

# Disability and Abuse Newsfeed

## Week of August 4 to August 10, 2018

Articles Compiled by Debra (D.J.) Stemmler Editing and Commentary by Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D., Posting by Thomas F. Coleman

Articles are listed in alphabetical order by state within each category, so you can easily scan through the articles for those within your state or other states in which you have an interest. *International* articles are near the end. The categories are: *Abuse and Neglect, Laws & Legislation, Studies & Statistics, Improved Supports, International,* and sometimes, *Miscellaneous.*

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### ABUSE & NELECT

1. Soldotna woman accused of abuse, Medicaid fraud - A Soldotna woman has been accused of fraud and abuse of a vulnerable adult for allegedly taking Medicaid funds while allowing her charge to live in an unheated, unkempt home.- Peninsula Clarion – August 1, 2018- (Alaska) - <https://is.gd/TvbdQQ>
2. Police: couple tortured, killed disabled uncle - A local computer programmer and his caregiver wife allegedly spent months torturing her disabled uncle before beating him to death and then staging his body in an attempt to fool police into believing the man had died from natural causes. – ctpost- August 8, 2018 – (Connecticut) - <https://is.gd/jvok22>

3. Mother accused of leaving daughter in river sought help for child's autism - Months before police say Shakayla Denson carried her daughter into the Hillsborough River and let go this week, the mother asked for help.- Tampa Bay Times – August 6, 2018- (Florida) - <https://is.gd/GD4mev>
4. Third Nursing Home Staffer Arrested in Alleged Duct Taping of Dementia Patient to Chair - A third nursing home staffer was arrested after a 67-year-old patient with dementia was allegedly restrained in a chair by duct tape. Sherlie Tesyeux, 27, was booked on one count of elder neglect. – Law & Crime – August 1, 2018 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/wT7zNw>
5. Parkland Shooting Suspect Lost Special-Needs Help at School When He Needed It Most - But Mr. Cruz was legally an adult, and he wanted to graduate from Stoneman Douglas, according to a new report released late Friday by the Broward County Public Schools. A Cross Creek staffer gave him three options: transfer to the school, sue the school district, or stay at Stoneman Douglas — without any of the special-needs assistance he had relied on since he'd been found to be developmentally delayed at age 3.- The New York Times – August 4, 2018 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/O8z9qb>
6. Man gets life plus 65 years for killing adopted autistic son - A man convicted of drowning his adopted autistic son last year has been sentenced to life in prison without parole plus an additional 65 years. The Associated Press reports Leon Williams was sentenced Friday. – WCTV- August 4, 2018 – (Georgia)- <https://is.gd/Pp0UH1>
7. Relief after DeKalb dad gets maximum time for drowning autistic son - Leon Williams, 44, a former state worker with no prior criminal record, was sentenced to life without parole for killing his adopted son, Kentae. – Atlantic Journal Constitution – August 3, 2018 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/RhficZ>
8. Nursing Homes Slow to Respond to Sexual Abuse Allegations - Throughout the country and right here in Illinois, an already crippled group of elderly are being

raped and sexually abused by the very people responsible for their daily care. – Blog Levin & Perconti- August 6, 2018 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/QjbYoD>

