



Budget Priorities for Developmental Services Fiscal Year 2008-09

As California legislators work this summer to develop a budget for fiscal year 2008-09, they will be searching for areas to cut in order to address the \$16.5 billion budget shortfall. People with developmental disabilities and their families in Orange County would like for their elected representatives to keep the following points in mind as they consider various budget proposals:

1. **Families of children with autism need a robust and responsive regional center system** to ensure that they are able to receive the services and supports they need to maximize their potential to live as normally as possible in the community.
2. **Service provider rate freezes must not be made permanent.** Rate freezes do serious damage to the community care system by compromising the reliability, stability and quality of service providers. There are already shortages of autism service providers in some areas, and making rate freezes permanent will only worsen that problem and make it more difficult for children with autism to receive the services and supports they need in the community.
3. **Regional centers should be allowed to use start-up dollars to expand and innovate new types of programs to meet evolving needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.** Respite alone is not enough to help the parents of a child with autism cope with the demands and strains the condition places on a family. They need more comprehensive family support services, such as counseling and parent training.
4. **Family Cost Participation Program (FCPP) should be made more efficient.** It is not efficient to have regional centers determine eligibility for FCPP when the Franchise Tax Board already has the data necessary to do that job. Taking FCPP responsibility away from regional centers will also enable the centers to focus more sharply on their role and primary responsibility of ensuring that families receive the services and supports they need.