



Parent Coalition Workshop in partnership with Parent to Parent

Assistive Technology Virtual Workshop

6 - 8pm, Tuesday, May 19

Looking for ways to support your child at home while we practice distance learning? Meet our panel of experts and learn their top tips, suggestions, and resources during this free, virtual workshop.

Register by emailing parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org. After registering you will receive an email containing the link for you to join the Zoom call. Pre-registration is **REQUIRED** to get the link. Must be able to connect through a cell phone, tablet, or computer. For special accommodations please RSVP by May 12. *For questions, please email parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org or call 360-715-0170.*

Looking for Assistive Technology Options?

There are so many resources available to use for enhancing our daily lives and helping us with communication, daily living, recreation, education, and employment. How do we decide what is useful and most appropriate for our children or for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities? InformingFamilies' website, AssistiveTechnologysection, has the following tips: **Identify the task first. Device Second.** There are a lot of options out there, and no one device is right for every individual.



Get an AT Assessment. If your child is in school, ask for an AT evaluation as part of the IEP process
Try Before You Buy. Make sure the device and/or apps are right for your child.

- Able Data is a database with info on products, solutions, and resources. <https://abledata.acl.gov/>
- Assistive Technology for Social Skills: <https://informingfamilies.org/assistive-technology/>
- TED – Devices and Apps to Stay Connected: <https://informingfamilies.org/ted/>
- Washington Assistive Technology Act Program provides information, referrals, training and device loans. (*Please note that during this time of COVID, loaning out of devices has been temporarily suspended) Learn more at <http://watap.org/>.
- Developmental Disabilities Administration offers equipment, devices or systems that are used to help a person live a more independent life. This could include items such as tablets, switches, electronic reminders, automatic shut-off stoves or specialized utensils. It is available for people currently enrolled receiving certain waivers. Please contact your case manager for more information.
- The Special Education Technology Center (SETC) at Central Washington University has AT resources for parents including a free video series on Supports for Children with Complex Communication Needs while Learning At Home. <https://sites.google.com/view/specialedtechcenter/parent-at-resources>



Special Education During COVID-19

OSPI has created a "Continuous Learning Document" – <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/OSPI%20Publication%20-%20Continuous%20Learning%202020.pdf>

This document is meant to be a reference for all programs, but provides some good considerations for learning supports and supports for students with disabilities.

OSPI also has a page devoted to special education guidance during COVID-19 including a Q&A document here: <https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/press-releases/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-resources/special-education-guidance-covid-19>

Specific Student Supports:

- For students who typically spend 80%-100% of their time in the general education classroom, special education providers will be supporting access to general education through collaboration with general education teachers, being available to answer student and parent questions, and supporting necessary accommodations. Schools want students to have access to general education learning with special education support, while staying within recommended guidelines for student learning commitments.
- For students who typically spend 0-79% in the general education classroom, special education providers will be communicating with families of students on their caseloads to create a more customized learning plan. This may include packets, access to online materials, phone or video conferencing, posting videos, etc. Special education providers are considering the unique needs of each student and their family.

What an Unusual Legislative Session!

For the first time, advocates for developmental disability (DD) services began educating policy-makers about the need to Caseload Forecast state services for the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). Caseload Forecasting is used each year to let legislators know how many people are expected to need state services. This is done so that enough funding is provided in the state budget for the services expected to be requested. The programs that are forecast are also entitlement programs, meaning if a person qualifies for the service, it is provided. Other than personal care (Community First Choice) and early intervention services, people with DD are not caseload forecast and their services are not an entitlement. This is the reason that DDA is the only state agency with a long waiting list for services. DDA did get some new funding in several areas, including adding 200 slots to Individual & Family Services and the Basic Plus waivers, and updating No Paid Services list. ESSB 6040 passed which adds the Individual & Family Services waiver and Basic Plus waiver to caseload forecasting. Excerpted from the Olympia Reporter by Diana Stadden at The Arc of Washington State <https://www.votervoicenet/ARCWA/BlogPosts/1691>.

Sibshops - Now Virtual through "ZOOM" Group Chat

A popular fun filled event for brothers and sisters of kids with developmental differences, delays, and on going health care needs.

12 - 1pm, Friday, May 22
Ages: 6 - 12 yrs

Register: p2p@arcwhatcom.org

Parents, after registering you will receive an email containing the link for your child to join Sibshops via Zoom. Pre-registration is REQUIRED so you can get the link. Must be able to connect through a cell phone, tablet or computer. Karlene Umbaugh and Melissa Abraham will be the group facilitators, and we can't wait to see you!

Parent Support meeting is now Virtual!

We may not be therapy, but we sure are therapeutic! We understand how isolating it can be right now, so we are hosting our monthly Parent Support Meeting through ZOOM. We will share knowledge, resources, provide support and guidance.