9. Statewide task force set to meet on group home troubles - In May, the WBRZ Investigative Unit uncovered squalid conditions that residents of a group home were living in. Tonja Myles said her uncle was severely neglected. – WBRZ 2 – August 3, 2018 – (Louisiana) - <https://is.gd/UuFhle>
10. Non-verbal autistic boy allegedly tasered, left lying in urine at Caddo high school - A non-verbal, autistic 10th-grader at a Caddo Parish high school allegedly was tasered and left lying motionless in a pool of his own urine for approximately 13 minutes, according to a civil lawsuit filed last week in federal court. – Shreveport Times – August 6, 2018 – (Louisiana) - <https://is.gd/NUj38c>
11. Covington Elementary faces two lawsuits over alleged abuse of special needs students - The document alleges the teacher and her assistants created a nightmarish classroom where verbal and physical abuse of disabled students was allowed and even encouraged. – WDSU – August 8, 2018- (Louisiana) - <https://is.gd/6gAjTK>
12. MCPS School Bus Driver Charged With Rape, Abuse of Special Education Student Placed on Leave- A Montgomery County Public Schools bus driver is on unpaid leave after he was charged with the second-degree rape and sexual abuse of a minor student in a district special education program. – Bethesda Magazine – August 6, 2018 – (Maryland) - <https://is.gd/LTxacf>
13. Scathing report shows staff at Easthampton Tri-County Schools repeatedly abused and injured special ed students - Easthampton's private Tri-County Schools will remain closed for at least a year after an investigation found that staffers had repeatedly abused and neglected special education students. – Mass Live – August 5, 2018 – (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/Ko6jrW>

14. Elementary School Kids Don't Belong in Handcuffs - On behalf of Cameron, the ACLU of Michigan, the ACLU's Disability Rights Program, and private cooperating attorneys filed a lawsuit against the Flint Police Department and the Flint Chamber of Commerce. The lawsuit asserts claims for Fourth Amendment and disability law violations. – ACLU- August 3, 2018 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/ECcCua>
15. Oakland County Sheriff: Evidence of drug trafficking found at adult care facility - Managers of an adult assisted living home in Highland Township have been charged after drugs and weapons were found at the facility, according to an Oakland County Sheriff's Office release. – Click On Detroit – August 7, 2018 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/LmHmkK>
16. Investigation reveals North Las Vegas hospital ignored abuse - North Vista Hospital in North Las Vegas was investigated in June after employees filed two complaints alleging a hospital employee “choked, kicked, punched, slammed” psychiatric patients and cursed at them. The complaint said hospital supervisors closed the doors to trap patients inside with the abusive employee, who was not named in the report. – Las Vegas Review Journal - August 8, 2018 – (Nevada) - <https://is.gd/Pb5yRh>
17. Ex-janitor looks to toss sex assault conviction because of prosecutor's words to jurors - Magoon, who previously worked as a police officer in Concord and Franklin, is serving 26 to 52 years in state prison after standing trial on three separate occasions on sexual assault charges in Merrimack County Superior Court. Jurors found that Magoon abused his position as a janitor at the Pines to sexually assault children in the before- and after-school program, and that, during his employment, he also sexually assaulted a disabled woman who uses a wheelchair. – Concord Monitor – August 5, 2018 – (New Hampshire) - <https://is.gd/2sXw6Y>
18. Police: Group home worker falsely claimed fire drill training - A supervisor at a state group home for the disabled has been charged with seven felonies for

allegedly falsifying records to indicate that fire drills were done when they were not, police said. – The Post Star- August 3, 2018 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/T1ZJ3Z>

19. Autistic boy allegedly shoots 8-year-old sister with rifle- The Lincoln County Sheriff said a 10-year-old boy with autism shot his eight-year-old sister with a 22-magnum rifle. The incident occurred after the siblings used a key to get into their father's gun safe. – The Salem News – August 4, 2018- (Oklahoma) - <https://is.gd/iXlnuE>

20. Erie man gets state prison for sex offense - An Erie man who pleaded guilty to having indecent contact with a mentally disabled teen over more than two years will serve a state prison sentence. The defendant, 43-year-old John W. Wright Sr., received one and a half to five years in state prison Tuesday from Erie County Judge John Garhart. The sentence was in the standard range of state sentencing guidelines. – GoErie.com – August 7, 2018 – (Pennsylvania) <https://is.gd/r10zdY>

21. Company pays federal officials \$8 million to settle probe of SC children's autism therapy - The state's largest provider of children's autism behavioral therapy has paid the federal government \$8.8 million to settle a false claims probe, federal prosecutors announced this week. – Greenville News – August 2, 2018 – (South Carolina) - <https://is.gd/lssEbH>

