



11am - 1pm  
Wednesday,  
January 10th

The Arc of  
Whatcom County  
2602 McLeod Rd.  
Bellingham



Join our Partners4Housing in-person workshop! We will be supporting families who are starting the process of completing their free Residential Assessment for their loved one. Meet other families and connect with staff with your questions! RSVP is welcome but not mandatory. Bring a laptop or tablet if you have one, some laptops will be available for use at the Arc.

Have a question or to RSVP email [parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org) or call 360-715-0170.

Learn more about Partners4Housing and the benefit of claiming your free Residential Assessment at:

<https://arcwhatcom.org/partners4housing/>



SCAN HERE

## Smiles of Life 2024



Proudly presented by The Arc of Whatcom County

## 2024 Smiles of Life Calendar

The Arc's 2024 smiles of life calendar is now available! Featuring beautiful photos, inspiring profiles, and motivating quotes, the 2024 smiles of life calendar is dedicated to people with developmental disabilities and their friends and families. The calendar makes a unique and inspiring gift for families, friends, neighbors, teachers.

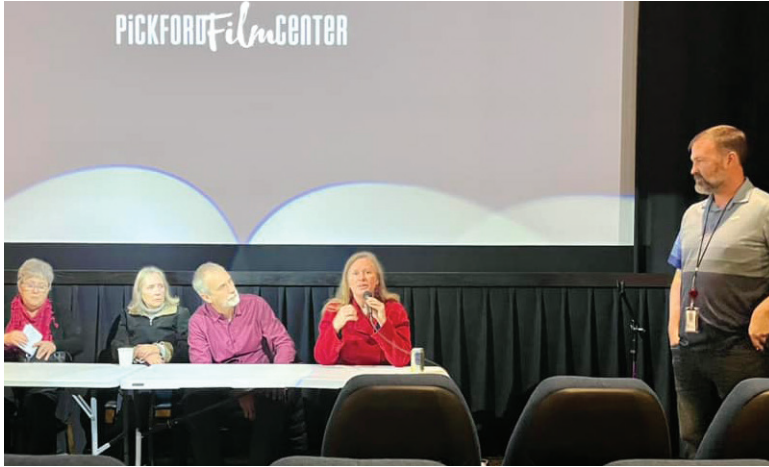
To make a donation online visit:

<https://www.classy.org/give/412351/#!/donation/checkout>

Please put the the amount of calendars you would like in the Comment Section. Your generous support (suggested donation of \$10 per calendar) will help fund valuable programs for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Calendars are available pickup Monday through Thursday from 10am - 1pm at 2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham. Please contact [admin@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:admin@arcwhatcom.org) for alternative pickup arrangements.

# Parent Coalition



The Arc of Whatcom County would like to thank Washington State DSHS' Developmental Disabilities Administration, Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program, The Arc of Whatcom County, the Pickford Film Center, and the amazing parents who worked so hard to bring this screening of UNSEEN: How We're Failing Parent Caregivers & Why It Matters to Whatcom County.

This documentary screening and panel was a great opportunity to raise awareness of caregiving challenges, educate our community, and discussions on support for caregivers.



AS360 is a new resource from the University of Washington Autism Center (UWAC). AS360 is an autism resource database designed to increase access to autism services and connect individuals and organizations. AS360 provides resources that help autistic people and their families, caregivers and providers navigate services and be part of an online community with other autistic people and their families.

- AS360 connects community programs into one cohesive ecosystem allowing families to identify and access clinically and culturally relevant resources
- AS360 provides individualized recommendations for navigating the autism journey
- AS360 puts caregivers at the center of their family's wellness journey, reducing stigma and enabling access to critical services

To learn more and access the site visit <https://www.as360.org/>

## “Our Dyslexic Children” Documentary Screening & Panel Discussion 7pm, Tuesday, January 16th

- Does your child seem to be struggling with learning how to read or spell?
- Does your child tend to complain about, or try to avoid reading and writing?
- Do they have a hard time identifying some speech sounds or remembering dates, telephone numbers or their address?
- Curious about Dyslexia? Learn about what Dyslexia is and is not, along with how to support your child in growing their reading, writing, and spelling skills.

We will be showing the 43-minute documentary “Our Dyslexic Children” and then have a panel discussion after with Cathie Bertola, M.Ed. Literacy and Nancy Ruhl, Parent Dyslexia Advocate, and many other community professionals. Meeting will start at 7pm, screening will start at 7:20pm. Panel Discussion to follow. Watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NayWqyDDXHk>

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/mw5cuj58>

# Parent to Parent



## Monthly Parent Connect

7-8pm, Monday, January 8  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

This is a meeting for parents and caregivers of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and ongoing health care needs. After registering you will receive an email containing the link for you to join the Parent Support Meeting via Zoom.

