

People with Disabilities

Many people live with disabilities, and sometimes may need special assistance to live in and feel part of the community. People with disabilities can be any age, from infants to the elderly. A top priority among many people with disabilities, and those that help care for them, continues to be improving community-based services, including access to information about services, affordable housing, after-school programs, employment support, and accessible transportation, to facilitate their inclusion in all activities of daily life.

Note: This chapter will deal primarily with issues related to developmental and physical disabilities. For more information on mental illness, please see *Goal 4: Health Care to Be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible*. For more information about *Older Adults or Veterans*, please see these sections under *Specific Populations*.

What's Working?

- Kinderling Center, a non-profit neuro-developmental center for infants and children with special needs and their families, provides a wide range of services including comprehensive developmental assessment and family counseling. They also

provide consultation for childcare providers to learn how to support children's successes in childcare. In 2008, Kinderling provided over 500 hours of technical assistance to providers in Bellevue serving 90 children birth to five years old. Due to the Child Care Consultants' intervention, more than 95% of the child care centers maintain or improve their retention rates of children with challenging behaviors.

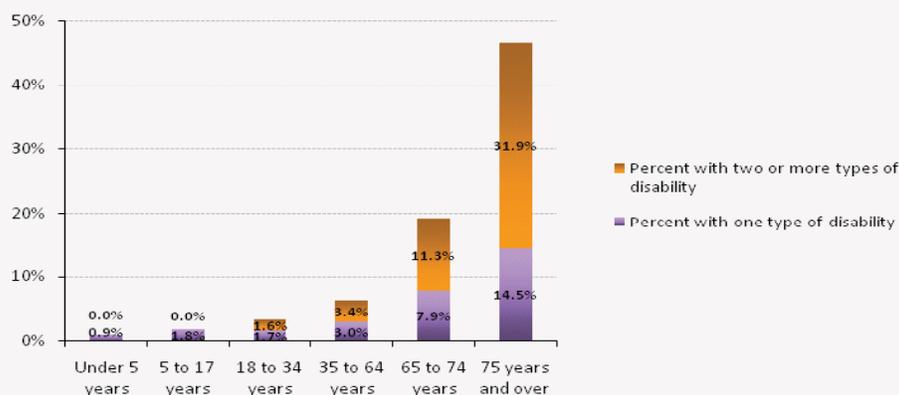
- SOAR, helping kids reach for the sky, an initiative in King County that works to ensure that kids birth to 18 succeed in school and in life, in collaboration with King County Division of Developmental Disabilities, Early Intervention Program, sponsored a pilot of multi-lingual peer helpers called *Promotores* to network in the Latino community to educate parents about developmental stages for young children, and where to get screenings and resources in case there are concerns.

Prevalence Adults

- According to the 2005-2007 ACS estimates, 40,959,608 million people in the U.S. have some type of long-lasting condition or disability. This represented 15% of the

Bellevue Population with Disabilities by Age (2008 ACS)

* The likelihood of having a disability increases with age.

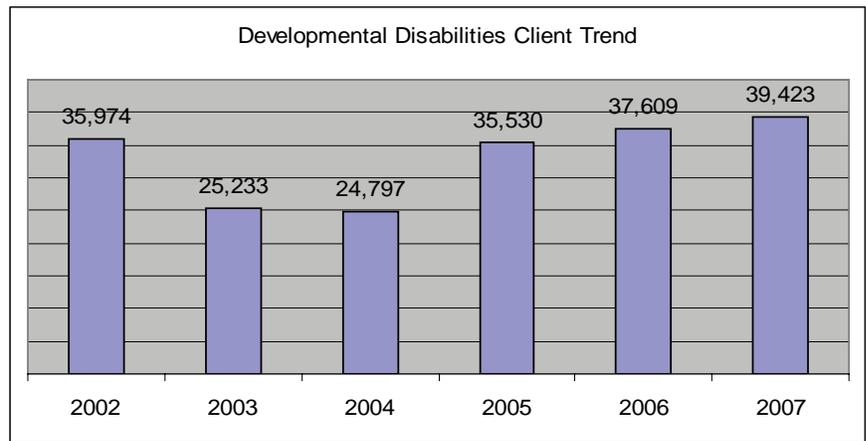


273,064,053 million people age five and older in the non-institutionalized population.¹

