



DOWN SYNDROME GUILD
OF DALLAS

What is *DARS*?

DARS – Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

DARS is the name for the state agency that funds work-related programs for people with physical and developmental disabilities. DARS is a merging of several agencies, including the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. There is at least one local DARS office in each county.

- The DARS system is a “rehabilitation” model originally designed for soldiers returning to work after having been wounded in World War I. The system is often difficult to follow and does not provide adequate funding – even after many revisions to the legislation – for people with developmental disabilities who require long-term, on-going support to be successfully employed.
- Before approving any client to receive funding, DARS will require a vocational assessment. For clients with developmental disabilities, standardized vocational assessments generally lead to a recommendation that a sheltered workshop is the best option. Therefore, families should go to DARS with vocational assessments done by the school district showing a summary of performance and a listing of specific skills demonstrated during internships, in-school jobs, previous jobs, etc. A good vocational assessment should emphasize the client’s likes and acknowledge his/her dislikes.
- DARS has a list of “vendors” that provide Supported Employment Services (SES). These vendors are paid through DARS based on “benchmarks” of success for the employee (length of time employed, etc).
- The goal of DARS is to close each competitive employment job case after 90 days of employment or supported employment after 117 days. In supported employment, the vendor/ employer *may* continue to provide on-going support and follow up, but typically this involves only one visit to the job site per month. Families need to ask their SES vendor: “What is your commitment to my child after DARS funding is gone?”

For additional information, see: www.dars.state.tx.us.

Or contact the Down Syndrome Guild DARS liaison:

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