

## OFFICE OF ADVOCACY

The statutes, regulations and procedures which govern the delivery of service system for individuals with developmental disabilities in California are complex, frequently changing and often confusing. In order to help ensure that each individual with a developmental disability receives the services they require and the benefits to which they are entitled, the Alpha Resource Center of Santa Barbara, (Alpha) has established and maintains an Office of Advocacy.

Generally, the individual with disabilities and/or their parents, family or friends are able to successfully advocate for their needs and interests. In addition, there are numerous agencies and organizations within the delivery of services system which have an advocacy role. However, it is when these resources are insufficient or have failed that the Alpha Office of Advocacy comes into play.

In many cases the advocate will be able to provide information and/or make a referral to enable the individual to resolve problems simply and directly. In other cases, more direct intervention is required. In these instances, the services of an advocate may be requested.

Requests for information and/or referral may be made by simply contacting the Office of Advocacy. Requests for services of an advocate are initiated by the submission of a completed Request for Advocacy Services and Consent for Release of Information form.

A request for advocacy service may be initiated by any party representing the person with a developmental disability; however, the request for service form must be signed by the individual with disabilities if he/she is over the age of 18 or by the party who has been assigned the legal authority over the individual's personal affairs (Guardian/Conservatorship). No intervention by Alpha can be initiated until appropriate authorization form the responsible party(ies) has been received. In addition the completed Request for Advocacy Services form should specify the objective(s) it is hoped that the advocacy services will help to achieve.



Currently, Alpha does not charge any fees for services provided through its Office of Advocacy; donations to the advocacy program are, however gratefully accepted. To be eligible to receive advocacy services, the individual must reside within South Santa Barbara County and have a developmental disability. Alpha reserves the right to evaluate each request for service with respect to the appropriateness of the objectives established and in accordance with service priorities established by the Board of Directors. Any advocacy service provided will be focused solely on the best interest of the individual with developmental disabilities, regardless of the party initiating the request.

*If you have questions regarding the Alpha Office of Advocacy or would like additional information, please call (805) 683-2145.*

