



Family Community Connections

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS WITH
INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
IN WASHINGTON STATE

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 Prenatal & Infancy	 Early Childhood	 School Age	 Transition	 Adulthood	 Aging
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 Daily Living & Employment	 Community Living	 Healthy Living	 Safety & Security	 Social & Spirituality	 Citizenship & Advocacy
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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Interests and Dreams	2-7
Building Relationships	8-13
Connecting with Community	14-19
Get Started!	20-23
Statewide Resources	24-31

Introduction



As a family member, there may be days when you think it is impossible to find community resources or engagement opportunities. Parenting is hard work. Add in a son or daughter with an intellectual and developmental disability, and the task becomes daunting. Many people toss around words like *community*, *inclusion*, and *belonging*; yet, finding ways to make these ideals a reality can be confusing, complex and overwhelming. There is no right path and no right approach.

With multiple paths and avenues available, it can be hard to know where to start. What may work for one family or individual does not work for another. There may be religious, cultural, personal and family beliefs that influence decisions. One family may focus on independence and another focuses on interdependence.

It is up to you to find the approach that works best for you and your family member with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This guide was developed with input from families, individuals with disabilities, and professionals to offer ideas, tips and resources to help envision a full and meaningful life for your family member.

Interests and Dreams



To help develop new dreams and visions, think of your son or daughter's interests first. Are there certain activities they like to do? What are their dreams? Who are they? What are your hopes for them? Different ages and stages may result in different answers. It is helpful to think of all possibilities and not set limits. Have fun and dream big.

Some ideas to explore might include: book clubs, knitting classes, swimming, dancing, or attending local community events. Many local communities have YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Recreation Centers and Community Centers, which offer a wide variety of activities for families.

If your circle is bigger as a family, your daughter's circle will be bigger. If your circle is small and you are not connected to your community, your daughter's circle will be small.

~ Cathy

While trying new activities, remember just because you like it doesn't mean your family member will like it. The activity must be something they enjoy doing or are willing to try.

Many systems within developmental disabilities focus on what your son or daughter cannot do but you can help focus on what they can do and what they like to do. If you don't know their interests yet, start by exploring places you might like to go.

If you go on a nature walk, take them. If you love animals, share your passion with your son or daughter. Have fun by getting to know your child and their unique personality.



Need Help?

Parent to Parent provides support and information to parents of children with special needs at no cost.

arcwa.org/getsupport

800.821.5927

Get Connected One Day at a Time.

One tip from families is to become a “regular” by doing the same thing each day, week, or month. If you like to go to for coffee every day, go around the same time each day. You may begin to see some of the same people. Parents and family members are often in a role of facilitating social circles so you may have to begin a conversation by saying hello. If your family member uses assistive technology or is unable to speak, think of ways your son can still be engaged. Can you introduce him? Is he able to use a communication device? Some people may welcome a greeting and an opportunity to interact. Model the best way to communicate with your family member.

As your son or daughter grows, you can take turns with other families, neighbors, friends or a paid provider in a support role. Backing away can be a series of a few steps forward and a step backwards. The focus should remain on what does your son/daughter like to do. Be curious. Try again if an activity doesn't work. Sensory issues can be overwhelming at first but repeated experiences may help your son learn what to expect and may help them to feel more comfortable.



Plan for Hiccups.

It is important to plan for setbacks and failures. Practice going on outings, and have a backup plan for how to proceed if they hit a stumbling block. What happens if a bus or ride doesn't show up? Will your son or daughter know what to do? All of us have been lost, late or at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Think about the risks you are willing to take and how best to support your family member. Sometimes there are two elements to plan for: the activity itself and the support needed to engage in the activity. If there was a setback, where did it occur? What needs to be in place to avoid future pitfalls? What did they learn from the experience?