- According to 2008 ACS estimates, approximately 8.8% of Bellevue's population 5 years and older have a disability. More specifically, approximately 10,680 residents reported having at least one disability. Among

the different disabilities reported, 2.4% were hearing; 1.4%, vision; 3.7%, cognitive; 5.5% ambulatory; 2.9% self-care; and 4.3% independent living.²

- Developmental disabilities are severe physical and/or mental impairments that occur before adulthood, are permanent and limit an individual's ability to function. Washington State's current definition includes epilepsy, autism, cerebral palsy and mental retardation. The prevalence rate of developmental disabilities, as defined in federal law, has been estimated to be 11.3 people per thousand (1.13%) of the non-institutionalized U.S. population.



Source: Washington State DSHS Client Participation Report

Service Trends

People with Developmental Disabilities

- The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Division of Developmental Disabilities' (DDD) most recent client participation report indicates that there were 39,423 persons in the State who were enrolled in their services at the end of September 2008, about 5% more than the 37,609 served in 2006.³
- As of December 2008, there were 4,875 adults with developmental disabilities enrolled in the State program in King County.⁴
- Enrollment has also increased over the last few years for services offered by the King County Division of Developmental Disabilities (KCDDD). Since 1980, the KCDDD client caseload has increased by about 6% per year; between 2004 and 2005, there was a 10% increase. KCDDD forecasts a continued annual increase in caseloads, based on Washington State population estimates and a national trend in which the number of babies born with developmental delays and special health care

needs is increasing. This increase is partly due to medical advances that enable infants who might not have survived several years ago to live. Another factor is longer life expectancies for persons with developmental disabilities.⁵

- As of June 30, 2009, 702 Bellevue residents were receiving services from KCDDD, slightly more than two years ago. Of those receiving services, over half (57%) are under 18 years old.⁶

Residential Habilitation

- Since the 1960s, there has been a decrease in the number of people with all disabilities who live in institutions, and an increase in the number who live in the community. The civil rights movement was a motivator for people with disabilities to seek jobs, housing and activities in their own communities instead of institutions. The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990, eliminating discrimination in housing, employment, transportation, and public accommodation. More recently, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that states must place people with disabilities in community settings when appropriate.⁷
- Statewide, the number of persons with developmental disabilities living in residential habilitation centers (RHCs) and nursing homes, which are facilities which provide intensive nursing care and skill development for those who are severely disabled, has decreased dramatically. In 2007, there

were fewer than 1,000 individuals in these facilities, compared to 4,145 at their peak in 1967. Average annual cost per client living in RHCs is \$136,862 compared to \$12,874 per client annually to receive personal support services.⁸

- The State DDD replaced its Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Community Alternatives Program (CAP) Waiver with five waivers. Four waivers - Basic, Basic Plus, Core, and Community Protection - were renewed effective April 1, 2007. The newest waiver, the Children’s Intensive In-home Behavioral Support (CIIBS) waiver, was effective May 1, 2009. Each of the five waivers provide an array of services tailored to the specific populations they serve. Waiver services provide additional supports when Medicaid state plan services and other supports are not sufficient.⁹ Problems have arisen, however, because the enrollment in some of the waivers is at capacity. People with identical service needs may not receive equal services if waivers are not available for them, such as for young children or people whose support needs were identified or have increased after the waivers had reached capacity.¹⁰

Residential Services

- In Washington State, the majority of people with developmental disabilities (97%) live in the community, most with their families. The remaining 3% either live in their own homes receiving non-facility supported living services or in licensed group care, such as adult family, boarding, or nursing homes.¹¹ For those who can’t live independently, supported living services offer instruction and support to persons who live in their own homes in the community. Supports may vary from a few hours per month up to 24 hours per day of one-to-one support. Clients pay for their own rent, food and other personal expenses.¹² Adult family

homes (licensed facilities for six residents or more) and boarding homes (licensed facilities for seven or more residents) are available as an intermediate level of care. Nursing homes support people who need the assistance of 24-hour nursing staff. In 2009, there are 126 adult family homes, ten boarding homes and two nursing facilities licensed by the State in Bellevue.¹³ Some of these facilities also serve frail elderly people and individuals with other disabilities, such as those related to head injuries, strokes or chronic diseases.

