

## Background

As emerging leaders, LEND/PPC family and self-advocate disciplines are uniquely placed to understand the needs of families and individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities and create change. As part of their capstone projects, these trainees created products to provide resources and improve access to individuals in New Mexico.

## Mentoring

Supporting and mentoring all trainees is critical, but family members and self-advocates may require additional mentorship. The NM LEND program mentors family member and self-advocate trainees to identify problems that impact themselves and their communities and to create products that support these needs. Intensive mentoring with family and self-advocate faculty assisted in identifying and focusing in on areas of need within their own lives and creating functional products to use in their communities.



Jeanette Bundy

As the mother of a son with autism, Jeanette developed *My Passport* to support the care and treatment of neurodiverse individuals. Each passport includes: About Me, Communication, Sensory Needs, What Helps Me, Today I Feel..., Questions, Pain, Additional Information, & Notes.



Attention people who care for my health: Please read before you help me with my care and treatment. The use of the passport is important for identifying possible problems quickly.

### Sensory Needs

I am very sensitive to:

- Sounds:
- Light:
- Smells:
- Textures or how things feel:
- Taste:
- Other:

I may need:

- To cover my ears and/or use headphones
- Deep pressure from weighted items to keep me calm
- To move around the room or pace
- Repetitive movements or stimming
- Something in my hands to fidget with
- To avoid noisy areas
- To avoid visually busy or bright areas (overstimulating)
- Spinning
- Jumping
- Swinging
- Have someone tell me about an upcoming change
- Other:

### Pain

I may feel pain differently than others:

- I have a HIGH pain tolerance and may not feel pain as others do:
- I have a LOW pain tolerance and may be extra sensitive to pain:
- Other:

How do you know I am in pain:

- My facial expression may change:
- My body movements may change:
- I may cry:
- Crying, moaning, calling out:
- Pacing or rocking:
- Acting differently, such as:
- Other:

Are you in pain?

Yes No

#### Selecting a Manual Wheelchair

The importance of a wheelchair for people with limited mobility is a well-known fact. It is a tool of empowerment to give individuals the independence to live a more active, mobile, and independent life. Without the tool, they are significantly more and often left in isolation. Choosing a wheelchair that meets individual needs is a complex task. The quality of life for the individual is at stake.

For people with upper body strength, they may choose a manual chair that allows them to propel the chair themselves. This is done by having a handrim, which would be located on the front, back, or sides. There are several types of manual wheelchairs currently available.

Types of manual wheelchairs:

- **Basic wheelchairs:** are made of metal and are the most affordable chairs. They can fit an average person up to 300 pounds. They fold and weigh between 35 and 45 pounds, which can be heavy and difficult to load and unload.
- **Transport wheelchairs:** are usually made of a folding frame and have four casters. These chairs are designed to be pushed by someone else. They are very portable for those who do not need a full-time chair. They may be used in hospitals.
- **Heavy duty wheelchairs:** are designed for heavy individuals weighing between 300 and 500 pounds. Seats can weigh up to 30 inches and can weigh 100 to 150 pounds.
- **Lightweight wheelchairs:** are made of aluminum or titanium and are designed for those who need a chair to get around. They are highly customizable, making them a good choice for those who need a chair for long-term use. They weigh between 15 and 25 pounds, and the seats are typically between 17 and 27 inches, and the wheels are typically between 12 and 16 inches.
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What to know before selecting a manual wheelchair:

- Will someone be pushing the wheelchair?
- Can the chair be used on stairs?
- How much will it weigh when it's full?
- How much will it cost?
- How long will it last?
- How will it transport the chair?

