

As a parent, what did **PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING** mean to you?

Partners believed in me as an advocate for my children. They inspire me when I get tired because I see I am not fighting alone. - *Adam*

Going through **Partners** gave me the knowledge to speak and act the way the professionals around the IEP table did. My role in the community changed as I passed on the information I learned to other parents and we made some powerful changes to the school system. - *Wanda*

In **Partners**, I met others that are on this path of raising a child with special needs. We got to spend several months of learning, bonding and growing together. I also learned that being a “take charge” kind of mom could get in the way of my son, Jacob, learning to advocate for himself. It was an experience like no other – we left **Partners** with a special bond which means a lifetime of support for all of us. - *Kerri*

I learned that I wasn't failing as a parent. I just had to find the right supports. - *Kathy*

I am still very connected to others in my **Partners** class. The relationships are valuable and treasured. I know I have a connection to **Partners'** graduate resources and experiences to help me in my parenting and professional role. - *Heather*

Partners changed my life and therefore, my child's life. Before **Partners**, I was overwhelmed trying to find services and resources for my daughter. **Partners** taught me where to turn for help and increased my confidence as a mother and an advocate. I began to understand that the issues I was having with dealing with disability, identifying and fighting for resources, and the **emotional** and financial strain our family was experiencing, were the same that other parents experienced. Having other parents to visit with about sensitive issues related to our children was a true blessing. I made great friends with my other classmates and continue to seek their input and advice today. Before **Partners**, I had not had the opportunity to know any adults with disabilities. Having the opportunity to get to know the self-advocates, to ask them questions, and to see the wonderful lives they were living, gave me a great sense of peace and hope for my daughter's future. - *Lisa*

I learned how to make change, speak to legislators and volunteer to improve the lives of people with disabilities. I would recommend **Partners** to all parents of children with special needs. - *Charlotte*

**TRUST YOURSELF AS A PARENT – YOU OWE THAT TO YOURSELF.
ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILDREN – YOU OWE THAT TO THEM. - *Patty***

The experience changed me forever. - Audrey

THE DIAGNOSIS DOESN'T MATTER. THE AGE OF YOUR CHILD DOESN'T MATTER.
HOW MUCH EDUCATION YOU HAVE DOESN'T MATTER.
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU ARE READY & WILLING TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

Partners Commitment to YOU:

- Outstanding fellowship, access to the nation's best speakers on disability issues and dozens of print and video resources – at no cost to you! *You will make incredible friends and allies.*
- An intensive, professional grade education in disability issues, advocacy and community leadership.
- All meals provided during class time.
- Financial assistance with travel expenses, child and respite care, as appropriate.
- Free hotel rooms to students, as appropriate.

Some of the topics discussed in Partners in Policymaking include:

Inclusive Education	People First Language
Inclusive Community Living	Employment
Sexuality	Person-Centered Planning
Natural Family Supports	Assistive Technology
Guardianship & Other Legal Issues	Behavior Interventions
Grassroots Organizing	Advocacy Strategies
State & Federal services including Social Security, TEFRA, etc.	

YOUR Commitment to Partners:

- Submit a completed application by last week of May.
- Attend all classes for the entire time – one weekend a month for: Sept, Oct, Nov, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr & May (Monthly class runs from 9 – 7:30 pm on Saturdays and 9 to 2:00 pm on Sunday. There is an afternoon orientation one Saturday in August.) .
- Complete all homework and group assignments.
- Be willing to have your perspectives widened and preconceptions challenged.
- Be committed to systems change *beyond your own family's needs.*

Have more questions? Need more applications?

Contact & submit applications to:

Erin Taylor, Mom & Partners in Policymaking Graduate 2011

Adult Advocacy & Training

Erin.Taylor@okddc.ok.gov

www.okddc.ok.gov ← *downloadable Partners in Policymaking applications here!*

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Not all applicants to Partners in Policymaking are accepted and we encourage you to apply again if you are not accepted for program.

