

The Arc's mission is to improve the quality of life, increase the independence and assure the full inclusion in the community of all persons with developmental disabilities

March 2025



March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



Understanding the challenges faced by people with disabilities is the first step in being an effective advocate. Learn about different types of disabilities, accessibility issues, and the barriers people with disabilities face. Share this knowledge with others to raise awareness and reduce stigma.

Advocate for policies that promote accessibility, equality, and inclusion in schools, workplaces, and public spaces. This includes supporting legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and fighting against discriminatory laws or practices that harm individuals with disabilities.

Get involved with local or national organizations that support people with disabilities. By volunteering, you can directly contribute to their initiatives and raise awareness about their work in the community.

Language matters in shaping attitudes. Use respectful and person-first language. Be mindful of the language you use in both personal and professional conversations.

Listen to and amplify the voices of people with disabilities. Encourage them to speak up for themselves, and use your platform (whether social media, community groups, or workspaces) to highlight their experiences, challenges, and achievements.

Work to improve accessibility in public spaces, transportation, digital environments, and buildings. This could involve lobbying for better wheelchair access, inclusive websites, or accessible public transportation.

Encourage employers to hire people with disabilities and advocate for inclusive educational environments that accommodate all students. Providing equal opportunities in the workplace and in schools helps build a more diverse and equitable society.

Advocate for empathy and connection between people with and without disabilities. Creating opportunities for interaction and collaboration helps build understanding, reduces prejudice, and promotes unity in communities.

SAVE THE DATE



Advocacy Days 2025



MARCH 5TH

10:00-11:30 AM | VIRTUAL | [REGISTER HERE](#)
SAIL (SELF- ADVOCATES IN LEADERSHIP) RALLY @ 1:00

Community Living

What are the community and housing supports and services I need in order to live successfully in the community?



MARCH 12TH

10:00-11:30 AM | VIRTUAL | [REGISTER HERE](#)

Social Engagement

How do we create welcoming communities and prevent social isolation?



MARCH 19TH

10:00-11:30 AM | VIRTUAL | [REGISTER HERE](#)

Workforce

How do we ensure there is a quality workforce available to care for our loved ones?



MARCH 26TH

10:00-11:30 AM | VIRTUAL | [REGISTER HERE](#)

Budget

What can you do now?

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Advocacy Days visit:
arcwa.org/advocacy/advocacy-days/

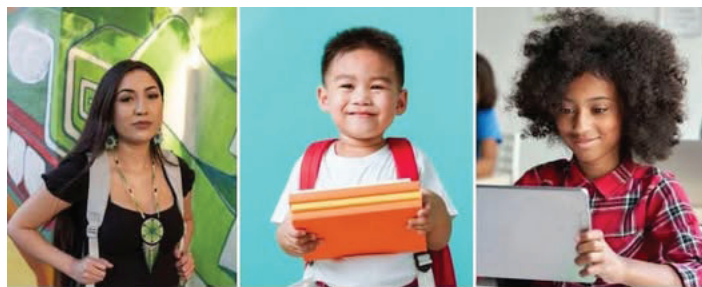
SPONSORED BY THE ADVOCACY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

Need Paperwork & Application Support from Arc Staff Members?

11am - 1pm, Wednesday, March 12
The Arc of Whatcom County
2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham

Join Arc Staff in-person at the Dan Godwin Community Center. We will be supporting families with filling out paperwork for their loved ones. Bring a laptop or tablet if you have one, some laptops will be available for use at the Arc.

We may not have time to complete all your paperwork, but this is a great opportunity to have support looking over where to start. If you need private one-on-one support, please email admin@arcwhatcom.org to set up an appointment at a different time. At our Paperwork Support Workshops, staff may be helping multiple people, and we cannot guarantee privacy



Office of the Education Ombuds

We listen. We inform. We help solve problems.

ABOUT US

Do you have a question or concern about K-12 public education? Contact the Office of the Education Ombuds and we may be able to help.

We can answer questions, share resources, and facilitate communication. Services are free and confidential, disability and language accommodations provided. Select your language from the language picker to complete an online request for OEO services:

<https://services.oeo.wa.gov/oeo>



@EdOmbuds



/WAEducationOmbuds



/WA_Education_Ombuds

Education Ombuds

We Listen.

