

# Advocating for Students with Disabilities Perspectives, Tips and Tools

*A conversation with:*

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**Darya Farivar**, Open Doors For Multicultural Families &

**Rose Spidell**, WA State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds

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League of Education Voters \* Annual Advocacy Training

February 11, 2017 \* Tukwila, WA

# Bellevue Special Needs PTA

[www.BellevueSpecialNeedsPTA.com](http://www.BellevueSpecialNeedsPTA.com)

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## **MISSION: A.C.E.**

*Advocate* for the advancement of the academic and social-emotional education of students with special needs, ensuring every student is able to reach their full potential.

*Connect* parents, educators and administrators to build bridges and increase understanding and awareness of special needs issues.

*Educate* parents and others in the community, so that they have the support and resources they need to advocate for students with special needs.

# SEL for Washington

SEL for Washington is a grassroots effort and growing coalition of members who educate about and advocate for access to Social and Emotional Learning and skill development in Washington public schools.

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[WWW.SELFORWA.COM](http://WWW.SELFORWA.COM)

# Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

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- Committed to ensuring that statewide special education services enable every student to fully participate in their schools and communities.
- Established in order to help facilitate the provision of special education and related services to meet the unique needs of special education students.

[www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/SEAC/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/SEAC/default.aspx)



OPEN DOORS

for MULTICULTURAL FAMILIES

Seattle – Kent – Redmond

Main Office:

24437 Russell Rd.

Suite #220

Kent, WA 98032

[multiculturalfamilies.org](http://multiculturalfamilies.org)

**“...dedicated to the needs of families who have loved ones with developmental disabilities and special healthcare needs.”**

**Kent Office**

253-216-4479

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Advocacy Program Coordinator

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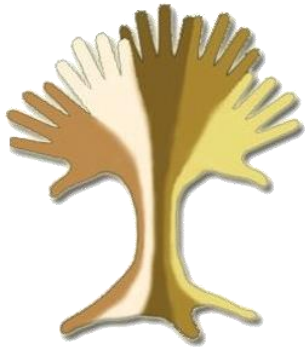
253-457-5064

English and Farsi

# Mission and Founding

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- Founded by a diverse group of parents, professionals, and community volunteers in June of 2009
- Our mission is to ensure that diverse families who have family members with developmental disabilities and special health care needs have equal access to culturally and linguistically appropriate information, resources, and services.

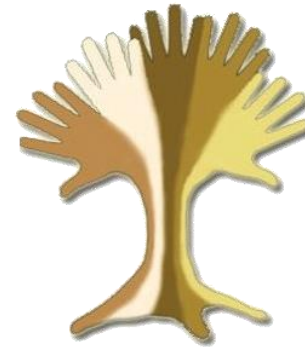


**Ginger Kwan**

Executive Director

[gingerk@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:gingerk@multiculturalfamilies.org)

206-372-1072



# Support Model

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- **Who do we serve?**

- Immigrant and refugee families
- Low income
- South Seattle and South King County
- Families who have loved ones with disabilities

- **How do we serve them?**

- Support all aspects of their lives.
  - Transportation stipend
  - Childcare stipend or onsite
  - Participation stipend
  - Refreshments



# Services

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fill out our [Referral Form](#) so  
WE can do the navigating!

- **We provide culturally and linguistically relevant support in the form of:** case managers, parent and self-advocate education, and specialized workshops with expert guest speakers.
- **Family Support Specialists (FSS):** Cantonese, Mandarin, Somali, Spanish (2), Korean, and Khmer.
  - Act as case managers who specialize in cultural brokering
- **Program Coordinators:**
  - Once families have been paired with FSS, they are matched to a program that will serve to educate them.
  - Early Learning, Youth Leadership and Advocacy, Youth Job Readiness, Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention, and Systems Advocacy
- **We do not provide interpretation services**

# Resource Navigation

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- Special Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Social Security Disability
- Developmental Disability Administration
- Guardianship
- Advocacy
- Healthcare
- Disability Specific (autism, chromosomal, learning)
- Transition (transition guide in traditional Chinese)

“like” our [Facebook](#) Page  
to keep up with events,  
resources, and  
announcements!





