

# Working with Families with High Support Needs

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# Welcome!

We would love to know who is here today!

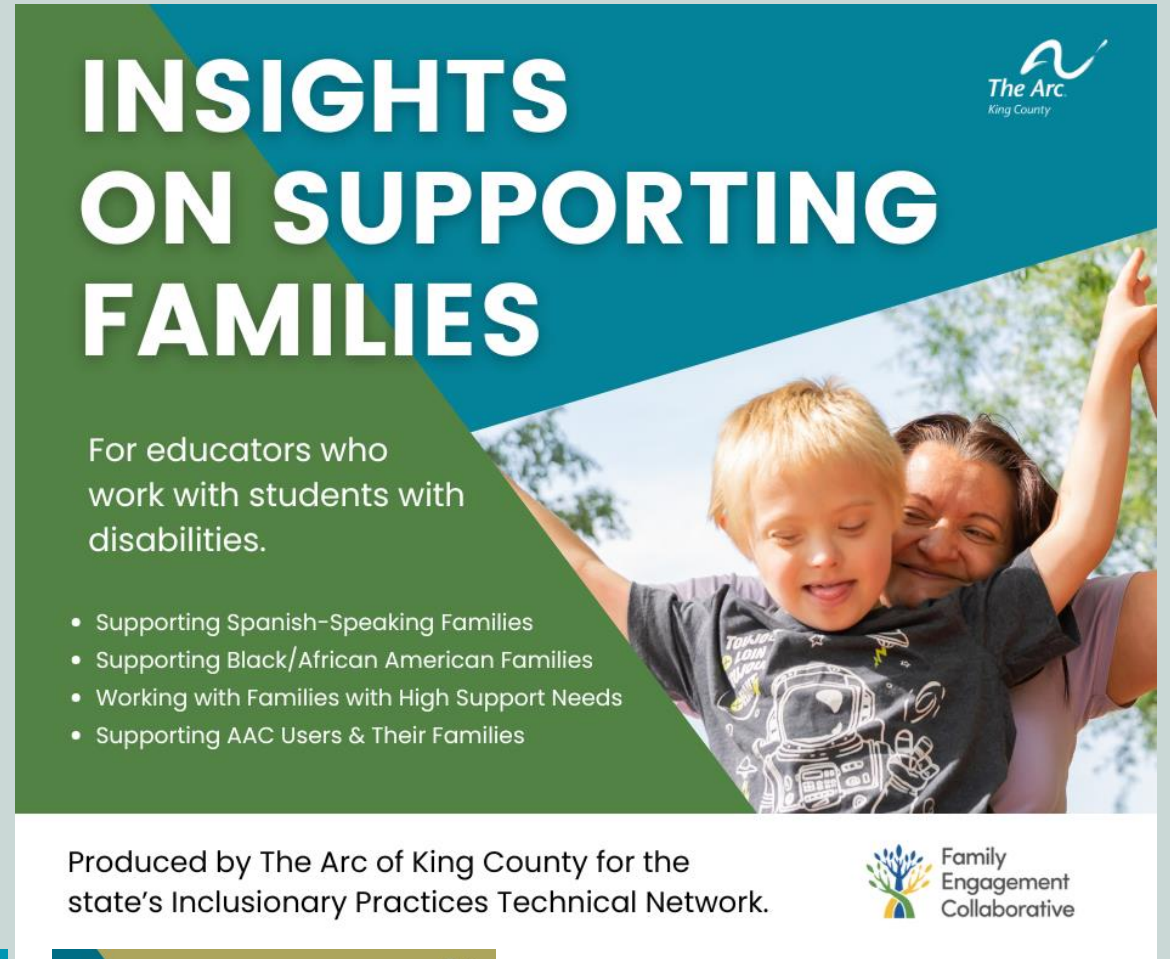
Please take a minute to tell us your role/s.

## About this series

This presentation is part of a series of workshops we are doing this spring as part of the [Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network](#).

This is a statewide collaboration between the [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction](#), WestEd, and education partners across Washington state.

One of these partners is the [Family Engagement Collaborative](#), and The Arc of King County is part of this collaborative. This spring we are hosting workshops to help educators learn more about disability and ways to support families, and help families learn more about inclusive learning and ways to navigate the special education process.





# Who we are ...

The Arc of King County promotes and protects the rights of people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (IDD) so we can all live, learn, work and play in the community.