We Answer Questions.

We Help to Solve Problems.

Washington State Governor's Office of the
Education Ombuds
Phone: 1-866-297-2597
Web: www.oeo.wa.gov

oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov / www.oeo.wa.gov / 1-866-297-2597

Parent to Parent

Monthly Parent Connect

7 - 8pm, Monday, March 10

7 - 8pm, Monday, April 14

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

This is a meeting for parents and caregivers of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and ongoing health care needs.

REGISTER your spot today!
Register: p2p@arcwhatcom.org

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



Navigating the Journey: Medically Complex Families

This peer support group provides a safe and supportive place for sharing feelings and challenges commonly experienced when navigating the unexpected outcome of having a child with medical complications, complex care needs, and rare or undiagnosed conditions. Logistics of care, juggling medical and therapy appointments, and unique support needs can create an isolating and overwhelming experience. Come share, connect and learn. You are not alone.

Adults only please! Light refreshments provided.

RSVP is welcome but not required.
Email p2p@arcwhatcom.org or call 360-715-0170



Learn more about Parent to Parent at arcwhatcom.org/programs/parent-to-parent/

**Wednesday
March 19
12 - 1pm
The Arc of Whatcom County
2602 McLeod Rd.,
Bellingham**



Parent to Parent of Whatcom County

DADS SOCIAL



Thursday, March 13
6pm
Coconut Kenny's
1740 La Bounty Dr, Ferndale

Join Parent to Parent's Dads Social. For fathers raising loved ones with developmental disabilities and chronic healthcare needs. A chance to be able to meet and talk with other dads that are dealing with similar issues and enjoy free wonderful pizza.

Please RSVP so we can get a heads up on how many people will be there. For questions or to register contact P2P at (360) 715-0170 ext 302 or p2p@arcwhatcom.org



**Coffee & Conversation
Monday, March 3, 10am - 11am
The Arc of Whatcom County
2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham**

Parents and Caregivers of loved ones with developmental delays, disabilities, and on-going healthcare needs are welcome to join us for coffee (or tea) and a relaxed and friendly chat. Meet other caregivers in our community, find out new resources, and share your thoughts, insights, triumphs and experience. Adults only please! Light refreshments provided.

Transition Resources

“How should I prepare for my Benefits and Housing Review consult with Partners4housing?”

We know that everyone's needs and situations are unique. Some are just beginning to explore housing options, while others are well along the path. We always aim to meet you where you are on your journey, so we keep our consultation flexible enough to be sure we cover your concerns and questions. Your Zoom consultation will generally cover information in these six buckets:

- **Housing options** – We'll talk about the three primary types of living situations: Adult Family Homes, Supported Living, and Shared Living.
- **Social Security benefits** – You'll learn what they include, how to apply, how to maximize SSI.
- **DSHS Services** – Your state's Department of Social and Health Services offers a range of additional benefits.
- **Section 8** – We'll help you understand what Section 8 is, how it's administered, and how it can (and can't) be used.
- **Food benefits / SNAP** – You'll learn who is eligible for food benefits, how the program works, and how to apply.
- **The Roommate Matching Pool** – We'll discuss our roommate pool and how it works, what makes a family or individual eligible, and how to use it to find compatible roommates and partnering families to create a successful Shared Living Solution.

The primary purpose of this meeting is to help you explore what's available and articulate your vision for your own, or your Loved One's, future. From there, we help break it down into achievable steps and provide a list of what to do next to move forward. To prepare, all you have to do is complete the Benefits and Housing Review online. We'll make sure we address your questions during the meeting. Sign up for your free Benefits and Housing Review (\$500 value), available for a limited time to Washington State residents, thanks to a generous Dan Thompson Memorial Fund Account grant.

SIGN UP HERE:

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



SAVE THE DATE

**Whatcom County
School to Work
Transition
Fair**

**Thurs, March 27th, 2025
9am-12pm
Ferndale Event Center
5715 Barrett Rd, Ferndale**

Join us for a resource fair focused on the transition into adulthood for middle and high school students with developmental and other disabilities. Families, educators, and interested community members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Connect with local organizations and explore resources on advocacy, employment, community inclusion, health, guardianship, education, recreation, Social Security, DVR, DDA, and more!