My Life Plan a person centered planning tool: <http://mylifeplan.guide/>

To further explore, interests and dreams look at online planning tools such as My Life Plan to help stimulate ideas, visions, and goals. The tool was developed by The Arc of Washington State and The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council to encourage individuals and families to use a person centered planning guide to help with ideas and goals for a meaningful life. The tool can also be shared with teachers at an IEP (Individual Education Plan) meeting, family members, or with friends trying to get to know your family member.



Prenatal and Infancy

Many families are enrolled in the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program (ESIT) in the Department of Early Learning (DEL). Local Birth to 3 providers can help to find resources in your community.

Is there a baby group in your area? A mom or dad's group that meets weekly? These are great places to learn from other parents and help to expand your own ideas and dreams.

Think of fun opportunities that allow your baby to try new environments. What is happening in your own community for families with babies? Exploring new activities will provide insight into what your baby likes and dislikes. Hopefully, you will have fun along the way and get to know your baby!



Need Help?

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) can help you find resources in your community.

del.w.gov

Dream early and often.



Early Childhood

If your child is in preschool, this is a great opportunity to meet other families and learn more about your child. Are there activities they prefer like a sensory table or a certain type of toy? Does your child like music? What do you notice when you are out with your child in the community? Sometimes it is easy to focus on what your child cannot do, versus what they can do.

Some areas have cooperative preschool programs, which may be fun for your child too. Families may choose to do a specialized preschool program through a school district and also attend a cooperative preschool to focus on inclusive opportunities and fun.

Look toward places your family naturally goes for fun and support. Along the way, you may find new interests and dreams for your family. If you have multiple children with developmental disabilities, finding something everyone can do may be challenging. It may take several attempts and lots of trial and error.



School Age

Elementary and middle school are great times to explore new activities. Think about having your son or daughter join a choir, band, or club. Would they enjoy trying an activity during or after school? This is a first experience for typical kids too, so don't let your own reservations limit possibilities.

Some schools also offer after school opportunities like softball, soccer, clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts, or Boy Scouts. If you have the time and wish to also participate, you can volunteer occasionally and give input on what works or doesn't work for your family member.

Some families have found success with such concepts of Circle of Friends. This approach involves a teacher or staff facilitating games, lunch or social conversations. One mom, ordered pizza each week for her daughter's Circle of



Need Ideas?

**Boys and Girls Clubs
of Washington
begreatwa.org**

Friends group and this helped the group to quickly gain in popularity. In 1988, Robert Perske released the book *The Circle of Friends* which gave examples and stories of friendships¹.



Transition Age

In high school, most students are involved in some type of club, organization, or sports. Parents may sometimes have to push their kids, especially if social situations are awkward. Parents find they continue to play a role even if it is as a driver to events or places. One approach might be for parents to lead some of the conversations and then learn to step away.

Look at high school leaders who are willing to provide a welcoming role in a club or school environment. Their guidance may help a student until natural supports develop. Usually there is a teacher involved as an advisor of a club who can strategize ways to become more intentional, especially with social situations.

As students become more comfortable, they can take ownership of their involvement in activities within the club. Helping your student navigate the complex social situations may be needed, but also remember to fade as your student becomes more confident.

Many school districts provide transition fairs with workshops on employment, guardianship, and community resources. These are great opportunities to learn more about your family member. “Who are they?” “What do they like to do?” The transition years are a time to continue to give your family room to grow and work on steps to independence.



**Need Information on
High School Transition?**

**Informing Families
Transition Toolkit**

informingfamilies.org

One of the most underutilized resources in schools is other students.

~ Sandy

¹ Robert Perske, *The Circle of Friends* (Toronto, ON: Inclusion Press, 1988).



Adulthood

As your family member ages, their interests may change too. Working and/or volunteering may also bring about new opportunities and new interests through different settings. If they volunteer in their neighborhood, try talking to other volunteers to learn ideas about places to go or new things to try. Many local cities and counties look for people to join boards or commissions. Being a member on a board is another way to find new things to belong to and also give input by people and family members with developmental disabilities. Neighborhood groups are another valuable resource.

What interests and passions does your family member have for their life? Families may struggle when their family member no longer attends school so it is important to continue to think of their interests and dreams.

