



Informing Families ... Today and Tomorrow

A project of the Washington State DD Council



Inside this issue

Introducing the New High School Transition Toolkit
Chart and plan for life after school.

Connecting to Community
Ideas for learning and growing at any age.

My Life Plan
New version update for this free online planning tool.

The Benefits of Self Advocacy
Building self-esteem and confidence through voice and choice.

Get TECH
Make technology part of any plan.

We Want to Hear From YOU

After decades of working to secure more funding and services for individuals and families on the Developmental Disability Administration's No Paid Services caseload, we have been able to share some really good news throughout this past year: funding is available for close to 5,000 individuals living in their family home with no paid services.

So far, more than 2,660 individuals have enrolled in the Individual & Family Services (IFS) waiver. For the first time in decades, the numbers of people waiting for services has been starting to go down.

It's a great start, but we would like to see even more people benefit from available funding to enroll in the

IFS waiver.

If you have a family member who is not currently receiving a paid service, we would like to understand what, if anything, might be holding you back from requesting services.

I hope you will take a few moments to respond to our brief online survey to give us a better idea of the needs of individuals and families who are not receiving a paid service.

To participate, visit: informingfamilies.org/nps-survey.

Sincerely,

Ed Holen, Director
Washington State
Developmental Disabilities Council



IFS: Planning, Connecting, and Creating Access

DDA has openings in its **Individual & Family Services (IFS)** waiver, which includes some exciting new services (see below). If your family member is not receiving a paid service, and you would like to request IFS services, or learn more, contact DDA through its new online Service & Information Request form at: dshs.wa.gov/dda/service-and-information-request.



*Need to learn a bus route?
Use a mobile device? Get ready for school dance?*



Peer Mentoring connects individuals with a peer who has had similar experiences. The individual's parent can also receive mentoring by another parent under the IFS waiver to benefit the individual.

Interested in joining a local club or class?



Community Engagement helps you connect with what's happening in your community.

Need help to create a person centered plan for school, work, or personal long-term life goals?



Facilitated Person-Centered Planning by an experienced professional (who is contracted with DDA) helps identify and develop a potential circle of support; discover capacities and assets, including family, neighborhood, and support network; create an action plan and facilitate follow-up meetings.

For more information, visit: dshs.wa.gov/dda/consumers-and-families/individual-and-family-services-waiver.



Planning for Life After School

Creating a successful transition to adulthood requires a lot of planning and support from different sources. Our four-page Transition Toolkit provides a time-line and checklist to help you make the most of your high school years.

Our free Transition Toolkit includes:

- A sample Star Form to help identify supports to reach a student's transition goals.
- Tips for transition planning and goal setting
- Transition time-line of things to do from age 14-21.
- Transition checklist of skills, activities, and services when creating your child's high school transition plan for his/her IEP.
- Ways to gain job skills during high school.
- Resources for post-secondary education.



Visit informingfamilies.org/transition-toolkit to get your free High School Transition Toolkit.

Connect with Community at Any Age

Learning, growing, and achieving goals continues throughout our lives, regardless of age or ability. It's no different just because someone needs support; in fact, it is even more important to make sure that our family members with disabilities do not become isolated or disconnected from community.

Paid services and supports can help with part of the picture, such as Peer Mentoring and Community Engagement services through the IFS waiver (see bottom of front page). View paid services as a bridge to developing other relationships and connections, rather than an end in and of themselves.



Find community through shared interests:

- **Visual and Performing Arts.** Creative groups (theater, photography, music, ceramics) are often very open and accepting new members who share the same passion for art.
- **Athletics.** In addition to Special Olympics, some adults with disabilities have found success joining local running clubs or other informal athletic groups.
- **Academics and Trade.** Even if your family member is not seeking a degree, they can take classes at your local community college without having to apply for credits (called "auditing").

For more ideas, download the free *Community Connections* guidebook: informingfamilies.org/guide.

Version Update MY LIFE PLAN

My Life Plan is a free online planning tool to help you and your family member identify strengths, interests, abilities, and the supports needed to reach goals that are specific to your son/daughter's life.



The newly released updated version makes it easier to update the plan as many times as you need, changing it as your family member grows and develops new interests and abilities.

The new and enhanced *My Life Plan* also comes with the ability to share the plan with important people in your family member's life—from IEP team members and DDA case manager to care providers and family members—allowing them to provide their own input and ideas.

To use this free online planning tool visit: mylifeplan.guide

My Life Plan is a free resource created by the Washington State DD Council and The Arc of Washington State.

Self Advocacy for Life

by Noah Seidel, Self Advocacy Coordinator for The Arc of Washington State

Everyone has the right to make their own choices. For most people, it happens naturally—a child choosing what to wear, a teen asserting independence, a young adult getting married.

But for a lot of kids and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, this basic right can get lost in the mix of fears and concerns about health and safety. The thing is, self-advocacy is just as important as health and safety. In fact, it's a big part of being safe and healthy.

Early on, it might be deciding what to eat or wear to school, and learning the consequences of those decisions. Later on, it's having a say in IEP goals at school. As we grow, it teaches us (and others around us) that we have the right to work, live, have fun, make friends, take risks, and learn to speak up for ourselves. It increases self-esteem, builds confidence, and has a lasting impact throughout life.