This event is in an accessible location. Submit requests for accommodations or interpreter services by March 15th by contacting DDInfo@co.whatcom.wa.us or (360)778-6012.

WADDCC

Washington State
Developmental Disabilities Council

**5 Year State
Plan Survey**
2027-2031

We're Listening: Share Your Vision for a Better Future

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council wants to hear from you! Share your thoughts, concerns, and ideas about the challenges and barriers faced by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families in Washington State.

Your feedback will help shape the Council's priorities for the next five years. Let's work together to build a more inclusive and supportive community!

Complete the survey today:

Visit: bit.ly/WADDCCSurvey

Available in multiple languages
Survey closes July 21st, 2025

SCAN

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, March 6, 4:30-6:30pm

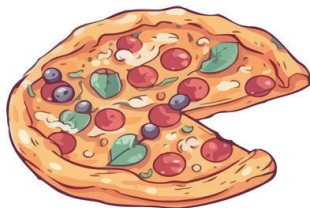
Believing in Yourself

Build your self-confidence, self-love, and self-esteem. We'll look at what self-esteem is, why it's important for a self-advocate, and how to build yours up.

Thursday, April 3, 4:30-6:30pm

Social Connections

Social engagement boosts well-being, happiness, and support. Please join us for a fun and friendly discussion on zoom.



Wednesday, May 28, 6:00-7:30pm

The Arc Membership Pizza Party

Join us for The Arc Membership Pizza Party at 2602 McLeod Rd, Bellingham WA 98225.
No Self-Advocacy Meeting on May 1st.

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



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



Bellingham Independents Spring Season

Special Olympics supports over 5 million athletes, 1 million coaches and volunteers, more than 100,000 competitions each year, and 32 Olympic-type sports through programs in more than 170 countries. Please send an email to sobellingham@gmail.com and let us know what sports you would like to receive more information about and you will be put on an email list for that sport.

For sport specific questions contact:

SWIMMING

sobellingham@gmail.com

TRACK AND FIELD

Kristy: coachkristybham@gmail.com

SOCCER

Keith: wholewheat60@gmail.com

Javier: jvrsampedro@gmail.com

SPIN DANCE

EVERY 3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH | 6-8PM

FREE

14 AND OLDER

ALL ABILITIES

WITH LIVE DJ AIREEKAH

**Glitt3r
Lyfe**
EVENTS
FUN & ART



SILENT DISCO PARTY!

EVERY FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH | 6-8PM

FREE * ALL AGES * ALL ABILITIES

MAX HIGBEE CENTER | CORNER OF STATE & MAGNOLIA

Down syndrome Outreach

Friday, March 21st is World Down syndrome Day! Do something special with your loved one to celebrate this special day!

- Wear Buddy Walk/Fest shirts and invite all your friends, family, and colleagues to do the same.
- Support local organizations like Down syndrome Outreach.
- Do three random acts of kindness!
- Write someone a positive note or give someone a helping hand.
- Read a book about Down syndrome at your child's school! If you have a younger child with Down syndrome, ask your child's teacher or principal if you can read a book to the class during story time.



It may be a great way to celebrate and educate children about Down syndrome. Consider these: “47 Strings: Tessa’s Special Code” by Becky Carey or “My Friend Isabell” by Eliza Woloson

- See how the Coast Salish People and Lummi Nation are celebrating and supporting individuals with Down syndrome. <https://youtu.be/XVRnipt4eHY?si=p3BCfv-cVpS6JmBv>
- Throw a party! For your family or your friends! Celebrate like you would celebrate a birthday. It's another chance to give thanks for all that our loved ones with Down syndrome bring to our lives!
- More ideas can be found at www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/randomacts-kindness
- The World Down syndrome Day theme for 2025 is ‘**Improve Our Support Systems**’. Learn more at





Ready, Set, KNOW...

DDA Home Visits

What to expect, purpose, and more.

If you are receiving or planning to receive any DDA-paid services, a case resource manager will conduct a home visit and request to view the living space of your loved one. For instance, they will view your child's or supported loved one's bedroom, but not the parent's or caregiver's room. These visits will take place in your home.