22. Sevierville attraction accused of discriminating against autistic child - Beebe says that after she told an employee that her daughter was autistic and "just excited," the employee asked her to leave, telling her she could get a refund for the tour. – Knox News- August 2, 2018 – (Tennessee) - <https://is.gd/sy5Nai>

23. Washington school district covers up special ed failures - Jaylyn's story shines a light on a broken special education system within the Mabton School District. For years, district officials violated state and federal special ed laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) — the law that

guarantees the right of all students with disabilities to receive the specialized services they need to reach their full potential in school. – K5 News – August 1, 2018 – (Washington) - <https://is.gd/bZvSIX>

24. Washington sent brain injury patients to Oklahoma — then all but forgot about them - In the end, what began as hospital-level rehabilitation care morphed into a very expensive form of long-term care. It wasn't until a doctor at the state's Medicaid program sounded the alarm that efforts began to bring the patients home. – KLCC- August 6, 2018 – (Washington) - <https://is.gd/ciJCre>

## **GUARDIANSHIP**

25. Guardianship System Reforms Protect Vulnerable New Mexicans - Following the publication of an investigative reporting series published in the Albuquerque Journal in 2016 and 2017, changes have come to New Mexico's elder guardian and conservatorship system- KSFR- August 1, 2018 – (New Mexico) - <https://is.gd/93aqXf>

26. “Substance abuse poses problems for estate planning” - His topic, “Estate Planning for a Beneficiary with a Substance Abuse or Mental Health Disorder,” addressed the model for a trust, an arrangement that allows a third party to hold someone's assets, that he has developed in consultation with psychiatrists and other medical professionals. – The Almanac – South Hills Community News – August 1, 2018 – (Pennsylvania)- <https://is.gd/OR5vEC>

## **LAWS & LEGISLATIONS**

27. New law helps protect Minnesota seniors from financial exploitation - A new law went into effect Wednesday that works to protect seniors from suspected fraud against vulnerable clients. The Safe Seniors Financial Protection Act freezes money while the Department of commerce investigates cases. – Fox 9

– August 1 ,2018 – (Minnesota) - <https://is.gd/QG9qw3>

## **STUDIES & STATISTICS**

28. Rare duplication within chromosome 15 delivers relatively mild blow - With 60 children aged 3 to 18 years, the study is the largest yet to compare the two types of mutations. Researchers presented the unpublished work yesterday at the 2018 Angelman Syndrome Foundation and Dup15q Alliance Scientific Meeting in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. – The Spectrum – August 7, 2018 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/v4eEmr>

29. Study revives serotonin as target for autism treatments - Boosting levels of the chemical messenger serotonin makes mice that model autism more social, according to a study published today in Nature. The study suggests the approach may do the same in people with autism. It also offers an explanation for why antidepressants do not ease autism traits: They may increase serotonin levels too slowly to be effective. – The Spectrum News – August 8, 2018 – (California) - <https://is.gd/h44sLF>

30. Confabulations Linked to Impaired Mental Time Travel in Alzheimer Disease - A high level of confabulations in Alzheimer disease (AD) is associated with an impaired ability of patients to travel back in time mentally in order to retrieve contextual details linked to the confabulated memory, according to a study published in the Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences.- Neurology Advisor- August 6, 2018- (No Site Given) - <https://is.gd/qBh7dT>

## **IMPROVED SUPPORTS**

31. Middle School in Springdale Provides Space for Those with Special Needs - Learning, comfort, and the sound of laughter are just a few things that fill this unique space, called a sensory room. It's one of just a handful available in the area. Marleah Hannaford, a Special Needs Teacher, says the room releases

their anxiety, and gives them an opportunity to learn, and looking around the room, you will see a lot of sensory teaching tools, dim lighting, and comforting sounds. – Fox 16 – August 5, 2018 – (Arkansas) - <https://is.gd/i87Erg>