#### Selecting a Power Chair

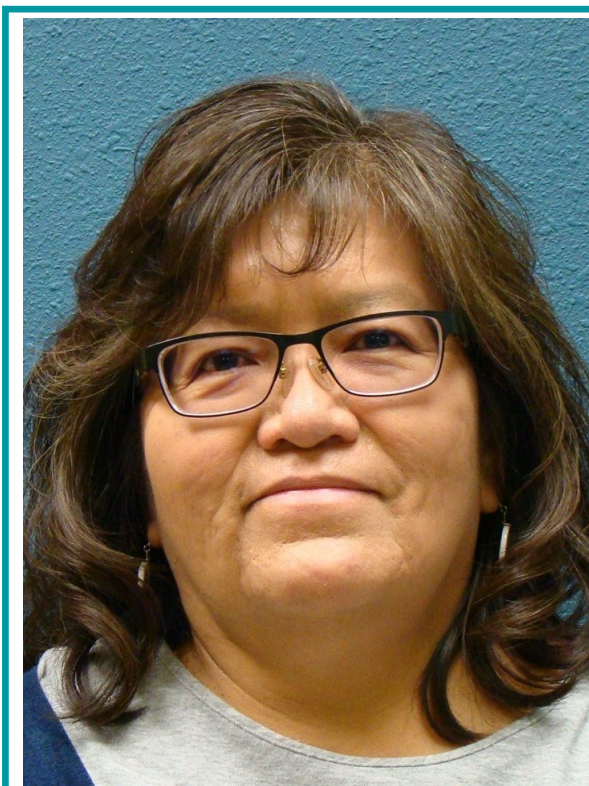
Power chairs are just as customizable as manual chairs. There are a few things to consider for power chairs:

- **Weight:** Power chairs are typically heavier than manual chairs. They are often between 100 and 150 pounds. Some are even heavier. They are often between 100 and 150 pounds. Some are even heavier.
- **Dimensions:** The dimensions will be how wide the chair accommodates an individual's body and how high the chair is. The user should be able to sit in the chair comfortably. The dimensions will be how wide the chair accommodates an individual's body and how high the chair is. The user should be able to sit in the chair comfortably.
- **Range:** Power chairs are typically used on flat surfaces. They are not designed for use on uneven terrain. They are not designed for use on uneven terrain.
- **Speed:** Speed is important if the user is going to use the chair for long distances. They are not designed for use on uneven terrain.
- **Range:** Power chairs are typically used on flat surfaces. They are not designed for use on uneven terrain. They are not designed for use on uneven terrain.
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Steven used his personal experience finding mobility equipment to develop tip sheets for selecting manual and power wheelchairs. His goals were to create products that could be disseminated to others using simple and accessible language. He included useful resources, considerations when selecting wheelchairs, and who to contact.

