the skills of the direct support professional workforce and to enhance recruitment and retention (and reduce turnover).

In 2005, the New Jersey team that came together for planning its recommendations for the Alliance for Full Participation Conference in Washington, D.C. identified **the support and professional development of direct support professionals as the #1 priority and need in New Jersey**. After the Alliance, the Workforce Development Coalition began planning for a statewide forum on career paths (career ladder) for May, 2006. In the months leading to the Forum, the Coalition conducted seven focus groups on career paths, participated in a DD Lecture Series and technical assistance forum led by Sheryl Larson on national recruitment and retention strategies and career ladders), and worked collaboratively on three grant proposals:

1. A request from DDD to CMS to participate in a national technical assistance program for workforce development initiatives in a selected number of states.
2. A proposal in collaboration with the Workforce and Economic Development Consortium of the New Jersey Council of Community Colleges to the Department of Labor for funding for a series of Literacy courses (communication, math, ESL, and computer skills).
3. A national Jobs to Careers RFP from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for health and human service workers.

The Forum on May 25, 2006

The Career Path Forum was held at the New Jersey Hospital Association Conference Center on Thursday, May 25. Ninety people from all over New Jersey participated, including a significant number of people who worked as direct support professionals or who had done so at some point in their careers.

Our primary speaker and consultant was Amy Gerowitz, from the Ohio PATHS program, a growing career path process in Ohio. We also had a speaker from SPIN, an agency in Northwest Philadelphia, who has developed a national reputation for its professional development programs for its staff. Three New Jersey agencies who have developed their own version of a career path were on a panel: The Arc of Mercer County, Bancroft Neurohealth, Inc., and Matheny Medical and Educational Center, Inc. Following the presentations, participants divided into four working groups:

1. Curriculum and Training

2. Structure and Access
3. Organizational Culture and Management Strategies
4. Contracting and Resource Issues to Support a Career Path.

Each working group reported back to a general session with a summary of its discussion and recommendations for action steps. (Each report is in the Appendix)

The Workforce Development Coalition Steering Committee met on June 6 to evaluate the Forum and begin planning its next steps.

Summary Evaluation Comments

- There was significant energy and interest to move forward at the Forum.
- Lots of pro's and positives for a career path and no "nay sayers."
- More DSP's should have been there. They want a career path now. There was also significant appreciation for the opportunity to be there.
- Participants were excited about the sense of value and respect for DSP's.
- There were differences between administrators and direct support professionals on what the curriculum should be. The consumer voice needs to be heard about the kind of curriculum (and competencies) that they want their staff to have.
- The Forum reinforced the idea that not every DSP wants to be a manager. Many wish to remain in direct support with a way to advance in skills and rewards.
- Coverage is issue of priority for managers and impacts training.
- There are many side benefits of a career path, including lots of other ideas for supporting the work of DSP's.
- A majority of the participants wanted to stay involved in development of a career path, e.g., 25 of the 32 in the group on organizational culture wanted to keep working.
- "I started as a DSP, left because of the turnover, Finally we are talking about it."
- Salaries are important, but are not the whole answer. Self-directed supports staff who make \$13-\$14 per hour stay in their jobs.
- The day exceeded my expectations, but let's do something now.

Action Steps.

In the course of planning the forum, the Coalition changed its language from a "career ladder" to a "career path." By "career path," we mean the development of a statewide process for credentialing direct support professionals at recognized levels of training and competencies, connected to salary increases, and supported by other management and organizational strategies to enhance the recruitment of quality staff and increase their retention. A career path does not mean "climbing out of direct support," for it is clear, many direct support professionals would like the option to advance as a professional in direct support and care.

The overwhelming conclusion was that the Coalition should continue to work on development of a career path. If we receive one of the RWJ Jobs to Careers grants, that will provide a great deal of organizational support to do so, but we should proceed regardless.