Are home visits and in-person visits the same?

No, they're not. In-person visits refer to a DDA case manager meeting with a client face-to-face, but this doesn't necessarily mean the visit takes place at the client's home. Home visits specifically occur when the case manager goes to the client's home.

Who is a case resource manager?

A case resource manager, or a CRM is a DDA case manager, social service specialist, or social worker.

When do home visits occur?

If your loved one receives an initial, annual, or significant change assessment, the CRM must conduct a home visit. During this visit, the CRM will request permission to view the living quarters of your child or the loved one you support.

A home visit may occur during:

- The assessment
- Up to 30 days before or after your child or loved one you support assessment
- Or up to 30 days after the individual moves from an institutional setting to a community-based setting

What will happen during this home visit?

The case manager will take note of their general observations of the living quarters and the individual's overall well-being. They will observe to learn about the condition of the home and the quality of care. Some questions they may consider when conducting their home visit include the following, but are NOT limited to:

- Does the client have access to food and running water?
- Are there locks on the refrigerator or cabinets preventing client access?
- Does the client's bed and bedding meet the client's individual needs?
- Are there locks on the outside of the client's bedroom?

If you have more questions, reach out to your DDA case manager.



Ready, Set, Know...

Childcare Resources in Washington State

As a parent or caregiver, it is important to find safe and affordable childcare. It can be overwhelming to find the right childcare provider, but resources are available for you.

Childcare Aware of Washington:

Childcare Aware provides families with accessibility information and support in early care and education from birth to 12 years old. They work with families and providers to meet the needs of your child. They offer a search engine for families to find trusted childcare in their area that will include, location, process, subsidies, and more. Childcare Aware offers information on what parents/caregivers should ask, resources for financial assistances, and resources specific to the area of the state you are located. To learn more visit <https://childcareawarewa.org/>

Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Washington State DCYF offers many resources for families and caregivers to support finding safe and reliable childcare.

Childcare Check

DCYF has created a tool called Child Care Check that helps parents and caregivers search for quality childcare in their area. This will provide information on individual child care and early learning programs. To learn more visit <https://www.findchildcarewa.org/> or call 1-800-446-1114.

ECEAP & Head Start

ECEAP, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program is funded by Washington state and is for children ages 3 to 4. Head Start is funded by the federal government for children ages 3 to 4. Some locations are available for birth to age 3 as well as pre-natal care for pregnant individuals. Both programs offer free early learning childcare or preschool that will best support your child's personal development and learning. Children with disabilities who receive special education services are also eligible for ECEAP. To learn more visit <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/eceap-headstart>

Washington Working Connections Childcare (WCCC)

WCCC can help eligible families pay for childcare. If eligible, families choose an eligible provider and the state pays a portion of the child care cost. To learn more visit <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help/wccc>.

The Child and Dependent Care Federal Tax Credit

The child and dependent care credit is a tax credit that may help you pay for the care of eligible children or dependents. This credit is based off of your income and the cost of care for your children or eligible dependents to work, look for work, or attend school. To learn more visit <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc602>



Questions to Ask Childcare Providers

Picking the right childcare provider is a personal decision for families. Make a list of questions you have that are specific to your child and their needs before meeting with or visiting a childcare provider. Here are some example questions to help you start:

- What is the daily schedule?
- How many children do you supervise?
- What modifications or supports can you provide my child?
- Does your staff have continuing education on how to best serve children with disabilities?
- What are some of the daily activities my child will be doing?

Childcare Check has created a PDF guide for families and caregivers to bring with them when visiting childcare providers. Visit https://childcareawarewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Updated-Employer-handout-child-care-search_FINAL.pdf

Check with your local school district to see programs offered in your area.



A RESOURCE HOME FOR THE ASD
COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON
STATE TO CONNECT ONLINE
THROUGH THE AS360 FAMILY
NAVIGATION PLATFORM (FNP)

FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Life Stages Checklists - to help families navigate their ASD journey
- Resource Finder - find resources that fit your needs
- Self-Assessments - modeled after what providers would ask
- Book Learning Center, Community Forum and more!

