
Developmental Disabilities Reform Act of 2008

Draft 1, December 2008

Tips on Reading the Draft

D.C. laws have their own language and rules. Here are some things you may want to know when you read Draft 1 of the DDRA:

- ◆ First Things First

Laws have parts that relate to each other. Generally, if one part of a law requires something to have already happened, that must come first. For example, a law has to create a Task Force before it talks about what the Task Force will do. This means that the order of things in a law doesn't always put the most important thing first. Often, you have to read a whole law to see what the law will do.

- ◆ Shall vs. May

“Shall” means that someone or some agency has to do something.

“May” means that someone or some agency is allowed to do something, but does not have to.

- ◆ Includes

The word “includes” followed by a list is the same thing as saying “includes but is not limited to.”

- ◆ Person

The DDRA uses “person” to mean someone who has asked for or is receiving supports and services. This is “*people first!*” respectful language. “Person” covers all the old words, like “client” and “consumer.”

- ◆ Supports and services

The DDRA uses the most modern, best practice words for “supports and services,” “support coordinator,” and “individual support plan.”