



For families finding affordable quality care is hard enough. What makes matters worse is that there are Medicaid Waiver programs that could provide additional assistance, but the average wait to receive this support is eight years or more. While the State of Texas has seen increases in the need for services, spending on services for people with disabilities lags far behind that of most states. Texas currently ranks 50th in state spending per capita for people with disabilities. The State has the longest waiting list for services and has the highest number of institutions in the country. State legislative cuts have shifted major costs for services to local communities and taxpayers. For people with developmental disabilities and their families the result of having inadequate tax revenue and a low state spending per capita has been; restricted access to programs, cuts in services, and growing waiting lists for services.

As of August 2009:

There were more than 124,143 individuals in Texas on all community service waiting lists (including non-Medicaid and state funded programs). There were 42,360 individuals with developmental disabilities waiting for Home and Community Services. Most individuals spend an average six to eight years waiting for community-based services and supports.

The number of Persons with Disabilities for Harris County is 573,025 (age five to 20- 66,906; age 21 to 64 – 400,956; age 65 and older – 105,163).

71 percent of all new jobs created in the United States in recent years have been created in Texas – and the lion's share of those jobs were in the greater Houston area. The population of Harris County is projected to double by 2030.

The Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County has the largest waiting list of over 4,000.

Persons with disabilities who live in Harris County typically wait longer for services.

Harris County provides the smallest amount of per capita funding in the state due to number of people that it serves.

The majority of our "Villagers" receive the maximum federal government support available from Social Security, which amounts to less than \$7,700 annually. These funds are designated to be used only to provide food, clothing and shelter. The cost to participate in day programs is not included. Having so little makes it virtually impossible for persons with significant disabilities to receive adequate care. The tremendous financial burdens associated with the need for ongoing services, medical care, respite and affordable residential opportunities inevitably falls on the families and caregivers. Most often the families are fiscally unable to provide all the services needed. This puts significant stress on families. The divorce rate for families with children with disabilities is higher than average. That many come from single family households only compounds the problem.

Currently the Humble Independent School District, our local school district with a student population over 28,000 and growing, has over 3,000 students receiving Special Education Services. When the surrounding school districts, such as, Aldine ISD which has 5,660, Spring ISD with 2,424, Sheldon ISD with 520, Crosby with 423, and Huffman with 314, are included the need for programs becomes poignantly clear.