



Island County

Parent to Parent Newsletter

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

OCTOBER 2015

It is never too early to start thinking about the future

FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION AND EVENTS, LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



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islandcountyparent2parent

RESOURCE FAIR 2015

OAK HARBOR, COUPEVILLE, S. WHIDBEY SCHOOL DISTRICTS
Elementary * Middle * High School * Transition
STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

OCTOBER 13TH 4:30PM-6:30PM

OAK HARBOR HIGH SCHOOL

950 NW 2nd Ave, Oak Harbor

DINNER PROVIDED WITH PRE-REGISTRATION

Register for dinner by emailing dfesler@ohsd.net or mikeet@co.island.wa.us

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Come and talk to representatives of organizations, businesses, parents and students that can offer assistance with funding, services and activities and ideas that will enhance the life of persons who experience disability.

Here are a few organizations represented:

U of W Assistive Technology, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security Administration, Social Security Benefits Planning, Washington Vocational Services, Sherwood Community Services, Service Alternatives, Skagit Valley College, & More!



Don't miss the Transition Fair this year!! Even if you came last year!!

Connect with new organizations and representatives from agencies that can offer assistance with your life after high school!

Register for dinner by emailing:

Diane at dfesler@ohsd.net or Mike at mikeet@co.island.wa.us

Support Groups for Whidbey Island



PAMI Padres Apoyando Motivando Informando
(Grupo de apoyo para familias de niños con necesidades especiales)

Dia: Primer Martes de cada Mes Hora: 7:00-8:30 pm

Lugar: Oficina de Aptitude Habilitation Services
31955 SR 20, Suite #3, Oak Harbor WA

Aqui encontrarás información importante sobre

*Ayudas y recursos en la isla *Ideas y Actividades del mes

*Apoyo y Motivación para seguir adelante

Se provee cuidado de niños.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor comuníquese con:

Laiza Ramos (787)529-6788 or pamiespanol@gmail.com



Friends Helping Friends

A support group for any and all who are raising a child with special needs

Friends Helping Friends: Thursday, October 15th at 7:00pm

Located at Aptitude Habilitation Services in Oak Harbor. Childcare is provided, please contact Stephanie at smartin@aptitudeservices.com

Any other questions, contact Jaemee Witmer at Jaemee.frc@gmail.com



Parent Support Partnership

Want Support from Others who “get it”?

Are you concerned about your child’s physical, intellectual or emotional development? Are you worried about behaviors, mood swings, school success, social interactions or safety? Do you care for a child with special needs?

Please Join Us!

Childcare and Dinner Provided with RSVP

Where: South Whidbey Elementary Campus in the Family Resource Center

When: Second Tuesday Every Month: Oct 13, Nov 10, Dec 8th @6:00pm

Who: All Parents and Caregivers

Call (360)221-6808xt 4321 to RSVP or ask questions

WA State Yellow Dot Program



What is the Dot?

Yellow Dot program is a traffic safety initiative that provides *first responders with critical personal medical information* necessary to treat victims at the crash site. Because the first hour or the "golden hour," following an injury is the most crucial, this information can mean the difference between life and death.

Q. Where do I go for the Yellow dot?

A. You can download your medical information and order your Yellow Dot decal from www.wayelldot.com

Q. Are medical cards for adults only?

A. No, they are for anyone with a medical need. Information on the card can be beneficial to responders regardless of age.

Q. Where does the Yellow Dot go on my car?

A. Rear facing windshield, on the lower corner of the driver's side. Your medical information card goes in the glove department.

Q. Can I fill out a yellow medical card for passengers in my vehicle?

A. Absolutely. You should complete a yellow medical card for the driver(s) or passenger(s), especially if they have specific medical need (i.e medical allergy, diabetic, heart problems)

www.wayelldot.com email:sysop@wtsc.wa.gov



Local Special Needs Resources

Island County Parent to Parent Coordinator and Information Education Specialist

Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson (360)632-7539 t.wheeler-thompson@co.island.wa.us

Toddler Learning Center Early Intervention Services for Children Ages Birth-Three

Whidbey Island (360)679-1039 Camano Island (425)334-4071xt128

Fleet and Family Support at NAS Whidbey Island

Family Liaison Sheryl Prout (360)257-6289

Children with Special Health Care Needs Coordinator Ages Birth - 21

Loretta Bezold (360)678-7940

Developmental Disabilities Coordinator (Island County)