- In 2008, 2,988 adults in King County on the Washington State DDD caseload received “residential services” for housing. “Residential services” are comprehensive housing support services provided in community based housing by agencies that contract with the Washington State DSHS/DDD.
- An additional 1,717 adults on the DDD caseload in King County do not receive “residential services”. Many of these adults have a need for affordable housing, either because their current housing causes them to be extremely rent burdened or because they live with an aging parent who cannot continue to care for them. Of the 4,705 adults in King County on the Washington State DDD caseload, 3,293 live in King County outside Seattle.¹⁴
- Many providers believe there is a crisis looming regarding the increased support needs of aging people with developmental disabilities who live at home with older adult

Individuals Age 35+ Enrolled in Region 4 DDD and Living in Parent's Home	
Age Group	Number
35-44	276
45-54	117
55+	27
Total	420
Source: King County Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services 2005-2007	

parents. As of January 2005, 420 individuals enrolled in DDD Region 4, which includes King County, were age 35 and above and living in their parent's home (see chart on previous page). Families who are caring for this population are aging, and need assistance with meeting the changing needs of their adult child with a disability and transition planning, including potentially other living options for their son or daughter.¹⁵

- AtWork! staff report that some of their clients have received services from this agency from several years to over 30 years. As they age, many are developing additional disabling conditions and seeing increased impact from their disabilities.¹⁶
- The Arc of King County Senior Family Caregiver Program provides services to older adult caregivers, usually parents, of adults with developmental disabilities. In some cases, the adults with disabilities have always lived at home, and are not connected with any services. The Arc staff report that transition services, including finding housing, in-home caregivers, sheltered employment and legal help to set up guardianships and trusts, are frequently requested. Gaps include low-cost legal services for caregivers who are not low-income, but still cannot afford the full cost of attorney fees, and housing with support services.¹⁷

"Our demand has significantly increased for community-based services as a result of the state's Working Age Adult Policy. The economic downturn has added to the demand for employment services to a wider range of disability levels."
Provider Survey, AtWork!

the high cost of housing. An individual on SSI could only afford \$191/month rent (30% of income). However, the Fair Market rent for a one bedroom apartment in the Seattle-Bellevue Metropolitan area is \$677/month, more than the entire check.¹⁸ For individuals who rely solely on their SSI

check for income, or even who receive supported employment services which pays higher wages, market rate housing is not an option.

- In response to the need for more independent housing units, KCDDD has begun to assist in capital funding of housing that reserves the lowest income units in new affordable, multi-family housing for their clients, and also come with an additional operating subsidy, like Section 8, to ensure that units are affordable. On the Eastside, there are 2 facilities, both in Kirkland, Plum Court and Summerwood, developed by Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH) and funded in part by A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), that have such set-aside units for 9 families or single adults with disabilities.¹⁹ Other housing funded by ARCH with set-aside units for people with disabilities on the Eastside include Stillwater (19 units) in Redmond; Parkview Condos (four units) in Bellevue; and Parkview Homes VI (six units) in Bothell/Bellevue.²⁰
- Locally, affordable housing for people with all disabilities is in high demand. Approximately 20% of Washington adults with developmental disabilities live in their own apartment or home.²¹ Besides these individuals, many others seek low-cost housing. The Alliance of People with disAbilities serves anyone with any disability at any age. Many of the people who ask for assistance have multiple, complex disabilities. Housing is the top need (21% of calls to their office), followed by legal assistance for

Affordable Housing for Independent Living

- Finding affordable housing in the community is challenging for many people, but those with disabilities who seek an independent living arrangement, such as an apartment, have additional barriers. In 2008, *Out of Reach*, an annual report of the cost of rental housing affordability in the U.S., stated that the 7.4 million individuals receiving federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of \$637/month are particularly vulnerable to

discrimination (11%). The Alliance has a Disabilities Law Project that handles civil rights cases for people with disabilities. Staff in their Redmond office have also seen an increase in requests for help in applying for disability benefits such as Social Security, programs for youth, and health care.²²