7 - 8 pm, Monday, May 11th
12 noon - 1 pm, Thursday, May 28th
7 - 8 pm, Monday, June 8

Register: p2p@arcwhatcom.org

After registering you will receive an email containing the link for you to join the Parent Support Meeting. Pre-registration is REQUIRED to get the link. Must be able to connect through a cell phone, tablet or computer.

You are not alone. We are here to help.



- Call: 360-715-0170 ext 302
- Email: p2p@arcwhatcom.org
- Facebook Messenger (Search Parent to Parent of Whatcom County)

Mental Health and Wellness Resources to Manage COVID-19 Related Stress

- COVID-19 Emotional Support Line: 1-866-342-6892
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) Toll-Free (español): 1-888-628-9454 Website <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>
- NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) <https://www.nami.org>
- Opportunity Council <https://www.oppco.org/> Click on "Whatcom Resources available during COVID-19" for a continually updated community resource list for services and organizations in Whatcom County.
- Treatment Locator Behavioral Health Services Website: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>.
- 7 Cups connects adults and teens to caring listeners offering emotional support through online community forums with a 24/7 chat: <https://www.7cups.com/>





Ready, Set, KNOW...

Plain Language



Economic Impact Payments

What's it All About?

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus is harming more than our health. When people can't work, shop or do business, it hurts our whole economy.

To help make things a little easier, the United States Congress passed a law called the CARES Act.

Part of the CARES Act includes payments of \$1,200 for people who earn less than \$75,000 per year. Some people who earn more than that will get money too (just not \$1,200). It also includes \$500 for every dependent under age 17.



If you receive SSI or SSDI, you will get a \$1,200 payment. It will not affect your eligibility for other benefits.

People who **will not** get a payment are those who:



- earn more than \$99,000 as single person
- are claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return (for example, a parent who claims a child)
- don't have a valid Social Security number
- are a non-resident of the United States

There are more details about who gets payments on the IRS website for economic impact payments: irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center.

Payments to people receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

People on SSI with no qualifying children do not need to take action in order to receive their payments. SSI recipients with qualifying children, however, will need to use the Non-Filers portal, which is found here: irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here.



Be on the lookout for scam artists trying to steal your personal information and money.

The IRS will not call, text you, email you or contact you on social media asking for personal or bank account information – even related to the economic impact payments. Watch out for emails with attachments or links claiming to have special information about economic impact payments or refunds. They are scams.

Informing Families is a resource of the Washington State DD Council. For more information, visit: informingfamilies.org

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Whatcom Superior Court Updates for all Guardians:

The Superior Court has reviewed and signed orders on guardianship cases that were already scheduled or noted. Presently, hearings are being delayed until after the first part of May. No in person appointments are happening or being scheduled at this time including meetings with the Guardianship Facilitator for review of documents. Guardians may turn in their reporting paperwork or any other paperwork by mail or between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. at the Clerk's office. Whatcom Superior Court, 311 Grand Avenue, 3rd Floor, Suite 301, Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: 360-778-5560

State Parks Open May 5



#RecreateResponsibly

Washington State Parks Disability Passes are available at no charge for people with permanent disabilities. This is a great way to reduce the costs of exploring our state parks.

Learn how to apply at: https://www.parks.state.wa.us/205/Passes?fbclid=IwAR3_bo1egj87v31dRiTIFyxD2mOAvGnrVqQ8yIP-JzAj06PUGd37_UfnRJI

Be Counted!

Every 10 years, everyone in the United States is counted through the census. It is important that everyone is counted because the census data impacts many key things. For example, the census data is used to figure out how much money state and local governments get for Medicaid, housing vouchers, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and education programs. When there isn't enough money, services and programs for people with disabilities can be cut. Census data is also used to determine how many representatives each state gets in the House of Representatives. The count affects you and your loved ones. <https://thearc.org/census/>



Internet & Phone Service Resources for Families



Individuals may need support accessing technology to communicate with friends and family, and avoid isolation. This can be done by signing up for free cell phones and low cost internet service, and other assistive technology resources available. Lifeline Assistance is the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) program designed to provide individuals with low-income access to free cell phones and inexpensive cell phone plans. For more information visit: www.lifelinesupport.org/do-i-qualify/

The FCC issued a consumer alert that provides tips to help consumers access Internet and optimize their home networks during the pandemic: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-363362A1.pdf>.

Caring for Companion & Service Animals

Terri Hansen, Assistant Inclusion Advocate

I have had the experience of owning a service dog and caring for a companion animal and have gathered some themes to share with you. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) a service animal means any dog that is individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II and Title III of the ADA. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. There was a great deal for me to learn about training & care. Depending on your budget, needs, and expectations, the animal may need to be fostered & trained by a family before becoming a working animal in your care. Originally, I began work to adopt a service animal, a puppy named Midnight. Over time, his size, his training with a foster family, determining support tasks, and other factors made it clear that we wouldn't be matched.

Whether you have a service or companion animal, it is essential that you have resources and supports in place. Financially you have to be able to support all of their needs: food, veterinary, & other supplies. If you have personal care or residential supports, those staff are not entirely responsible for animal care. Supportive staff can assist you, but it is your responsibility to ensure the animal's needs are met.