The entitlement of school will end at age 21, but do not underestimate what is possible. Continue to explore their interests and dreams for a meaningful life.



Aging

It may be more difficult for your family member to go out into the community and follow their interests as they enter into their senior years. Check if there are senior centers in your area with activities and programs such as Meals on Wheels that support other seniors in your area. Often, senior centers have field trips and other fun activities with transportation included. This is a bonus for individuals who do not drive. Continue to think of their interests, hobbies and activities.

If they are involved in a spiritual or cultural community, are there people willing to drive your family member or attend activities with them? Many spiritual or cultural groups have monthly calendars with events planned for participants. Joining some of those activities is a good way to learn more about what your family member likes and doesn't like.



Building Relationships

Often, family members find themselves communicating and connecting with people in many new capacities. There may be doctors, therapists, specialists, school district personnel, nurses and a host of others in your son or daughter's life. You may have constant care of your family member and then a host of people to coordinate with as well. This can be overwhelming, and it is approached differently based on your family's values, culture, economic status and/or vision. Your opinion is invaluable.

It is important for people with disabilities to have equal access to a meaningful life. If your son or daughter is not able to speak for themselves, family members can be strong advocates.

Some general suggestions for relationship building:

- ❖ Be respectful even if you disagree
- ❖ Be prepared
- ❖ Bring your passion to the table in a way that advances goals and visions
- ❖ Think if issue is important to your family member or if it is your own issue
- ❖ Keep focus on your family member
- ❖ Be open minded but not afraid to follow your instincts
- ❖ Encourage your family member to advocate for themselves
- ❖ Follow up after discussions
- ❖ Remember it is all about relationships, relationships, and relationships



Prenatal and Infancy

In the early years, it is important to have someone who helps you coordinate the health care needs and developmental issues of your child. This is usually a doctor or a professional who can help give you appropriate information about your child's diagnosis, disability, or health care needs. If you do not have a trusted professional, is there someone else who can be a sounding board and help filter and analyze information?

Birth to 3 providers can connect you to resources and other family members. These early relationships are important as they can help to provide accurate information to guide your decisions. It is easy to be overwhelmed when you learn your child has a developmental disability, but there are many compassionate and knowledgeable people who work with children.

You are beginning to develop a community for your family member. If you have a few people who understand the smaller issues, it will help you when you face more difficult issues such as a health crisis, hospitalization or school issues. It is helpful to have a connection to people who get it. Start early building healthy positive relationships.

Start Building relationships early and often.



Early Childhood

Early childhood is usually a time when your child is transitioning from a Birth to 3 provider to a school district preschool. This is the first of many transitions your family member will make. Some of those relationships may continue in your family member's life, or you may find a new set of people guiding and interacting with them. This may be your first experience with a school district, which can feel overwhelming.

If you are from another culture or English is not your first language, you may face additional challenges. Interpreters can be a tool for events or learning information

but still the need of peer to peer connections and relationships are very important. Word of mouth is a great way to connect. Don't forget to talk to other parents!

Parents are your greatest source of information. Connect with other parents to find out what they know.

~ Darla



School Age

An important tip from other families who have been where you are is to remember the school journey is a marathon and not a sprint. The early relationships you build for your son or daughter will stay with them for many years. It may be helpful to attend parent summits, PTA events or other school events during the year to get to know teachers and families.

What is the school culture like? Who are champions for your student? Who are people that will help you advocate or make positive change? Look broadly and don't be afraid to take risks.

Your son or daughter is a general education student first. There are specific resources and information for students in special education which may be necessary but students in special education should have full access to any supports, services, and opportunities all general education students do.

If English is not your first language, check to see if your school has a family engagement office or resources for English Language Learners. The Washington State Office of Public Instruction (OSPI) has some resources for English language learners which may be helpful:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/Parents.aspx>.



Need Help?

Office of the Education
Ombuds
oeo.wa.gov

Do not underestimate the importance of building relationships as your son or daughter becomes more and more involved in school activities.