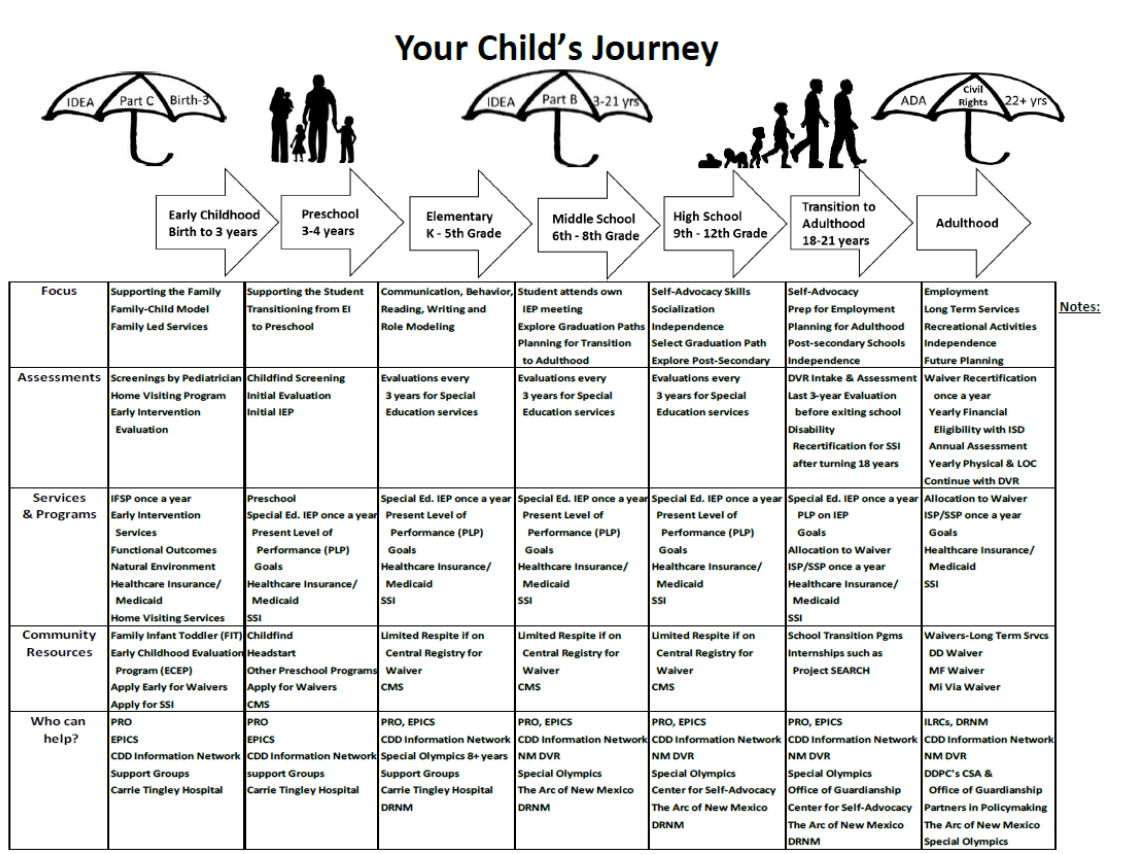


Steven Fischer



Dolores Harden

In Dolores' work as an advocate and parent, she saw that parents of children with disabilities often do not understand how the service system works as they progress through it. She wanted to create a graphic timeline, feeling that storytelling and personal experiences are impactful, particularly for Native American families. To fulfill this need, she created *Supporting Your Child's Journey: A map for helping families of children with disabilities to navigate service systems in New Mexico*.



#### Employment for Individuals with Disabilities – An Overview

Supports are available to help people with disabilities work and earn wages. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities can work in an environment with workers who are not disabled and who are looking for a job. They can also work in a sheltered workshop. Sheltered workshops are places where people with disabilities can learn skills and gain experience. A Supported Employment approach provides support to an individual to be employed in a competitive work environment. A job coach can provide on-the-job training to help the individual learn the skills and tasks of the job. A job coach can also provide support to the employer to help them understand the individual's needs and abilities. A job coach can also provide support to the individual to help them understand the employer's needs and expectations. A job coach can also provide support to the individual to help them understand the employer's needs and expectations.

Sandra found that families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in New Mexico had inconsistent information about employment. Families may not understand that people with significant disabilities can work, what help is available and the options for employment. Prior to participating in NM LEND and creating the *Employment for Individuals with Disabilities* tip sheet, Sandra stated that it was difficult for her to envision her son working one day. She learned the value of an inclusive work community.



Sandra Montoya

## Feedback

The products are an example of leading change that is meaningful to the disability field through collaboration, involving all stakeholders, including family members, self-advocates and professionals in the field. Each emerging leader sought feedback from stakeholders.

## Dissemination

- The Arc of NM
- Partners for Employment
- Centennial Care MCOs
- Children's Medical Services
- NM Disability Planning Council
- NM Technology Assistance Program
- Parents Reaching Out
- Shiprock Disability Network Parent Support Group
- Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs

Available at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability Information Network Library  
[www.cdd.unm.edu/infonet](http://www.cdd.unm.edu/infonet) or  
[almedlock@salud.unm.edu](mailto:almedlock@salud.unm.edu)