



## **Statement by Katy Neas, Chair, Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

---

“As we honor the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) celebrates the success of millions of students with disabilities who were able to secure a free appropriate public education as a result of this important civil rights law.

Only 4 decades ago, children with disabilities were turned away from school by a society guided by misinformation and stereotypes. Their future was grim and opportunities limited.

Today, because of the proactive policies of IDEA and the leadership of CCD, over one million young children are enrolled in early education services that address each child and each family’s unique needs to succeed. Another five million children with disabilities are being educated in elementary, middle and high schools across the nation. Today, more than two-thirds of students with disabilities will earn a standard high school diploma. These successes are born from the passage of IDEA, an engaged advocacy community, and a shared commitment between families and educators.

As we reflect on this progress, we still know there is work that is left undone. CCD is committed to moving forward with a renewed energy to continue to protect the fundamental right to a public education, to ensure that all young children receive appropriate services as early as possible, to demand high expectations and to eliminate stigma associated with individuals with disabilities.

In just one generation, our society has made significant strides to change perceptions of the academic abilities of children with disabilities; we must rededicate our efforts to ensure that these students gain the skills to be successful in competitive integrated work, to live independently, and to have meaningful personal relationships. I am confident that our best years are ahead of us.”

*The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society.*