Island County: Mike Etzell (360)678-7883 Oak Harbor Outreach: Callie Richards (360)240-4727

Early Childhood Parent Support Program

Wendy Beagle & Brooke Partin-Falke (360)240-5517

Upcoming Events & Activities



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October 3-31st. Haunting of Coupeville. Corn Maze, Trolley Ride, Giant Pumpkin Contest, Halloween Torchlight Parade (Oct 24 5pm), Halloween Costume 5K & 1 Mile Run and Festival. Details visit www.hauntingofcoupeville.com (360)678-5434

October 16-31st Boys & Girls Club Frightville. The Annual Boys and Girls Club Haunted House. Regular Haunts Oct 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31. Times 7-11pm. \$10pp Twitching Hour Haunts 11-midnight \$15pp. Kids “lights on” matinee dates Oct 17, 24 & 31st from 12pm to 4pm. \$3pp Questions call (360)240-9273



Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

Harvest Party! October 15th 5-7pm

RSVP by Oct 9th (360)257-6289

Celebrate the beginning of fall with indoor fun, food and games.

Nor'Wester- San Juan Room Fleet and Family Support Center



Down Syndrome Family Gathering

November 7th at 11:30pm

Trinity Lutheran Church

18341 WA 525, Freeland 98249

Come and meet with other families that celebrate the extra chromosome on Whidbey Island. Potluck and activities. Questions call Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson (360)632-7539 or email t.wheeler-thompson@co.island.wa.us



Washington State Free Parks Day

November 11th

No Discover Pass Required

For up-to-date information, published articles, local events and activities like us on Facebook. www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent or get on our email list for newsletters. Contact Island County Parent to Parent Program at (360)632-7539 or t.wheeler-thompson@co.island.wa.us

Ongoing Events & Activities



Special Olympics

Looking for new athletes ages 8 and above. North end Bowling Season started at the end of September, not too late to join. Oak Bowl in Oak Harbor practice every Monday and Tuesday from 4-6pm. North end Basketball starts in December. Questions or to sign up, call Chris Becker (360)320-2549.

South end Basketball starts November 7th, contact Mike Etzell (360)678-7883

Keep an eye out for updates about spring sports. Cycling, swimming, etc.



Exploration for All: Autism Early Open. On the second Saturday of each month, through December 12th, all families affected by autism spectrum disorder are invited to explore Pacific Science Center during a special **FREE** morning visit from 8-10:00am.– before we open to the general public. Experiences our exhibits without heavy crowds when we have softened general lighting and decreased the noise level and visual stimulation on interactive exhibits wherever possible. **October 10th, November 14th and December 12th. Please call to verify dates and times. (206)443-2001**

Want to experience a family movie without worrying about what others might be thinking or saying about your kiddo that can't sit still, or isn't quiet. AMC Sensory Friendly Films are made just for you. You will be surrounded with families just like you. Kiddos are encouraged to sing along, move around and enjoy. Limited previews, dimmed lights and sound turned down for our sensory kiddos.



Cascade Mall Theater—Mount Vernon
All shows are at 10:00am, Dates & films are subject to change. Call ahead to verify (360) 707-2727

September 26th *Hotel Transylvania 2*

October 17th *The Jungle Book*

November 14th *The Peanuts Movie*

December 5th *The Good Dinosaur*

Special Swim for Special Kids at Oak Harbor Pool

The **second Saturday of the Month**, Oak Harbor Pool offers an open swim dedicated to special needs children and their families. The whole family is welcome to join in. Come and enjoy the pool and connect with other families.

Next Dates:	October 10th	\$3.00 per person
	November 14th	Active Duty- Free
	December 12th	(360)675-7665



DISCLAIMER: This event/activity is NOT being sponsored by the school district, and the district assumes no responsibility for the conduct or safety of the event/activity.

In consideration for the privilege to distribute these materials, the South Whidbey School District shall be held harmless from any cause of action, claim, or petition filed in any court or administrative tribunal arising out of the distribution of these materials, including all costs, attorney's fees, and judgements or awards.