Please register early so you can get the link. Must be able to connect through a cell phone, tablet or computer. For questions, contact Parent to Parent at 360-715-0170 ext 302 or [p2p@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:p2p@arcwhatcom.org)

Register: [p2p@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:p2p@arcwhatcom.org)

THANK YOU  
GRACIAS



Thank you to everyone who made our recent Holiday Party a success!

Haggen  
Starbucks  
Inner Child Studio  
Costco  
McKay's Taphouse  
Bellingham Parks & Rec  
Lion Club

All the wonderful volunteers, we couldn't do what we do with you!



Parent to Parent has a closed Facebook group for parents and caregivers of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and on-going health care needs called P2P: Whatcom County. This is a private page for our Parent to Parent of Whatcom County families. A place to share joys and tears. A place for us to ask for help or just be heard. What's said here, stays here. You are not alone.

Join: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1289791781074855/>

# WHATCOM COUNTY

## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



## TRANSITION RESOURCE GUIDE

### SCHOOL YEARS

- ◇ Be responsible for chores at home
- ◇ Consider work/volunteer opportunities
- ◇ Build friendships with peers
- ◇ Get involved in a neighborhood or community organization
- ◇ Keep a note book that includes: medical history/alerts, diagnosis information, school evaluations, IEP's, assessments
- ◇ Build on personal strengths, capacities and interest. These may help define a future career.
- ◇ Provide opportunities to make choices, and identify preferences.
- ◇ Participate and be present at all meetings

### Explore, Interests, Skills and Dreams!

### HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

- ◇ Discuss career/job ideas or college.
- ◇ Establish transition goals in the IEP no later than 16. (College or work focus and independent living skills)
- ◇ Set up a bank account
- ◇ Explore hobbies and community events.
- ◇ Build a calendar/routine based on interests, hobbies and support needs.
- ◇ Learn to ride the bus!
- ◇ Socialize with friends and peers.
- ◇ Be able to advocate or speak up for oneself.
- ◇ Discuss your child's graduation date with the IEP team and learn about the district's 18-21 program. Staying in school until 21 may prevent a gap in services.

### Educate Yourself About Decisions at AGE 18!

The updated Whatcom County Developmental Disability Transition Resource Guide is available now. Topics include:

- education resources & supports
- technology
- housing & living information
- transportation
- healthcare & medical services
- family supports
- recreation
- helpful timelines

Download: <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/2116/Resource-Guide-PDF?bidId=>

The Developmental Disabilities Program contracts with various agencies in the community to provide services for residents of Whatcom County with developmental disabilities and their families. Learn more about:

- Child Development Services for infants and toddlers birth to age 3.
- Pathways to Employment and Community Inclusion Services for Adults 21+.
- School to Work Program.
- Information and Family Support.
- Find out how your agency can become a County qualified service provider.
- Attend a Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board meeting.

Learn more: <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3246/Developmental-Disabilities>



**Washington State**  
ABLE SAVINGS PLAN

## Is the WA ABLA Governing Board for you?

There are two open positions to serve on the Washington State Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Savings Plan Governing Board! The seven-member board includes four seats for people with financial, legal, or disability-program experience, appointed to serve four-year terms. Two of those seats are vacant and applications are being accepted now. Appointees serve alongside three state officials, including the State Treasurer of Washington State.

<https://govforms.dynamics365portals.us/application-form/>

A Washington State ABLA Savings Plan allows people with eligible disabilities to save for their everyday needs, invest in a tax-free account and prepare for the future without losing their state or federal benefits.

Washington State ABLA Savings Plans are easy to open and simple to manage. Individuals can make direct contributions and can also make payroll contributions through the ABLA to Work program. Friends and family members can also easily contribute to ABLA accounts.

Washington State ABLA empowers individuals with disabilities to save for qualified expenses and invest in their future.

<https://www.washingtonstateable.com/>



We are so excited to announce that The Arc of Whatcom County is partnering with partners4housing to provide free Residential Assessment (RA) to local families, courtesy of the Dan Thompson Memorial Fund. Completing this RA will help your family explore housing possibilities for your loved one and make a resilient plan for the future. The RA starts with an online questionnaire, where you and your loved one answer questions about your loved one's needs and current benefits and define your vision of "home." After completing the questions, you'll meet online with a trained Solutions Coordinator. They will help you understand how to access all the benefits your loved one is eligible for, including that all-important section 8 voucher, so you can start planning for your loved one's future housing needs.

