Inclusion of People with Disabilities

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Inclusion means everyone, regardless of one's abilities, disabilities, support or health care needs, has the right to participate in and have access to every facet of life, alongside everyone else, without exception. Everyone means everyone.

One of the most critical needs and characteristics of humans is the need for a sense of belonging and connection to others. Society itself is the result of this common need to belong, and having a disability in no way lessens this need.

Our need to belong and connect with others begins at birth between parents and child. This incredible bond extends with siblings and our extended family members. Over time, shared life experiences strengthen these connections: comforting one another through hardships and grief, striving for and achieving common goals, celebrating each person's accomplishments, and supporting and loving one another. Supporting these initial bonds and ensuring people have opportunities to build relationships throughout their community results in benefits to the individuals involved and reduces the need for formal support systems over a person's lifetime.

Disability is a natural aspect of the human condition. For society to flourish it is imperative we ensure all individuals with disabilities, regardless of severity, have access to and are provided with the opportunities, experiences, and benefits of participating in all aspects of community life.

Inclusion affords countless reciprocal and loving relationships, and offers Louisiana communities the gifts and talents of thousands of our citizens. Inclusion of people with disabilities is the right thing to do – morally, socially and legally. The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council believes all people, including those with the most severe challenges, have the right and should have access to supports to live in their own homes and to learn, work, and play alongside everyone else in the community.