The Arc is driven by the fundamental belief that everyone deserves to write their own life story. That means:

- Real access to education
- Meaningful employment
- Quality healthcare
- Genuine community connections

At our chapter, we offer information and family support, systems navigation, education & civic engagement support. We also run a supported living program for adults with IDD.

We help (or refer!) on any topic. The most common are special education, housing, and Medicaid long-term supports.

<https://arcofkingcounty.org/>



Need assistance? [ask@arcofkingcounty.org](mailto:ask@arcofkingcounty.org)

**Today's presenter:**

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# Agenda

The Parent Experience

Why Parents Reach Out for Help

What Can We Do to Help?

Supporting Multicultural Families

Supporting Difficult Parents

Supporting Parents with I/DD

# Most parents of children with IDD report experiencing:

- TRAUMA
- Fighting for services and to be taken seriously
- Deep fear and grief (sometimes)
- Navigating complex systems
- Taboo and stigma
- Isolation
- Thoughts of inadequacy
- Worry for our child and family's well-being



What else?

How might these experiences impact a parent and their ability to engage in their child's special education?

# What do parents experience while navigating Special Ed?

- Confusion
- Paranoia
- Worry
- Intimidation
- Insecurity
- More bad stories than good
- Triggered/reminded of their own experiences as students



What else?

How might these experiences impact a parent and their ability to engage in their child's special education?

# Why Do Parents Need Support?

1. New diagnosis
2. Help navigating the system: DDA, Special Ed, SSI and more
3. New to the area
4. They're experiencing conflict or crisis



What feelings might a family be experiencing when facing each of these scenarios?



# What can we do to help?

- Listen to their story (even if it's long)
- Validation, compassion and understanding
- Share parts of our own story as relevant
- Share compliments and positive observations about child, parenting, parent/child relationship, advocacy efforts
- Point towards other parents and parent support opportunities



What else?

Anything we should avoid doing?

# What Makes a Parent “Difficult” to Work With?

1. Confrontational with or disrespectful towards staff
2. Not following up, missing deadlines, or missing meetings altogether
3. Asking for too much, or things that are impossible
4. Requiring lots of reminders, support and more help than the average parent

## Questions to consider:

- *Why might they be acting like this?*
- *What might we do to help?*

# Supporting Multicultural Families

- Our culture and background impact our views on disability, education, advocacy and parent support. Don't assume shared values.
- Take time to learn about the culture of the family you're supporting, especially regarding disability, education, advocacy and support.
- Check in periodically to ensure you're providing meaningful support.
- Allocate more time when working with multicultural families. Building trust takes time, but it's important.



Reflect on your own various identities and how they may affect your values related to special education, disability and advocacy.

# Understand the Reality of Using Interpreters

Language is a significant barrier to accessing services. Those who rely on interpreters report the following:

- Inaccurate interpretation
- Interpreters who don't know the lingo
- Sharing opinions and interfering in conversation
- Members of the same small community





# When the parent has a disability

Parents are entitled to 504 accommodations, such as large print materials or extra time for meetings, so they can participate in the IEP process.

Ask a parent with a disability (or any parent, really):

- What do you need to effectively engage in your child's education?
- What barriers are interfering with your participation and understanding of the process?
- How might we communicate with the team ahead of time about your accommodation needs? (*Assist them with this task as needed*)



# You are not alone



When supporting a parent who is unique or particularly challenging:

- Listen actively
- Empathize
- Be patient
- Set boundaries (abuse should not be tolerated)
- Offer practical assistance
- Encourage professional help (carefully)
- Be consistent
- Reach out to The Arc and Parent to Parent for help

**The Arc of King County** provides emotional support, specialized services and activities in English, Spanish, Korean (email only). For other languages, we utilize interpreters.



**To contact us or refer families to us:**

**English:** 206-829-7053 OR [Ask@arcofkingcounty.org](mailto:Ask@arcofkingcounty.org)

**Spanish:** 206-829-7030  
OR [Preguntas@arcofkingcounty.org](mailto:Preguntas@arcofkingcounty.org)

**Korean** (email only): [Jkim@arcofkingcounty.org](mailto:Jkim@arcofkingcounty.org)



## Before you go...

Please let us know what you thought of today's presentation.

Your feedback allows us to understand and improve upon our training.

If you can't access the poll onscreen, please complete this version. Thank you!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DLP3LYD>





# Final Thoughts and Questions?