The Difference Between IEPs and 504 Plans

Here is a basic list of the general differences. For a full list and laws, see www.understood.org

	IEP	504 Plan
Basic Description	A blueprint or plan for a child's special education experience at school.	A blueprint or plan for how a child will have access to learning at school
What it Des	Provides individualized special education and related services to meet the unique needs of the child. These services are provided at no cost to parents.	Provides services and changes to the learning environment to meet the needs of the child as adequately as other students. As with IEPs, a 504 Plan is provided at no cost to parents.
What Law Applies	The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) This is a federal special education law for children with disabilities.	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 This is a federal civil rights law to stop discrimination against people with disabilities.
Who is Eligible	To get an IEP, there are two requirements: 1. A child has one or more of the 13 specific disabilities listed in IDEA. Learning and attention issues apply. 2. The disability must affect the child's educational performance and/or ability to learn and benefit from the general education curriculum.	To get a 504 Plan, there are two requirements: 1. A child has any disability, which can include many learning or attention issues. 2. The disability must interfere with the child's ability to learn in a general education classroom. Section 504 has a broader definition of a disability than IDEA. That's why a child who doesn't qualify for an IEP might still be able to get a 504 Plan.
Independent Educational Evaluation	Parents can ask the school district to pay for an independent educational evaluation (IEE) by an outside expert. The district doesn't have to agree. Parents can always pay for an outside evaluation themselves, but the district may not give it much weight.	Doesn't allow parents to ask for an IEE. As with an IEP evaluation, parents can always pay for an outside evaluation themselves.
Who Creates the Program/Plan	There are strict legal requirements about who participates. An IEP is created by an IEP Team that must include: Parent, general ed teacher, special ed teacher, school psych, district rep with authority. With few exceptions, the entire team must be present for IEP meetings.	The rules about who's on the 504 team are less specific than they are for an IEP. The 504 Plan is created by a team of people who are familiar with the child and who understands the evaluation data and special services options. This might include: parent, general and special ed teachers and the school principal.
What's in the program	The IEP sets learning goals for a child and describes the services the school will give. Here are some of the important things and IEP must include: child's present level of academic and functional performance, annual education goals and tracking progress, the services the child will get, timing of services, accommodations to environment, modifications, standardized test participation, how the child will be included in general education classes and school activities.	There is no standard 504 Plan. Unlike and IEP, a 504 Plan doesn't have to be an annual written document. A 504 Plan generally includes the following: Specific accommodations, supports or services for the child, names of who will provide each services and name of the person responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented.

School Anxiety & Strategies that May Help



It's almost time for school. The bus will arrive any minute. Maybe today will be the day. But then you hear it: "Mom, I don't want to go to school."

Your heart sinks. Here we go again. Every day it's the same conversation. The same conversation that usually ends up in tears, missing the bus and late for school again. "You'll be fine, honey!:" you say cheerfully. "There's nothing to worry about!" But your words fall on deaf ears. Your child is fully convinced that everything will NOT be ok and that there are PLENTY of things to worry about. Sighing, you sit down on the couch, wracking your brain for something more helpful to say.

If your child struggles with anxiety, you know the challenge of finding the right things to say when he or she is worried. It's not easy to connect without making the fears worse, while at the same time offering support and encouragement.

Are you curious how to help calm an anxious child? Rather than telling your child "You'll be fine", or "Don't worry about it", try one of these phrases the next time your child is feeling worried:

1. I am here: You are safe. Anxiety has a way of making things look worse and feel scarier than when we are not worried. These words can offer comfort and safety when you child is feeling out of control, especially if they are at the height of their worry.

2. Tell me about it. Give your child room to talk about their fears without interrupting. Some children need to have time to process through their thoughts.

3. How big is your worry? Help your child verbalize the size of their worry and give you an accurate picture of how it feels to them.

4. What do you want to tell worry? Explain to your child that worry is like an annoying "worry bug" that hangs around telling them to be worried. Create a few phrases, then give them permission to talk back to this worry bug.

5. Can you draw it? *Many kids cannot express their emotions with words.* Encourage them to draw, paint or create their worries on paper.

6. Let's change the ending. Anxious children often feel stuck in the same pattern without a way out. Help them see different options by telling their story, but leaving off the ending. Then create a few new endings. Some can be silly, but at least one should be realistic for your child. Focus on your child conquering their fears with confidence.