*We listen. We inform. We help solve problems.*

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[www.oeo.wa.gov](http://www.oeo.wa.gov) \* [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov) \* 1-866-297-2597

***INTERPRETATION AVAILABLE***

# What is OEO?

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The Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) is a small agency within the Governor's Office created in 2006 by the Washington State Legislature. OEO works to promote equity in education and support the ability of all students to fully participate in and benefit from public education in the State of Washington.



# What Does OEO Do?

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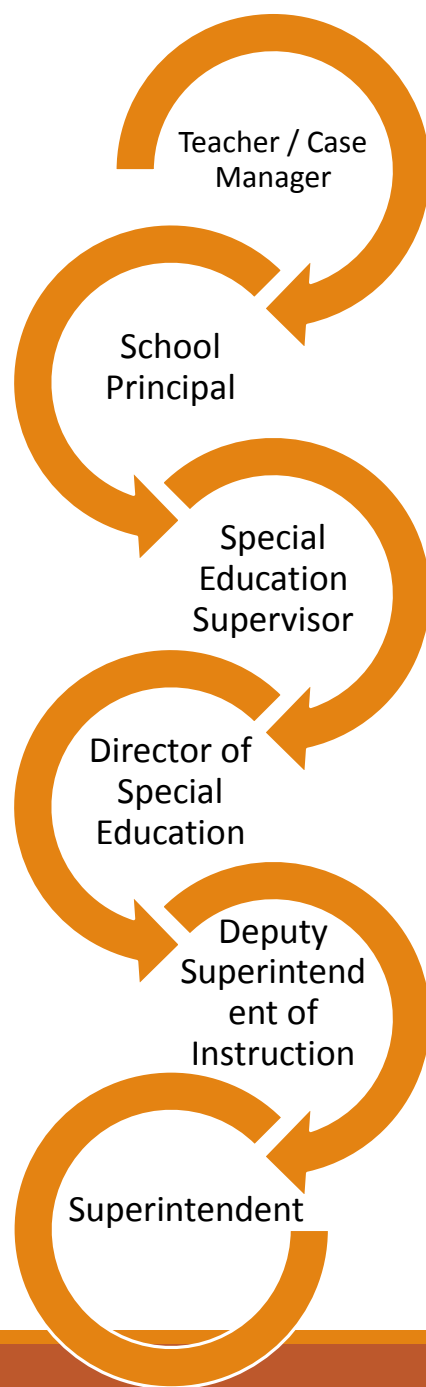
- ✓ Provide FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, IMPARTIAL and COLLABORATIVE support to families and schools to help resolve concerns;
- ✓ Share information about K-12 public school processes and the rights and responsibilities of parents and students;
- ✓ Make policy recommendations and share best practices to help improve outcomes for all students and eliminate opportunity gaps.

**Call us toll free! \* 1-866-297-2597 \* Interpretation Available!**

# Steps for Advocacy

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- ✓ Find other parents who have the same concerns and work together toward improving the conditions.
- ✓ Talk to the counselor, school advisory group, PTA, parent liaison or other school or program staff. They may share your concerns or be able to help you.
- ✓ Bring your concerns to the school district office or superintendent.
- ✓ Attend public meetings and school board meetings, and tell your story.



## Steps to Communicating with School & District Staff

- ✓ Ask questions and share concerns with your child's teacher and case manager. Include specialists like SLP, Counselor, OT and PT as appropriate.
- ✓ Bring unaddressed concerns to the school Principal. They are responsible for the success of every student in the building.
- ✓ Include the Special Education Supervisor in discussions if questions and concerns cannot be addressed solely by the teacher/case manager.
- ✓ The Director of Special Education oversees all supervisors and is responsible for oversight of the district's special education services.
- ✓ The Deputy Superintendent's work includes providing instructional leadership and professional development for principals.
- ✓ Responsible for the success of all students in school district should be aware of concerns and issues that are not addressed at the school level.

