

Transcript

LEO WYTKIND: All right, I'll go ahead and get started. Thanks everyone so much for joining. My name is Leo Wytkind. My pronouns are they/ them and I'm a program associate at The Arc of the US I'm going to go over a few logistics and then I'll pass it off to my colleague, Katy, to introduce herself and get started. So just to go over a few logistics. Participants are currently in listen only mode. You can communicate with each other or the host in the chat box and you can seek technical assistance if needed, by chatting our tech support or generally chatting. You can type questions about the material presented in the Q&A section. Please try and keep questions in the Q&A box because at the end, we'll go over questions and we'll be looking in that Q&A box. Today's webinar will be recorded and shared after the fact.

Please keep in mind this when sharing information and experiences during the webinar. We understand that this topic will generate many questions. However, due to limited time, we may not get to every question in the Q&A portion. You'll see an email at the end of today's presentation that you can contact with additional questions. And I'll pass it off to my colleague, Katy.

KATY SCHMID: Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for joining today. My name is Katy Schmid. I'm the senior director of national program initiatives at The Arc of the United States. I'm here today to present on our new advocacy curriculum. A little bit about me. I've been with The Arc now for eight years. I oversee The Arc@School as well as tech programs and I've worked across a couple other teams here at The Arc of the US. Before coming to The Arc of the US, I was a special education teacher. Then I moved into the assistive technology world where I was continuing to assist

students and educators and families. And then I made my way to The Arc of the US. So really excited to have you here today. Today's webinar is focused on introducing the launch of the new Spanish language advocacy curriculum. In this brief introductory webinar, you will learn about the core components of this curriculum.

For those of you who are already familiar with the English version of the curriculum, the Spanish version is the exact same, just simply translated to Spanish. This is the English language version of the webinar. And if you are here by mistake and prefer the Spanish language version of the webinar, that is scheduled to take place immediately following this webinar at two o'clock Eastern time. Please go to the link inserted in the chat box to register for that webinar and join us at two o'clock if that is your preference. Pass it to Didi to read that in Spanish.

WANDA TABARES: [Spanish 00:02:57].

KATY SCHMID: Thank you, Wanda. In 2018, The Arc@School launched the English version of the curriculum. It was funded through a grant from AT&T. And we were very excited to provide this content to our chapter staff network and then realized that it would be greatly beneficial for families, educators, and other disability advocacy professionals. Since the launch, we've had thousands of users across access the curriculum. Many of those users are chapter staff. But we also have had many external users, such as parents or family members supporting a student with a disability, educators seeking more detailed information on special education federal law, also known as Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, and other disability advocacy professionals. Since the launch ... I apologize.

In recent years, we've partnered with various funders who have sponsored free accounts for differing demographics across the country. We've targeted specific regions such as the rural south, as well as low income

households and BIPOC households. We recognize the need for this information to be available in different languages, and we've wanted to translate the curriculum to Spanish for many years. We are grateful that last year, we received a grant to translate the entire curriculum. And that's what brings us here today, to review the Spanish version, talking about the features and how to get an account.

Federal laws describe the services and supports available to students with disabilities, but students and parents often struggle to advocate on their own for appropriate educational services and many seek help from a special education advocate. While both attorneys and non-attorney advocates are available to assist students and their families, non-attorney advocates are an important resource for students and families who cannot afford an attorney, find an attorney, or want to resolve their disagreements without involving an attorney. This curriculum is designed for individuals who are working with or advocating on behalf of children with disabilities in special education matters. This training is also valuable for parents and other family members, as well as educators and related disability professionals. Chapter staff have free access to both the English and the Spanish version of the curriculum. For everyone else, there is a fee to access of \$99, and unless a chapter is running a grant funded program that provides free access to their community. And I'll provide more details on that later.

