

Advocacy Spotlight

Emilie Everett is a mother of three with two children on the autism spectrum. She is a vocal advocate working hard to make her voice heard.

When Emilie's oldest son received his autism diagnosis, Emilie quickly discovered how harrowing it can be navigating the developmental disability world.

"When my 5 year old first got diagnosed with Autism, everything seemed overwhelming and like I was drowning. Navigating the steps after diagnosis was the main reason I got involved in advocacy. I became more aware of the needs of my children and wanted to get more informed and involved in my community."

Reaching out to The Arc of Snohomish County, Emilie was able to facilitate her advocacy further. She is an IEP Parent Partner, a Helping Parent at The Arc, and is currently enrolled in The Arc's Leadership Academy program. This fall she will start the Nonprofit Management certificate program at the University of Washington. Recently, Emilie was invited to share her story with OSPI in a statewide webinar addressing the needs of special education in the current coronavirus pandemic.

"I am constantly striving to learn and grow in advocacy. I want to help parents navigate resources in the community, and lend a helping hand (or ear) to those who need it.

"Advocacy is something that may seem overwhelming, but it is incredibly empowering. I encourage everyone to take the tools necessary to learn how to advocate and lead. I used to think I had no voice, but then I had to become a voice for my sons, and it has forever changed me.

Emilie plans on using her advocacy skills to work in the non-profit sector, furthering the cause of marginalized communities.



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“There is no greater disability in society, then the inability to see a person as more”
- Robert M. Hensel

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Advocacy in Action

2020 Election—Get out and vote!

The 2020 general election is coming up in November, and a number of positions in both the state and federal government are up for election. How these elections unfold will have a great impact on both the state and the country, so casting an informed vote is of vital importance.

The Arc of Washington State has emailed a questionnaire to all state candidates to learn about their stances regarding the issues that face the I/DD community. The Arc wants to ensure that you have the information needed to vote for which candidates will best represent both yourself and those you love with I/DD. You can find the answers to these questionnaires and more information

IMPORTANT DATES TO KNOW

October 16— Beginning of the 18 day voting period. Registered voters should begin receiving their ballots in the mail, and Accessible Voting Units (AVU) will begin to become available at voting centers.

October 26—Due date for online and mail in voter registrations. In person registering and voting is still permitted up through 8:00pm on election day.

November 3—Election Day! All ballots must be cast in person or postmarked by this day by 8:00pm

Need to register to vote?

[Register Here](#)

If you are a registered voter, Washington state will be sending you your ballot by mail. To find a drop box for your ballot near you, [Find a drop box](#)

If you need further assistance casting your ballot, contact your [county's election department](#), or you can call Snohomish County's Election and Voter Registration at 425-359-2777.



If you have any other questions about voting, please contact The Arc at 425-258-2459, or contact jake@arcsno.org for help.

Disclaimer: The Arc is a 501(c)(3), and as such does not endorse any political party of campaign. The information presented here is purely for educational purposes and in no way is presented to favor one candidate or party over another.

Advocacy in Action

Possible cuts to DDA on the horizon

In a letter from the state Office of Financial Management (OFM) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all state agencies were told to expect a massive budget cut of 15% in the coming year. To prepare for this, each agency was advised to submit to the state what a 15% budget cut would look like. For DDA, this would be a disastrous move as the agency is already critically underfunded.

Like all state agencies, DDA did compile the requested cuts and submitted them to OFM. A quick summary of the proposed cuts include

- Eliminating the Community Crisis Stabilization Service
- Reducing Medicaid waiver capacity
- Reducing staff positions in RHCs
- A rate cut for in-home providers, adult residential care, adult family homes, and employment and community integration programs
- Increasing eligibility requirements for Medicaid

Interestingly enough, another proposal in these cuts includes the complete closure of the Rainier School, something that The Arc and the I/DD advocacy community has been pushing for for many years. While the complete closure of the school would incur a higher upfront cost, DDA recognizes that the long term savings far outweigh the short term cost.

This is just a shortened list of the proposed cuts, but it's quick to see that any singular one of them would be disastrous. The last point shows to be the most troublesome, as increasing the requirements for Medicaid will more than likely remove people from services that are currently receiving them. This would be a crushing blow to the I/DD community.