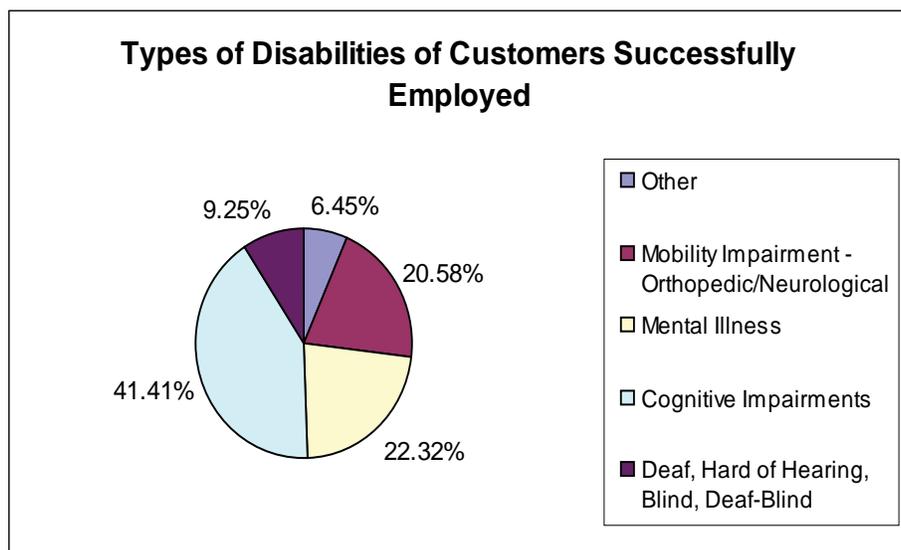
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- The State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is the primary funder of employment services for people with disabilities. About 42% of DVR clients have cognitive impairments including developmental disabilities, about a quarter are mentally ill, 20% have mobility impairments, 9% are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or deaf-blind, and 5% have other disabilities. DVR eliminated its waiting list for services effective February 11, 2008. DVR had been operating with a waiting list since November 2000. At its peak, the waiting list had over 14,000 individuals. In 2008, DVR received 9,527 applications; in 2009, DVR is on pace to receive about 11,500. In 2008, higher numbers of DVR clients experienced mental illness as a primary or secondary disability than in previous years and DVR has been less successful

helping these clients achieve employment outcomes. In addition, DVR had less success with individuals living in poverty and older populations. Since these are growing populations in the State, new efforts are underway to increase partnerships and service delivery options.²³ In 2008, DVR reported 2,357 total rehabilitations, at an

average cost of \$5,850 per client.²⁴

- Bellevue clients represent 3.4% of the open DVR cases in Washington State as of September 30, 2008. Between October 2007 and September 2008, 411 applications for services were received at the Bellevue DVR office. Bellevue DVR clients continued to have slightly higher rate of rehabilitation compared to the State (64.8% vs 60.4%). Average hourly wages for Bellevue clients when they are placed in jobs are \$11.29, higher than the State average of \$10.99.²⁵
- The high unemployment rate in the State has made it even more challenging for people with disabilities to find jobs. In a competitive environment, job developers are forced to be more creative to find work for their clients. With reimbursement being outcome-based, agencies are struggling to maintain operation while doing the time-intensive and challenging work of matching clients with appropriate positions. The chart below provides the percentage of clients statewide within each disability category who were successfully employed in 2008. Compared to two years ago, slightly more people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or deaf-blind and mobility impairments have been employed.²⁶



Source: 2008 Data from Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, July, 2009

King County Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

- KCDDD funds long-term employment services for adults with developmental disabilities (ages 21 and over) who are enrolled with the Division Employment Vendors in the community to provide ongoing support, job coaching, and job replacement services as needed to these individuals. However, State funding is insufficient to cover the cost of day programs/employment supports for the approximately 4,000 working-age adults enrolled in the King County DDD program.
- The State Division of Developmental Disabilities released a policy, effective July 1, 2004, promoting gainful employment in integrated settings in the community for working-age adults with developmental disabilities. King County DDD is partnering with local employers, employment vendors, such as AtWork!, located on the Eastside, families, individuals with disabilities and government agencies in identifying challenges, discussing potential impacts, and suggesting ways to overcome challenges to fully implement the Working-Age Adult Policy in King County.²⁷

Non-Profit Agencies Offering Employment Services

- AtWork!, a non-profit agency that provides employment services for people with disabilities, has found success helping individuals find jobs through Customized Employment. A discovery process identifies the abilities of individuals who have historically been excluded from working. Through volunteering, work trials, and one-on-one job coaching, each person establishes vocational goals and builds a resume that demonstrates skills needed by employers. Through outreach to businesses in King County and employer education, AtWork! works with companies to customize positions that take advantage of an individual with

disabilities' unique talents while meeting a critical business need.

