

## IEP Parent Partner Spotlight

**C**har Aurdal participated in The Arc's very first IEP Parent Partner training in 2014. Parent Partners act as a neutral party to support parent participation, and help foster a collaborative, positive and productive IEP process. Her personal experiences as a parent and her willingness to help others has made her a valuable Arc parent mentor. Like many of our families, she has had to learn on the go. As it became clear that her son had multiple disabilities, Char's perseverance and levelheaded manner came in handy when faced with the up and down relationship with her son's school. Through trial and error, her ability to advocate for her son produced some outside the box solutions. Char's son is now 26 years old and he has come a long way. He has a lot to be proud of - he lives on his own (his parents are his neighbors in a duplex) and he works full time. The Arc's Special Education Coordinator, Nicki Solie, recently sat down with Char to talk about her journey. Here are some highlights from their discussion:



**Was there anyone to help you navigate your son's special education?** *No. I did it alone and it was very hard because I did not feel like I knew what I was doing, how to advocate for services or how special education worked. There was no one to help me. I was at the school every day and I became friends with most all of the staff, which helped. I will never forget one meeting. By the time I walked in, everyone was seated all on one side of the table and I sat across from them. It felt like I was facing a firing squad. The school psychologist, whom I had gotten to be friends with, came in and sat down next to me. I was so grateful.*

**What made you decide to be an IEP Parent Partner?** *When I saw the opportunity to learn more about special education and helping others I knew I wanted to do the training. I remember what it was like to be by myself and wishing there was help out there. And it is a good feeling knowing that I have helped empower other families to take an active role in their child's education.*

**What can you say are the benefits to inviting an IEP Parent Partner to a meeting?** *It's one of the best programs out there. I make it clear to families that I do not speak on their behalf during a meeting; I take notes so they can focus on the meeting. I remember one family was having a second meeting with the school to finish an IEP and the parent brought out my notes as a reminder of what was decided on and accomplished in the last meeting. Both sides were grateful they did not have to cover the same ground twice and it helped avoid misunderstandings. I think it changes the tone of the meeting; it actually makes it less adversarial or confrontational. People on both sides can get emotional sometimes. Meetings can fall apart, but with a neutral person there, it can keep the focus on the priorities.*

For more information about The Arc's IEP Parent Partner program, or to be trained as an IEP Parent Partner, please contact: Nicki Solie at [Nicki@arcsno.org](mailto:Nicki@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x110.

### INSIDE

**Page 1 - Spotlight**  
Char Aurdal

**Page 2 - Arc News**  
Parent Volunteer Training

**Page 3 - Save The Date**  
Understanding Special Education  
Legislative Forum

**Page 4 - Parents' Role**  
Effective IEP Meetings

**Page 5 - Tools & Resources**  
Education Ombuds  
Inclusion: Value & Misconceptions  
Friendship Development

**Page 6 - Open Board & Committees**

**Page 7 - Get Involved**

## Fall 2018 Helping Parent & IEP Parent Partner Training

Dates: Monday, November 5, 12 & 26  
Time: 6-9 pm  
Location: The Arc office  
FREE \*Registration required

## Esta capacitación también se ofrecerá en Español

Fechas: Viernes 19, 26 de Octubre  
9, 16 de Noviembre  
Hora: 6-8:30pm  
Lugar: Oficina de the Arc  
GRATIS \*Se requiere Registración

"I am a stranger to you now,  
let me walk with you for  
awhile.

Because I have been where  
you are, and where you are  
about to go.

I have no answers. I offer  
instead my hand, my heart,  
my listening ear, my time,  
and my experience...

So that one day, you can  
turn to another and say: I  
am a stranger to you  
now..."

- Alice, New Hampshire parent

**A**re you the parent, grandparent or caregiver of a child with developmental disabilities? Would you like to offer peer support, encouragement and share insights with other parents who have a child with special needs? Join us on Nov 5 & 12 for The Arc's 2-part **Helping Parent** training.

- Learn how to use your personal experiences to effectively support other parents
- Increase self-awareness
- Develop active listening skills
- Create a vision for a Good Life

Then continue with the **IEP Parent Partner** module on Nov 26th

*\*Pre-requisite: completion of Helping Parent training Parts 1 & 2*

- Overview of Special Education
- Nuts and bolts of IEPs
- Help families navigate the IEP process

For more information or to register, please contact:

Alaina Kube [Alaina@arcsno.org](mailto:Alaina@arcsno.org) 425 258-2459 x111

Nicki Solie [Nicki@arcsno.org](mailto:Nicki@arcsno.org) 425 258-2459 x110

¿Te gustaría **apoyar a otros padres** de familia que tienen un niño con una discapacidad?

