



Arlington
Public
Schools

Parent Resource Center

BRIEFING PAPER

March 2017





PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) was created to provide parents the support and information they need as they work with the school system to identify and meet their child’s unique learning needs. The APS PRC is one of a network of PRCs across the Commonwealth of Virginia, and receives guidance, support, and periodic training from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

The PRC offers support and assistance, a lending library, and parent education opportunities, and serves as an information and referral source for families and staff members. Additionally, the PRC participates in a number of task forces, working groups, and collaborative APS and community groups and committees designed to foster family and community engagement, and PRC staff reports to and works closely with the Department of Student Services and Special Education (DSSSE) administrators.

The PRC offers family and individual consultations, resources, DVDs, audiobooks and monthly updates via APS School Talk, Peachjar, the website and the DSSSE newsletter. The PRC website contains numerous links designed to support family and community engagement in the education of students.

Our volunteer Special Education Parent Liaisons and special education coordinators provide parent information and support to all parents. The Special Education Family Resource and Information Guide is available online and a copy is given to every family of a student with a disability. The PRC applied for and received a grant to republish the Guide in English and Spanish, and the second edition of the Guide is currently being printed, translated, and prepared for dissemination. Students with the Arlington Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP) assisted with the Guide’s production. The Guide was developed in response to inquiries from parents of newly identified students, and was collaboratively written by parents and staff.

The purpose of this initial report is to provide background information in addition to current feedback data collected via PRC visits, phone calls and parent sessions. The Office of Special Education (OSE) will share the information with the APS in order to link instruction, school administration and special education services in meeting the needs of our students.

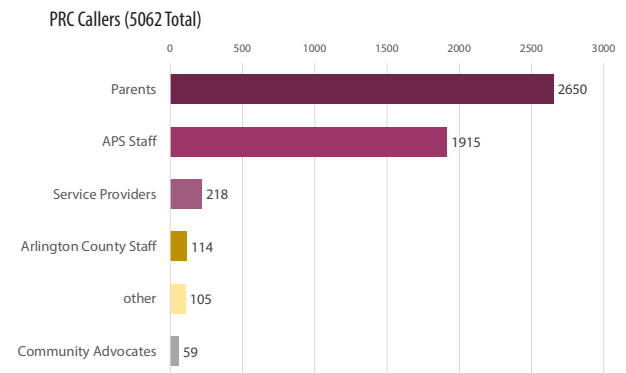
Data which Provides Insight

How does the Parent Resource Center gather data?

The PRC staff keep data based upon parent, staff and community contacts, phone calls, meetings, and workshop evaluation feedback. This is important because these data help determine the focus of PRC workshops and parent information sessions.

Who calls the PRC?

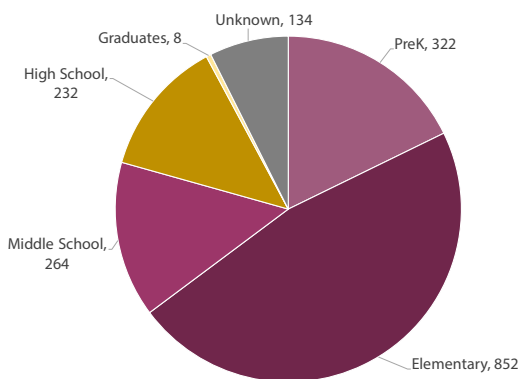
Parents make up the majority of phone inquiries. These conversations range from questions about available programs to more detailed questions about how to access support for their child’s particular need. APS staff often call for ideas and resources on how to encourage family engagement, and to collaborate with PRC staff members on parent education and engagement opportunities.



What school level has the highest rate of contact?

These data show us that the majority of the contacts are from families with elementary students.

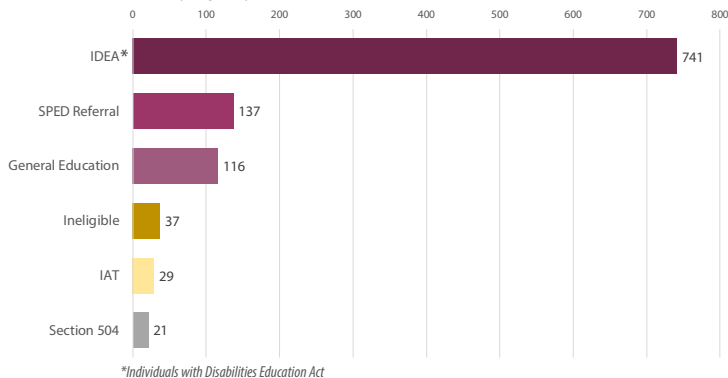
Parent Contacts by School Level (1812 Total)



Where in the process are the students?

