

# 1980s

## Great Strides Forward

Turning 22, Family Support  
and A New Department of Mental Retardation

*It wasn't perfect, but eventually funding was attached to the law. . . We knew we were making progress.*

—Maureen Sullivan



In 1984, the Turning 22 Law (Ch. 688) is enacted. This is the first law in the nation providing a plan for graduating high school students to obtain adult support services.

Governor Michael Dukakis adds to his legacy in disability policy. In addition to establishing a separate Department of Mental Retardation, he signed into law Turning 22 (Ch. 688), Special Education (Ch. 766), and expanded community services including family services.



Photo: Oded Burger

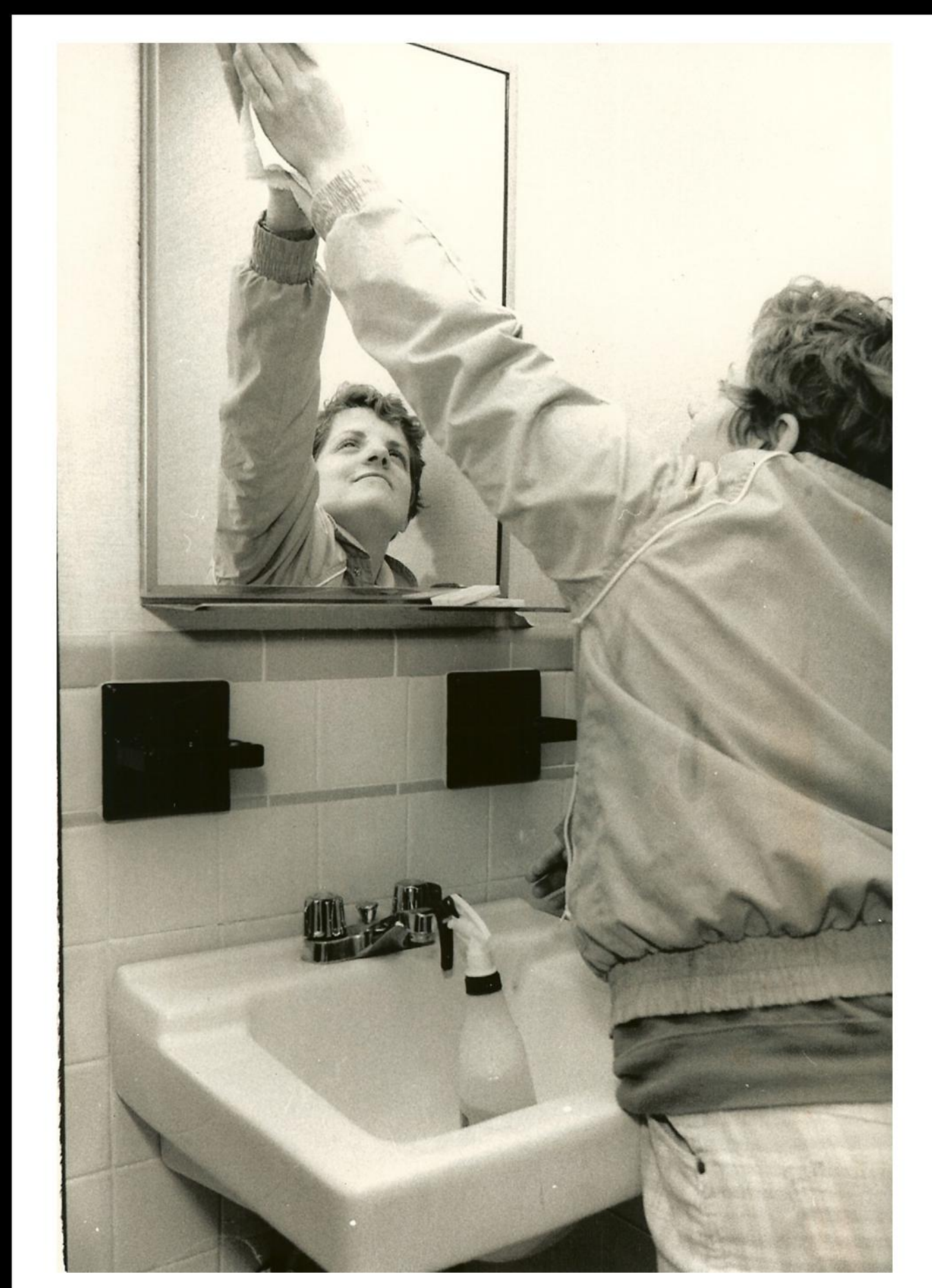
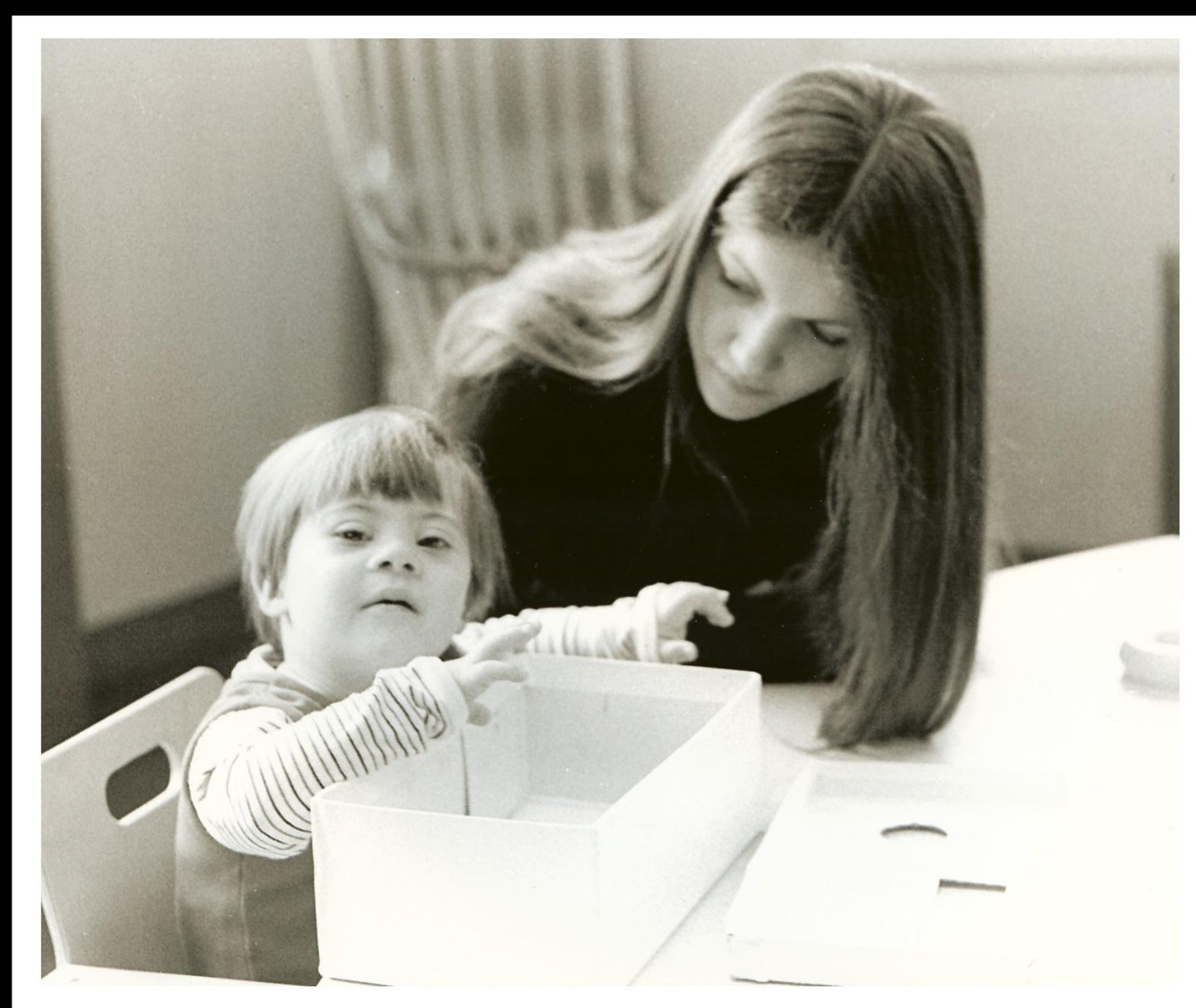


Photo: K. Perlow

Employment becomes the goal, moving away from sheltered workshops and day activity services. Services evolve to meet this new vision.

Another major development in the 1980s is the growth of Early Intervention. Children from birth to age three, either with developmental disabilities or considered at-risk, are receiving in-home physical therapy, speech therapy, nutritional supports, and more. Over the decades, Early Intervention will grow to serve over 35,000 children each year.



## *The Arc of Massachusetts*

Remembering the past.

Celebrating the present.

Securing the future.