



# Navigating the News: A Guide for Families

Families are hearing a lot of information every day—from TV, social media, and conversations with others. Some of it can feel confusing, overwhelming, or even upsetting. This guide offers simple ways to help you make sense of the news and find information you can trust.

## Making Sense of the News

There is a lot of information coming at families every day. It's normal to feel unsure or overwhelmed. Taking a few simple steps can help you understand what you're seeing and hearing.

- ▶ Pause before reacting or sharing.
- ▶ Check where information is coming from.
- ▶ Look at the date to make sure it is current.
- ▶ See if other trusted sources are reporting the same thing.
- ▶ Be cautious with information on social media—it may not be accurate.



If something is unclear ask questions, look for more information, and check trusted sources. Try searching for the same topic on a government or well-known organization's website. Look at the date and author, and see if other sources are saying the same thing. You can also talk it through with someone you trust before deciding what to believe or share.

## Talk About the News Together

Talking about the news with your loved one can help them feel informed, supported, and less overwhelmed. Start by asking what they have heard and how they are feeling. Use clear, simple language and take your time explaining things. It's okay to say you don't have all the answers—learning together can build trust. Pay attention to how the conversation is affecting them, and offer reassurance if something feels confusing or upsetting. These conversations can help your loved one feel safe and included

### You can:

- ▶ Ask what they've heard and how they feel about it
- ▶ Listen without rushing or interrupting
- ▶ Use clear, plain language and explain step by step
- ▶ Repeat or revisit information as needed
- ▶ Take breaks if the conversation feels overwhelming
- ▶ Reassure them if something feels scary or confusing
- ▶ Focus on what is known and what supports are in place
- ▶ Come back to the conversation later if needed

## When News Affects Your Family

Sometimes the news you hear may relate to services, supports, or rights for people with disabilities. If something feels concerning or unclear, you don't have to figure it out on your own. Reaching out to trusted supports—like providers, schools, case managers, or community organizations—can help you understand what the information means for your family. Connecting with others can give you a place to ask questions, talk things through, and feel supported in next steps.

## Family & Community Connections

These organizations can help connect you with other families, share experiences, and provide general information. They do not provide mental health services or crisis support, and may not have answers about specific news topics.

### Informing Families Coordinators

<https://www.informingfamilies.org/coordinators>

### Parent to Parent

<https://arcwa.org/parent-to-parent/>

### Parent Coalitions

<https://arcwa.org/parent-coalition/>

### The Arc of Washington

<https://arcwa.org>

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If you or someone in your family is feeling overwhelmed or in crisis, support is available. You can call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or chat online at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org). This service is free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.