



focus facts on community living

OKLAHOMA'S FEDERALLY DESIGNATED UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (UCEDD)

January 2024

Access our website at: <https://ouhsc.edu/thecenter>

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE CENTER FOR LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP!

January is Mental Wellness Month

January is Mental Wellness Month. [The Little Things Mental Health Campaign](#), or #littletings, identifies all the little things that can make big differences in mental health, such as talking about your problems, exercising daily, and getting enough sleep at night. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, need to be connected to resources, and/or need to speak to a trained behavioral health professional, please [call 988](#), Oklahoma's mental health hotline.

New Updates to CLL's Community Guide and Videos are Now Available

The Center for Learning and Leadership (CLL) has updated their most popular product, [Guide to Community Services in Oklahoma](#). The Guide provides detailed information and resources for individuals with disabilities and their families across the lifespan. In addition to updates to the publication, there is now a video walking you through the guide available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Voting and Guardianship in Oklahoma

It's an election year. Are you registered to vote? If not, you can start the registration process through the [Oklahoma State Election Board's website](#). Voters must be registered to vote 25 days before any designated Election Day to cast their ballot. The State Election board has provided a [2024 Voting Information Calendar](#) where you can find information on registration deadlines and voting dates. The [Oklahoma Disability Law Center](#) offers voting resources and information for people with disabilities, including [A Guide to the Voting Rights of People with Mental Disabilities](#).

Oklahoma Human Services Launches New Campaign to Recruit and Retain DSPs

[Oklahoma Human Services has launched a new campaign](#) to address the statewide shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) by rewarding them for their loyalty and tenure called DSP+. In Oklahoma, DSPs are typically referred to as Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) or Habilitation Training Specialists (HTSs). Eligible professionals for this new financial incentive include HTS staff who work through traditional agencies or self-directed services (and utilize Acumen as their employer). PCAs will receive the incentive through their agency of employment. DSP must apply to receive the incentive payment. Learn more through this [report by KOCO](#).

National Agenda for Supporting Families: Continuing the Conversation

National Community of Practice for Supporting Families (CoP), funded by the Administration on Community Living (ACL), hosted a summit to bring together families with lived experience of having a family member with intellectual/developmental disabilities to develop policies, practices, and initiatives to support individuals and families across the lifespan. [Read more about the recommendations and other highlights of The Summit](#).

Events and Announcements

January 16th Broken Arrow & January 17th OKC | DDS Regional Family Meetings | 10am-2pm

Oklahoma Developmental Disability Services (DDS) invites you to their [regional family meetings in January](#). There will be one meeting held in Broken Arrow on Tuesday, January 16th and one in OKC on Wednesday, January 17th. Find out more about moving off the DDS waitlist and get your questions answered at one time, in one place. Lunch is provided. [Register HERE](#)

January 24th | Service and Emotional Support Animals | 2pm | Virtual and FREE

Join the [Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council](#) on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 2:00 p.m. to learn about Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals with the [Southwest ADA Center](#). This training will be on Zoom and is free to attend, [but you must pre-register](#).

January 30th | Using LifeCourse to Plan for Waiver Services | 12pm | Virtual and FREE

Join the [Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD](#), [Oklahoma Family Network](#), and the [Oklahoma Disability Law Center](#) training on Using Life Course to help prepare for waiver services. You will learn about Charting the Life Course tools and how they can help you prepare for long-term support. [Pre-registration required](#).

February 3rd | National Down Syndrome Congress Educator's Conference, Tulsa | 8a-3p | \$100

Calling all Educator's! The [National Down Syndrome Congress \(NDSC\)](#), [Down Syndrome Association of Tulsa \(DSAT\)](#) and the [Down Syndrome Association of Central Oklahoma \(DSACO\)](#) present the Educators Conference in Tulsa taking place on Saturday, February 3rd from 8am-3pm. The Conference offers hands-on, research-based strategies that education professionals can implement immediately to best support their students with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities. CEUs are available. [Visit NDSC's website for more information and to register](#).

February 13th | Basics of Self-Directed Services | 12pm | Virtual and Free

Please join the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD and the Oklahoma Disability Law Center as we share what we know about Self-Directed Services. Learn how other families have used SDS for long-term supports. This training will help you be prepared to determine if you want to choose SDS when the opportunity arises. [Pre-Registration required](#).

Save the Date! | March 27th Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day at the Capitol

Save the date and plan to attend the 2024 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day at the Capitol. This year's theme is We're All In. [You can RSVP to the event and stay posted on the latest information through the event page on Facebook](#).

We want to hear from you!

Do you have news or an event to share? Please send all information including a link (if applicable) to learn2lead-ucedd@ouhsc.edu. All submissions should be in no later than the fourth Friday of the month before publication (ex: 4th Friday in June for July's newsletter).

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The University of Oklahoma advances a diverse, equitable, and inclusive university community by embracing each person's unique contributions, background, and perspectives. OU Norman, OU Tulsa, and the Health Sciences Center recognize that fostering an inclusive environment for all, with particular attention to the needs of the historically marginalized populations, is vital to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of our institutional mission and enhances the OU experience for all students, faculty, and staff. *focus facts* is published for the University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network members. Its purpose is to highlight specific information and data items relevant to developing and sustaining positive community environments. Individual information items are provided for use in this form, or for further circulation. When re-printing information please reference *focus facts* and the month of issue noted below the banner at the top of this page. The name of a contact person for additional information on items referenced in the newsletter is provided for your convenience. If you have data, information or a story to report relevant to community living, please send it to *focus facts* Editor at the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD OU Health Sciences Center, PO Box 2690, Oklahoma City, OK 73126. Please include the information source, by title, a one paragraph (or less) description or story, a contact name who can provide additional information on the subject, and a daytime or evening telephone number for the contact.

If you have questions regarding the format for submissions, please call the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Headquarters Office at (405) 271-4500. The University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network is open to membership by any organization or individual who shares the interests of Network members. The Network is dedicated to identifying opportunities for collaboration and information exchange among its participating members, which leads to improving our statewide, regional or local capacity to provide a better living environment in Oklahoma for people with developmental and other disabilities and their families. The Network is partially supported through a grant from the U.S. Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Offices of the Designated Representatives of the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Collaborating Partners.

If you have a disability (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, Blind/low-vision, mobility, cognitive, etc.), and require accommodations, please reach out to Learn2Lead@ouhsc.edu. It is helpful if you share what type of accommodations will be needed to ensure that you are able to use the resource materials.