Of the number of parent contacts, this chart shows where their students are in the identification/eligibility process. Most of the contact comes from parents whose children are already identified and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

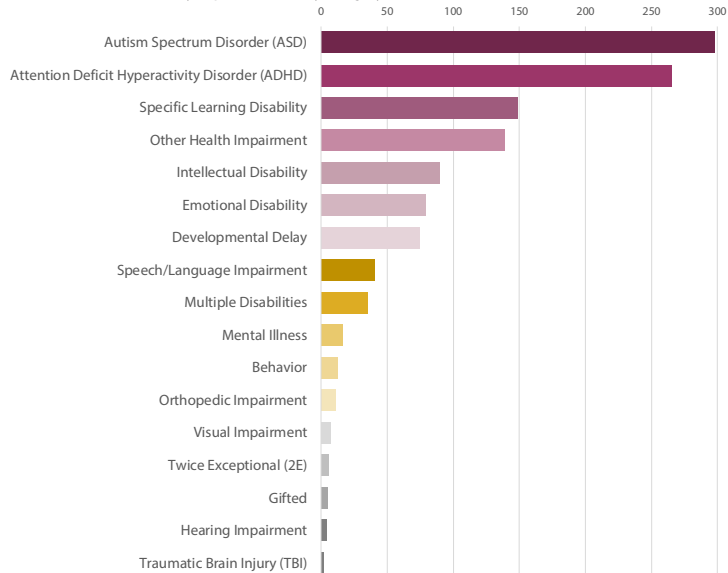
Parent Contact by Eligibility Status (1081 Total)



Of the disability categories, which ones receive the most requests for information?

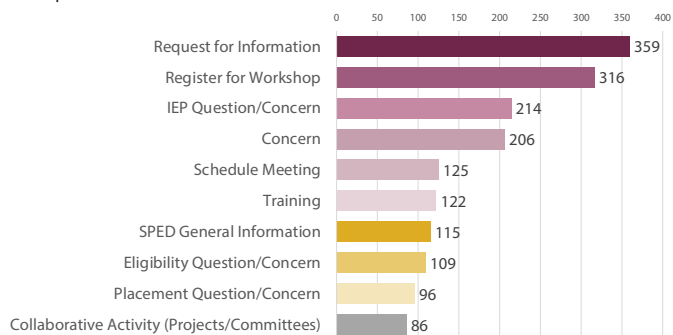
The majority of parent contacts come from parents whose children are identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. We have seen a rise in questions for students with Dyslexia, which falls under the Specific Learning Disability category.

Parent Contacts by Reported Disability Category (1235 Total)



What are the top reasons for contacting the PRC?

Top 10 Reasons for Parent Contact



Bright Spots

The Special Education PTA highlights PRC Workshops on their website and email listserve to inform parents about the available workshops, dates and times. (See next page)

What We Have Learned

Providing targeted parent education sessions based upon the number of inquiries has proven to better connect families to school teams. This fosters strong relationships and builds trust among all stakeholders.

Moving Forward

We are using IDEA grant funding to increase PRC staffing from 1.5 to 2.0 FTE Coordinators. There is a need for a bilingual coordinator. This will be essential for parents of dually identified students and will expand our outreach to the APS community.

Parents Are Saying...

"I was feeling lost when I first dropped into your office years ago. I love the resources you provide. Keep up with your splendid work. All parents (special needs or not) benefit from your work."

"Thank you so much. I found our meeting today extremely helpful in crystalizing best next steps for supporting our daughter. We're lucky to have your calm, informed presence listening to and advising us!!"

"I can't thank you enough for all your time, insights, and info today. I feel so fortunate to live in Arlington and to know that there are such wonderful resources available to me – and such nice and smart people too. :) Thanks again for giving me both some peace of mind as well as a clear plan."

