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Independent Living Centers as a Resource to Youth in Transition.

Slide Two.

ILC's at a Glance.

- Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations run and controlled by persons with disabilities. They are non-residential, community-based centers where people with disabilities can receive assistance with a variety of daily living issues and learn the skills they need to take control of their lives from people who have had similar experiences living with a disability. The centers serve people with all types of disabilities and, with some exceptions, do not charge for their services.

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ILC's at a Glance.

- All ILCs provide four core services:
 - Information and Referral,
 - Peer counseling,
 - Independent living skills training,
 - Individual and Systems Change advocacy.
- In addition, centers may provide benefits counseling, employment readiness training, housing referrals, assistive technology services and legal aid. Services vary from center to center but all provide the four core services mandated by federal legislation.

- Typically, centers work with local and regional governments to improve infrastructure, raise awareness about disability issues and lobby for legislation that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits segregation and discrimination.

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ILC's at a Glance.

Simply stated, the IL philosophy says that people with disabilities should have the right to control their own lives and enjoy the same opportunities as all other citizens. This includes the right to:

- make their own decisions and direct their own affairs,
- have a family life,
- have choice in services, transportation, housing, education and employment,
- participate fully in the social, economic and political life in their communities,
- contribute their unique talents and abilities as respected members of their communities.

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Tips on Involving Youth.

- Youth Committees,
- Board of Directors,
- Peer Advocates,
- Hiring Youth.

Slide Six.

How ILC's can serve as advocates for Youth.

- IEP Meetings,
- Vocational Rehabilitation,
- Youth Trainings,
 - Educational Rights & Responsibilities,
 - Employment Rights & Responsibilities,
- Linking to other Resources,
 - Community Trainings,
 - Disability Awareness Training for ALL,
 - School Presentations.

Slide Seven.

Reaching out to Youth.

- In school Trainings/Classes for Youth w/ Disabilities,
- State Youth Leadership Forums,
- National Youth Organizations,
 - NYLN – www.nyln.org,
 - KASA - www.fvkasa.org,
- Resource Fairs.

Slide Eight.

Our Experiences.

- YODA,
- NYLN & YLF's,
- Building Advocacy & Learning Leadership Skills (BALLS):
 - Why the name,
 - What it is,
 - How it works,
 - Why it's important.

Slide Nine.

Testimonials.

- Betsy Valnes,
NYLN Executive Director,

“The BALLS curriculum is innovative, motivating, and empowering. Emerging leaders will learn of their skills, their goal, and their rights...not to mention that peer to peer training is the best way for them to see that they can achieve success.”

We all have an obligation to ensure that youth have the opportunity to fulfill their maximum potential. By providing them with the best possible tools and resources, we can at least give them that opportunity to challenge themselves to aspire toward greater things. Our job as Independent Living Centers is to provide youth with the tools, resources, and mind-set (through peer-to-peer trainings by other youth leaders) that enable them to take charge of their lives and make their own decisions about their goals.