

CILs and Parenting with a Disability



Centers for Independent Living (CILs) can be very powerful allies for parents and prospective parents with disabilities, and are uniquely suited to participate and lead advocacy efforts and provide appropriate services. If CILs don't take the responsibility for creating inclusive legislation, others could create laws that infringe upon our rights to parenting. CILs can influence and create legislation, they just can't use federal funding to do so.

Steps to make systems change for parents/prospective parents with disabilities:

1. Become familiar with parenting legislation in your state
2. Identify any laws that are discriminatory against parents/prospective parents with disabilities
3. Create a plan to protect the rights of parents/prospective parents in all aspects: child protection, adoption, foster care, family court, etc.
4. Create cross-disability collaboration and model cross-disability legislation from other states
5. Gather strong testimonies from parents and/or prospective parents with disabilities and engage the disability community
6. Find a champion within your state to support the bill
7. Educate your lawmakers

Resources for Parenting Rights Information:

- [Rocking the Cradle: Ensuring the Rights of Parents with Disabilities and Their Children](#)
- [Department of Justice/HHS Technical Assistance: Protecting the Rights of Parents and Prospective Parents with Disabilities](#)
- [Disabled Parenting Project](#)
- [National Resource Center for Parents with Disabilities](#)

Parenting services align with all CIL core services

- **Advocacy:** Supporting the rights of people with disabilities to parent, both individual and systems
- **Independent Living:** teaching skills to help the consumer parent
- **Information & Referral:** Referring parents/prospective parents to services that will support them on their journey
- **Peer Support:** Making connections to peers that are also parents with disabilities
- **Community Transition:** Ensure parents/prospective parents with disabilities live in the community of their choice
- **Youth Transition:** Family planning and teaching about their rights to someday become a parent



Success Story

This South Carolina mother had her child removed from the home by members of her family who believed she did not have the right to parent her child because of her intellectual disability.

Because of the "Persons with Disabilities Right to Parent Act," and her CIL, she was reunited with her child.

