

PDD Systems Change Initiative

The Maine Developmental Disabilities Council is coordinating a Systems Change Initiative to address the need for increased capacity and effectiveness in public services and supports for individuals with autism and other PDD's across the age span in our State.

This initiative is a collaborative effort , with participants including:

- ★ Maine Dept. of Health & Human Services,
- ★ Maine Dept. of Education,
- ★ Maine Dept. of Labor,
- ★ Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies,
- ★ Autism Society of Maine,
- ★ Individuals with PDD
- ★ Family members, and
- ★ Other stakeholders

Get Involved

A Community Partners webpage will be available beginning in June 2008 to allow maximum participation from individuals with PDD, families, and interested parties. The webpage will include status reports, meeting dates, information presented at meetings, and provide an opportunity for you to comment!

A link to the webpage will be available at www.maineddc.org



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

The DD Council is a federally-funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As required in federal law, the Council is involved in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities, with the goal that individuals with developmental and other disabilities of all ages are fully included, integrated and involved in their communities and the decisions impacting

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Maine Developmental Disabilities Council



PDD Systems Change Initiative

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What is a “PDD”

Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) have been identified as a separate category of disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), the primary reference system used to classify and diagnose mental disorders in the United States.

According to the DSM-IV, a PDD is

characterized by severe and pervasive impairment in several areas of development: reciprocal social interaction skills, communication skills, or the presence of stereotyped behavior, interests, and activities.

The category of PDD includes the following diagnoses:

- Autistic Disorder
- Asperger’s Disorder
- Rett’s Disorder
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- Pervasive developmental disorder—not otherwise specified (known as PDD-NOS)

Which “Systems ?”

Individuals with PDDs may require a wide array of services and supports during their lifetimes, depending upon the functional limitations associated with their disability. Those may include early intervention services, special education, in-home supports, as well as community and employment support services.

Initial Areas of Focus for the Initiative

- * Early Intervention
 - Screening and Diagnosis
 - Intervention
 - Transition to Schools
- * Transition from School to Adulthood

Other Areas Identified for Future Work

- * Children’s Services
- * Adolescent’s Services
- * Adult Services
- * In-Home Support System
- * Integrated Planning
- * Community Involvement

Why now? Why PDD?

At the national level, the **dramatic increase in incidence of PDD (especially autism) is labeled an epidemic**” by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

This “epidemic” is reflected in Maine Special Education data for the last five years:

- * **Annual increase of 18%** - this is the average increase each year in the number of children served in Maine schools under the category of autism.
- * **100% increase in transition-aged youth** – the number of youth ages 14-18 served in Maine schools under the autism category has doubled.
- * **95% increase in number of students with autism** – the number of students in the autism category in public schools in fall, 2007 is nearly double the the number in that category in fall 2003.

National surveillance studies indicate comparable increases across the country, with a current prevalence rate of 1 in 150 births.