¿Estas interesado(a) en ayudar a otras familias a prepararse y/o deseas saber cómo navegar el proceso del Programa de Educación Individualizada o **IEP** de los hijos?

Cada taller es interactivo y se necesita completar en 2 días

Para registrarse o para mas información contacte a:

Mely Cervantes [Mely@arcsno.org](mailto:Mely@arcsno.org) 425-258-2459 x114

### Why I Decided to be an Arc Helping Parent/IEP Parent Partner

*"I like to help others. I have an autistic son. I know what it is like to need support or help."*

*"I have received help from others who have been through similar situations. I am now in a place where I feel I can help others."*

*"Someone might benefit from my experience."*

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— 2019 —

## IEP Binder Organization Workshop

Monday, January 14  
7-8:30 PM

The Arc Office  
2500 Hewitt Ave, #300  
Everett, 98201

One thing all families of special needs kids have in common - massive amounts of paperwork! Keeping a historical record in a central location provides numerous benefits such as being able to quickly share information with other professionals, applying for services or camps, or gaining insight on your child's progress. Binders and tabs provided with pre-registration.

RSVP to Nicki Solie  
[Nicki@arcsno.org](mailto:Nicki@arcsno.org)  
425-258-2459 x110

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# Save The Date

## Understanding Special Education

Monday, September 24, 7-9 PM

The Arc Office 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

*Presented by Scott Raub, Special Education Parent Liaison  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)*

This is a great opportunity for parents/caregivers, educators, Arc Helping Parents and IEP Parent Partners to increase their knowledge about the special education process. The OSPI Office of Special Education aspires to ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

For more information contact Nicki Solie at [Nicki@arcsno.org](mailto:Nicki@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x110

## Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Conference

Saturday, September 29, 9 AM - 4 PM \*Registration is required  
Bellevue College

When schools and communities commit to promoting Social Emotional Learning they position themselves to develop partnerships to ensure that our education system is equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive for all students. Come participate in Design Circles, hear inspiring speakers and learn from diverse communities and educators as they discuss these three guiding principles: Professional Learning, School-Family- Community Partnerships and Cultural Responsiveness.

For information and to purchase tickets visit:

[www.facebook.com/events/1033536986802281/](https://www.facebook.com/events/1033536986802281/)

## Arc 2018 Legislative Forum

Thursday, October 18, 6:30 - 8 PM

Everett Station Weyerhaeuser Room 3201 Smith Avenue, Everett, 98201

The forum is an opportunity to connect with legislators, candidates and other families on issues that face the I/DD community. Your personal stories and connections with your legislators can and will make a difference!

If you have questions or would like to help out with the event, please contact:  
Autumn Chancellor at [Autumn@arcsno.org](mailto:Autumn@arcsno.org) 425-258-2459 x113

## Autistics Present Symposium

Saturday, October 20, 10 AM - 4 PM \*Registration is required  
Bellevue College

*Intersectionality - Claiming All Our Identities*

For anyone interested in learning more about autism and living and working as an autistic person: professionals, parents and guardians and autistic individuals.

For more information or to register:

[www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/autism-conference/](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/autism-conference/)

## Transition Planning Checklist

Informing Families.org

A checklist of skills, activities, and services to consider when creating your child's high school transition plan for their IEP.

Categories include:

- Independent Living
- Employment/
- Post Secondary Education
- Health & Safety
- Social/Recreational
- Financial & Legal
- Housing & In-Home Supports

Complete Checklist:

[www.informingfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Bulletin\\_TransitionChecklist1.pdf](http://www.informingfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Bulletin_TransitionChecklist1.pdf)

Star Chart Worksheet:

[www.informingfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/star\\_form.pdf](http://www.informingfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/star_form.pdf)

IEP Preparation & Participation Form:

[www.arcsno.org/all-resources/special-education-resources-1/332-iep-preparation-and-participation-form/file](http://www.arcsno.org/all-resources/special-education-resources-1/332-iep-preparation-and-participation-form/file)

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# Parents' Role in IEP Process

## Preparing for an Effective IEP Meeting

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) guaranteed a seat at the IEP meetings for parents and student, but often parents feel overwhelmed and intimidated. What can parents do to be active participants on an IEP team?

It starts with preparation.