From the time Alexa was little, I tried to look ahead and see what other girls her age were doing—playing with Barbie dolls, watching Disney princess movies. I wanted her to be able to “play next to them.” I did this with each stage. I tried in grade school to make sure that she enjoyed a few things that girls her age liked to do, and did the same thing all the way into high school and college. I also made sure she was around kids her own age— at school, clubs, at church and in the neighborhood. You need to have access to develop friendships.

~ Susan



Transition Age

In high school, look toward independence opportunities and how others can naturally support your family member. Are there peer tutors or other students who may be willing to support your student? Maybe someone in class is willing to email notes or information from class. If your student is uncertain about homework, is there someone who they can call to ask about assignments? Focus on positive aspects of group projects as often these are social opportunities. Encourage your son or daughter to attend school dances, drama performances, and other school events. During the transition age, many families find volunteering at different school or community events helpful.

As individuals navigate the teen years, issues around puberty, sex education and intimacy may surface. Talking with health care providers, other families and professionals may help during these transition years.



Adulthood

Adulthood can be a time of transition when family members may be moving out of their family home or remaining in the family home. Finding support is key, and continuing to build relationships is invaluable. For many adults, it may take years

to transition to an independent living situation. If they are remaining in their family home, how will they continue to develop relationships and autonomy?

Look at relationships currently in their life. Are there friends, neighbors, Applied Behavior Analysts, speech therapists, or professionals who can help to facilitate the transition to independent living?

If they are living at home, do they currently have relationships in their life to continue to help them live a meaningful life? Once they are no longer in school, it can be difficult to make some of the connections that happen naturally in a school setting.

Some families have used respite providers or family friends to help their son or daughter explore the community and help build relationships. Look for opportunities for long-term teaching. A parent may have to help facilitate a social circle and consciously help their family member continue to expand their relationships.

Think about next steps. Where are we going from here? Who are the people in my family member's life?



Aging

This is often a time when families focus on life planning issues and look at key relationships in their family member's life.

What type of relationships will they continue to have as they age and will they need different supports? What input has your family member given? Are siblings or other family members involved in planning? As a family member, you may have a plan but does everyone in the family know the plan?

Your family member may be retiring and have more time available for social events that may require coordination and/or planned support.

Continue to look at assistive technology, personal strengths and assets, relationships, community-based opportunities and eligibility specific support needs.



Need Ideas?

**The Arc Center for Future
Planning**
futureplanning.thearc.org

If you have not begun long term planning, now may be the time to start to research and develop some additional plans.

Are there goals your family member may continue to work on? Dreams? Interests? Relationships will continue to be a focal point as supports and needs change as an individual grows older.



Connecting with Community

Connecting with community resources is often a trial and error adventure. Some activities may happen naturally, and others require work and perseverance. It is important to look at what is working now and what are future goals that may help your family member gain independence, and to do this at different ages and stages.

Many forms of assistive technology—such as smart phones, lap tops, assistive communication devices, apps and social media—have expanded the ability to connect. Many families research information, clubs and events online. Your son or daughter may find groups or activities to connect with on Facebook, local websites, libraries, newspapers, grocery store bulletin boards, and community centers.

It may also be helpful to also look at your City and County government information to find out what is available in your community. A phone book will have a listing of phone numbers or you may access them on line or with a smart phone.

In *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg refers to places where people gather to connect as Third Places. These places are opportunities to meet neighborhood connectors who usually know neighbors and local resources². Going often and having fun are keys to connecting with others in your community.



Need Ideas

**Better Together: 150 Ways to
Build Social Capital**
bettogether.org/150ways.htm

² Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1989).



Prenatal and Infancy

Many counties have information available for younger families that may include DVDs, webinars, and parent councils. The key is to find one place as a starting point that will then lead you to other non-profits, parent support groups, specific disability groups, and community activities.