32. LOCAL FAMILY CONTINUES PUSH FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EQUALITY - Their daughter with special needs to swim at the Deming park pool. the pool has decided to not change its policies. news 10's lacey Clifton has more on their latest efforts. it's been a struggle to find just the right fit. "so this is the approved coast guard device that you can get at Walmart. – WTHITV- August 1, 2018 – (Indiana) - <https://is.gd/7s94Kb>

33. Variety presents new bikes to special-needs youths unable to ride traditional bikes - ariety's presentation of bikes to two special needs youths came with a special message: "Every child should have the opportunity to ride a bike." – Des Moines Register - August 4, 2018 – (Iowa) - <https://is.gd/LcakhB>

34. T.K. Stone, Lowe's repurpose classroom for special needs students - Students with special needs at T.K. Stone Middle School will have a new kitchen and life-skills classroom when they head back to school next week. – The News Enterprise – August 2, 2018 – (Kentucky) - <https://is.gd/CqwdRY>

35. For those living with autism, a hero - The opinion of autism in Kenya is largely dismissive, said Muchine, who moved to the U.S. in 1993 to attend college. She points out youth on the spectrum In Kenya are often described as "abnormal." showing symptoms including compulsive and aggressive behavior and social-interaction difficulties, for example. – Lowell Sun – August 6, 2018- (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/RZllye>

36. Minnesota no longer has a backlog of elder-abuse allegations that need to be investigated. - The Minnesota Department of Health announced Wednesday that state officials have finished investigating 826 cases of abuse of seniors and vulnerable adults. Investigators substantiated allegations in 30 percent of those cases. – Grand Forks Herald – August 8, 2018 – (Minnesota) -

<https://is.gd/hemNqJ>

37. Parents of special needs kids get a respite night - The Nebraska Caregiver Coalition Visionary Committee created a respite night for parents of special needs children July 19 at Homestead Rehabilitation Center as part of a pilot program to enhance the lives of caregivers. – Lincoln Journal Star- August 4, 2018 – (Nebraska) - <https://is.gd/h14MXq>
  
38. School bus safety: Special needs parents say gaps in system put their children at risk - Since a school bus crash on Route 80 ended the lives of a fifth-grader and one of her teachers in May, a litany of bills from federal and state lawmakers focusing on driving records and physical fitness have been proposed. – northjersey.com – August 6, 2018 – (New Jersey) - <https://is.gd/IVEG4R>
  
39. Governor Cuomo Announces \$8.4 Million To Combat Elder Abuse And Financial Exploitation Statewide - Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced \$8.4 million in state and federal funding to improve and expand services for vulnerable adults at risk of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. Developed by the state Office of Victim Services and state Office for the Aging, the Elder Abuse Interventions and Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams Initiative is the first of its kind in the nation.- LongIsland.com – August 1 2018 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/dhvXiQ>
  
40. Elder abuse reports, substantiations up in Pennsylvania - A decade ago, investigators substantiated 159 elder abuse cases reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Last year, the number was 1,018, more than a six-fold increase. – Reading Eagle – August 8, 2018 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/l0ncJ9>
  
41. Special needs adults can continue learning at new PEER Place in Hendersonville - A new program in Hendersonville is filling a void for adults with developmental delays to continue to learn at any age. – Tennessean –

August 7, 2018 – (Tennessee) - <https://is.gd/rSm3WA>

42.5 barriers Texas must remove for disabled people to live like everybody else - In his testimony on the ADA, former Sen. Lowell Weicker, R-Conn., said people with disabilities "spend a lifetime overcoming not what God wrought, but what man has imposed by custom and law." Since the ADA has yet to deliver full integration, what impositions remain? – Dallas News – August 1, 2018 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/ZGPqTr>

43. Disability rights group sues Dallas Housing Authority - A new federal discrimination lawsuit against the Dallas Housing Authority alleges the governmental agency has violated federal rules in accommodating clients with disabilities. – Denton Record Chronical – August 7, 2018 - <https://is.gd/WyXmVe>