# OEO Resources — [www.oeo.wa.gov](http://www.oeo.wa.gov)



Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds

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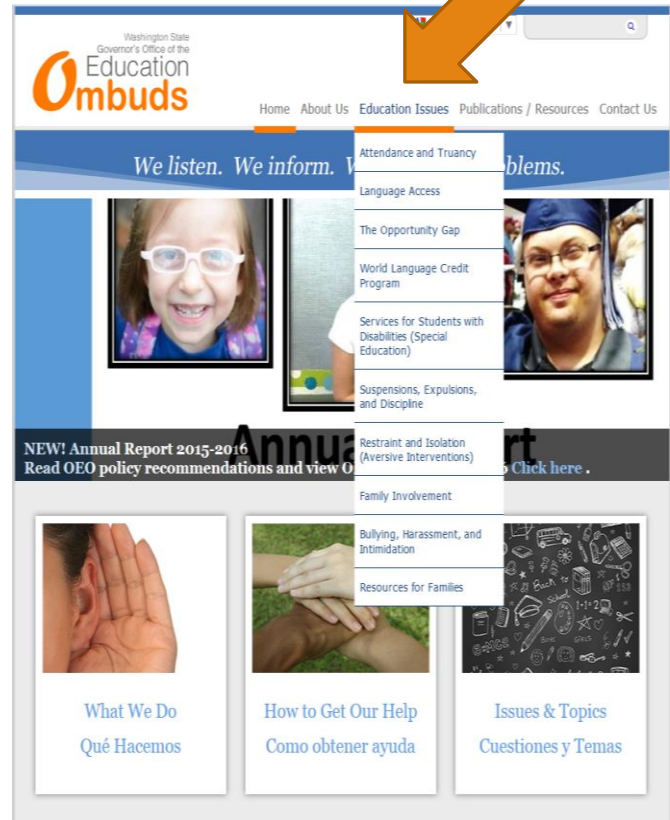
We listen. We inform. We help solve problems.

**Request Our Services**  
Read about our role, services, and Frequently Asked Questions to see if we can help you.

What We Do  
Qué Hacemos

How to Get Our Help  
Como obtener ayuda

Issues & Topics  
Cuestiones y Temas



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We listen. We inform. We help solve problems.

Attendance and Truancy

Language Access

The Opportunity Gap

World Language Credit Program

Services for Students with Disabilities (Special Education)

Suspensions, Expulsions, and Discipline

Restraint and Isolation (Aversive Interventions)