Many isolated communities work closely with their local Public Health Department to share information for different ages and stages for child health and development. Networking will allow you to learn alongside your family member. You may try several groups or activities until you find one that fits with your style, culture, and comfort level.

Some areas in Washington have a Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS) <http://www.peps.org/>. PEPS focuses on creating neighborhood-based parent groups. Talking with other parents may help you to find out where families go with their babies in your community.

It takes time to get connected and if you have barriers in your life it may be especially challenging. Take care of yourself, learn from the experiences of other parents, and maintain high expectations for your baby.



Need Information?

Washington Department of
Health's Children with Special
Health Care Needs
doh.wa.gov

In the Ritzville area, The Adams County Public Health Department is a helpful resource especially for younger families involved in early childhood issues. As families age, The Columbia Herald newspaper provides information on community forums that bring together churches, aging agencies, disability groups, and a variety of other community partners.

~ Debbie



Early Childhood

If your child is in preschool, make a point to attend a library story time each week and meet other families. Many libraries offer story times in different languages, provide performances, music events and a variety of free activities. It can be a fun way to meet others who also like to read and explore community events.

Many community centers offer parent-child classes, drop-in gym events, Lego clubs, and dance classes. If you need support to attend, talk to the instructor and find out how barriers can be reduced to better accommodate your family member. A small change may make the activity more enjoyable. You may need to educate the instructor or share ideas and suggestions to help your child be included.

When my daughter was in preschool, we joined a music class for toddlers. Not only did the bells and music motivate my daughter to walk, it gave us something to do when my older daughter was at her kindergarten class. The instructor gave scholarships for special needs children so it was a win-win situation.

~ Janice



School Age

Schools are a great source of information. Parents are knowledgeable and usually willing to share resources. Ask another parent for help or ideas. Attend general school events, PTA meetings, clubs, music performances, drama productions or sporting events.

If you are from another culture, and uncomfortable attending school events, try to find someone you trust to attend with you. Many family events are social opportunities, which increase inclusion. If there are barriers, work with PTA members or school personnel to reduce these barriers. If you need a translator or



Need Help?

**Parent to Parent has Ethnic
Outreach Coordinators**
arcwa.org/getsupport

materials in another language, request this from your school. Check and see if your school district has a family engagement office.

Many school districts coordinate information and post upcoming events through a local Education Service Districts ESDs. In 2015, there are 9 Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in Washington State that oversee a total of 295 school districts.



Need Information?

For a complete listing of ESDs in Washington State go to: k12.wa.us/maps/ESDmap.aspx



Transition Age

Consider having your family member explore volunteering. It's a great opportunity to get connected and meet new people. It can also give insight into potential employment skills. If they are able to attend without you, this may encourage your family member to ask for help or practice communicating with different people. If they need additional support, consider volunteering with them or finding a friend to assist them.

Look for ways to make connections at school. Many high schools have peer tutor programs or clubs that include individuals with disabilities. And a lot of high school students need volunteer hours for resumes or college applications. Is there someone who is also volunteering at an event who might drive and hang out with your son or daughter? Are there sports, drama clubs, choir or other school events to participate in during their high school years?

Learning to take reasonable risks is an important step during the transition years. New opportunities for independence will help individuals navigate cell phones, debit cards, shopping, and other life skills.

If your family member needs more support, how does that support change or modify as they become older? If they do not drive, do they need bus training or paratransit services?



Invest in the Future

Washington State
Developmental Disabilities
Endowment Trust Fund
ddlot.org

As you consider skills needed to successfully navigate their community, focus on two elements:

- Why are they learning the skill?
- How are they going to use it?

People need places to go, things to do and people to see in their community. The world is a classroom so families should start early and look at opportunities for their family member to interact in their communities.

~ Richard



Adulthood

Start talking to other adults to find out fun things to do. Where do others like to go in your community? Where do they work and/or volunteer? Being involved allows others to see the potential in all people, and raises the value and visibility of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Many adults may wish to join a local community center for group activities, such as a wheelchair basketball league or volleyball team. Gyms often hold tournaments with their regular basketball groups. If your son or daughter does not like physical activities, would they enjoy being a scorekeeper for some of the games? Many communities also offer activities through Special Olympics, libraries, church groups, art centers, farmers markets, and annual festivals. The key is to find out where people go in your community.