If you are familiar with the curriculum, this will be a refresher as I review the components. The curriculum is online and self-paced. Users can work through content, pause and then come back to pick up where they left off. The curriculum is comprised of eight modules. Module one provides foundational knowledge needed for advocacy. Module two describes early intervention services. Module three provides an overview of special education services. Module four has a more in-depth discussion on

individualized education programs or IEPs. Module five describes parents' rights, also known as procedural safeguards. Module six describes section 504. Module seven describes educational records. And module eight talks about some of the basic advocacy skills a special education advocate needs. Each module is roughly an hour long, and all modules must be completed in order because the information provided in many modules lays the foundation for the following modules. For example, many of the items that a user learns in module one will be referenced later in the curriculum. So for that reason, users must complete the modules in order,

So features of the modules, a pre-test which is comprised of 10 multiple choice questions. The pre-test measure the baseline of users' prior knowledge so that users will not see how they did on the pre-test before moving on to the listening guide. The listening guide can be downloaded and printed by users to use as a note-taking tool while listening to each module. We also offer the listening guide in a fillable PDF format. The listening guide is meant to help users identify the important concepts in each module, but it is completely up to the user whether they would like to utilize that listening guide or not. It's not required. Each module has anywhere between four and seven short narrated videos, which average about 10 minutes each. The videos have been broken into small portions so that users can have the freedom to stop and start working on the curriculum at their convenience.

When the user completes all of the recorded videos, the user will take the post-test, which is comprised of 10 multiple choice questions. In order to pass the test and move on to the next module, users will need to get at least eight out of the 10 questions correct. Users have three total attempts to pass the post-test. The system requires users to wait 24 hours between attempts. The system will provide explanations on why the user's response are correct or incorrect to help the user better understand the module

content. In 2021, The Arc School added a new resource to each module. This resource is called Cultural Competencies, and it directly focuses on things that parents and advocates should be aware of related to bias, culture, and race, when supporting students of all backgrounds and special education. Our hope is to ensure that there is a whole child approach that is being taken when supporting a student's intersecting identities. Once the user passes the post-test, additional resources are provided at the end of each module. Some of these resources are printable materials and some are links to online resources.

It is important to note that users who complete all eight modules will receive a certificate of completion. The certificate states that the user has spent approximately 10 hours working on eight major topics of special education advocacy. Users will receive a follow-up email providing them with a certificate of completion. The certificate of completion cannot guarantee earning continuing education credits, because every state school, district, and professional organization, has its own standards and requirements. Contact your state education agency, local school district or professional organization to determine whether the curriculum will be accepted for professional development.

All users also have six months from the date of account creation to complete the curriculum. Chapters can request an additional three months at no cost. Because user accounts are not permanent in this learning platform that we use, users who complete the curriculum will be given access to a printable version of the curriculum after you've gone through all of the modules. And you'll receive directions for accessing those materials when you complete the curriculum. If users need support, they can reach out to us directly through the platform or at our email address that will be shared at the end of this webinar.

And here's just a quick snapshot of the Spanish curriculum information webpage. This page contains a summary of the curriculum, the resources in it, and frequently asked questions. There are two ways to access the curriculum, paying users and chapter staff. Paying users will be routed through the purchase form, which is the button on the left. Chapter staff have free access and can request an account, and we double check all chapter staff requests to ensure that they are actual employees at chapters.

Upon receiving an account, you'll be provided with login credentials and instructions through email. Once you log in, this is what the interface looks like. As I shared earlier, there are eight modules plus an introductory module. Users must move through the content consecutively, meaning you complete module one before moving on to module two, since that content builds through the training. But just so that you have a visual, this is what it would look like when you log in. The left-hand side is the homepage for the user. And then the right-hand side shows you what it looks like to be in a module. And in this particular snapshot, it is module one. For folks who are seeking basic high level information on special education, we have a section on our website that is completely free and in Spanish. I want to point this out. Topics that are covered in that section are general information on special education, early intervention, IEPs, section 504, and transition services. Those five topics provide printouts that you can print or keep in PDF format, disseminate throughout your network. You're free to use those resources however you wish.

Now, a little more information on the grant funded programs. We do currently have a few grant funded programs that do provide free access to the curriculum. The first one is focused on providing free access to family members in southern rural states. We will provide information on that program in our follow-up email so that you all, if you qualify, can sign up, or

you can pass it along to those who you believe might qualify. We also have several state-based partnerships with chapters who are working within their community to provide free access and host focus groups to review the content, and discuss state and local special education nuances. Please email us to inquire if there's a program in your area.

And even if there's not a program right now that exists in your area, that doesn't mean that there won't be in the future. We are actively establishing programs across the country or moving programs each year trying to cover as much ground as possible, to ensure that family members have access to this information. Now, I will go ahead and open it up for questions. Leo, I'm not seeing any questions come through on my end. I'm just checking to see if you're seeing any on your end?

LEO WYTKIND: I don't see any in the Q&A yet. If folks have questions, please put them in the Q&A.

