



COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT

PARTNER PROFILES

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The Arc of California Plans Statewide Rollout of CDS for March 1, 2006

“Some of our members are parents and volunteers and their main concern is the future of the system and they realized that the CDS is the future of the system. It’s all about the workforce.”

— Tony Anderson,
Executive Director,
The Arc of California



Pamela Hayes calls it a “landmark project in California” and regards the recent agreement to implement the College of Direct Support curriculum into the training of Direct Support Professionals as “the biggest development ever in California within the world of serving those with developmental disabilities.”

It didn’t happen overnight, but the rapidity of this partnership’s formation perhaps redefines the concept of “fast track” in California.

On January 1, 2006, The Arc of California and the College of Direct Support (CDS) signed an agreement to bring the CDS to agencies throughout the state that want to use the Internet-based training curriculum as its primary training tool or integrate it into their existing training modules. And already 10 agencies are signed on and will begin implementation of the CDS on March 1 to approximately 10,000 users, according to Tony Anderson, the executive director of The Arc of California. He notes that, “A lot has happened in a very, very short period of time – like in six months.”

There are three driving forces behind The Arc of California-CDS partnership: Hayes, the executive director of Valley Light Industries in the Los Angeles area; Kim Olson, executive director of the Alpha Resources Center of Santa Barbara; and Anderson, who directs The Arc of California from his Sacramento office.

Here is a snapshot look at the timeline that unfolded —

- July 29-30: The respective boards of The Arc of California and the California Conference of Executives of The Arc meet and discuss the CDS.
- August 24: Bill Tapp, national project director of the CDS, comes to California to meet with a statewide task force appointed to discuss and investigate a relationship with the CDS.
- September: Hayes travels to Pennsylvania to observe the use of the CDS and to hear their story. Pennsylvania was the first state to adopt the CDS. Multiple conversations between Tapp and those in California are ongoing.
- October 22: The board of The Arc of California unanimously votes in favor of the CDS and instructs Anderson to negotiate a contract with the CDS.
- November 9-10: Anderson attends the graduation ceremonies of the Moore Center in New Hampshire and talks with their staff about the CDS and their impressions and experiences.

“The more I learned about the CDS, the more I knew it was what we needed in California,” Hayes said. “This is going to make a huge difference, an incredible difference in our state and with our Direct Support Professionals. I am simply overwhelmed by the prospects of what this means for us now and in the long term. This is going to revolutionize training in California for direct support staff.”

Hayes, who describes herself as being the “wind beneath the wings” of those in the state interested in the CDS, points to the ease of using the CDS curriculum and its training platform.

“I went online to try it and immediately liked it because it’s easy to navigate and the CDS was willing to customize it for us and it’s presented on a basic reading level,” she said. Hayes’ agency near Los Angeles is a private non-profit with a day program that serves 240 consumers. She has a staff of 54 and a \$1.25 million budget.

Olson says that “enough of us finally realized what the CDS could do for us and we were able to get together and put it together.”

Anderson says California has approximately 200,000 individuals with developmental disabilities and The Arc has 20 chapters around the state, from as far south as San Diego to northern California in Chico and Butte County. The size of the agencies ranges from one with 90 clients to a high of 1,300 at The Arc of San Diego. “Right now we have 10 agencies signed on and committed and I think most of the others will come aboard fairly soon,” he said.

Olson, like Hayes, was an early advocate for the CDS.

“I was aware of the CDS and what they wanted to do and then I discovered that they had partnered with Charlie Lakin and the University of Minnesota and I knew immediately that they had credibility with their curriculum,” she explained.

Dr. Charlie Lakin, of course, directs the University of Minnesota’s Research and Training Center on Community Living and is a major part of the CDS, overseeing the writing of all curricula.

During the months she was thinking about the CDS, Olson heard Tapp speak. “As I listened to Bill Tapp speak something resonated with me about what he was saying and I realized through his words what huge potential this has,” Olson said.

“Anytime you can make training readily available and readily accessible in the workplace, and it includes the administrative tools for tracking, then you have a powerful tool.”

Anderson thought back to a meeting of the board of directors of the Arc of California and a discussion they had. “Some of our members are parents and volunteers and their main concern is the future of the system and they realized that the CDS is the future of the system,” he said. “Parents are getting older and they want to make sure the caregivers are well trained to care for their children who have developmental disabilities when they can’t.”

Tapp was a vital part of the California decision to partner the CDS with the Arc of California. He said, “It is gratifying to see the directors of the agencies and their staffs come together to transform the workforce and to revamp their total service system to deliver services one person at a time through our training. This is a great story and I know the use of the CDS will be more than they can imagine right now.”

The Arc of California-CDS partnership has gotten the attention of Sue Swenson, executive director of The Arc of the United States. “The Arc of California has shown national leadership by adopting the College of Direct Support. This brilliant training program allows Direct Support Professionals throughout California to share standards, approaches and a common way of talking about their work,” she said. “We know the workers will gain a lot. I think families and people with disabilities will be delighted when they see the results. And I think Chapters of The Arc will notice that the CDS helps them provide the best and most reliable services and supports.”

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About CDS Partner Profiles

CDS Partner Profiles highlights the activities of state and local organizations that have integrated the College of Direct Support into efforts to elevate the preparation, performance, status, and compensation of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Frontline Supervisors (FLS). The purpose of the *CDS Partner Profiles* is to identify and describe a variety of innovative and exemplary initiatives and activities into which the CDS has been integrated. *CDS Partner Profiles* are written by leaders of organizations that are actually engaged in these efforts.

College of Direct Support (CDS) www.collegeofdirectsupport.com

The CDS is an internet-delivered multimedia, competency-based training curriculum for DSPs and FLS supporting individuals with disabilities.

The CDS is available for review at: collegeofdirectsupport.com

For more information about the CDS, contact Bill Tapp at bill@collegeofdirectsupport.com or Donna Kosak at donna@collegeofdirectsupport.com or call toll-free, 877-353-2767

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