

Budget Listening Session Testimony

My name is Jennifer Boyle, and I live in North Caldwell, New Jersey with my family. I am also a Transition Coordinator consultant to the CTC Academy in Oakland, New Jersey - a private, not-for-profit school for individuals with complex disabilities. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and concerns with you today.

I am the proud mom of two young men, Sean, who is 20 years old, and Sam, who is 17 years old. Today, I will be focusing on my older son Sean:



Sean loves music and spending time with his family more than anything. He loves Disney Pixar movies, being in nature, hiking, and riding his adapted bike. He is a Boy Scout in our local troop, and he enjoys camping and contributing to his community. Sean has learned to read and can use a communication device that he controls with his eyes.

Sean also has an intellectual disability and a developmental disability, profound cerebral palsy, a feeding tube, an intractable seizure disorder, and other physical and medical issues. He needs comprehensive assistance with every area of his life.

Sean will graduate from his 18-21 year old program at the CTC Academy in June 2025, and he will officially enter the world of adult services and supports. Because Sean has been part of the Community Care Program waiver for many years, we have had the benefit of “training wheels” for learning about the adult system of care. I have devoted many hours to learning about the supports available to Sean as an adult, and also learning what’s most important to Sean from the best source – Sean himself. He would like to work, volunteer, be a valued part of his community and have a robust social and family life. Many CTC graduates are seeking a meaningful day program that can meet their needs.

Since Sean needs 24-hour one-to-one support and medical oversight, I am quite challenged with planning for a meaningful adult life with him. Despite the much-needed recent increases in budget allocations, the supports that Sean requires are still in short supply. This includes nursing care or other skilled medical care, direct support professionals, customized employment, meaningful day habilitation and reliable adapted transportation. I believe the shortages are a result of budget constraints in funding these vital supports.

I am appreciative of the recent budgetary enhancements and improvements in available resources to support individuals with the highest level of need, but there is still more to do. And it’s not just for Sean – CTC Academy serves 150 other children and young adults with similar needs. Moreover, Sean’s school is one of many private schools serving students with complex disabilities in the state of New Jersey.

I am requesting an increase in DDD funding so that budgets available to individuals in the Da and Ea tiers may be increased, particularly in the day habilitation, supported employment, and community supports areas. These higher reimbursement rates would allow providers to start, operate

and expand high-quality programs and supports for individuals with the highest level of need. I would also welcome the opportunity to share our experiences for the purposes of budget planning – now and in the future.

As we look toward the future together, I will keep learning, advocating and innovating to help Sean, his schoolmates and their families plan the life they desire and deserve. I urge you to take a critical look at DDD funding and the budgets available to those with the highest levels of need, so that a good and meaningful life is attainable by all. Thank you for the opportunity to share, and thank you for the important work that you do.