KATY SCHMID: All right, so seeing that there's no questions, obviously, we have the email address listed right here. If you have follow-up questions that come to mind, by all means, please reach out. Actually, now I'm seeing that ...

DYCIA SANTOS: There's one question in the web chat from Emmanuel Christian.

WANDA TABARES: He would like to know if there's any remuneration.

DYCIA SANTOS: Yes.

KATY SCHMID: I'm sorry. If there's any?

WANDA TABARES: Remuneration. He wants to know if there's any money paid for the services.

KATY SCHMID: For our advocates to assist families?

WANDA TABARES: All he said was any.

DYCIA SANTOS: Will this people be sharing via ... No, that's all he said on there. It's on the web chat.

KATY SCHMID: I'm looking at the chat box now. So I'm not sure I fully understand the question, but I'll try to address. So our chapters, depending on the chapter, provide advocacy supports to families. Some chapters do charge a small fee. Other chapters do it in kind. So for free. It really just depends on the chapter. And I'm seeing a question regarding Spanish-speaking families in California. This is accessible. This program is offered across the country. So families in all states are able to purchase the curriculum or work with their chapter to receive advocacy supports, if their local or state chapters do provide that.

So I would suggest if you are somebody who resides in California and you're interested in receiving special education advocacy supports directly from a chapter to take a look at our website, thearc.org, to see which chapter is closest to you. As far as the free grant funded programs, I don't believe that we have a chapter working in California at this time, but I can double check that. That's not to say that, like I said, you can't reach out to your local chapter to see if they might be able to provide supports. And of course you can purchase the curriculum for the \$99 fee.

I see a question. Is this curriculum just in Spanish? No, it started off as an English curriculum and then we received funding to translate it to Spanish. And that's why we're really excited to be providing the Spanish version today and doing an overview of the Spanish language curriculum, which is exactly the same as our English language curriculum. I see a question regarding to access the training is not really for parents. I would say that it

is for parents, if parents are interested in learning more about special education law to directly support their student in their IEP meetings. But it also is suitable for professionals who are advocating for families. So it really depends. And yes, a parent, unless they're working with a chapter on a grant funded program, would need to pay the \$99 to access the curriculum. Are you seeing any other questions? Leo, anything that I've missed?

LEO WYTKIND: Looks like one just came in asking if there are any scholarships for parents. Do you want to just reiterate that?

KATY SCHMID: Yeah, so the free grant funded programs essentially act as scholarships for these accounts. And based on how we work with our funders, we typically will select geographic regions to target. So right at this time, we have a southern state program that we are working with a funder where we're targeting rural southern states to provide free access to this curriculum. And then another program, we're working in specific states to work with families that the chapter supports to provide this program. And I'm happy for anybody to follow up with us on email, school@thearc.org and we can provide him more information on what might be available. How can I get this information in English? Leo, will you go ahead and just put in the advocacy, the English advocacy webpage in the chat box for me, please?

LEO WYTKIND: Sure.

KATY SCHMID: Thank you. So we'll give you the link to sign up for the English one if you're interested in that. I see that somebody asked about Alabama. And yes, that state is one of the southern states we're targeting. Again, we will provide more information in the follow-up email. I wanted to be sure to send out everything all in one communication so that if you do qualify for these programs, you can just go ahead and click the links that

we send out and then sign up right there through that email, that we will send following the webinar.

I'm seeing a question, how does this curriculum help besides advocate for your child? So the focus of the curriculum is on special education law and helping disability professionals, parent educators, better understand how to navigate the law. So really in essence, it's going to help you better understand what the school's required by law to provide to your student or your child. But the material is not meant to be provided to the student directly. It's not activities for students to be going through. It's really to better provide the knowledge that parents can understand their rights as it relates to IDEA and the law. Just keeping an eye on the chat box. We have a couple more minutes if anybody else has any more questions.

All right. I think that we can wrap it up now. And again, we'll be sending a follow-up email providing more information on those programs, as well as some of the links that were shared in the PowerPoint slides if you are interested in signing up, or sharing this information out for anybody that you feel like would be interested in learning more about this. So thank you again for your time. For those of you who would like to join for the Spanish language version of this webinar, that's at two o'clock. It's the same exact presentation only in Spanish, and we just want to ensure that we provide this information to our English speakers as well as our Spanish speakers. So thanks again for your time and we welcome any follow-up questions through email. Take care.