Action Step	Responsibility
Distribute the new federal report on the challenges of finding direct support professionals.	Boggs Center to send electronically to provider networks and participants.
Write a summary report (this one) and distribute to participants, Coalition, and provider networks with ways for others to join the working groups.	Boggs Center and Provider Networks.
Develop common formulas for data collection on vacancies, turnover rates and turnover costs to begin to establish a statewide evaluation of costs. Note: two agencies in NJ estimated turnover costs per employee at @\$8000.	Jonathan Campbell of ABCD to find formulas in use, and work with provider networks to get common recommended formulas for agencies to use.
Develop a publicity packet about a career path for use with agencies, dsp's, and others. Develop speakers for agency awareness Explore option of sharing significant information about this initiative at NJACP November conference.	Structure and Access Workgroup. Mary Ann Basileo, Jonathan Campbell, Celine Fortin. Next Meeting August 16.
Related, develop a logo and letterhead for the Coalition to help develop its identity.	Boggs Center to work on mock up.
Develop working committee of provider representatives (especially financial officers) and DDD to explore ways to find resources to support a career path.	Contracting and Resource Work Group. Keith Kearny, Cassandra Ross. Joe Bongiovanni of DDD Waiver Office will explore ways that waiver can and is being used in other states to support training.
Begin to collect more detailed information on other statewide career paths, and curricula/training strategies used to develop identified competencies.	Curriculum Committee. Next meeting planned for July 25 at Project Freedom from 5:00 – 8:30. Other Steering Committee members to assist with research.
Communication: 1. Expand Workforce Development Coalition listserv 2. Explore development of a separate web site for the many resources that could be related to this initiative	1. Participants will be registered, and any who wish to belong email bill.gaventa@umdnj.edu . 2. Continue thinking about resources needed to do this.
Strengthen the Direct Support Professional Association. 1. Ask agencies to call direct support workers "direct support professionals." 2. Develop a DSP listserv. 3. Ask NJDSPA for a wish list of ways that provider networks and state agencies can support the Association	1. Request discussion and action on this by Provider Networks. 2. Boggs Center for the time being. Done. Email Elizabeth Ong at Elizabeth.ong@umndj to ask to belong to njdspa@lists.umdnj.edu 3. NJDSPA to begin work on that.
Begin to develop information for legislators and policy makers to follow up on invitation sent to the Forum on Career Paths.	Jonathan Campbell, ABCD.

What You Can Do Right Now: (Next Page)

What You Can Do Right Now

1. Learn more about the issues. Share copies of this report, the federal report on workforce development, and the report of the New Jersey Workforce Development Summit in 2002. All are on the Boggs Center website but are also available through the Provider Networks.
2. If you want to be part of the Workforce Development Coalition listserv, email bill.gaventa@umdnj.edu.
3. If you want to be on one of the working groups, contact:

Organizational Culture:	Brian Horsmon, 856-348-1157, bhorsmon@bnh.org
Curriculum/Credentials:	Bill Gaventa, 732-235-9404, bill.gaventa@umdnj.edu
Structure and Access:	Jonathan Campbell, 609-581-8375, jonathan@abcdnj.org
Resources and Funding:	Keith Kearney, 201-436-2200, kearneykj@yahoo.com
4. Have your agency appoint at least one direct support professional to be part of the New Jersey Direct Support Professional Association. Till further developments, the quickest way to join is to ask to be on the listserv, NJDSPA@lists.umdnj.edu. Email Beth Ong at Elizabeth.ong@umdnj.edu to be put on this listserv. Also think about joining the National Association of Direct Support Professionals, NADSP.
5. Encourage the use of the term “direct support professionals” in your agency and in your communications.
6. If you want someone to come to your agency or organization to talk about this coalition, this career path initiative and related issues, contact one of the Provider Networks or The Boggs Center.

Appendices

- A. Summary history of Workforce Development Coalition.
- B. Working Group Report: Organizational Culture.
- C. Working Group Report: Curriculum
- D. Working Group Report: Structure and Access
- E. Working Group Report: Resources and Funding
- F. Mission and Organization of Workforce Development Coalition
- G. Information Sheet on New Jersey Direct Support Professional

Appendix B: Organizational Culture Work Group Report.