While it is still unclear if these cuts will be implemented, what is clear is that some cuts are definitely coming. The state is expected to see a historic budget short fall for next year. When the Washington State Legislature reconvenes in January, it is expected that they will be making drastic cuts to the budget. Contact your local legislators and let them know that #CUTSCAUSECRISIS

[View the memo outlining the cuts](#)

[View the letter with the proposed cuts](#)

[View the proposed cuts as released by OFM](#)



*"Your present
circumstances don't
determine where you
can go; they merely
determine where you
start."*

- Nido Quebin

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*“The world worries
about disabilities more
then disabled people
do”
- Warwick Davis*

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Advocacy in Action

Learning During Coronavirus

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has not only changed our day to day life, but how school life will look moving forward as well. The State Office of Public Instruction (OSPI) has set forth guidelines on how school will look this coming year, and saying it will be different is an understatement. Re-



remote learning, instituted on an emergency basis in the spring, is the new normal in the fall. Most school districts across the entire state are starting the school year in a remote learning environment with plans on moving to in person teaching later in the year as Coronavirus numbers allow.

In addition to the challenges facing students and parents in a remote learning environment, are the added difficulties of providing an adequate education environment for students

with special needs. Parents, along with schools, districts, and the state are struggling to determine how to provide these services, and many are putting the onus on individual IEP teams to determine the best way to deliver services to these students during this time. Unfortunately, many of these teams do not know what they can do during this time, or what they are allowed to do within the guidelines put forth by the state.

Many, if not all, IEPs currently in place are expected to be revisited for this upcoming school year. Parents and IEP teams are expected to figure out how to provide services to their special needs students. IEP meetings can be a difficult and trying time for families, especially those who are new to the process. It is expected that many IEPs will be adapted to provide services remotely, but many students require services that simply cannot be provided in a remote setting. These cases will require schools and districts to provide some sort of in person learning for these students regardless of the state emergency declaration currently in place. While this will be difficult to arrange, districts and schools are preparing for some in person instruction even if they are currently engaged in distance learning as a whole.

While this will inevitably help students with special needs and their families, this process will take some time to put into place, so for the first few weeks of the school year, students with special needs and their families should expect there to be some form of remote learning to take place to start the year. But parents and guardians need to remember that whatever is agreed upon in the IEP is legally binding, and the school and district are obligated by law to follow these IEPs.

If you will be working on your child's IEP this year, The Arc is here to help. With our IEP Parent Partner (IEPPP) program, we can help pair you with another parent who has worked on IEPs in the past and help guide you through the process, attend the IEP meeting with you, and take notes during the IEP meeting. For information on this program or to request an IEP Parent Partner, you can contact Nicki@arcsno.org for more information. If you need an IEPPP, please reach out as soon as possible as it can be difficult to arrange one on short notice.

[Review the school opening information that OSPI](#)

If you would like to host or attend a virtual legislative coffee in your local district contact:
Jake@arcsno.org

“Stand up straight and realize who you are, that you tower over your circumstances”

- Maya Angelou

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Arc News

Virtual Advocacy Day recap

In July and August, the Arc of Washington State, in partnership with SAIL and the DDC, hosted several virtual advocacy days with state lawmakers to discuss the impending budget shortfalls facing the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each virtual advocacy day consisted of two members of the state legislative chambers, with every one being either part of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, or the House Appropriations committee. Self-advocates and families from the districts represented were also present in all the advocacy days, relaying their stories and letting the legislators know how dire cuts to DD could be.

The virtual days were massively successful, with the virtual connectivity allowing more people to connect who may have been unable to attend an in person event in Olympia. While the purpose initially was to prevent cuts from an impending special session, as the advocacy days went on it became clear that a special legislative session was not going to be called. This changed the message being delivered slightly, as it then became more about educating legislators about the problems currently facing the DD community then trying to prevent immediate cuts. Maintaining the DDA budget was still a priority, however it was no longer an emergency topic.

After these virtual advocacy days with legislators, The Arc of Washington also hosted a special education forum with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal and Assistant Superintendent for Special Education Glenna Gallo. This platform allowed families to tell their stories about the struggle with special education in the time of COVID-19, and also allowed for a question and answer session as well.

If you missed out on any of these virtual advocacy experiences, all of the events were recorded and can be found at the Washington State Arc's website at <https://arcwa.org/advocacy/advocacy-days/>

If you want to be informed for other events like this, sign up for reminders at <https://arcwa.org/action-center/>



**We're here to help
you have a voice**

You are the expert in telling your story and how it relates to decisions being made by lawmakers.

Although impacting government may feel overwhelming, we're here to help you have a voice.

It only takes a few steps:

Be informed

- Sign up for Action Alerts

Get Connected

- Join The Arc
- Join a parent coalition
- Join a self-advocacy group

Take Action

- Visit The Arc of Washington State's Online Action Center
- Send emails
- Make phone calls
- Attend town hall meetings
- Participate in Advocacy Days
- Visit your legislators in person.