- In July 2007, AtWork! implemented the Working Age Adult Policy, so that all of its clients will be in community-based worksites, at least for a portion of the time; this model requires more intensive, 1-1 staff support. Currently the demand for this service has increased significantly, particularly due to the economic downturn. In June 2009, they had served 218 clients; 75 were Bellevue residents.²⁸

Transition Programs for High School Graduates with Developmental Disabilities

- If high school students with disabilities do not have appropriate work experience and transition services while still in high school, they are often unsuccessful in finding employment. In King County, an estimated 584 individuals will be exiting high school transition programs over the next four years. To address this need, KCDDD, in collaboration with a series of partners, provides the *King County School to Work Project*, a program that helps young adults ages 20-21 with developmental disabilities transition from high school to the community, hopefully to a job. This program, funded in partnership with the Bellevue School District, provides work experience while students are still in school, and has been highly successful. Approximately 70% of these King County graduates are non-waiver leaving them with no funding available for employment supports.²⁹ During the 2009 State Legislative session, the budget did not include any designated funding for this program which would serve about 1,400 high school graduates needing employment statewide.
- AtWork! provides School to Work Transition services to students in local school districts. Working with high school staff, AtWork! Professional Employment Consultants serve the needs of individual

students through community work experience, job trials, resume development, job search, job placement and on the job coaching while in school and after graduation. In 2009, the program served six students; three of them were Bellevue residents.³⁰ Another organization, Alliance for People with disabilities, also runs a high school-to-work transition program that serves East King County.

Increasing Cultural Diversity

- The recent King County Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services has identified a need for culturally competent services and outreach for the increasing number of people from diverse ethnic and cultural communities. This goal is also included in the King County Plan for Early Intervention Services.³¹ According to the 2005-2007 ACS, King County as a whole has about 27% of its population who identified themselves as non-Caucasian. Nineteen percent of King County residents are foreign-born and 23% speak a language other than English at home.
- In Bellevue, providers of services for people with disabilities describe a small but growing trend of diversity among their participants. Kinderling Center reports an increasing number of diverse families using their services; staff tailor their programs to better serve Latino families more effectively, for example, by learning how this culture views sleep, eating, and the role of language. Highland Community Center noted that they are seeing some participants from other cultures, but sometimes people with disabilities are “hidden” from the public. Staff from Elder and Adult Day Services speak over 15 languages in order to be more accessible to their participants.³²

“As a result of the economic downturn, clients served within the manufacturing enterprise at AtWork! have made less wages. Clients are now less able to have money to pay for social and leisure activities increasing the need for home staff. As the local rate of unemployment is at record high, all individuals have been slowed in obtaining community employment.”
Provider Survey, AtWork!

a high number of participants living with developmental and physical disabilities. In 2008, 375 individuals participated in 122 different programs at the

Need for Additional Recreational Opportunities

- The City of Bellevue Department of Parks and Community Services provides specialized recreation opportunities for those living with disabilities as well as inclusion support to participate in generalized recreation. The majority of specialized programs occur at the Highland Community Center and several programs are based at the Tennis Center and the Aquatics Center. The Bellevue Youth Theater, Kelsey Creek Farms, Northwest Center and the Crossroads Community Center experience a high number of participants living with developmental and physical disabilities. In 2008, 375 individuals participated in 122 different programs at the Highland Community Center, which is one of the highest drop-off and pick-up sites for the Metro Access program. A Recreation Inclusion Coordinator is in place to assist with accommodations or adaptations to reinforce successful experiences in general recreation programs. Bellevue has financial agreements with Kirkland and Mercer Island to provide specialized services to residents of these two cities, as well. Highland Center staff report a trend in fewer youth with a variety of disabilities, but increasingly more living with autism, participating in after-school and summer camp programs, and fewer people with disabilities signing up for daytime programs due to changes in funding from the State DDD. Other specialized recreation programs in Bellevue are offered by Catholic Community Services, Special Olympics of Washington, Special Care agency and OUTDOORSFORALL.
- Elder and Adult Day Services provides a program for adults 18-45 years old with

developmental disabilities. This program provides activities for them, five days/week and also serves as respite for their older parents.

