

The Arc of Chester County
Chat n Chew Schedule
Fall 2026

Session 1: Wednesday, September 23, 2026, 11:30am –1:00pm

Understanding Special Education, IEPs & 504 Plans

The Arc of Chester County's Education Advocates will be on deck to discuss Special Education and provide an overview of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 Plan processes. This presentation will cover disability categories and eligibility, evaluations, key terms, applicable laws and timelines, and the essential components of an IEP. Participants will gain a better understanding of the evaluation and IEP process, including important timelines and parent rights. This training is valuable for parents, caregivers, educators, providers, and anyone supporting a student with special needs.

Session 2: Wednesday, September 30, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Comprehensive Employment Services

Learn about Comprehensive Employment Services (CES) and how waiver-funded employment supports can help individuals with disabilities find and maintain employment in their communities. Shelby Hallman, Director of Comprehensive Employment Services at The Arc of Chester County, will explain what CES is, who can benefit, how the process works, and what services look like for participants and families. The session will also highlight how CES partners with local businesses to support successful employment.

Session 3: Wednesday, October 7, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Social Security Disability Benefits – Part I

You can never have too much information about Social Security benefits. Join Richard Gaudiosi, Public Affairs Specialist for the Social Security Administration, for an informative session that will help you understand and navigate these essential programs. Learn about SSI and SSDI, how to apply, the appeals process, and how to handle common questions, arming you with the knowledge to make informed decisions and access the benefits you or your loved ones deserve.

Session 4: Wednesday, October 14, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Social Security Disability Benefits – Part II

We welcome back Richard Gaudiosi, Public Affairs Specialist with the Social Security Administration, for an in-depth session on disability benefits. This presentation will focus on how working and income can impact your benefits, explain the Ticket to Work program, and

provide practical guidance to help you make informed decisions. Bring your questions and get clear, expert answers on navigating work and benefits.

Session 5: Wednesday, October 21, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Accessing Mental and Behavioral Health Services in Chester County

Accessing mental health services can be complicated and overwhelming. Currently a national workforce shortage of mental health professionals has made the process more difficult. Joshua Warfield, Mental Health Clinical Services Coordinator of the Chester County Department of Mental Health will discuss pathways and resources for accessing mental and behavioral health services.

Session 6: Wednesday, October 28, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Connecting Services and Natural Supports

Join Julie Moyer from the County's MH/IDD Department to learn more about services and life as an adult. This session will cover eligibility, available services, the waiting list process, and what families can expect as their loved one transitions into adulthood. We'll also hear from a parent about their adult child's experience, providing a firsthand perspective on navigating adult services and what life can look like after transition. This session is especially helpful for parents and caregivers of transition-age youth who want to better understand the adult service system and hear from another family's experience.

Session 7: Wednesday, November 4, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Exploring Life Sharing: An Overview for Individuals and Families

Join Carmen Saur, Program Specialist with the Department of Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, to learn more about Life Sharing and whether it may be a good support option for you or your loved one. This session will provide an overview of what Life Sharing is, what the experience looks like for individuals and Life Sharing providers, and who may be a good candidate. Carmen will also discuss how Life Sharing is funded, how individuals are matched with providers, what supports are available, and what families and individuals should consider when exploring this option.

Session 8: Wednesday, November 11, 2025 , 11:30am – 1:00pm

Self-Directing Waiver Services with Agency with Choice

Jillian Simmons, Assistant Director of Agency with Choice at The Arc of Chester County will explain how self-direction works and the benefits of having greater choice and control over services. Participants will learn how they can recruit and hire support workers, choose who provides their services, and have more control over when and how supports are delivered.

This session is designed for individuals with disabilities, families, and representatives interested in learning more about self-directed supports.

Session 9: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Adulthood in the ID/A World: Rights, Choices, and Supports

Entering adulthood brings important changes to legal rights, decision-making authority, privacy, consent, and adult services. Join Tyree Lewis, Director of Quality Management, and CJ McGowan, Program Specialist, from the Chester County Department of MH/IDD, along with Janet Schneider, Chief Quality and Compliance Officer for The Arc of Chester County, to learn what individuals, families, and supporters need to know as they navigate the transition to adulthood. Participants will learn about decision-making options, privacy and confidentiality, behavior support plans, restrictive procedures and rights restrictions, HRC review, and ways to remain informed and involved in decisions about services and supports.

Session 10: Wednesday, December 2, 2026, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Navigating the Individual Support Plan: What You Should Know

We are joined by ID Deputy Administrator Stephanie Kilcoyne and ID Supervisors & Program Specialists Carmen Saur and Julia Moore from the Chester County Department of MH/IDD for a practical overview of the Individual Support Plan (ISP) process and how to participate effectively. Our experts will discuss the purpose of an ISP, how to prepare for and participate in an ISP meeting, who should be included, and what information should be documented. Participants will also learn important questions to ask and how to ensure the ISP reflects the individual's needs, goals, preferences, and supports.