Another option is to explore connecting with social media by exploring Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest. Many groups post information about events and outings on social media.

Washington State has a number of established self-advocacy groups as well with a variety of activities such as monthly meetings and trips to Olympia to share their stories.



**Get Connected
Self Advocacy Groups**

arcwa.org/takeaction/self_advocacy



Aging

As your family member ages, continue to think of a vision for their lives and look for community opportunities to support that vision. Research local non-profits to find out if there are activities available for your family member. Are there neighborhood groups that meet during the day or the evening that of are interest to your family member? Many historical societies, senior centers, cultural groups, rotaries and recreation centers provide a wide variety of activities for people of all ages. How can their activities be sustained as they continue to age?

Many families develop a weekly schedule with a variety or volunteering, work activities, recreation and social events. If your family member is living in the family home, how do they continue to develop independence and opportunities for growth? If they are working on skills to move out, how will they continue to find community connections, relationships, and support? What are their unmet needs and how will goals help them develop support?

If your family member is in retirement, think of their interests and the supports they may need to continue to participate in activities. Caregivers are also aging at the same time and families can feel burned out with being social directors. It may be helpful to expand your thinking and look toward organizations that already have support or some type of infrastructure built into them. Can a Rotary or a Kiwanis's club have activities that your son or daughter could be involved in? What are other opportunities?

Are there community opportunities already in your family life that you can build on over time? Possibly church services, cultural groups, civic groups, (i.e. Kiwanis, Rotary), parks & rec., or a community center. If not, then these organizations may provide a beginning.

~ Martha

Get Started!

Families who have a son or daughter with an intellectual and developmental disability are in the unique role of wearing multiple hats as a doctor, therapist, professional, bookkeeper, taxi driver, or any other skill needed to navigate the complex life of raising a family member with an intellectual and developmental disability. Family members who get involved by accessing resources, talking with other parents, siblings and professionals find the journey to be rewarding, challenging and full of unexpected surprises.

To help with the journey, reach out to other parents, organizations and eligibility specific services. Start making a list of local and state resources to help you and your family member on your journey of dreaming, building relationships, and connecting with your community. For a directory of statewide resources, see the back of this booklet.

Interests and Dreams

Things my son/daughter likes to do

Goals/vision for home, school, recreation, relationships, work

Who are they?
What do they like to do?

Building Relationships

Places my son/daughter spends time

Ideas for broadening his/her social circle

People and places to go for help and support

Connecting with Community

Activities or groups at school or in the community that match my son/daughter's interests

Places where others in our community like to connect

People and places to go for help and support



Statewide Resources



Citizenship & Advocacy

The Arc of Washington State & Local Arc Chapters

www.arcwa.org | 888-754-8798

The Arc of Washington State’s mission is to advocate for the rights and full participation of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Along with our network of members and chapters, we support and empower individuals and families; connect and inform individuals and families; improve support and service systems; influence public policy; increase public awareness; and inspire inclusive communities.

The Arc is affiliated with [The Arc of the United States](#) and local Arc chapters throughout Washington State. For local Arc chapters, visit:

www.arcwa.org/aboutus.

Disability Rights Washington

www.disabilityrightswa.org | 800-562-2702

Disability Rights Washington (DRW) is a private, non-profit organization that protects the rights of people with disabilities statewide. Disability Rights Washington provides many services, including technical assistance services and community education and training. Technical assistance services include general information about legal rights and strategies about how to become a better self-advocate. Individuals with disabilities can request technical assistance services by

mail or by calling our toll-free number listed above. DRW also does substantial systemic advocacy, both in the public policy arena and through class action litigation. Check DRW's website for advocacy publications about a variety of disability-related issues.