44. Little Haven' is alternative for special-needs children - The first center in Texas dedicated to non-residential care for children who require ongoing, skilled nursing is right here in Brownsville. – The Brownsville Herald – August 4, 2018 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/EqujTO>

45. Experts Call For More Trauma-Informed Classrooms as New School Year Approaches - With studies estimating that nearly 50% of U.S. children have experienced at least one potentially traumatic "adverse childhood experience," or ACE, experts including Ukeru Systems President Kim Sanders are encouraging classroom to be trauma-informed in order for students to best succeed. – Digital Journal – August 2, 2018 – (Virginia)- <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/3882393>

46. Gov. Northam announces federal funding for Virginia's brain injury services - Gov. Ralph Northam announced a three-year federal grant worth \$900,000 that will go toward brain injury services in the Commonwealth. Northam said in a news release on July 25 that the grant will fund work being done by the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) which has

been working to enhance services and supports for Virginians with traumatic brain injury (TBI). – WTKR – August 4, 2018 – (Virginia) - <https://is.gd/VAJjWL>

## **INTERNATIONAL**

47. School Teacher out on Bail After 2 Sexual Assaults - A 34-year-old maths teacher was convicted for the sexual assault of a Year 11 girl with an intellectual disability and a Year 12 girl at a high school in Sunshine, Melbourne. – The Epoch Times – August 2, 2018- (Australia) - <https://is.gd/VYBkYY>
48. As one man loses his hearing, he's building a signing community in Corner Brook - At the end of it, we had a full plan for a class. Right from the get go, almost immediately, it was never about one-on-one. It was — this is something good. Let's try to reach out to the community and see who else wants to learn, so we can build a community of signers," said Drover. – CBC – August 5, 2018- (Canada) - <https://is.gd/BBDDyi>
49. 'Device addiction similar to autism' - Device addiction is considered to be the primary reason for this phenomenon, and analysts have gone to the extent of saying that some severe cases of device addiction show similar characteristics of autism. – Khaleej Times – August 4, 2018- (Dubai) - <https://is.gd/xmYWd9>
50. Sex and special needs: Why new schools guidance must embrace pupils with learning difficulties - Relationships and sex education (RSE) is taken seriously at Oak Field special school, which caters for pupils with severe and complex learning and physical disabilities – The Guardian – August 7, 2018- (England) - <https://is.gd/OnoP3x>
51. NA man found guilty of raping disabled teen - New Amsterdam man, who was on trial for the rape of 17-year-old disabled girl, was found guilty at the High Court in Berbice yesterday. – Stabroek News – August 4, 2018 – (Guyana) -

<https://is.gd/5eb6a1>

52. Disability in India Is Still All About the Able - Disability in India remains about the able-bodied. Why? -The Diplomat – August 1, 2018 – (India) - <https://is.gd/TS0CaS>
53. Iran's Child Protection Bill Includes Kids With Disabilities But Fails to Close Legal Loopholes - A bill in the final stages of Iran's legislative process addresses the country's legal vacuum regarding the abuse of children with disabilities but includes loopholes that put those children at risk, according to experts.- Center for Human Rights- August 7, 2018 – (Iran) - <https://is.gd/3bLmR4>
54. Draft standards seek to safeguard adults - The Health Information and Quality Authority (Hiqa) and the Mental Health Commission (MHC) believe the draft standards for adult safeguarding will help to “actively” highlight, minimise, and prevent harm. – The Irish Examiner – August 2, 2018 – (Ireland) - <https://is.gd/WHMaVb>
55. Almost 700 residents died unexpectedly in nursing homes last year - Almost 700 unexpected deaths of older people in nursing homes last year should be investigated by the health watchdog, an advocacy group has claimed. Latest figures from the health watchdog show that 697 people died unexpectedly in nursing homes, compared with 726 the previous year. – Independent.ie – August 5, 2018 – (Ireland) - <https://is.gd/s2BMZc>
56. Abusing children: Woman jailed 30 yrs- A 32-year-old local who abused her daughter and disabled son by chaining up his leg was on Tuesday jailed 30 years and fined RM100,000.- Daily Express- August 8, 2018 – (Malaysia) - <https://is.gd/zkquog>
57. At last: Ashley Peacock to be released from cell-like room - After almost eight years living in a cell-like room at a locked psychiatric facility, autistic man Ashley Peacock will finally move to his own home. The 40-year-old, whose living situation was so poor the Ombudsman once labelled it "cruel and

inhuman", will begin the transition to the community later this month. -  
Newstalk ZB- August 6, 2018 – (New Zealand) - <https://is.gd/I5N8ZK>