"I attended your IEP workshop last night, and am so grateful for having done so. You are even more knowledgeable, thoughtful and accessible than I had heard! Thank you for all you do -- and share with so many parents and children who very much need your expertise. I now count myself among them. Thank you again for the good and important work you have done and continue to do. It must give you great joy and satisfaction to think of all the families you have helped throughout your career!"

*"A recent response to the question 'What's something new that you learned during this session?' –
"That I can trust APS."*

Planning Workshops Based Upon the Data

The PRC staff hold workshops based upon parent and staff feedback, requests, and suggestions. Based upon the number of requests for workshop registration and information, we maintain a continual schedule of parent education events. For example:

Recent Parent Resource Center Events

An Introduction to Understanding Special Education

PreK

Elem

Middle

High

All

All

Do you have a child who has been referred for special education consideration, or who you think may have a disability? Parents and staff members are invited to join us to learn about the special education process, from referral to provision of services. Parents will receive information on how to prepare for special education meetings, and work collaboratively with staff throughout the special education process.

Special Education Parent Liaisons Mid-Year Meetings

All

Special Education Parent Liaisons will gather to connect and engage, and hear information from Arlington County's Community Services Board, the Arlington Public Schools Office of Special Education, the APS Parent Resource Center (PRC), Arlington SEPTA, Arlington County's Office of Therapeutic Recreation, and the Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC). The group will participate in future planning and share ideas for 2017-18 workshops and trainings.

Becoming an Active Member of Your Child's IEP Team

All

Parents of students receiving special education services are encouraged to attend this helpful workshop to:

- gain a deeper understanding of the IEP process, including standards-based IEPs;
- understand components of the IEP, including Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, measurable annual goals, assessment options, service delivery models, and accommodations for students with disabilities;
- learn how to prepare for IEP meetings; and
- develop effective collaboration skills to work with your school-based team members

Parents Are Saying...

"Thanks so much for sponsoring and taking part in the presentation of The Big Picture; Rethinking Dyslexia. It was such a significant step to have APS acknowledging and supporting its dyslexic students and their families. "

"Thank you so much for doing this important work with our kids. They really do have to make big adjustments because of their situation. There are great gifts but great challenges as well and they are so young to have to understand so much."

"I wanted to thank you for running the P2P workshop. It truly changed our lives. I learned so much about ADHD and applied so many new strategies in the last couple of months. I truly can't fully express my gratitude... You really changed our lives!! Thank you sooo much!"

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate having the opportunity to be in the CHADD class. My stress level and even my husband's, I think, has gone down quite a bit now that we know there are many other parents and children facing similar issues and that help is available."

PreK

Child Development Resource Fair

The 9th annual Your Child's Development 2017: A Resource & Information Fair for Arlington Parents & Caregivers of Infants and Preschoolers was held on Saturday, February 25, 2017 at the Kenmore Middle School. This FREE fair provides resources and information from several county agencies and community organizations. The two topics for this year's workshops were: "Nurturing Positive Parent-Child Relationships" and "Helping Children Handle Stress & Trauma". Find more information online at <http://www.arlingtonresourcefair.com>. This event is sponsored by the Arlington Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council, which is comprised of several Arlington County agencies, Arlington Public Schools programs, local community organizations, and Arlington parents.

Elem

Super Sibs Club Sibshop

Super Sibs Club is a series of Sibshops – peer recreation and support sessions for students, Grades 2-5, who have brothers or sisters with disabilities, special needs, and/or significant health issues. Donations to cover the costs of snacks and materials are requested as follows – \$10 for 4 hour sessions (includes lunch) and \$5 for 2 hour sessions (includes snacks). Sibshops are co-sponsored by Arlington Public Schools Parent Resource Center (PRC) and Arlington PRCR – Therapeutic Recreation. Registration is REQUIRED.

Past events included:

High

Preparing for the Transition from High School to College

All

Effective Parenting: Managing Intense Emotions and Problematic Behaviors Skillfully

All

An Introduction to Special Education

All

Becoming an Active Member of Your Child's IEP Team

Elem

Super Sibs

Middle

Attendance at High School Information Night

All

Prescriptions to Combat Disorganization and Procrastination

All

Autism Parent Education Series

Middle

Middle to High School Transition Workshop