1. Work Group Title: *Organizational Culture*
2. Lead contact for work group:
3. Names of facilitators/ identify note taker: *Amy Gerowitz, Brian Horsmon / Jessica Marchese*
4. Members of the work group: *see attached*
5. Overview of the discussion: *The participants in this workgroup engaged in a lively discussion on the issues. The main focus was communication. Getting the word out to DSP's will be the key to making this project successful. Participants at the forum talked about how some of them felt "in the dark" on where this all came from, what a DSP is, what do all the acronyms stand for, etc... This seemed to show a clear gap between the upper levels in organizations and FLS/ DSP levels. Participants who identified themselves as DSP/FLS expressed concern about how information gets filtered down. Thus, finding a way to have the DSP/ FLS level informed (a web site was suggested) is crucial.*
6. The key issues identified:
 1. *How can dsp professionals be involved in setting up a career path and be involved in making decisions?*
 - *develop better communication*
 - *involvement in forums, committees (make DSP's available)*
 - *DSP survey*
 - *Online forum for DSPs*
 - *Public Relations campaign: getting the word out to DSPs, having organizations use the "DSP" terminology*
 2. *In addition to career path- how might agencies better support DSP's?*
 - *management styles/ management training*
 - *giving DSP's career "choices" other than becoming a manager/ and give compensation for the other choices*
 - *Provide mentors on a regular basis/ have DSP's hear success stories*
 - *Creating a way for DSP's to network with each other*
 - *Creative scheduling*
 - *Child care*
 - *Email communication for DSPs'*
 3. *How do we share our ideas in New Jersey?*
 - *web site, post ideas, list serve*
 - *get involved with the national affiliation*
 - *create an email network*
 - *list people from other organizations trying to accomplish the same things-who else is on the same page as you*
 - *Regional group meetings*
7. Possible next steps discussed: *The groups main goal is to enhance communication:*

- *among DSP's*
- *among agencies/ organizations*
- *communication with NJADSP*

8. The two action steps reported to the full forum: *The action steps reported were to develop a standard DSP survey, and nurture the NJDSPA. However, an additional action step that needs to be accomplished is getting the word out.....i.e. COMMUNICATION. DSPs' have to be informed of this project; organizations have to use the terminology (DSP), and DSPs' need to be given the opportunity by their organizations to get involved. Having a newsletter/ website for this project could accomplish this goal.*
9. Plan and timeline laid out concerning implication of the two action steps:
10. Date or possible dates for next work group meeting: *TBD. Twenty-Five of the thirty two participants expressed interest in continuing to work on this project. We will start laying out plans via email, then set up dates for an actual meeting.*
11. Individuals interested in a leadership role in future work group meetings: *Joy Gross*

Appendix C: Curriculum Work Group Report

1. Lead contact for work group – not determined
2. Names of facilitators/ identify note taker – Pat Gerke and Ann Milam/ Ann notetaker
3. Members of the work group: A large group. More than 30 participants interested in this group.
4. Overview of the discussion:

The discussion of this group was lively and at times quite animated. We began by listing the key subjects identified by Focus Group participants earlier this year and after adding a few, asked group members to prioritize, individually, the top 6 subjects that they felt would be Level 1 Curriculum subject material. This resulted in a generally agreed upon list of seven (7) areas which are: Teamwork, Communication, Problem Solving, Ethics and Professionalism, Documentation, Empathy (Sensitivity Training as an example) and Customer Service (knowing how to deal with consumers, family members and community at large). This list was strongly agreed upon by the 30 people in the room.

After lunch, we looked at the remaining subject areas and again each participant was asked to prioritize the top six. These made up possible Level 2 Curriculum Courses. That list is: Knowledge of Specific Developmental Disabilities, Lifting and Transferring, Computer skills, Behavioral Supports/overview of Mental Health Issues, Nutrition, Person Centered approaches/How to better know the person being supported, Conflict Resolution, Use of Technology/Equipment/Adaptive Technology. Again, this list was strongly supported as an advanced level of information and knowledge that someone who wants to gain more proficiency and competency would complete after the Level 1 courses. But not everyone would be expected to do this additional coursework.

A level Three was also discussed, possibly including some of the topics we didn't get to agree on. These included Aging, Cultural Competency (including Disability Culture), Teaching Strategies, Time Management, Crisis Intervention, Advocacy, Community and Service Networking (developing relationships), Physiology and Medical conditions and Assessment. There was discussion that these topical areas might be college level material in case someone wants to go on for a higher degree and there could be credits received for the coursework if someone were interested.

The group had some divided conversation over who this Path would be for – just DSP level or as a stepping stone for managers. The DSP's in the group strongly defended the need to make this Path one geared for new people coming into the field as well as DSP's who are seasoned workers. How to grandfather or even who to do that for was touched on briefly but it was felt it better to come back to that at another time.

