



TASH

Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion for People with Disabilities since 1975

TASH Resolution on Choice

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this resolution is to affirm the right of all people to exercise choice in their lives. All people have the right to express their preferences and choices in all aspects of their lives:

In the past, decisions regarding individuals with severe disabilities often have been made by professionals, families, policy-makers and others, based primarily on assumptions about what is in the best interest of the person with severe disabilities;

Rationale

- Historically some families, professionals and policy-makers have erroneously believed that persons with severe disabilities are unable to communicate or to consciously direct their own lives;
- Freedom of expression and choice are fundamental human rights;
- Natural opportunities for making choices begins early in life and increased opportunities to express preferences and choices throughout the lifespan can heighten an individual's sense of self-esteem and self-direction;
- Programs and activities that relegate individuals with severe disabilities to a passive role do not encourage or allow a full range of choices that exist; and active attempts by people with severe disabilities to exercise control over their lives often has been described as problem behavior.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT TASH, an international advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates and people who work in the disability field, affirms the right of persons with disabilities to freedom of choice in all types of settings. Families and professionals should systematically work toward the development

of real opportunities for choice across all ages. Individuals with disabilities should be encouraged and supported to make choices through such activities as exposure, awareness, interaction and instructional opportunities. Research should be supported on successful methods that empower people with disabilities to make and carry out choices.

Adopted December 1998

Revised March 2000