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## POLICY BALLOT

The Youth Leadership Council of the National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN) conducted a survey of the policy priorities of 176 youth, ages 16 to 24, in 31 states and the District of Columbia. Youth were asked to vote for the 10 policies that most needed to be adopted from the NYLN 2001 Policy Agenda. The following 10 policy recommendations received the most votes.

- 1 Agency leaders and legislators should visit places where people with disabilities get services, including sheltered workshops, nursing homes, special education classrooms, and segregated housing developments. They should talk to people with disabilities about their experiences in these places and where they want to learn, work and live.
- 2 Support youth leadership conferences and other leadership activities that build young people's skills and encourage information sharing. Make sure that young people from diverse cultures, with different disabilities and languages, are involved in youth leadership.
- 3 Give youth a real voice in policy-making, including meaningful positions on government boards and other policymaking groups.
- 4 Require that young people in high school receive training on policies that affect them, including the ADA, IDEA, Section 504, and Social Security. Educate high school students about their rights and responsibilities, including the importance of voting.
- 5 Educate families about the importance of children and youth learning to take care of themselves and to direct their lives as much as possible.
- 6 Enforce IDEA, ADA, Section 504 and other laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities.

- 7 Redefine eligibility for SSI/SSDI so that it is not based on whether a person can work or his or her income.
- 8 Increase opportunities for youth to mentor youth.
- 9 Increase opportunities for youth with disabilities to graduate with a diploma, including identifying creative ways to earn school credits and developing alternatives to assess student achievement.
- 10 Provide youth with training in how to work with systems and use supports, such as One-Stop Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, SSI, Medicaid, Work Incentives, and personal assistance services. Explain the benefits and limits of using public supports. Give information in understandable, informal language.

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**Support for the NYLN Provided By:**

**Center on Self-Determination  
Oregon Institute on Disability and Development  
Oregon Health & Science University**

**Academy for Educational Development**

The NYLN is sponsored by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Council on Disability, Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities, Social Security Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and US Department of Labor.

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