Another key discussion point was how soon the courses should occur within either hiring process or for existing staff that choose to participate. Some wanted the level one courses to begin the first day on the job, others within a month, possibly allowing a year, while still others thought that they should be taken before starting on the job if someone could possibly do that. How that would be arranged and paid for is another question, we realize.

How these skills are best learned was also discussed. In terms of the Level 1 subject areas, the possible methods mentioned were:

- role play/videotaping and giving feedback within the group
- Mentoring
- Interactive methods
- Lecture – structured classroom
- People with disabilities helping to teach
- Group discussions
- Use of case studies
- Sharing successes and problems
- College of Direct Support
- Sensitivity Training
- Discussion of Agency Specific areas
- Instructors who work in the field to validate the teaching goals
- Team teaching
- Instructor swap between agencies
- One on one instruction at the job site

5. The key issues identified

Lots of issues came up within the group in terms of who gets to do this, how would they know about it, can we borrow the curriculum modules developed by other states or agencies, who would teach it, and how/where. Another issue that was important to explore is how to have some flexibility for staff who work with individuals with more severe disabilities to have greater knowledge of things like Transferring and Lifting in Level 1 so they can better support the person.

It was noted that no consumers were present to give their important insights into what staff need to have in terms of skills and competencies. It was felt that their input might change the discussion in terms of what are the priorities vs what agency directors and possibly even DSP's would say.

6. Possible next steps discussed

- a. Define each skill area/subject
- b. Develop Outcome statements for each
- c. Hold Consumer focus groups to review these ideas
- d. Look at existing curriculum so we don't re-invent the wheel
- e. Identify the statewide resource pool for instructors
- f. Bring together a better cross-section of DSP's, consumers, family members, DDD, agency managers and directors, trainers and possibly Human Resource representatives.
- g. Identify possible money sources to write/develop curriculum not already out there

7. The two action steps reported to the full forum

All of them were reported, but there seemed to be strong feelings that it was important to start with defining the skill area/subject and looking at the existing curriculum out there as likely first steps

8. Plan and timeline laid out concerning implication of the two action steps

9. Date or possible dates for next work group meeting – comments ranged from meeting again in one month to waiting until the fall. It was also suggested that maybe a night meeting would permit consumers, more DSP's and possible family members to participate who could not today.
10. Individuals interested in a leadership role in future work group meetings
No one made an advance on this, although a number of DSP's and manager level staff expressed strong desire to be a part of the effort.

Next meeting planned for July 25 at Project Freedom from 5:00 – 8:30.

Appendix D: STRUCTURE AND ACCESS WORK GROUP REPORT

Lead Contact: Jonathan Campbell, ABCD
609-581-8375
jonathan@abcdnj.org

Facilitators: Jonathan Campbell, Celine Fortin, Mary Ann Basileo (note taker)

Work Group Members: See attached list

Discussion Overview:

The morning session of the work group reviewed the morning presentations and discussed impressions of those and of the focus group information. Impressions included:

- Program sounds similar to DYFS Career Ladders program
- Buy-in is important re: cost of turnover (need to realize that solutions are not too costly when cost of turnover is considered)
- Should recognize and share what people do right

The afternoon session looked at key issues, questions and action steps.

Key Issues Identified:

- Motivation for agencies to buy in
- Training time (how much is needed, scheduling, etc.)
- Recognition/incentives (for agency and employee)
- How to measure competence
- Should it start with pilot? (Sometimes pilots don't expand; need to ensure it continues)
- Look at DYFS Career Ladder model: can we draw from it?
- State/DDD investment in on-line program
- Establish cooperative among larger agencies
- What to do with long-term employees: Should they be grandfathered in? They may need program more than new people (may be rigid, "set in ways")

Key Questions for Work Group with Recommendations:

- 1) How to provide coverage for training to occur:
 - Hire someone to provide relief for staff going to training (e.g., "Floater"); could be an extra position for Senior Staff person
 - Flexibility of scheduling for training
 - Shorter training days/sessions (e.g., may be easier to cover 2 half days than a full day)
 - Convenient locations for training
 - Online training; video conference; web-cast
 - Link with Unemployment system of training
 - Agencies could work together to cover each other (Possible barriers: Union issues; cross-training; pay issues)

- Use Sub. pool; independent providers
- 2) Should it be voluntary for employees? Agencies?
 The majority of the group felt it should be voluntary for employees, but mandatory for agencies. Thoughts/recommendations follow:

