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Anchorage, Alaska: Yesterday children across Anchorage returned to school and many parents are scrambling to find last minute supplies, pack lunches, and make sure their student gets to bed on time. For some parents in Anchorage, back to school presents additional challenges such as charged wheelchair batteries, full oxygen tanks, or shopping for specialized food.

A change in routine can be especially hard for a child who experiences a disability. Susan Slivka's son missed the first day of school because he was up all night excited about returning to school. He wore himself out to the point he was unable to attend the first day.

Often the parents of children who experience a disability have to rise very early because the process of getting a child ready for school takes longer. If the child has complex medical conditions, there may be medical procedures necessary before the child can leave for school. There are few after school programs for children who experience a disability, so the parents often have to arrange care or work schedules that allow one parent to be available.

Susan's son woke this morning, after a good night's sleep, ready to begin his first day of school.

Founded in 1957 by a group of parents, The Arc of Anchorage's goal is to ensure people who experience developmental disabilities, or mental illness have the opportunity to lead rich, full, satisfying lives as valued members of our community. The Arc of Anchorage has a full array of services available to people across the lifespan from birth through old age. The Arc of Anchorage recognizes each person has specific dreams, ambitions and interests, as well as aptitudes and abilities apart from the disability he/she experiences. Services are tailored to meet the needs and goals of each person.

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