1. Find the anniversary date (by looking at the last IEP) and put a reminder in your calendar.
2. 30 days prior to the anniversary you can send a friendly note to the school about scheduling the meeting; include a few convenient times that work in your schedule.
3. Update or create a student binder, which contains all the past evaluations both school and private, IEPs, progress reports, work samples, and communications with all professionals.
4. 2 weeks before the meeting call The Arc to request an IEP Parent Partner if desired.
5. Work through a [Star Chart worksheet](#) or the [IEP Preparation & Participation form](#). These tools can help identify your child's strengths and needs, their hopes and dreams, their vision for a good life and the missing pieces that can help them reach those goals.
6. Make a list of priorities, questions, and actions needed and share them with other team members prior to the meeting so they can come prepared with answers.
7. During the meeting, stay on task and professional as most meetings are usually only an hour unless requested to be longer. This is why bringing in a support person can be instrumental in making it a successful meeting.
8. After the meeting, follow-up with a thank you note to the members. Include a short summary, something agreed upon, or action items that need to be completed and by whom, or questions that still need clarification.

FAQs and answers about IEP meetings, can be viewed at [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org).

### IEP Parent Partners

Parents are essential members of the IEP team. The IEP Parent Partner program supports this role by matching parents with a trained IEP Partner who mentors them before, during and after the IEP meeting, at no cost to families.

Prior to the meeting, Partners help parents understand what to expect during IEP development, and help parents prepare so they may more fully contribute to the development of their student's IEP.

Partners are available to attend the IEP meeting to take notes, allowing parents to fully engage in the meeting.

If you would like to be matched with a volunteer Parent Partner, contact: Nicki Solie at [Nicki@arcsno.org](mailto:Nicki@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x110.

## Questions to Ask Your Kids After School Instead of “How Was Your Day?”

- What made you smile today?
- Can you tell me an example of kindness you saw or showed?
- What did you do that was creative?
- Who did you sit with at lunch?
- Was anyone in your class gone today?
- Tell me something you know today, that you didn't know yesterday.
- Did you like your lunch?
- What was the hardest rule to follow today?
- If you could change one thing about your day, what would it be?

50 questions:

[www.herviewfromhome.com/50-questions-to-ask-your-kids-instead-of-asking-how-was-your-day/](http://www.herviewfromhome.com/50-questions-to-ask-your-kids-instead-of-asking-how-was-your-day/)

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# Tools & Resources

## WA State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds

OEO.wa.gov \*También disponible en Español

### The Basics: What every parent needs to know

- *Basic Education Rights and Opportunities in Public Schools*
- *How to be an Education Advocate*
- *Discipline in Public Schools*
- *Protecting the Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities in Public Schools*

View publications: [www.oeo.wa.gov/publications-reports/publications/](http://www.oeo.wa.gov/publications-reports/publications/)

### Ask An Ombuds

OEO hosts lunchtime webinars called “Ask an Ombuds” and also webinars designed to help families, schools, and community professionals stay up to date on best practices and recent education policy changes.

More information: [www.oeo.wa.gov/publications-reports/webinars/](http://www.oeo.wa.gov/publications-reports/webinars/)

### Common Topics and Educational Issues

View topics: [www.oeo.wa.gov/education-issues-topics/](http://www.oeo.wa.gov/education-issues-topics/)

## The Value of Inclusive Education

Open Society Foundations.org

- *What is inclusive education?*
- *Why is inclusive education important?*
- *Should children who need specialized attention be separated?*
- *What are the basic elements of inclusive education?*
- *How can we advance inclusive education?*
- *Is inclusive education expensive?*

Read entire article: [www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/value-inclusive-education](http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/value-inclusive-education)

## 3 Big Misconceptions About Inclusion

The Inclusive Class.com

- *The student with disabilities will not be able to “keep up” with the class curriculum.*
- *Including a child with disabilities in a general education class will be distracting for the other children.*
- *Inclusion is a program.*

Read entire article: [www.theinclusiveclass.com/2018/08/3big-misconceptions-about-inclusion.html#1](http://www.theinclusiveclass.com/2018/08/3big-misconceptions-about-inclusion.html#1)

## Helping Children Develop Friendships

Sandbox Learning.com

- *Get Involved*
- *Leverage the Child's Interests*
- *Role Play Difficult Skills*
- *Provide Examples*
- *Model Being Good to Others*
- *Do Not Force Friendships*

Read entire article: [www.sandbox-learning.com/Default.asp?Page=128](http://www.sandbox-learning.com/Default.asp?Page=128)



**T**he Arc of Snohomish County encourages individuals and family members to participate on boards and committees, to be the voice for developmental disabilities as decisions are made in our community.