Employees:

- Need some type of incentive so people will participate
- Have mix of voluntary/involuntary (i.e., certain “required” courses)
- Trainings should be available in other languages
- How to encourage participation: financial and recognition incentives; opportunities for growth; make it easily accessible; advertise; regional (location) flexibility

Agencies:

- Should be mandatory for agencies to receive funding
- Start as mandatory and see how it goes
- Letter to educate agencies re: benefits of program
- Provide technical support to agencies
- How to encourage participation (if not mandatory): Reward agencies for participating (e.g., more funding; access to training materials; flexibility); financial assistance for first few years to get it started, and to pass along to people taking courses

3) How would the records be kept?

- By agency (individual file/portfolio)
- By state via large data base (i.e., if employee goes to another agency, can look up in data base to see credentials)
- By individual: Have secure data base for employee to access own records
- Use system similar to Pre-Service, i.e., Individual/agency keep certificates or portfolio

4) Program Structure:

- #1 is to come up with components of program (need info. from Curriculum Work Group)
- Classroom work: possibly on regional basis; work with local Community College; purchase course(s)
- OJT: Need certain number of hours, but possibly could pick site (other agency?). Possible issue: may not “jive with” sending agency philosophy, practice, etc.
 - Find out which agencies are willing to be sites for more specialized learning
 - Who might have training available in other languages?
 - Have inventory of sites willing to share expertise and what that expertise is
 - Survey of agencies who want to participate
 - What about access for agencies/employees providing in-home supports (they don't go to facility-based locations)?
- Can Continuing Education resources be used?

Action Steps: Discussion centered around topic of what we need to do to get agencies involved, how to get "buy-in" to begin, how to find out who is interested, etc. The two preliminary questions and action steps are:

1) Question: What do we need to do to get agencies involved?

Action Step: Develop marketing package (including Speaker's Bureau?) to market idea/concept

- Keep it generic and brief
- Determine what motivates people
- Decide who to target in agencies (HR? Exec.? Both?)
- Involve DSPs: target them so they ask agencies about program
- Two tracks: Execs. and DSPs
- Find out biggest objection to program (cost?) and market to that; gear message to overcome that
- Combine package with people going to agency (i.e., information goes to Exec. with request to go out and speak about it)
- Table at NJACP conference? Abilities Expo?

2) Question: Who is interested/who do we ask?

Action Step: Develop and send survey to agencies with purpose of identifying those interested in participating/what they can offer

- Is agency willing to offer on-site training (e.g., open own trainings, provide job shadowing, etc.)?
- Need to identify what we're looking for
- What are expectations of agency: availability (time/space); qualifications of trainer
- Number of people they can accommodate
- Primary interest (i.e., Receive staff? Send staff? Both?)
- Connections they have in community (colleges, etc.)
- Need to get information from Curriculum Work Group so we know areas to include
- Number of potential trainees for program?
- Surveys need to reach right person(s): need updated contact list
- Whose letterhead does it go on? Develop our own? **Develop an identity.**

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 16, 2006;

Time: 10:00-12:00

Location: The Arc of NJ, New Brunswick

Appendix E: Contracting and Revenue

The group, while small, was composed of a good mix of large agency staff, small agency staff and State fiscal employees. The exercise started with reactions to the morning's speakers.

Notes:

1. The long term effect of instituting a comprehensive staff training program should be "cost neutral".
2. Agencies must get buy-in from management/CFO who generally does not like to put large amounts of money out with the "expectation" that one day it will all be worth it.
3. Will there be new money sources to pay for training? State funds, grants, budget modification?
4. How can we restructure what we currently have to pay for training?
5. Will agencies need more flexibility when contracting with DDD to support changes in budgets, policies, etc?
6. Currently, there is a long approval process for budget modifications.
7. End of fiscal year brings pressure to "spend down" funds for agencies and for DDD. Can these available funds be used for training? What type of planning would be required?
8. Can some under spending be carried over for training?
9. Can some of "reclaimed" waiver money be used for workforce development?
10. Because of low salaries paid to DSP's, most work second job making training even more difficult.
11. Can contract reimbursement be based on participation in training program? i.e. if an agency has 20% of DSP workforce in training program, reimbursement ceiling is 3% higher.
12. Current state of affairs dictates strict adherence to CCW guidelines. DSP's must understand how important the CCW is and how to ensure all consumers are eligible at all times. This will maximize funds.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the Community Care Waiver and its importance. None of the group members was a waiver "expert", but the group had enough information to have an intelligent discussion. More comprehensive information will be needed to finalize the discussion.

