

Community Services for Children with Special Needs

1. Find support

Connect with other families and providers to get valuable support from them:

- ✓ [Parent to Parent](#) support groups, newsletter, Helping Parent matches, and fun family events. Call 360-715-0170.
- ✓ The Parent Coalition at The [Arc of Whatcom County](#) provides one on one information and education to help you navigate support services. Call 360-715-0170.
- ✓ Call [Single Entry Access to Services](#) (SEAS) at 360-715-7485 for fast, easy access to services for kids age birth to 21 who need specialized care or support. Visit whatcomtakingaction.org.
- ✓ [National Association of Mental Illness](#) or [NAMI-Whatcom](#) has family trainings and support groups.
- ✓ [Guide by Your Side](#) (425-268-7087) and the [Washington Parents of Blind Children](#) (email: gandarias1217@gmail.com) offer support for parents of children with sensory disabilities.
- ✓ Online support groups and local websites such as www.whatcomtakingaction.org or [Bellingham Moms of Children with Special Needs](#) on facebook.

2. Get your child the particular kind of treatment and tools they need.

- ✓ If your child receives therapy at school they may also benefit from therapy outside of school (see back page for a list of local therapy providers or our [Resource Guide](#) for a full list).
- ✓ Get on the wait lists! Right now! If you don't, it will take even longer for your child to be seen!

3. Enroll your child with the [Developmental Disabilities Administration \(DDA\)](#)

DDA can provide lifelong support for children who are eligible for their services. DDA can help pay some costs of caring for your child, such as therapy and care providers. Call 714-5000 to get an eligibility packet. See our handouts on DDA at www.whatcomtakingaction.org.

4. Educate yourself -There is a lot to learn!

- ✓ Attend workshops at The [Arc of Whatcom County](#) and subscribe to their newsletter at www.arcwhatcom.org or call 360-715-0170 for more information.
- ✓ Check out the free lending libraries from [The Arc](#) and the [Autism Outreach Project](#).

I need a break! Where can I get some help?

- ✓ [Parent to Parent](#) has a list of Super Sitters that have extra training. Call 360-715-0170.
- ✓ [DDA](#) can provide Personal Care and Respite services for eligible clients (see above).
- ✓ [FACES Northwest](#) has a summer program for children with autism (call 360-389-2151). [Ray of Hope](#) is a camp for children with emotional and behavioral challenges (call 360-714-0700).
- ✓ Other camps, classes, and after-school programs may be a good fit for your child. Keep up to date with offerings from [Bellingham Parks & Recreation](#), [Special Olympics](#) and other groups.
- ✓ Check out Whatcom Taking Action's "[Respite Handout](#)" for more ideas.

How can I get help paying for my child's care?

- ✓ Medicaid - can help with the cost of therapies and other medical costs. Visit ParentHelp123.org or call the family health hotline at 1-800-322-2588 to find out if you qualify.
- ✓ DDA can help cover a variety of costs. (See Above)
- ✓ Social Security - can give financial help for children with disabilities (income based).
- ✓ [Medicaid Transportation](#) - can help cover the [cost of travel](#) to appointments.
- ✓ Some grants can help cover costs, including SISU Children's Fund and Ben's Fund.
- ✓ [Ershig Assistive Technology Resource Center](#) at WWU (360-650-2783) and [Bellingham Central Lion's Club](#) (360-733-4911) may help with specialized equipment your child may need.
- ✓ www.whatcomtakingaction.org has handouts on these and many other topics.

Check out our website and full [Resource Guide](#) at www.whatcomtakingaction.org

Treatments and Therapies

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

ABA is a method used to reduce challenging behaviors. ABA helps people acquire and improve many skills including language, attention, social awareness, self-help, and play. ABA is very effective for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and similar developmental disabilities. For more information on ABA see our [ABA Handout](#) on www.whatcomtakingaction.org.

Whatcom and Skagit County ABA providers:

[Bayside Autism](#)
425-429-4793

[Blue Water Behavioral Consulting](#)
360-499-3508

[Endless Potential, LLC](#)
360-930-6063

[Pacific Northwest Autism](#)
360-348-6414

[Sendan Center](#)
360-305-3275

For information on getting ABA covered by Medicaid and a list of covered providers:

[Medicaid Applied Behavioral Analysis \(ABA\) Therapy Program](#): 360-725-1681

Counseling, Family Therapy, or Psychotherapy

These types of therapies help to treat mental health issues like anxiety or ADHD and behavioral concerns. Family therapy can help both the child with autism and the whole family.

How do I find a counselor, family therapist, or psychotherapist?

- Ask your child's primary care provider for a referral.
- Contact your insurance company for an approved list of mental health providers.
- For children on Medicaid (Apple Health) contact the North Sound Mental Health Administration at (NSMHA) at 360-416-7013.
- [NAMI Whatcom](#) has an online directory of mental health providers as well as support groups and classes for parents. You can also contact them at 360-671-4950.

Medication

Medication may help manage mental health symptoms. Medication by itself does not work as well as medication combined with other therapies. Only certain types of providers can prescribe medication. Your doctor may be able to recommend a psychiatric provider or directly prescribe medication in consultation with a psychiatric provider.

SLP Speech/Language Pathologist

An SLP works to improve your child's ability to communicate. This could range from teaching a child to communicate with a pictures, gestures, words and sentences, to working with a group of teens on social skills. Some SLPs may also provide feeding therapy.

OT Occupational Therapist

An OT assists with in the development of motor skills used in daily living. The OT may focus on sensory issues, coordination of movement, and balance. Treatment might include self-help skills such as dressing, eating, or grooming. The OT helps to minimize the impact of disability.

PT Physical Therapist

Physical therapists use a variety of treatments to help build strength, improve movement, and strengthen skills needed to complete daily activities.

Whatcom Speech/Language (SLP), Occupational (OT), and Physical Therapy (PT) providers:

Bayside Autism 425-429-4793 SLP	Connections SLP 360-756-1495	Harmony Physical Therapy 360-441-6053 PT
Integrative Physical Therapy Services 360-715-8686 PT	Kornerstone Kids 360-752-1115 SLP OT PT	Pacific Kids Therapy 360-393-6210 OT
PeaceHealth Medical Group Children's Therapy 360-752-5622 SLP OT PT	Pediatric NDT and SI Therapy Services 360-398-2772 OT	
Sendan Center 360-305-3275 SLP	Washington Elks Therapy Program OT 800-825-3557	
Whatcom Physical Therapy PT 360-332-8167	WWU Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic SLP 360-650-3881	

For other provider types, check out our full [Resource Guide](#) at www.whatcomtakingaction.org