The Arc can provide support, resources and tools to help you be effective and successful.

If you're already serving on a board or committee let us know. We'd love to hear from you!

For more about leadership opportunities and training contact:

Jamie Coonts at  
[Jamie@arcsno.org](mailto:Jamie@arcsno.org)  
425-258-2459 x104.

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# Boards & Committees

## School District Opportunities

Welcome to the new school year! Just as parents are important members of an IEP team, so too are parents important members of a school district community. Volunteer and get involved. Join your **local PTA**. Bring awareness of the needs of students with I/DD and advocate for inclusive school events. **Special Education PTAs (SEPTAs)** are an opportunity to meet other parents in similar circumstances and bring together families of students who attend different schools in the same district. Other opportunities include attending **school board meetings**, contributing to **community committee work**, or **volunteering in classrooms**. Find what works for you!

To view a current list of boards, committees and parent groups in each school district: [www.arcsno.org/all-resources/special-education-resources-1/526-school-community-involvement-2018/file](http://www.arcsno.org/all-resources/special-education-resources-1/526-school-community-involvement-2018/file)

The Arc is here to help! If you are interested in starting a special education parent group in your district or would like ideas for how to make your voice heard in an existing parent group, please contact the Arc of Snohomish County. We want to help!

For more information contact Nicki Solie, Special Education Coordinator at [Nicki@arcsno.org](mailto:Nicki@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x110.

## Governor's Council for Independent Living

WASILC strives to ensure statewide representation of members who represent a broad range of individuals with geographic, disability, business, ethnic, service provider, advocacy and agency diversity.

If you are committed and passionate about the values and mission of Independent Living or are interested and want more information, please contact Kim Conner, Executive Director, at [Kimberly.Conner@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Conner@dshs.wa.gov) or 360-725-3695.

To apply, submit an online application to the Governor's office: [www.governor.wa.gov/boards-commissions/boards-commissions/apply-serve-board-or-commission](http://www.governor.wa.gov/boards-commissions/boards-commissions/apply-serve-board-or-commission)

## Everett Diversity Advisory Board

The Diversity Advisory Board was established to identify and prioritize issues regarding diversity and inclusion and offer recommendations to the Mayor of the City of Everett.

The Diversity Advisory Board meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 4:00 PM. For more information visit: [www.everettwa.gov/1201/Diversity-Advisory-Board](http://www.everettwa.gov/1201/Diversity-Advisory-Board)

To apply, submit an online application: [www.everettwa.gov/FormCenter/Boards-Commissions-25/Boards-and-Commissions-Application-164](http://www.everettwa.gov/FormCenter/Boards-Commissions-25/Boards-and-Commissions-Application-164)

**For a complete list of opportunities, check your city's webpage.**

The Arc of Snohomish County

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

[www.arcsno.org](http://www.arcsno.org)  
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Shayne Nagel  
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[Shayne@arcsno.org](mailto:Shayne@arcsno.org)

Jamie Coonts  
Program Director  
[Jamie@arcsno.org](mailto:Jamie@arcsno.org)

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# Get Involved

## People First of Snohomish County



4th Tuesday of each month

11 AM - 1 PM

The Arc Office - 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

A Self-Advocacy organization by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We believe we are people first and our disabilities are secondary.

For more information contact:

Kylie Walsh at [Kylie@arcsno.org](mailto:Kylie@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x121

## I.CAN Women's Self-Advocacy Group



2nd Tuesday of each month

10:30 AM - 12 PM

The Arc Office - 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

A casual environment that combines learning with fun.

We believe everyone has something to share. Open to all women age 16 and up.

For more information contact:

Corinna Fale at [Corinna@arcsno.org](mailto:Corinna@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x103

## Join an Inclusive Girl Scout Troop!



Saturday, October 13th

1-3 PM

The Arc Office - 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

Informational First Troop Meeting for girls in grades K-5 and their parents interested in participating in a multi-age troop celebrating diversity, equity and inclusion!

Harness your inner G.I.R.L. (Go-Getter, Innovator, Risk Taker, Leader.)™

For more information or to RSVP, contact:

Annette Crespo - Community Engagement Manager

[ACrespo@girlscoutswa.org](mailto:ACrespo@girlscoutswa.org) or 360-658-8083

# Did You Know?

The Arc of Snohomish County is available to come speak to your group. Interested in learning more about Special Education, Advocacy, Inclusion or Charting The Life Course? Contact Jamie Coonts at [Jamie@arcsno.org](mailto:Jamie@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x104.