Informing Families

www.informingfamilies.org

Informing Families offers trusted news and information to individuals and families that empowers them to be active participants in planning and building a network of support and opportunities. Informing Families is a program of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council, in collaboration with the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration and other partners throughout the state.

The Office of the Education Ombuds

www.oeo.wa.gov | 866-297-2597

OEO resolves complaints impartially and confidentially and works with all parties involved to find collaborative solutions focusing on the student's best interest and his/her academic success. Other functions of OEO include: collecting data and making public policy recommendations to elected officials, promoting family engagement in education and identifying strategies to close the achievement gap.

Parent to Parent (P2P)

www.arcwa.org/getsupport | 800.821.5927

Learning that your child has a disability can be a traumatic experience.

Parents have many questions and concerns in coping with their child's needs and their own feelings. Personal support from another parent, who has a child with similar needs, can be helpful in coping with these challenging experiences and feelings. Helping Parents (volunteer peer mentors) are available to provide support and information.

ETHNIC OUTREACH: P2P ethnic outreach offers culturally relevant services. We can direct you to community resources for your entire family. [¿Hablas Español?](#)

Parent to Parent Support Programs of Washington State is a member of the Parent to Parent USA Alliance.

People First of Washington

www.peoplefirstofwashington.org/ | 800-758-1123

People with all kinds of (dis) ABILITIES have the right to be equal and respected citizens in our communities. We have the right to work, live, have fun, make friends, take risks, and learn to speak up for ourselves. People have the right to make their OWN informed choices.

Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

www.sailcoalition.org | 888-754-8798 ext. 102

A statewide coalition in Washington State of people with developmental disabilities. SAIL Coalition strives to shape public policies that affect the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

Self Advocates of Washington (SAW)

www.wearesaw.org | 253-571-8665

We are an advocacy group of, by, and for people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is our vision to assure that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have a voice.

Self Advocates of Washington's mission is to provide training, support, and information to make sure leaders with intellectual and developmental disabilities grow more independence and are respected members of the community.

Washington State Bar Association ~ Elder Law

www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/Sections/Elder-Law-Section | 800-945-9722

The Elder Law Section offers opportunities for education and consultation on issues relevant to elder law practice.

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council

www.ddc.wa.gov | 800-634-4473

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council's mission is to advocate, promote and implement policies and practices to create pathways to meaningful, integrated and productive lives for people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities over the life course.

Washington State Father's Network

www.kindering.org/services/familysupport/fathersnetwork | 425-653-4286

A Powerful Voice for Fathers and Families of Children with Special Needs.

Washington State Parent Coalitions

www.arcwa.org/parent_coalitions2

Parents of children with an intellectual/developmental disability need to connect with other parents for support and resources. Throughout Washington State you will find Parent Coalitions who have parents and guardians who have walked the walk and can help parents organize their voices and be heard on issues important to them. The Arc of Washington State works with Parent Coalitions around the state to help parents and guardians become effective advocates for their family members and others who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Washington State PAVE

www.wapave.org | 800-572-7368

PAVE is a parent directed organization that works with families, individuals with disabilities, professionals and community members in all walks of life and with all types of disabilities. Find a Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP) specialist in your area by calling 1-800-5-PARENT.



Daily Living & Employment

Aging and Long Term Support Administration (AL TSA)

www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa

Home and Community Services provides and administers long-term care services to eligible individuals and collaborates with Area Agencies on Aging to share community service options. Adult Protective Services investigates reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Includes Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing services.

Cultural Diversity Links

www.arcwa.org/getsupport

Explore various resources available to diverse families across the state. A listing of resources is provided on Parent to Parent's Ethnic Outreach page.

Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

www.dshs.wa.gov/dda

Home and community-based services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Information on eligibility, frequently asked questions, and regional offices and phone numbers.

Information specific to American Indians and Alaska Natives:

dshs.wa.gov/dda/consumers-and-families/american-indians-alaska-natives

Open Doors for Multicultural Families

www.multiculturalfamilies.org | 253-216-4479

Dedicated to the needs of diverse families who have loved ones with developmental disabilities and special health care needs. Focus is on King County but willing to work with families from various areas.

The Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W₄A)

www.agingwashington.org | 360-485-9761

A membership organization made up of 13 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) in Washington State. The organization seeks to enhance the effectiveness of each AAA through a strong agenda of information, advocacy and education. Provides information on aging and disability resources in Washington State.

Washington State Department of Health

www.doh.wa.gov | 800-525-0127

The Department of Health protects and improves the health of people in Washington State. Our programs and services help prevent illness and injury, promote healthy places to live and work, provide information to help people make good health decisions and ensure our state is prepared for emergencies.

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

www.dshs.wa.gov

DSHS oversees the social services provided to the citizens of Washington State. They are the primary state agency through which social and health programs are administered.

Washington State Independent Living Council

www.wasilc.org | 800-624-4105

Independent Living Centers are non-residential, private, non-profit, consumer-controlled, community-based organizations. They provide services and advocacy by and for persons with all types of disabilities. Their goal is to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential within their families and communities to achieve and maintain independent living.

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund

www.ddlot.org

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund allows individuals with developmental disabilities or their families to set aside funds for future use without affecting their eligibility for government services and benefits. Funds can be withdrawn from the trust and used for many services not covered by other benefits, including recreation, therapy, clothing and transportation.



Healthy Living

Boys and Girls Clubs Washington State Association

www.begreatwa.org

The Boys & Girls Club provides a safe place to learn and grow, ongoing relationships with caring adult professionals, life enhancing programs, character development experiences, hope and opportunity.

Department of Early Learning (DEL) ~ Early Support for Infant and Toddlers (ESIT)

www.del.wa.gov/development/esit | 866-482-4325

ESIT program provides services for infants and toddlers birth to 3 who have disabilities or developmental delays. DEL contracts with local lead agencies to provide services, supports and resources to families.

NAMI WA

www.namiwa.org | 206-783-4288

NAMI Washington provides governance, advocacy and fundraising support for the 22 NAMI affiliate offices, large and small, throughout the state. NAMI's mission is to improve the quality of life for all those affected by mental illness. We do this by providing a statewide, unifying voice of advocacy and coordinating the delivery of education, support and recovery. NAMI Washington trains affiliate volunteers to teach and lead NAMI's programs in their community.

Special Olympics Washington

<http://www.specialolympicswashington.org> | 206-362-4949

The vision of Special Olympics is to help bring all persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected and given the chance to become useful and productive citizens.

Project UNIFY is a U.S. national project funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It uses sports and education programs to activate young people to develop school communities where all youth are agents of change-fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities.

WithinReach

www.withinreachwa.org | 206-284-2465

A Washington Statewide organization that focuses on maternal, child and family health issues. The WithinReach Child Development program connects families to the resources they need to give their kids the best start in life. If you would like a free developmental screening for your child or have concerns about your child's development, call our Family Health Hotline 800-322-2588 or visit

www.parenthelp123.org

Washington Apple Health ~ Medicaid

www.hca.wa.gov/medicaid | 800-562-3022

Washington State Health Care Authority administers Washington Apple Health and contracts with health plans to provide coverage. You can apply for Apple Health on line at Washington Healthplanfinder: www.wahealthplanfinder.org or 855-923-4633.

Whatcom Taking Action

www.whatcomtakingaction.org

Taking Action is a partnership including community members, parents, and providers of care and support services to build an integrated system of care and support that local families can access—easily and efficiently. Website includes how to handouts, videos, and resource guides. Some information is generalized and other information is specific to Whatcom County. Taking Action’s Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS) is for anyone with special health care needs in Whatcom birth to 21 years old: 360-715-7485.

The Y (YMCA)

www.ymca.net

The Y helps kids, adults, and families from all walks of life reach their goals and contribute to solutions that improve communities. The Y provides people with endless opportunities to achieve more. There are locations throughout Washington State.

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