AS360

- 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

Resources Near Me is available to you on this platform—providers and agencies within a chosen range of your address in Washington state. Do you have a question or recommendation you want to offer or discuss? Use the **Member Forum** to post your questions and see what families in Washington have to say about the topic. Need a book on a particular subject? Check out our **Book Learning Center**. Seattle Children's Autism Center and the University of Washington Autism Center have collaborated on a family navigation and resource platform called AS360. It's focused on improving outcomes for individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Washington State through timely access to care, resources, information and community for individuals and families. We encourage you to visit the site, create an account, and browse the available assessments, resources and more! www.as360.org

FREE ONLINE CLASSES

NAVIGATING SSI APPLICATIONS

FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18

FOR YOUTH AGES 18+



Date

March 5, 2025



Time

12 pm PST



Date

March 12, 2025



Time

12 pm PST



NWACCESSFUND.ORG



YOUTH@NWACCESSFUND.ORG



[206-328-5116](tel:206-328-5116)

Join us for March's Navigating SSI Applications classes! These classes are online, free, and are created and led by a certified benefits planner. These classes are intended for parents and service providers of youths with disabilities in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Get a better understanding of the SSI application process, learn tips and strategies to navigate it, and get a chance to ask questions.

Register here:

www.nwaccessfund.org/youth/navigating-ssi/

Have a disability benefits question? Check out the Make It Make Sense Series on YouTube, where we explain complicated benefits questions, like - What's an ABLE account? How does work impact SSI benefits? What's a DAC? What's the difference between SSI and SSDI? and more!

Check out the YouTube channel here:

youtube.com/@northwestaccessfund2564

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
Ken Larson -Vice President
Susan Jewell – Treasurer
Sam Hogan – Secretary
Dale Whipple – 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 open to the public Monday through Thursday, 10am - 1pm if you would like to browse our Lending Library or are in need of resources. Staff are also available by appointment outside of those times. Please call 360-715-0170 if you are needing any assistance and would like to connect with a staff member.

Staff are available every Thursday from 11am - 12pm via Zoom for Open Office Hours. No RSVP needed.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86909304702>
Meeting ID: 869 0930 4702

Staff will be available to help with resources, support, information, and connection. We will not have a password to join, but participants will be in a waiting room, until we admit you.

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 To see a list of staff positions and extensions, visit:
<http://arcwhatcom.org/about-the-arc/staff/>

MARCH

3 Monday 10 - 11am
Coffee and Conversation

6 Thursday, 11am -12pm
Open Office Hours

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

10 Monday, 7 - 8pm
Virtual Parent Connect

12 Wednesday, 11am - 1pm
Paperwork Application
Support

13 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

13 Thursday, 6pm
Dads Social

18 Tuesday, 6pm
Parent Coalition Workshop

19 Wednesday, 12 - 1pm
Navigating the Journey:
Medically Complex Families
Group

20 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

26 Wednesday, 6 - 7:30pm
Board of Directors Meeting
more info at:
arcwhatcom.org/about-thearc/board-of-directors/

27 Thursday, 9am - 12pm
Transition Fair
Ferndale Event Center
5715 Barrett Road, Ferndale

27 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

APRIL

Our office follows the Bellingham School District calendar and will be closed for Spring Break starting Monday, April 7th and will reopen Monday, April 14.

3 Thursdsay, 4:30 - 6:30pm
Self - Advocacy Meeting

3 Thursday, 11am -12pm
Open Office Hours

14 Monday 10 - 11am
Coffee and Conversation

14 Monday, 7 - 8pm
Virtual Parent Connect

16 Wednesday, 11am - 1pm
Paperwork Application
Support

17 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

23 Wednesday, 6 - 7:30pm
Board of Directors Meeting
more info at:
arcwhatcom.org/about-thearc/board-of-directors/

24 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours



OUR LENDING LIBRARY IS AVAILABLE!

Please click on the link and click on books.

Search our collection on our website at [the Resources tab under books.](#)

The Arc Whatcom County

PARENT TO PARENT

STAY CONNECTED




www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom

www.facebook.com/ParenttoParentWhatcom

www.facebook.com/WhatcomCountySelfAdvocacy

www.facebook.com/DownsyndromeOutreach

Follow our Instagram @arc_whatcom

Find resources, information and more at:
www.arcwhatcom.org