

Disability Campaign.org

Independent Living

Independent living centers are facilities that serve people with disabilities and provide them with skills and training so that they will become more independent, seek opportunities, and grow in self-determination and self-respect.



Photo: Vance Taylor, Principal at Catalyst Partners, LLC.

Some centers are more specialized for particular kinds of disabilities or groups of people, such as learning disabilities or the elderly. Independent living centers may work with public services in the community, the government, and the private sector in order to provide people with disabilities with housing referral, personal assistance referral, legal aid, work opportunities, etc. This resource sheet will provide you with some information about independent living to evaluate if this is an option for you or your loved one.

Services offered:

1. **Independent living skills**, including how to use appliances around the house, how to shop on their own and pay bills.
2. **Accessibility** options for people with impairments, such as how to get onto public transportation, use accessible technology, or travel.
3. **Referral services** to community organizations, local businesses, nonprofits, and government offices that serve people with disabilities and/or offer work/educational opportunities.

4. **Peer support and counseling groups** for people with disabilities that are made up of people with various kinds of disabilities or of people with similar needs.
5. **Advocacy** training for people with disabilities, helping them develop the skills needed to advocate on their own behalf.

Types of programs offered:

1. **Day programs** permit people with disabilities to attend independent living programs during the day and return to their homes in the evenings.
2. **Weekend programs** are often held on Saturdays and provide fun and leisure activities for those in the community with disabilities.
3. **Residential programs** offer similar services to day programs, but permit the person with a disability to reside at the facility. Such programs may be options for young adults seeking transition from living with their parents to living completely on their own or for the elderly as an option prior to moving to an assisted living facility. Check with the facility to determine if they provide attendant care, as well.
4. **Vacation programs** tailored for people with disabilities that offer recreational and social experiences at a variety of locations.



Photo: John Miller, Ph.D., in UCSD Pulse Fall 2006 Newsletter

Remember, whether we are disabled or not, we are all dependent on one another to some degree. The goal of independent living centers is to increase independence by empowering those with disabilities. For more information on independent living, contact the National Council on Independent Living or visit their website at <http://www.ncil.org/>.

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