Transportation Gaps

- Transportation continues to be a critical need for many people in King County, and especially affects people with disabilities. In a survey completed by a wide range of human service providers on the Eastside in 2009, it was identified as the top barrier for clients accessing services. In the phone survey, almost 7% of respondents said that getting special transportation for an elderly person or a person with disabilities was a major or moderate problem.
- The demand for special needs transportation is growing, and many transportation providers are struggling to provide it. The King County Special Needs Coordinated Transportation Plan, completed in 2006, was created in response to a federal law requiring jurisdictions to coordinate efforts to serve the needs of people with disabilities, older adults, youth and people with lower incomes. During the creation of that plan, service gaps identified by consumers included lack of access to information about schedules and physical access to bus stops, lack of extended hours of service, and a shortage of personal services and facilities. The plan will be updated in 2010.³³
- King County Metro's ACCESS program fills some of the need for door-to-door service for some people with disabilities, but continues to have gaps for many customers. In 2008, Metro's Accessible Services Advisory Committee (ASAC) began an intensive review of the client eligibility and re-certification process for use of Metro's Access Transportation Service, working collaboratively with Metro staff. The

"Sometimes aging parents caring for adult children with developmental disabilities cannot address all their health care issues, and also cannot get their children to activities so often they stay home."
Key Informant Interview, Highland Community Center Staff

committee's goal is to develop an advisory recommendation on the eligibility process from the customer's point of view—from the time a customer requests information about paratransit service through the application process, including the functional evaluation at Harborview Medical Center, eligibility letter, appeal process, and recertification.

The committee also sent a letter to the Metropolitan King County Council supporting then-King County Executive Ron Sims' proposed increase for Access

Transportation Service fares, but expressed concern about the proposed 50-percent increase in the cost of an Access pass as disproportionately affecting riders with limited fixed incomes. The committee also expressed its support for the exploration of new revenue sources for transit.³⁴

Prevalence Children

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in the United States, 17% of children have a developmental or behavioral disability such as autism, mental retardation, and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. In addition, many children have delays in language or other areas, which also impact school readiness. However, less than 50% of these children are identified as having a problem before starting school, by which time significant delays may have already occurred and opportunities for treatment have been missed.³⁵
- For the year beginning July 2008 through June 2009, the King County Early Intervention System served 2,664 children birth to three, which represented 3.1% of the County's estimated birth to three population, as calculated using birth data. On any given day in July 2009, 130 children aged birth to three living in Bellevue zip codes

were receiving services. The annualized unduplicated number of children receiving services in these zip codes is estimated to be 250 children. In King County 27% of the infants and toddlers who participate in early intervention no longer need special intervention services by age three. Since 2008 DSHS/DDD funding for this entitlement service has been lidded. Due to increased enrollment in King County, this resulted in a 30% reduction in DDD funding for each enrolled child. In 2008, early intervention agencies report provided \$1,000,000 in uncompensated services.³⁶

Service Trends

Need for More Funding for Early Intervention Services

- All children age birth to three who have disabilities are guaranteed early intervention services under a federal regulation called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C. King County Developmental Disabilities Division is the Local Lead Agency that contracts to provide these services to children and families. Early intervention (EI) services have been shown by extensive research to be crucial in minimizing the effects of the disabilities and result in better outcomes for these children later in their lives. However, in King County, children are being referred to EI programs at lower rates than expected. A recent study recommended engaging physicians more effectively so they better understand how the EI system works.³⁷
- The local system of services required by law includes ChildFind (information and outreach), an assessment of children’s developmental levels, Family Resources Coordination, an Individual Family Services Plan and Parents Rights. More early intervention services are being provided

“We have seen a significant increase in children who demonstrate challenges with sensory integration, emotional regulation, and coping.”
Provider Survey, Kindering Center

in home and community settings in programs designed for typically developing children, which is a best practice. King County contracts with providers for Child Development services, and, in the past, could increase funds to the providers as their caseloads grew. But though the rate of growth in referrals has averaged over 10% annually over the past five State budget cycles, no new funding was appropriated for EI services during the 2009-2010 budget cycle. This situation is expected to continue until the economy and thus the State funding picture improves.³⁸

- Kindering Center, one of two Eastside providers of early intervention services, reports a 20% increase in children served between 2006 and 2008 while decreases in state and county funding make it difficult to serve the need. Funding from King County dropped by 29% (\$67 decrease per child per month) and the State dropped 41% (\$54 decrease per child per month). In addition, the number of children they will fund has been capped, which results in no funding for any child over the maximum allotted. This is projected to result in a \$500,000 shortfall for Kindering’s early intervention program.³⁹