Some states do pay for workforce development through the waiver. It is not clear how they are doing it but it is something that must be explored.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group made up of provider agency financial staff and DDD fiscal staff to discuss cost saving ideas so that a portion of each contract can be dedicated to workforce development without sacrificing service delivery.
2. Investigate how other states are using their waiver to pay for training.

Appendix F: New Jersey Direct Support Professional Workforce Development Coalition

Mission:

To promote the recruitment and retention of a professional workforce to enhance the quality of direct supports for people with disabilities and their families.

Objectives

We will do this by:

1. Supporting the choice of direct support professional as a life long career through
 - Advocating for wages and other benefits that allow direct support professionals to remain in the profession.
 - Building the competencies of direct support professionals through opportunities for education and professional development
 - Increasing public awareness and appreciation of direct support professionals.
2. Building partnerships among agencies, funding sources, educational institutions, families, and consumers to:
 - Develop effective strategies for recruitment and retention
 - Shape policies that strengthen the quality of direct support professionals on a state and national level.
3. Improving the quality of the work environment for direct support professionals, through:
 - Promoting innovative management practices.
 - Strengthening skills of front line supervisors.
 - Creative uses of direct support professionals that value their skill and experience.
4. Encouraging the existence and growth of the New Jersey Direct Support Professional Association, by:
 - Disseminating information about the NJ DSP Association and planned regional meetings.
 - Providing web site links to information about the Association.
 - Supporting a second state-wide summit for direct support professionals.

Organizational Structure

Steering Committee:

- Representatives from networks, constituencies, or regions, including provider networks, state agencies, families, self advocates, direct support professionals, educational institutions/networks. Membership on this is representational and reflects commitment to work.
- Quarterly meetings generally midway between General Membership meetings.

General Membership.

- Quarterly meetings open to anyone.
- **Mailing list database** membership at The Boggs Center is open to anyone committed to the above mission. **Email listserv** is open to anyone committed to mission. To join, send an email to Elizabethl.Ong@umdnj.edu.

New Jersey Direct Support Professional Association Mission Statement:

The New Jersey Direct Support Professional Association is an alliance of frontline human service workers dedicated to enhancing the quality of services provided through the development of the workforce. We are striving to increase the recognition of the value of the work done by Direct Support Professionals (DSP). In order to achieve this we need to gain respect and acknowledgement. We also look for opportunities for professional development through continuing education, statewide certification, and a career ladder. We seek to provide a forum for DSP's to congregate ideas and have a voice in state and national matters that affect us. We will work to influence policy and decision-making as it impacts service providers, service recipients, and families.

Comments:

*"The NJ DSP Association was a vision a few years ago at the Workforce Development Summit held in Princeton. A small group of people has been working steadily on this idea to help build a professional network, not a union, one that would recognize and enhance the incredibly valuable work done by direct support staff. Let's hope it grows."
Bill Gaventa, The Boggs Center*

*"As an association Executive, I and the Executives at our member agencies fully recognize and support the importance and value of a forum for individuals doing similar work to come together and share ideas, such as the DSP association. The cornerstone of a strong association is its ability to provide constructive and proactive networking opportunities for its members that lead to positive and innovative advances in the field, in this case, services for people with developmental disabilities. NJACP members are the agencies who employ the vast majority of DSPs. We value the work DSPs do every day and believe it would be a great thing for the DSP Association and NJACP member agencies to work hand in hand to continue to create a strong and viable community-based system of services for people with developmental disabilities."
Diane Conway, Ph.D. Executive Director*

To Join:

There are two ways to be part of the Association:

1. There is a free listserv for the direct support professionals who want to be members of the network. To join, email Beth Ong at The Boggs Center, ongel@umdnj.edu and ask to join the NJDSPA@lists.umdnj.edu.
2. The Association is seeking the support a base to help with membership lists, addresses, mailings, etc. For the time being, if you are interested in being a member, send your name, agency, address, and phone number to:

NJDSPA
Attn: Pat Gerke
The Boggs Center
P.O. Box 2688
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903