7. What other things do you know about (fill in the blank)? Some children feel empowered when they have more information about their fear (especially things like tornados, bees, elevators, etc.) Grab a book, do a science experiment. How often does your fear happen? How do people feel safe?

8. Which calming strategy do you want to use? Work proactively to create a long list of *calming strategies* your child enjoys. Practice them during the day, at random times when your child feels calm.

9. I'm going to take a deep breath. In this case, use your self as the calming skill. Verbalize what you are doing and how it makes you feel.

10. It's scary AND..... Acknowledge your child's fear without making it even more frightening by using the word "AND".. After the word "and" you can add phrases like, "You are safe" or "You've conquered this fear before" or "You have a plan"

11. I can't wait to hear about it.... It's hard to see our kids suffer with worry. Many parents rush in to rescue their child from an anxiety-producing situation. Encourage your child that they will survive this difficult feeling by bringing up the topic to talk about when you're together later—what they did at recess, who they sat by at lunch, etc.

12. What do you need from me?

Instead of assuming that you know what your child needs, give them an opportunity to tell you what would help. Older kids may be able to verbalize if they need you to listen, give a hug, or help find a solution. If you can't do it, give them their wish in fantasy: "I wish grown ups could go to kindergarten too!"

13. This feeling will pass. This maybe a phrase you can both use when your child is at the height of panic. All feeling pass eventually. It often feels like they will never end, you won't make it through, or it's too hard. And that OK. Don't let your brain get stuck in the moment; focus on the relief that is on the horizon.



Anxiety and worry look different for every child. Not every one of these strategies will work for your kids. You are the expert on your child. If you try something and it makes their worries worse, don't panic. Just pick something from else from the list to try next time. Eventually, you will find a few phrases that are effective for sending a calm, encouraging and empowering message to your child.

"When worries get too big" is a great addition to add to any Library if you have a child who worries or is anxious. Engaging and easy to read, this illustrated children's book is filled with opportunities for children to participate in developing own self-calming strategies. Note: If you child's worries are impacting their school functioning, sleep or eating habits, or are negatively impacting their daily routine, seek support from a mental health professional.

*Article by Nicole Schwartz. Mom to 3 little girls, a licensed Therapist and Parent Coach.



Island County

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What is Parent to Parent?

Parent to Parent is a nationwide program that offers local supports and resources. Learning your child has special medical needs or a disability can be a traumatic experience. You may have questions or concerns regarding how to deal with your child's needs and/or your personal feelings. Parent to Parent offers emotional support, insight and understanding to parents who learn their child has special needs or whose child is going through a transitional period.

The Parent-to-Parent program provides information and referrals to community resources, services, support groups, state support programs, and others as well as events and support groups to bring families together and gain relationships.

Island County Parent to Parent is here your family.

www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent



October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month

Many communities raise funds and awareness for Trisomy 21 during the month of October with a Buddy Walk. You can register on their websites, or just show up and sign up. Great opportunity to meet other families.

Skagit County: October 10th The Skagit County Buddy Walk annual event takes place

from 10 AM to 12 PM in the YMCA Sport Center at Bakerview Park in Mt. Vernon, Washington. The event is a 1.25 mile walk to promote awareness and acceptance of people with Down Syndrome and other disabilities in our community. www.p2pskagit.org

Whatcom County: October 3rd "12th Annual Whatcom County Buddy Walk" 11am-2pm at Fairhaven Village Green. There will be a 1-mile walk in beautiful Fairhaven, and all ages and abilities are invited to participate. arcwhatcom.org

Seattle: October 4th 1-4PM Where: Seattle Center, Next 50 Plaza

The Buddy Walk® is open to everyone—from individuals with Down syndrome and their family members to those who know someone with Down syndrome to community members who simply want to show their support. www.downsyndromecommunity.org

November is Diabetes Awareness Month



American Diabetes Month® (ADM) is an important element in this effort of awareness. Here are just a few of the recent statistics on diabetes:

- Nearly 30 million children and adults in the United States have diabetes.
- Another 86 million Americans have prediabetes and are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.
- The American Diabetes Association estimates that the total national cost of diagnosed diabetes in the United States is \$245 billion.