More Support and Information for Caregivers

- Early screening of children birth-three for developmental delays is critical to helping families get the services they need as soon as possible. Kindering Center, with a grant from United Way of King County, and SOAR, provided seven free screening events at Crossroads Community Center in Bellevue in 2008. Of the 65 children screened, 10 (15%), needed further evaluations, and five (7%) were advised to have a rescreening.
- According to the most recent King County Early Intervention Service Plan, families

of infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities report the need for more information and assistance from a skilled, knowledgeable person to help them with assessing and coordinating services. To address this need, KCDDD provides multiple ways for families to receive this information, including more opportunities for families whose children are in home and community settings to connect with other parents of children with disabilities.⁴⁰ More information is also needed for services for school-aged children age 3 through 18. Parents report that supports to help their children participate in social and recreational activities with typically developing peers are lacking. For youth 18-21 years old, there is a need for information about employment, recreation, and day programs.⁴¹

Community Perceptions

- In the 2009 phone survey, 17% of respondents indicated that *lack of services for people with disabilities* was a major or moderate problem in the community, similar to past survey results. Roughly 6% of respondents reported in the same survey that *not being able to find programs or affordable care for someone with a disability* was a major/moderate problem in their households, similar to 2005 and 2007 results. Twelve percent of respondents to the 2009 survey reported that there was an adult with disabilities in their household, somewhat higher than previous years; one percent reported a child with a disability. Respondents living in a household that included a person with disabilities were significantly more likely to report one or more major/moderate household problems (67% vs. 48% of respondents who did not live with a person with disabilities). Likewise,

"Special needs childcare is a big challenge to find. If the child does not have a diagnosis yet, it is especially hard to access programs. Many programs have to hire another staff to accommodate the child." *Community Conversation, Child Care Resources Staff*

the average number of major/moderate household problems is significantly higher for those with people with disabilities than for households without (3.77 vs 2.11).

- In the 2009 consumer survey, *not being able to find enough support as a caregiver for an elderly or disabled person* was rated by ten percent of respondents as a major or moderate problem in their household; 12% said that it was a major or moderate problem finding affordable care or programs for a person with a disability.
- Providers working with adults with disabilities frequently mentioned unemployment as a growing issue since the current recession. Many of their clients working in supportive housing settings have been laid-off. Another need is for more free recreational activities.
- Staff from Child Care Resources reported on ongoing shortage of both childcare and after-school care for children with disabilities. Many providers are reluctant to take on special needs kids due to concerns about how to accommodate them without hiring extra staff.

Implications for Action

- Funding for services to people with all types of disabilities is not keeping up with the growth of this population in the State, in King County, and in Bellevue. The result is that there are wait lists for certain services such as housing and family support from KCDDD. And for those programs in which waiting lists are not allowed, agencies are strapped to find additional resources to fill the funding gap. This trend is predicted to continue over the next several years due in part to the higher life expectancy of the aging disabled population, the increase of referrals of children with disabilities, and the continued development of medical procedures that now save the lives of those who in the past may not have survived trauma or complications at birth.

- Lack of affordable housing is as much of a problem for people with disabilities as for the rest of the population, if not greater. The need is growing faster than housing stock is produced. It is especially critical for people with disabilities to find housing in familiar neighborhood settings, near support systems and convenient amenities, in order to maintain their independence to whatever extent they are able. Another growing need in the economic downturn is for more paid and volunteer positions for people with developmental disabilities.
 - Early intervention services for children birth to three with disabilities are under-funded. Research clearly shows that early intervention saves costs later; for some children whose special needs are identified when they are older, critical time is lost. All sectors of the community—medical, business, education, public and non-profit—need to increase their efforts to promote early screening and make it easier for parents and caregivers to find help.
 - Childcare for children with special needs is in very short supply in the community, as are programs appropriate for children age 12 and older. Community-based organizations already providing such services to typically developing children could, with training and support, help to fill this gap.
 - Inclusion of people with all disabilities in all communities needs to be a priority. Research has shown that people with disabilities who experience inclusion early in their lives are more likely to live in and actively contribute to their community as adults.
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