Eligible families will also have free access to a roommate matching pool, to help you connect with other families and find compatible roommates for your loved ones. We are so excited to be partnering with partners4housing on this important project because we know how much this can help families like yours in our local communities. How to get started: If you or someone you know has a loved one with IDD, 16 years or older, living in Washington State, claim your free RA today ... at no cost!

**SIGN UP HERE:**

<https://signup.partners4housing.com/promo/WAWAT>





Designed for children aged 12 and under with autism spectrum and/or sensory-processing needs, our Low Sensory Sundays provide a special, quieter experience at our museum's Family Interactive Gallery (FIG).

**WHEN:** Jan 28, Mar 24, May 26, and Jul 28.

**TIME:** 10 - 11:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Family Interactive Gallery (FIG) inside the Lightcatcher building, 250 Flora Street.

**COST:** Absolutely FREE!

What to expect:

- Wheelchair accessibility
- A quiet room for downtime
- Supportive tools including gloves, cue cards, sunglasses, timers, and sensory maps

Brought to you by Hoagland Pharmacy, our mission is to break down barriers and foster a welcoming museum community. Our vision is to provide consistent access and support for families with children who benefit from a low-sensory environment. RSVP is appreciated but not required.

Let's make art inclusive!

Details:

<https://ow.ly/b6LB50PLo24>

*Is your child “consistently inconsistent”, or do they struggle with many, or all, of the following:*

- understanding consequences
- emotional regulation and/or behavior challenges
- ADD/ADHD
- fine or gross motor delays
- sensory processing sensitivities
- language delay or related challenges
- memory and/or processing speed difficulties
- math comprehension – i.e. money, time, large quantities



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are the number one cause of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDDs) nationwide and worldwide, and are more common than Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and Tourette's combined.

Community is important, as are people who “get it,” and who understand. FASD Focus NW support groups are a chance to build community, make connections and share ideas. To know that you are not alone. Each group meeting is spent sharing joys as well as tears, asking questions, and offering and receiving support from others. This is a volunteer ran and peer-led support group that is open to families or caregivers to individuals who have been diagnosed with or are suspected of being impacted by Prenatal Substance Exposure (PSE) and/or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs) as well as to adults impacted by PSE/FASDs. Our groups are respectful of and open to birth mothers. In 2008, the CDC reported that more than half of all pregnancies (51%) were unplanned. At FASD Focus NW, we seek to educate and reduce stigma related to unintentional alcohol consumption and pregnancy.

**\*FASt Friends Virtual Support Group will be held on Wednesday, the 24th in January from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

Our support group is always the 4th Wednesday of each month from 8-9pm. There is no fee to attend and you do not need to sign up each month.



**Sign up to receive meeting invites at:**  
<https://www.nofaswa.org/support>

Build your Self-Advocacy & Leadership Skills. These meetings empower individuals to develop advocacy and leadership skills and set lifetime goals for employment, independence and community involvement.

## Self-Advocacy Group Meetings



**Thursday, January 4, 4:30-6:30 pm**

### Self-Advocacy in Healthcare

Build your skills and learn about how to best advocate for your health and health care. We will talk about how to communicate with your doctors, your care team, and tools for at-home health care routines.

Join us virtually for this meeting on zoom.

The virtual meetings are on zoom. After registering you will receive an e-mail containing the link for you to join the Self-Advocacy Meeting. For more questions or information call (360) 715-0170. Pre-registration is **REQUIRED** to get the link. Must be able to connect through a cell phone, tablet or computer.

Register at: [SelfAdvocacy@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:SelfAdvocacy@arcwhatcom.org)



**SELF-ADVOCACY**

*A program of The Arc of Whatcom County*

*"Be Strong. Be Proud. Be Heard."*



Sponsored by The Arc of Whatcom County with funding from the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program

# Staff & Board of Directors

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.

## Arc of Whatcom County Staff:

Executive Director: Beverly Porter

Assistant Director: Rhonda Rische

GIDES Family Advocate: Barbara Roxas

Asst Inclusion Advocate: Terri Hansen

Family Advocate: Laura Kaptinski

Parent to Parent & Self Advocate Coordinator:  
Karlene Umbaugh

P2P Parent Assistant & Parent Coalition

Co-Coordinator: Melissa Abraham

Padres a Padres: Marta Mejia, Alina Zollfrank

Office Manager: Hilary Scheibner

## Board of Directors:

Missy Bartell – President

Jason McGill – Co Vice President

Melissa Mitchell – Co Vice President

Susan Jewell – Treasurer

Dale Whipple – Director

Sarah Godwin – Director

Ellie Posel – Director

Margaret Jahn – Director

Melanie Hartley – Director

Frances Chalmers – Director

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



Our office is Monday through Thursday, 10am - 1pm if you would like to browse our Lending Library or are in need of resources. Staff are available outside those time also by appointment. Call 360-715-0170 if you are needing any assistance and would like to connect with a staff member.