Many families look to the Humane Society for pets; you must consider the history of any rescue animals as previous neglect or mistreatment would impact a good match. After I adopted Buddy from the Humane Society, I found that he was difficult to train, could be food aggressive, and occasionally bit support staff. Understanding that Buddy hadn't had a reliable food source & had been neglected as a puppy then allowed us to avoid power struggles with food.



When I adopted Buddy 16 years ago, it was with the intention he would be a companion animal. Buddy was so much more than a companion, he was able to do so much for me, his calming presence and the distraction from the pain of Crohn's disease. Before adopting him I was having 15-20 flare ups per year. Those dropped to one per year with Buddy.

In our early years, Buddy was a typical, loving dog with a big personality. When he was younger, he would sometimes escape, then support staff and I would chase him around the parking lot. As he aged, my knowledge of hip dysplasia, seizures, and other concerns grew. I learned how to care for an aging dog. Fairhaven Veterinary Hospital provided the best care for Buddy, set up payment plans, and taught me how to care for an aging dog. When the time came to say goodbye, I was involved at every stage, allowing me to support Buddy as he had comforted me.

Having a companion animal gave me a sense of pride & financial responsibility. Knowing that I had to pay for things out of pocket for him meant that I had to save for his needs, not just my own. He gave me something other than myself to focus on. I didn't need much from him but the comfort he provided. The fact that he knew me well was important. I counted on him and I knew I was a comfort to him as well. There was a great bond between the two of us. It was a wonderful experience to have Buddy and I know that I gave him a good life.

WEARING A MASK



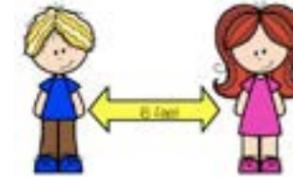
A social narrative for children.



Sometimes adults and kids need to wear masks to protect other people from getting sick. This might be something new for me!



Masks might feel kind of uncomfortable at first, but I will get used to it!



Even when I wear a mask, it is still important to stay 6 feet away from other people.



It is still OKAY to touch and hug my family.



I usually don't need to wear a mask in my home or my yard.



If I go to a store or to an appointment, I need to wear a mask.



If I go somewhere with my family and there are other people around, I should wear a mask.



A mask can protect other people if I cough or sneeze. It will also protect me from others!

This story is for children who may need to wear a mask in public due to COVID-19. It is important to prepare children for big changes in these unprecedented days. Thank you Autism Little Learners for this social story. Find more at www.autismlittlelearners.com and <https://www.facebook.com/autismlittlelearners/>



The Parent Coalition

The Arc of Whatcom County provides leadership support for individuals with developmental disabilities and their parents/guardians. The goal of the Parent Coalition is to enable persons with developmental disabilities and their parents/guardians to become effective and involved in accessing services.

The Parent Coalition newsletter is published monthly by:

The Arc of Whatcom County
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www.arcwhatcom.org

Office is currently closed due to COVID-19

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Stay Connected

Online Community Calendar:
Visit The Arc's website at www.arcwhatcom.org and click on **Events**.

Facebook: Visit our FB page: www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom for the latest information and events.

E-alerts: The Parent Coalition emails updates on legislation, workshops, and upcoming activities. To sign up, visit www.arcwhatcom.org or email parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org.



The Parent Coalition is funded by grants from the Developmental Disabilities Program of Whatcom County, the United Way and your generous donations.

2020 Smiles of Life Calendar Spotlight

Shiloh



Anaiya



The Arc is Here for You!

WITH MANY NEW REMOTE OPTIONS FOR SUPPORT,
INFORMATION, CONNECTION & ADVOCACY!

- FIND OUT MORE BY CALLING THE ARC OF WHATCOM COUNTY AT 360-715-0170 OR EMAILING US AT PARENTCOALITION@ARCWHATCOM.ORG
- STAY TUNED FOR EVENT UPDATES ON FACEBOOK AND ON OUR COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

www.facebook.com/arcwhatcom 
www.arcwhatcom.org

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities



Whatcom Taking Action Resources During COVID-19

Parenting during COVID 19 is complex and challenging. Having a child with a special health care need can place added stress on families as our support systems and routines are disrupted. Whatcom Taking Action has compiled a list of COVID 19 resources and information to support families. We know that this is a time where what is being asked of families is incredibly challenging and nearly impossible without support.

There are lots of resources available and most importantly people to connect to who care about you, your family and our community. The full list can be found at: <https://whatcomtakingaction.org/covid-19/>.

The SEAS line is open. Anyone can call or email for resources on child development. SEAS is here for you, from the time your child is 0 until 21. For information, referrals and guidance around available resources to support child development, any family or provider can contact the SEAS line (Single Entry Access to Services) at 360-715-7485 or email SEAS@oppco.org or fax. The SEAS line connects families to local developmental evaluations, early intervention, and resources to support their child's health and wellbeing.