For tips on Legislative Advocacy visit [*Hot Tips*](#)

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Tools & Resources

Sign up

Legislative Alerts & Updates

The Arc of Washington State | <http://capwiz.com/arcwa/mlm/signup/>
Sign up for legislative action alerts related to developmental disability. Receive the information you need, to voice your opinions on bills during the legislative session. Alerts provide you with messages for your legislators that you can use as is, or edit using your own words. Enter your name and address and click! Your message will automatically be sent to all of your legislators. Toll free Legislative Hotline 1-800-562-6000. Email or call, action takes less than 5 minutes!

Find Your

Legislative District and Elected Officials

Washington Legislature | <http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>
Find your legislative district and elected officials.

Hot Tips

Legislative Advocates on Developmental Disabilities

The Arc of Washington State |

<https://arcwa.org/content/uploads/sites/35/2019/11/Hot-Tips-2020.pdf>

Some of the topics included:

- Tips for meeting with elected officials.
- How to create a short, clear message.
- The bill process—how a bill becomes a law.
- The state budget process.

Resource Library

The Arc of Washington State | <https://arcwa.org/resource-library/>

A comprehensive list of documents and websites that support developmental disability issues.

Transportation Resource Guide and Accessible Travel Map

Snohomish County Transportation Coalition

There are many ways to travel and a wide variety of payment options.

SNOTRAC partners and affiliates offer transportation in Snohomish County and throughout the region. www.gosnotrac.org

Find an open board or commission, get involved and have your voice heard!

The Arc can provide support, resources and tools to help you be an effective and successful disability advocate on local Boards and Commissions.

For information contact:
Autumn Chancellor at
Autumn@arcsno.org
425-258-2459 x107

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Coming Up!



Hosted by
Disability Rights
WASHINGTON
&
 **ROOTED**
in **RIGHTS**

**Celebrating 30 Years of the ADA:
Washington State Government
Candidates Forum**

Join us for a virtual forum with the candidates running for statewide positions in Washington State. By making sure people with disabilities are part of the conversation, we can ensure that changes made by elected officials are reflective of our needs and values.

Date: September 23 Time: 6-7:30 pm

Questions can be submitted in advance when you
RSVP

Special Education During COVID-19: Rights and Advocacy Tips

Presented by Deborah Dorfman, Managing Attorney Northwest Justice Project. Attorney Deborah Dorfman will share important information about parent and student rights to special education during COVID-19 and advocacy tips. Topics include:

- In-person vs. distance learning
- Provision of Related Services
- Evaluations and IEP Development
- Implementation of IEPs (provision of FAPE)
- Recovery Services and Compensatory Education
- How to seek remedies and get help

Date: September 14, Time: 7-8:30pm

REGISTER HERE

The Arc of
Snohomish County

2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300
Everett, WA 98201
425-258-2459

www.arcsno.org
info@arcsno.org

Shayne Nagel
Executive Director
Shayne@arcsno.org

Jamie Coonts
Program Director
Jamie@arcsno.org

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Get Involved

Note that all events are currently conducted remotely. We will be conducting in person events again once it is safe for all interested parties. Thank you for your understanding at this time.

I.CAN Women's Self-Advocacy Group

2nd Tuesday of each month | 10:30am–12pm

We are a group of self-advocates open to all women ages 16 and up. A casual environment that combines learning with fun experiences. We share resources and skills, and hold the belief that everyone has something to contribute to our group. Please contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121 or Corinna Fale at Corinna@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103 .

Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

2nd Tuesday of each month | 1pm–4pm

Group of self-advocates focused on legislative change. Open to all. SAIL is a statewide coalition of people with developmental disabilities that strives to shape public policies that affect people with developmental disabilities.

Please contact Corinna Fale at Corinna@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103.

People First of Snohomish County

4th Tuesday of each month | 11am–12:30pm

A self-Advocacy organization by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are focused on educating ourselves and others, advocating for our rights, having fun! We believe we are PEOPLE FIRST and our disabilities are secondary. Please contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121.

Due to coronavirus cancellations, please check our website calendar at www.arcsno.org/calendar for updates

Did you know?

You can host a virtual legislative coffee!

With a pivotal election coming up, knowing where legislative members and candidates stand is vital. These events allow community members to talk to legislative candidates in an informal, low pressure environment. These events can be held at public locations or in your own home, whatever is most comfortable for the host. If you would like to host a legislative coffee event with legislative candidates from your district, please contact Jake@arcsno.org

Federal Bills of Interest

H.R. 6800 The Heroes Act

This bill is a further stimulus plan in response to the COVID-19 epidemic. It contains very specific language in regards to caretakers and the disabled, covering many financial burdens that come about because of live in care. Among the considerations for funding in this bill are respite care, childcare, expanding availability of PPE to group living settings, stabilization of live in provider wages, stability of benefits in response to instability of employment, and many others. Many, if not all, of these services have yet to be addressed in other COVID-19 stimulus legislation. This bill is still sitting in the Senate. The Arc of the United States strongly supports this bill.