## We now offer Open Virtual Office Hours.

Staff will be available on zoom to help with resources, support, information, and connection. No RSVP needed. We will not have a password to join, but participants will be in a waiting room, until we admit you

Thursdays, 11am - 12 noon

Join Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86909304702>

Meeting ID: 869 0930 4702

The Arc of Whatcom County  
Dan Godwin Community Center  
2602 McLeod Rd  
Bellingham, WA 98225-1368

Phone: (360) 715-0170

Fax: (360) 715-8522

Email: [admin@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:admin@arcwhatcom.org)



# Get Involved!



Looking for a way to give back to your community?

## Volunteer at The Arc!



*The Arc of Whatcom County has exciting opportunities for volunteering, college internships, or high school culminating projects. Help others in your community and gain valuable skills at the same time!*

*Contact the Arc today today for details. We greatly appreciate your interest and look forward to working with you soon!*

### Volunteer & Internship Opportunities

- **DsO Spring Fling, annually in May** – Join the fun at this annual event for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.
- **Self-Advocacy (SA)** – Help support adults with developmental disabilities work on skills to advocate for themselves and others in the community. Meets one Thursday afternoon per month.
- **DsO Buddy Fest, annually in September\***–Join the fun and promote the inclusion and acceptance of people with Down syndrome!
- **Board Members** – We are looking for passionate and committed individuals to join our Board of Directors, providing oversight of The Arc’s programs and representing The Arc in the community.
- **Spanish Speaking Intern** – Help support our Padres a Padres program in supporting our Spanish speaking community in Whatcom County.
- **Outdoor Landscaping and maintenance** – Help keep the Dan Godwin facility in great shape by helping with yard work and small projects around the facility.
- **Smiles of Life Calendar\*** – Help with the development of our annual Smiles of Life Calendar featuring photos and profiles of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- **Parent to Parent Holiday Party, annually in December** - Help with setting up event, food, games, and making the event memorable for children and their families.
- **Resource updates and distribution\*** – Help update and distribute resources for individuals, families and youth with special needs.
- **Parent to Parent Halloween Fall Festival, annually in October** – Volunteers are needed to help with set up, activities, and snacks during this event which supports families in our community.
- **Social Media Intern** – Help us spread the word about all the great things the Arc is doing to support individuals with disabilities in Whatcom County!

**2023**

Some information listed is time-sensitive and subject to change. Please contact us for current details.

# 2024 Event Calendar

## JANUARY

4 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

4 Thursday, 4:30 - 6:30pm  
Self-Advocacy Meeting

8 Monday, 7 - 8pm  
Parent Connect Meeting

10 Wednesday, 11am - 1pm  
Partners4Housing Workshop  
more info on page 1

11 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

16 Tuesday, 6pm  
“Our Dyslexic Children”  
Documentary Screening &  
Panel Discussion  
more info on page 2

18 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

22 Monday, 6 - 8pm  
SPIN Dance  
Bloedel Donovan Gym  
Free and open to the community,  
ages 14+  
<https://maxhighbeecenter.org/>

24 Wednesday, 6 - 7:30pm  
Board of Director’s Meeting  
All Community Members  
Welcome! Join in-person or  
virtually. Learn more at:  
<http://arcwhatcom.org/about-the-arc/board-of-directors/>

25 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

## FEBRUARY

1 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

1 Thursday, 4:30 - 6:30pm  
Self-Advocacy Meeting

8 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

12 Monday, 7 - 8pm  
Parent Connect Meeting

15 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

22 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

28 Wednesday, 6 - 7:30pm  
Board of Directors Meeting  
All Community Members  
Welcome! Learn more at:  
<http://arcwhatcom.org/about-the-arc/board-of-directors/>

29 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours



## STAY CONNECTED

Follow our Facebook Pages:  
[www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom](http://www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom)  
[www.facebook.com/ParenttoParentWhatcom](http://www.facebook.com/ParenttoParentWhatcom)  
[www.facebook.com/WhatcomCountySelfAdvocacy](http://www.facebook.com/WhatcomCountySelfAdvocacy)  
[www.facebook.com/DownsyndromeOutreach](http://www.facebook.com/DownsyndromeOutreach)

Follow our Instagram @arc\_whatcom

Find resources, information, and more at:  
[www.arcwhatcom.org](http://www.arcwhatcom.org)