Family Involvement

Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation

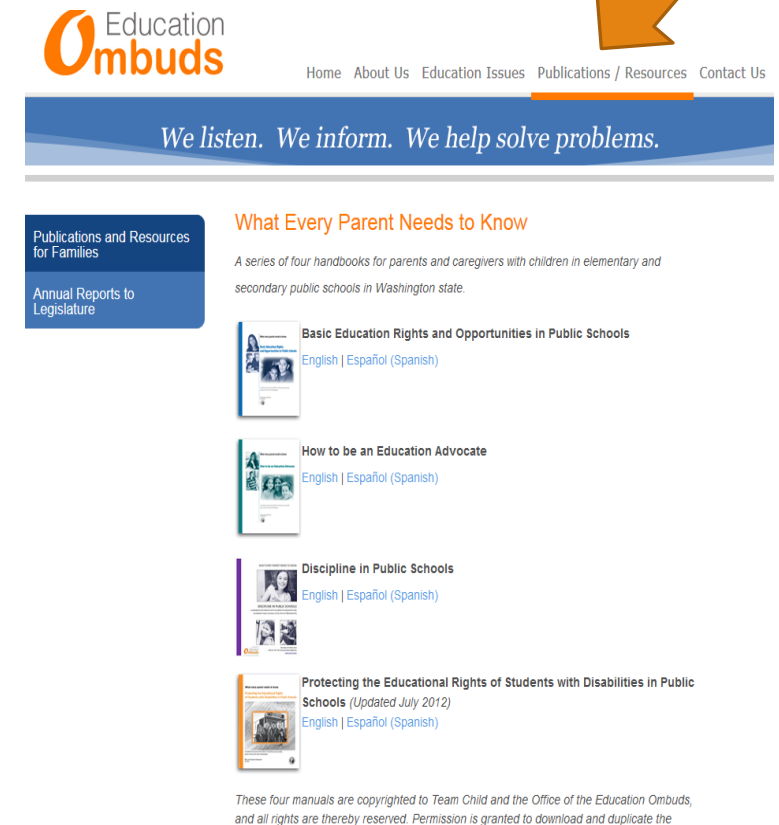
Resources for Families

**NEW! Annual Report 2015-2016**  
Read OEO policy recommendations and view OEO's findings. [Click here.](#)

What We Do  
Qué Hacemos

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We listen. We inform. We help solve problems.

**Publications and Resources for Families**

**Annual Reports to Legislature**

**What Every Parent Needs to Know**  
A series of four handbooks for parents and caregivers with children in elementary and secondary public schools in Washington state.

**Basic Education Rights and Opportunities in Public Schools**  
[English](#) | [Español \(Spanish\)](#)

**How to be an Education Advocate**  
[English](#) | [Español \(Spanish\)](#)

**Discipline in Public Schools**  
[English](#) | [Español \(Spanish\)](#)

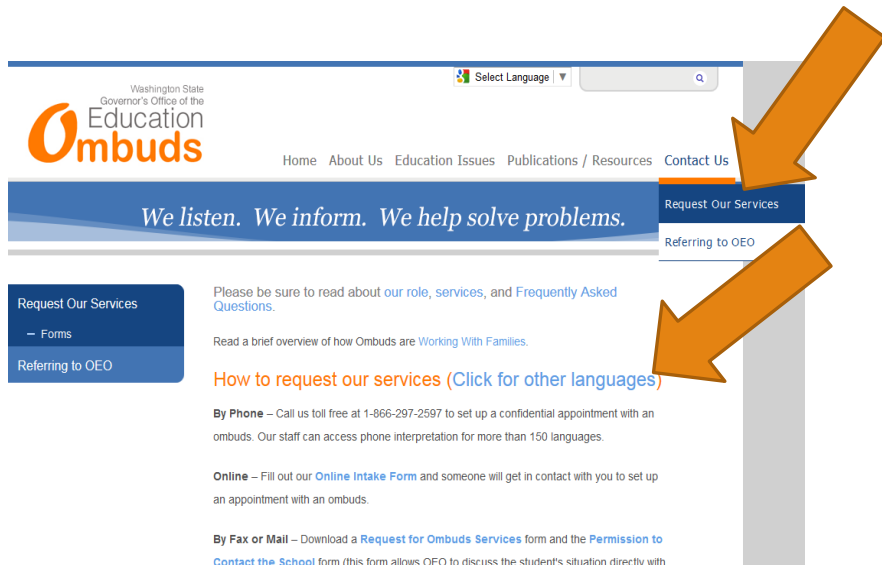
**Protecting the Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities in Public Schools (Updated July 2012)**  
[English](#) | [Español \(Spanish\)](#)

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# OEO Resources — [www.oeo.wa.gov](http://www.oeo.wa.gov)

## Forms available in:



- ✓ Spanish
- ✓ Amharic
- ✓ Arabic
- ✓ Chinese
- ✓ Korean

- ✓ Punjabi
- ✓ Russian
- ✓ Somali
- ✓ Tagalog
- ✓ Vietnamese

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THANK YOU!