58. Net closes in on man who verbally abused disabled girl, 5, on train - Five-year-old Alexa Quinn Fuller, who has undiagnosed autism, was crying while on her way to Bathgate with family when the lout yelled: "Will you shut your f\*\*\*\*\*g mongro child up." – Edinburgh News – August 7, 2018 – (Scotland)  
<https://is.gd/bdHVxi>

59. Forced marriage: Sajid Javid launches urgent inquiry - Some families have disabled children married abroad then bring the spouses back to the UK in the belief that this ensures they will have a carer for life. The wives, however, may be raped and beaten – The Times – August 3, 2018 – (United Kingdom) -  
<https://is.gd/eP9dWC>

60. Jet2 may have apologised, but we need bigger consequences for companies if we are to see real change in how they treat disabled customers - Staff at Split airport appeared to have no record of his disability and the (utterly ridiculous) rules required two days notice for a mobility scooter to be put on a Jet2 aircraft. -Independent – August 4, 2018 – (United Kingdom) -  
<https://is.gd/j4EsxH>

61. Mum's row with neighbours who 'hurl abuse' at disabled daughter - but they say her family is an "absolute nightmare" - Fed up residents are planning a petition to kick the Smith family out - but mum Tina says she "would rather live in a tent" than stay in her Bransholme, Hull, home- Mirror- – August 6, 2018 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/A5R8AM>

## MISC

62. How to help young adults with autism transition to adulthood - For the past 20 years, my colleagues and I have run a social-skills group for children with

autism, ages 5 to 18 years. Our program teaches the children how to recognize their own emotions, have conversations, solve problems and build genuine friendships. – Spectrum News – August 7, 2018 – (California) - <https://is.gd/4TtySp>

63. Community Living Agency Denies Disability ‘Segregation’ Remarks - A federal agency responsible for community living is reaffirming its mission following allegations that a top official publicly stated that she favored “segregation” of people with disabilities. – Disability Scoop – August 3, 2018 – (D.C.) - <https://is.gd/XdSnXo>

64. “Straw-less summer”: Balancing sustainability and disability rights on the Eastern Shore - This is the concern that has been raised in recent months by the disability community in response to efforts to decrease disposable straw use, setting up a national debate between environmentalists and disability rights activists. – Delmarva Now- August 5, 2018- (Maryland) <https://is.gd/CEms7Y>

65. Off The Beaten Port: Correll wants to raise awareness of disability - Rosie Correll is a sophomore English/Journalism major at the University of New Hampshire. The Portsmouth native loves her major because she sees journalism as a way to tell stories that educate the public about disability. – Fosters.com – August 5, 2018 – (New Hampshire) - <https://is.gd/SMPMPO>

66. We need more than goodwill when we write about disability - One of the themes of the recent Global Disability Summit in London was tackling stigma and discrimination. Journalism has a role to play. – The Guardian – August 5, 2018 – (Global) - <https://is.gd/K5fwUA>

67. Love of patterns, order may explain mad math skills—and autism link- Link between Autism, math, and systemization borne out in general population. – ars technica – August 8, 2018 - (No Specific region identified) -

<https://is.gd/TvHQDm>

68. The hidden danger of suicide in autism - Many people with autism entertain thoughts of suicide and yet show few obvious signs of their distress. Some scientists are identifying risks — and solutions — unique to autistic individuals. -Spectrum News – August 8, 2018 –(No Specific region identified)