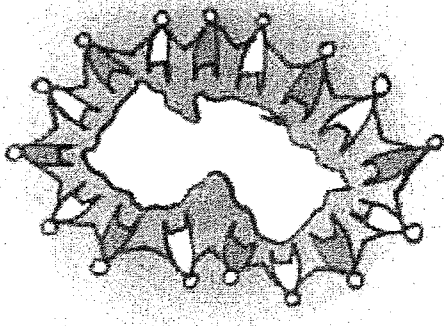
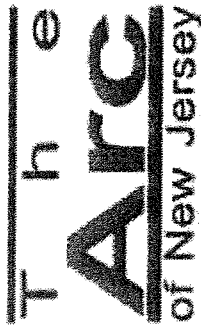


# UNDERSTANDING STATE GOVERNMENT

*The government of the State of New Jersey is divided into three branches:*



## **Family Advocacy Program**

### The Executive Branch

Includes the Governor, departments (such as the Department of Human Services or the Department of Education) and state agencies (ranging from the Motor Vehicle Commission to the Commission on Brain Injury Research).

#### *How does it affect disability services?*

- ◆ Provides the actual services that individuals with developmental disabilities use on a daily basis
- ◆ Interacts with independent service providers (such as The Arc) through contracts and directly with families.
- ◆ Writes rules and regulations and makes recommendations to the Governor about policies and budget issues.

### The Legislative Branch

Includes all State Senators and Assemblypersons and is responsible for making new laws and changing existing laws.

#### *How does it affect disability services?*

- ◆ Develop and change laws that affect individuals with developmental disabilities
- ◆ Plays a major role in the final passage of the State's budget - determining how much funding will go into disability services on an annual basis.

### The Judicial Branch

Includes all of the state courts and is the final authority on the meaning and constitutionality of laws.

#### *How does it affect disability services?*

- ◆ Provides guidance on what a "reasonable accommodation" is under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- ◆ Provides guidance about what the "least restrictive environment" means under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- ◆ Provides resolution when disputes arise between parties

*The examples here are just a few of the possible ways each branch relates to developmental disabilities*