

**Testimony regarding DDS DRAFT Five Year Plan 2017 – 2022  
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My name is Ronald Langner and I live in Tolland. I was very disappointed to read the proposed 5 year plan of the Department of Developmental Services which is supposed to outline the goals of the agency for 2017 – 2022. The document lacks clearly defined agency goals. Without clearly defined goals it is impossible to determine if any significant progress will be made over the next five years.

For the past four years my wife and I have worked with other families and The Arc Connecticut to advocate for better services for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We have done research, written reports and offered testimony to highlight inefficiencies and wasteful spending at DDS. We have urged DDS to close outdated and outrageously expensive institutions and use the savings to do something about the Waiting List. I am encouraged that “DDS continues to follow national trends, moving toward community-based residential supports and away from publicly-operated, institutional care.” But a continued commitment is not clear in the 5 year plan. It barely mentions the Waiting List. It also does not acknowledge that there are now waiting lists for Day Services and Respite. As I read this document trying to understand exactly what DDS has in mind for the next 5 years, I found this summary paragraph on page 20:

“We will seek to prioritize agency projects in a way that will allow DDS to learn and absorb new ways of operating before initiating new business practices. Strategically, we will focus on building a strong foundation and improving core competencies in the first phase. The second phase will allow us to achieve early progress in implementation of new programs, leading us to projects focused on active evolution in the delivery of sustainable and innovative supports in phase three. In phase four, DDS will be transformed into a responsive, modernized organization. Some projects may, by necessity, fall outside of this strategic timeframe, but by and large, the agency intends to follow this model to find success.”

Those statements, while they may sound elegant, are so general and obtuse that they could apply to any business I can think of. What does that paragraph state about how DDS will meet the needs of families? In reality what DDS seems to be saying to families about the Waiting Lists and other core services is, “See us again in five years when we have transformed the agency into a responsive, modern organization, and we may have an answer for you then.” DDS must do better!