

EQUAL JUSTICE JOURNAL



September 2024

Welcome to the **Equal Justice Journal** Newsletter! We're thrilled to have you join us on this journey as we shed light on the critical work of The Arc of New Jersey's Criminal Justice Advocacy Program (CJAP). Our mission is to serve as a vital resource for information regarding offenders, victims, and witnesses with developmental disabilities, acting as a bridge between the criminal justice and human services systems. With over 25,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in prisons across the nation—potentially twice that number—our program is dedicated to advocating for these individuals, ensuring they receive the care and support they need as they navigate complex systems.

In future newsletters, you can expect insights into our advocacy efforts, upcoming events, monthly recaps, and ways you can get involved. Together, we can make a meaningful impact for those we serve. Thank you for being part of our community!

View Our Program Brochure Below:

- [Understanding the Criminal Justice](#)

For Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Families and Caregivers

Criminal Justice Advocacy Program

Don't Miss Out!

Criminal Justice Advocacy Program

The Arc of New Jersey

Personalized Justice Plans for Our Clients

This is How We Help

Things to Know Before You Go to Court

Contact Us

The Arc of New Jersey

- [System](#)
- [Critical Stages](#)
- [Download our Intake and Release of Information Form](#)

Our Intake and Release of Information Form is required to advocate for an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities that has been incarcerated and/or currently has pending charges.

Please return the completed forms to cjap@arcnj.org or via fax# 732.733.6804

Spotlight: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Month

September is dedicated to raising awareness about **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) refers to a range of lifelong physical, cognitive, and behavioral conditions caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. Individuals with FASD often experience difficulties with memory, attention, impulse control, and social skills, making them vulnerable to various challenges, including involvement with the criminal justice system.

These challenges can manifest as trouble understanding consequences, poor judgement, and difficulty with complying with rules or authority, increasing the risk of conflict with law enforcement.

September is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month

approximately **1 in 10** pregnant women ages 15 to 44 in the U.S. used alcohol in the past month*

There is no known safe amount of alcohol or time to drink during pregnancy.

The effects of prenatal alcohol exposure can even occur before a woman knows she is pregnant.

FASD affects 1 to 5% of 1st grade children in the U.S.**

It's never too late! Brain growth occurs throughout pregnancy. The sooner you stop drinking, the better for your baby.

NIH National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism www.niaaa.nih.gov

*SAMHSA, 2018 NSDUH Table 6.20B—Alcohol Use, Binge Alcohol Use, and Heavy Alcohol Use in Past Month among Females Aged 15 to 44, by Pregnancy Status, Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Pregnancy Characteristics: Percentages, 2018 and 2019. **May, P.A., Chambers, C.D., Kalberg, W.O., et al. Prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders in U.S. communities. JAMA 310(3):474-482, 2013. PMID: 23431001

Recognizing the unique needs of individuals with FASD is crucial for creating supportive environments that prevent unnecessary criminalization and promote rehabilitation and justice.

To gain deeper insights into the connection between Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and the criminal justice system, we invite you to watch our recorded webinar from November 18, 2022: **"Exploring a Closer Look: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) and the Criminal Justice System: A Review of Symptomatology."** [Click here to watch the webinar](#) and learn more about the critical challenges individuals with FASD face in the justice system.

Previous Events

Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office (ACPO) hosted an event titled "Breaking Bias: Bridging Divides in Criminal Justice."

Atlantic City, NJ--On Friday, September 13th at Stockton University, Atlantic City Campus' Fannie Lou Hamer Event Room, the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office (ACPO) hosted an event titled "Breaking Bias: Bridging Divides in Criminal Justice."

Nearly 100 invited guests--comprised of law enforcement officials, social service employees, faith leaders, educational administrators, community leaders, and members--learned about efforts made by the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office and its collaborators to address bias and discrimination of all kinds.

CJAP Director Robyn Holt and Case Coordinator Jennifer Catalano, pictured below were among the panelists discussing the needs of individuals with intellectual disability (IDD).



Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)

On September 26, 2024, CJAP Director Robyn Holt and Case Coordinators Hannah Noel, and Karlee Salus conducted a training for law enforcement in Burlington County, focusing on intellectual disabilities and evidence-based de-escalation practices.

If you are law enforcement staff or court personnel interested in coordinating a presentation in your county, please contact rholt@arcnj.org.



Upcoming Events

[Disability Connections: Information & Resource Fair 10:00am to 1:00pm](#)

Join us on **Wednesday, October 9th, 2024 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM** at **Middlesex College, West Hall, Parkview Room**, located at **2600 Woodbridge Ave, Edison, NJ 08837**, for the **Disability Connections Information & Resource Fair**. This event is designed for individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, offering access to a wide range of benefits and services available throughout the county.

CJAP Director **Robyn Holt**, will be discussing *Programs, Trends, and Research Information on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and the Criminal Justice System*.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with vital resources and stay informed! [Click here to register.](#)

Equal Justice Talks Webinar Series

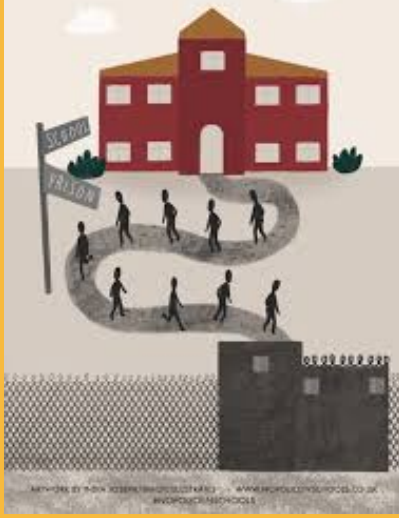


From Classroom to Cell: Understanding and Addressing the School-to-Prison Pipeline for Individuals with IDD

Upcoming Webinar: Thursday, October 17th, 2024 10:00am-11:00am EST.

"New Opportunities under Medicaid to Support Young People in

Correctional Systems"



Join us for an insightful webinar that explores emerging opportunities within Medicaid to better support young individuals involved in the correctional system, with a particular focus on individuals with disabilities. As recent policy changes and innovations create new pathways for healthcare access and rehabilitative services, this webinar will delve into how Medicaid can be utilized to address the unique healthcare needs of incarcerated youth, including those with IDD.

Presenters will discuss key topics such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and continuity of care, as well as the specific needs of individuals with disabilities in carceral facilities.

[Register Here.](#)



Past Webinar: September 26, 2024

If you missed our latest Equal Justice Talks webinar, "Addressing Discipline Issues for Individuals with IDD: Navigating Bullying, Zero Tolerance Policies, and Behavioral Strategies," [click here to watch.](#)

This in-depth session explores the complexities of discipline issues faced by individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). While state and federal laws provide important protections, these regulations can sometimes be misapplied, leading to students with disabilities being unfairly labeled as bullies. Anti-bullying policies have highlighted the fact that students with disabilities—especially those with social challenges—are often victims of bullying themselves.

In this webinar, attorneys discuss the legal framework surrounding bullying and offer strategies for addressing these issues, both through restrictive measures and proactive interventions in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

We want to hear from you! If there are specific topics you're interested in or if you'd like us to dive deeper into please reach out to: Rholt@arcnj.org.

Visit our Webinar Archive

Stay Connected

The Arc of New Jersey Criminal Justice Advocacy Program

732-246-2525

cjap@arcnj.org
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