Self-Advocacy organizations offer lots of ways to develop self-advocacy skills, and also impact the community by educating community members, policy makers, and youth with and without disabilities about the value of inclusion, and the right for everyone to be treated equally.

Self-advocates educating others helps change perceptions around intellectual and developmental disabilities and the wants and needs that people who experience it have. Education can raise awareness and address many stereotypes that still exist in our society.

The bottom line is, self advocacy benefits everyone—individuals, families, communities, and entire systems.



Self Advocacy in Washington State

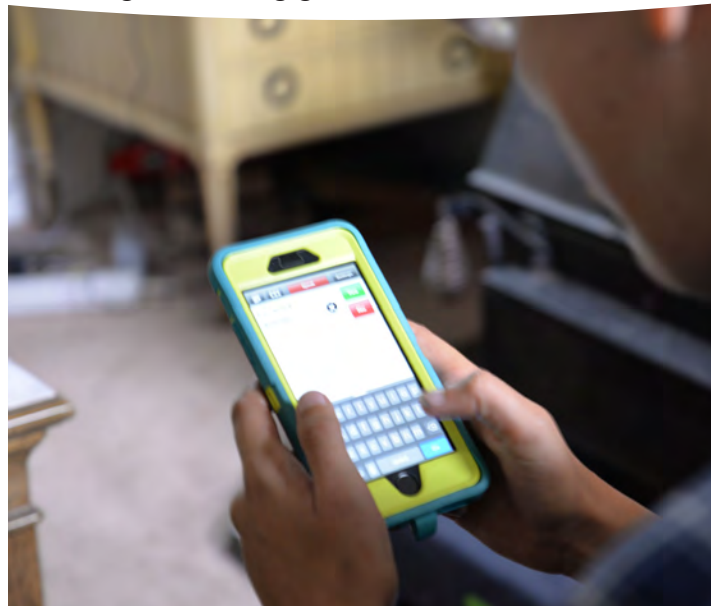
People First of Washington
Chapters throughout the state offer support, activities, and training to its members in finding their voice, connecting with each other, and being respected members of their communities. People First also supports leadership clubs, called Student First, in high schools.
peoplefirstofwashington.org

Self Advocates of Washington
Chapters in Pierce and Kitsap Counties provide training, support, and information to gain independence and be included and respected in their communities.
wearesaw.org

Self Advocates in Leadership
A statewide coalition that seeks to improve public policies that impact the lives of people with I/DD.
sailcoalition.org

Get TECH

Technology is an accommodation, like a ramp or wheelchair. It's a tool to create independence and access to places, people, and activities. Be sure to include technology in your son/daughter's Individual Education Plan (IEP) for school, or person-centered plan for support and services. For more information on technology resources, visit:
informingfamilies.org/get-tech.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

THE RIGHT MATCH. A professional, such as an Occupational or Physical Therapist, can assess and match your family member's abilities and needs with the right device and software.

PRESCRIPTION. This will be needed if you plan to bill insurance or apply for payment through a program such as the Individual & Family Services waiver or Community First Choice.

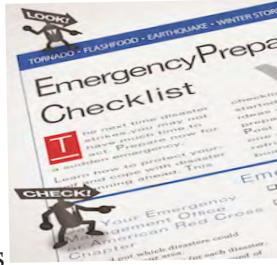
PURCHASE. If you need help purchasing a device, there are resources to help cover the cost, or provide low interest loans.

TRAINING. This includes the individual and anyone in his/her life who provides support.

Winter Weather Preparedness

When it comes to emergencies, basic needs are the same for everyone: first aid, food, clean water, batteries, shelter, communication. If you or someone you know has a disability, basic needs can also include:

- ✓ power for electric-dependent equipment
- ✓ accessible shelter & transportation
- ✓ back up personal care
- ✓ provisions for service animal
- ✓ medication and medical supplies



Because winter weather and flu season pose challenges for both the individual and those who provide support, it's a good idea to start thinking about ways to prepare for your specific needs (see resources below for ideas).

If you receive services from the state (such as DDA), talk to your case manager about back-up care options and what you can expect from the agency in an emergency.

Get Connected

First Responders: In the event of an emergency, the fire department is usually the first to respond. Do not wait for an emergency to call and let them know if anyone in your home has mobility challenges, medical conditions, or other considerations that are important for first responders to be aware of. If something occurs at your address, their responders will be prepared with the aide and equipment you need.

Utilities and Other Services: Make a list of utilities and communications services you use. Find and follow them on Twitter or Facebook for updates on outages, delays, and notices. Some have outage apps to download now, for use when you need it. Do the same for city and statewide agencies (such as the Department of Transportation) that can provide updates on road conditions, evacuation locations, and information specific to your area.

Disability-Related Planning and Preparedness Resources

READY: [ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs](https://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs)

Red Cross: [redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities](https://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities)

Washington State Independent Living Council: [wasilc.org/InclusiveEmergencyPreparedness.html](https://www.wasilc.org/InclusiveEmergencyPreparedness.html)