

Asha Abdullahi



Asha Abdullahi is the founder and Executive Director of the Somali Parents Advocacy Center for Education (SPACE), where she tirelessly supports Somali families, particularly those with children facing disabilities. A former refugee from Somalia and a mother to a son on the Autism Spectrum, Asha's personal journey has deeply informed her professional mission. Her commitment to the community began when she faced significant challenges securing appropriate services for her son and brother, both of whom needed specialized care. Realizing that many Somali families struggle with similar issues, often exacerbated by stigma and cultural barriers, Asha resolved to make a difference.

To better equip herself for this work, Asha pursued advanced training through the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program at Boston Children's Hospital, and she earned an advocacy certificate from the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Her education, combined with her lived experience, empowers her to serve as a cultural broker and advocate, helping families navigate complex healthcare and educational systems.

Through SPACE, Asha has developed partnerships with numerous agencies, focusing on early diagnosis, connecting families to vital resources, and educating communities to reduce the stigma associated with disabilities. Her work has been instrumental in improving communication between Somali families and institutions such as schools and healthcare providers, fostering healthier relationships and better outcomes for children with disabilities.

In recognition of her contributions, Asha has been appointed as a citizen member of the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, where she continues to advocate for the rights and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities.