



Island County

Parent to Parent Newsletter

SPRING 2016

Developmental Disabilities Life Opportunities Trust (Endowment Trust Fund or DDLOT)

Thursday, April 21st

11:30am– 1:00pm

Coupeville High School

Annex Room 305 (Enter Room from Outside Door)

Presenter: Angela Dirk

ARC of Washington

Everyone Welcome!! Free!!!

Brown Bag Lunch (BYOL)

A Developmental Disabilities Life Opportunities Trust (also known as the DD Endowment Trust Fund or DDLOT) allows individuals with developmental disabilities or their families to set aside funds for future use without affecting their eligibility for government services and benefits. Funds can be withdrawn from the trust and used for many services not covered by other benefits, including recreation, therapy, clothing and transportation.

Questions: Call Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson (360)632-7539

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What happens to Special Needs students after high school?

By Claudia Rowe, Seattle Times education reporter Originally published January 14, 2016

College enrollment rates among special-needs students have been flat for several years, while employment is ticking upward.

For decades the state has tracked what happens to its special-needs students after they leave high school. But to what end? What's reasonable to expect for the kids with autism, learning disabilities like dyslexia or difficulty regulating emotions?

Nationally, graduation rates for special education students vary widely — from 22.5 percent in Mississippi to 80.4 in neighboring Arkansas. As is true for many education outcomes in Washington, we fall right in the middle, at 54.5 percent for the 2012-13 school year.

Graduation rates for students with special needs vary widely between states. Credit: Education Week

But what about after graduation?

Washington polls its former special-needs students, and last month released the most recent results: Of 5,354 disabled youth who left high school in 2012-13 and responded to the state's survey, only 24 percent were enrolled in college one year later, a rate no better or worse than two years before.

Another 28 percent, about 1,500 students, reported that they were employed, which was a slight uptick from those with solid jobs in 2010-11.

But 35 percent, or nearly 2,000 young adults, were neither employed nor enrolled in school. More than 1,700 had dropped out prior to graduation.

Douglas Gill, the state's assistant superintendent for special education, characterized those figures as "maintenance" — neither a drastic regression nor anything to celebrate.

"We'd always like to see improvement to where only 5 percent of kids aren't engaged after high school, but I don't know how realistic that is," he said.

Washington public schools educate about 160,000 students who qualify for special services.

Gill said he's pushing for the rate of unenrolled-and-unemployed special-needs students to drop by 10 points in next year's survey. Increasing vocational education electives, he said, could make that happen.

"Employment is sort of the ultimate goal for all of us," he said, "and reading an instruction manual is a whole lot different than reading the Canterbury Tales."

tran·sition

-noun

movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another; change: the transition from adolescence to adulthood.



April 2nd is Autism Awareness Day

Early identification, diagnosis and intervention can make a significant difference. Autism can be reliably diagnosed by age 2. Yet, the average age of diagnosis is between ages 4 - 5. That's why raising awareness and understanding the signs of autism are so important. The earlier we can recognize the signs of autism and get support for our loved ones on the spectrum, the better outcomes they will experience throughout their lives.

Everyone has their own unique experience with autism. Autism is a spectrum condition, meaning it affects people in many different ways and in varying degrees. To ensure everyone receives the

care and supports they deserve, we must provide the scientific community with tools that will enable them to discover personalized treatments. Autism Speaks is committed to this effort through our groundbreaking MSSNG genomics program, which will lead to a better understanding of autism and new ways to treat its symptoms.

Autism is a lifelong condition. In fact, each year 50,000 children with autism transition to adulthood. Many of them are capable of going on to meaningful employment and living on their own. But they need more employment opportunities and housing and residential supports.

Autism Speaks continues to work with public and private partners to ensure people with autism successfully transition to adulthood.

Acceptance is the answer. Together we can make a difference in the lives of people with autism by accepting their many gifts and recognizing the challenges they can face. Autism currently affects 1 in 68 people -- these are our loved ones, friends and neighbors. We owe it to them on April 2, and every other day of the year, to make the world a more understanding place. **So let's Light It Up Blue together and shine a global spotlight on autism!**

What is Autism?

- Autism is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3
- Autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities
- Individuals with autism often suffer from numerous co-morbid medical conditions which may include: allergies, asthma, epilepsy, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, and more
- Autism is diagnosed four times more often in boys than girls. Its prevalence is not affected by race, region, or socio-economic status. Since autism was first diagnosed in the U.S. the incidence has climbed to an alarming one in 68 children in the U.S.
- Autism itself does not affect life expectancy, however research has shown that the mortality risk among individuals with autism is twice as high as the general population, in large part due to drowning and other accidents.

Currently there is no cure for autism, though with [early intervention and treatment](#), the diverse symptoms related to autism can be greatly improved and in some cases completely overcome.

- About 40% of children with autism do not speak. About 25%–30% of children with autism have some words at 12 to 18 months of age and then lose them. Others might speak, but not until later in childhood
- Autism greatly varies from person to person (no two people with autism are alike)
- The rate of autism has steadily grown over the last twenty years
- Comorbid conditions often associated with autism include Fragile X, allergies, asthma, epilepsy, bowel disease, gastrointestinal/digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, PANDAS, feeding disorders, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, ADHD, Tourette Syndrome, OCD, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, immune disorders, autoimmune disorders, and neuroinflammation.
- Children with autism do progress – early intervention is key

Autism is treatable, not a hopeless condition

Information provided by National Autism Association www.nationalautismassociation.org

Autism Wandering Bill Gets New Look



Did you know?
Kids with autism are up to
8x more likely to wander
from safety than other kids.

Many have no sense of danger, and
are drawn toward water or moving cars.
Many cannot speak or respond to their name.

**For kids with autism,
wandering often ends in tragedy.**

Card design by:
www.facebook.com/RamblingAutismMom

For more information on wandering:
www.awaare.org

A revamped approach to federal legislation aimed at addressing the needs of kids with autism and other developmental disabilities who wander is garnering bipartisan support.

Two years after U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., originally [proposed](#) a bill to establish federal resources related to kids with disabilities who wander, aides say that the senator has reached an agreement to get the legislation off the ground.

Originally, Schumer sought \$10 million in federal funds for a new U.S. Department of Justice program that would provide free electronic tracking devices for children with autism and other developmental disabilities who are prone to bolting.

That goal is pared down somewhat under the revised bill introduced this month by Schumer and U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa.

The current [proposal](#) dubbed Kevin and Avonte's Law calls for tracking devices for children with autism and other developmental disabilities to be made available through a reauthorization of an existing federal program designed to help those with Alzheimer's disease who are at risk of wandering.

Under the bill, the Justice Department would distribute grants to state and local law enforcement agencies to pay for training, tracking devices and other efforts to help keep individuals with disabilities or Alzheimer's disease safe.

The senators are seeking \$2 million for the combined program. That's an increase over the \$750,000 in federal funds allocated to address wandering among those with Alzheimer's in 2015, but far less than the \$10 million that Schumer initially wanted.

Securing Grassley's support, however, is seen as key because the Republican chairs the Senate judiciary committee, which would hear the bill.

"We must move rapidly to implement the potentially life-saving precautions like voluntary tracking devices that will protect our precious children," Schumer said in a statement to Disability Scoop. "This technology will allow parents of all children with autism, no matter their means, to use the benefits of a high-tech solution to an age-old problem."

Study: Wandering A “Pervasive Problem” for Kids with Disabilities

by Michelle Diamant | February 11, 2016

Wandering is a significant issue for children with developmental disabilities, with a new study estimating that more than 1 in 4 kids with autism, intellectual disability or developmental delay eloped in the last year alone. (Thinkstock)

More than a quarter of children with developmental disabilities wander away from safe environments each year, a new study suggests, and those with autism appear to be at greatest risk.

The findings published this month in the journal PLOS ONE come from what’s being called the broadest study yet looking at the prevalence of elopement among school-age children across the country.

Researchers assessed data from a 2011 survey conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of parents and guardians of more than 4,000 kids ages 6 to 17 with special health care needs.

In total, 26.7 percent of parents whose children had a current diagnosis of autism, intellectual disability or developmental delay said that their child had wandered away from a safe place in the last year.

Researchers found that children with autism were most likely to wander, with parents reporting that about 1 in 3 on the spectrum had done so in the previous 12 months. And, kids ages 6 to 11 were at higher risk than those ages 12 to 17, the study found.

“Wandering has become a greater concern,” said Andrew Adesman, chief of developmental pediatrics at Cohen Children’s Medical Center of New York and a senior investigator for the study. “Not only does it pose a significant risk to the safety and well-being of children with developmental disabilities, but fear of wandering can be a daily source of stress and anxiety for parents of affected children.”

Overall, Adesman and his colleagues concluded that wandering is a “pervasive problem” for U.S. children with developmental disabilities.

In most cases, children bolted while in a public place, though parents also reported a significant number of cases where kids eloped from a home or a structured program.

Kids with a history of bolting shared several characteristics that put them at risk, researchers said. These children were less likely than others to realize they were in danger or to distinguish familiar faces from strangers. Kids who eloped also tended to display sudden mood changes, get angry quickly or overreact and they were more prone to panicking in new situations.

“The kids who are most likely to wander are the kids who are least likely to respond appropriately to police or rescue personnel – potentially further jeopardizing their safety,” Adesman said. “First responders need to recognize that children or young adults with an autism spectrum disorder may overreact to some well-intentioned interventions and may be unresponsive to simple commands or questions.”

49% of children with ASD elope from a safe environment

More than 1/3 of children with ASD cannot communicate their name, address or phone number

91% of deaths related to wandering caused by drowning

Events & Activities

Developmental Disabilities Life Opportunities Trust (Endowment Trust Fund or DDLOT) - April 21st Coupeville High School Presentation by Angela Dirk from ARC of Washington. 11:30am-1pm at Coupeville High School. Annex Room 305, Access from outside of building. Brown bag lunch. Free! All Island County Families Welcome. Questions? Call Tiffany (360)632-7539

EFMP—Informational Social: Picky Eaters? - April 20 for information contact Sheryl Prout at EFMP sheryl.prout@gmail.com or (360)257-5266

Infant and Early Childhood Conference—May 4-6 Tacoma Convention Center

Conference Goals: Challenge thinking about diversity and disability; Increase family and provider effectiveness through new skills, strategies and ideas for providing high quality services; Enhance understanding of unique strengths and needs of each family; Foster partnerships across families, disciplines, agencies and funders to provide coordinated services in local communities; Promote networking and coalition building around early childhood issues; Enhance the lives of families and their children through the use of information and technology; and Promote the mutual understanding of the contributions families and providers bring to the lives of young children. For information, email Tracy Ulrich tracyulrich@frontier.com

Community Summit—June 14-16—Wenatchee Convention Center An exciting opportunity to learn from experts, network and build local communities into better places to live and work.

Washington State Father's Network Campout—June 17-19, 2016 Washington Park 6300 Sunset Ave, Anacortes, WA 98221. Fun for the whole family, for the weekend or just for the day. For more details, give Mike Etzell a call (360)678-7883

Upcoming Events: Resource Fair at Coupeville High School October 4th

Sib Shops will start this Fall—Supports for siblings with special needs

Future Planning: Guardianship and Special Needs Trusts Workshops this fall



Exploration for All: Autism Early Open at Pacific Science Center. On the second Saturday of each month, through December 2016, all families affected by autism spectrum disorder are invited to explore Pacific Science Center during a special **free** morning visit from 8-10 a.m. – before we open to the public. Experience our exhibits without heavy crowds when we have softened general lighting and decreased the noise level and visual stimulation on interactive exhibits wherever possible. **April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9 and August 13**



Sensory Friendly Films: We turn the lights up and sound down, so you can feel free to be you at these unique showings for people living with autism or other special needs.

LOEWS Cascade Mall 14 Movie Theater offers the following movies:

Batman vs Superman: Dawn of Justice— Saturday, April 9 at 10am and Tuesday, April 12 at 7pm

Jungle Book—Saturday, April 23 at 10am

Captain America: Civil War—Tuesday, May 10 at 7pm and Saturday, May 14 at 10am

Alice Through The Looking Glass—Saturday, May 28 at 10am

Call to verify date, time and movie (360)707-2727

People First of Washington



The purpose of People First of Washington is “to assist people to realize and appreciate that we are “people first” and our disabilities are secondary. We are equal citizens in our communities.

People First is for adults with Disabilities that want to meet others in their community.

When: 1st Thursday of the month. For Location, call Mike Etzell (360)678-7883

Friends Helping Friends



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

When: Third Thursday of the Month, April 21st, 7:00-8:30pm,
Starting in May, the new time will be 6-7:30pm, May 19th June 16th

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

Questions and to verify date and time, contact Jaemee Witmer at jaemee.w@tlcwhidbey.org

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! **FREE** Childcare and Dinner with RSVP

Where: [South Whidbey Elementary Campus in the Family Resource Center](#)

When: Second Tuesday Every Month: March 8th, April 12th, May 10th, June 14th @6:00pm

Who: All Parents and Caregivers Call (360)221-6808xt 4321 to RSVP or ask questions

PAMI Padres Apoyando Motivando Informando

(Grupo de apoyo para familias de niños con necesidades especiales)

Día: 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

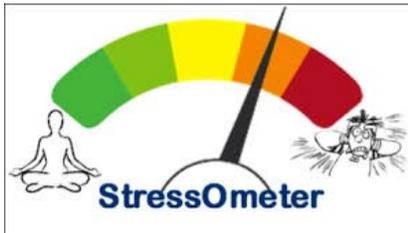


Aquí encontrarás información importante sobre, *Ayudas y recursos en la isla *Ideas y Actividades del mes *Apoyo y Motivación para seguir Adelante,

Se provee cuidado de niños. Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor comuníquese con: Laiza Ramos (787)529-6788 or pamiespanol@gmail.com

Seven Types of Self-Care Activities for Coping with Stress

Try these simple self-care activities to cope with stress, Barbara Markway Ph.D.



When we're stressed, self-care is often the first thing to go.

Why is this?

1. Our brains go into fight-or-flight mode and our perspective narrows. We don't see we have options—options for coping with stress and making ourselves feel better.
2. We're so busy trying to solve problems that we're stuck in "doing mode"—trying to get more and more done—when switching to "being mode" may be just the break we need.
3. We may not have a "go to" list of self-care activities(link is external). Self-care has to become a habit, so that when we're dealing with stress, we remember that, "Hey, I need to take care of myself in this situation." And, you need a variety of activities to try—if one doesn't work, you can switch to another. Like my Self-Compassion Facebook page (link is external) for daily self-care inspiration!

Fortunately, there are several pathways to self-care, and none of them need be difficult or take a lot of planning:

SENSORY

When you feel stressed and need a calm mind, try focusing on the sensations around you—sights, smells, sounds, tastes, touch... This will help you focus on the present moment, giving you a break from your worries.

Breathe in fresh air

Snuggle under a cozy blanket, cuddle with a pet

Listen to running water

Sit outdoors by a fire-pit, watching the flames and listening to the night sounds

Take a hot shower or a warm bath

Get a massage

Pay attention to your breathing

Wiggle your bare feet in overgrown grass

Stare up at the sky

Lie down where the afternoon sun streams in a window

Listen to music

PLEASURE

A great way to take care of yourself when you're coping with stress is to engage in a pleasurable activity. Try one of these ideas.

Take yourself out to eat

Be a tourist in your own city

Garden

Watch a movie

Make art. Do a craft project

Journal

Walk your dogs

Go for a photo walk

"Self-Compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we give to others"

Christopher Germer

MENTAL/MASTERY

You can also give yourself a boost by doing a task that you've been avoiding or challenging your brain in a novel way.

Clean out a junk drawer or a closet

Take action (one small step) on something you've been avoiding

Try a new activity

Drive to a new place

Make a list

Immerse yourself in a crossword puzzle, Do a word search

Read something on a topic you wouldn't normally



SPIRITUAL

Getting in touch with your values—what really matters—is a sure way to cope with stress and foster a calm mind. Activities that people define as spiritual are very personal. Here are a few ideas:

Attend church, pray

Light a candle

Write in a journal

List five things you're grateful for

Read poetry or inspiring quotes

Meditate

Spend time in nature

EMOTIONAL

Dealing with our emotions can be challenging when we're coping with stress. We tend to label emotions as "good" or "bad," but this isn't helpful. Instead:

Accept your feelings. They're all ok. Really

Write your feelings down.

Cry when you need to, Laugh when you can

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love"

Mother Teresa

PHYSICAL

Coping with stress by engaging the body is great because you can bypass a lot of unhelpful mental chatter. It's hard to feel stressed when you're doing one of these self-care activities:

Try yoga

Go for a walk or a run, Go for a bike ride

Dance, Stretch

Don't skip sleep to get things done, take a nap.

SOCIAL

Connecting with others is an important part of self-care. This can mean activities such as:

Go on a lunch date with a good friend , Calling a friend on the phone

Participating in a book club

Joining a support group, Whidbey Island Support Groups listed on page 7

It can also mean remembering that others go through similar experiences and difficulties as we do.

We're not alone. Simply acknowledging that we're all part of this human experience can lessen isolation and lead to a calm mind. That's the best self-care strategy I know.

Friends Helping Friends Support Group

May Topic : Self Care

Presented by: Constance Mollerstuen from Positively Linked

A Support Group for any and all who are raising a child with special needs

Every Third Thursday of the Month—April 21st (Autism), May 19th (Self Care) , June 16th (Music Therapy)

Aptitude Habilitation Services Office Oak Harbor 7:00-8:30pm in April.

6-7:30pm (NOTICE NEW TIME Starting May!)

Childcare provided, please contact Stephanie smartin@aptitudeservices.com

Questions: Jaemee.w@tlcwhidbey.org or join Facebook page at Whidbey Island Friends Helping Friends





Island County Parent to Parent
Human Services
PO Box 5000
Coupeville, WA 98239

Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson
(360)632-7539
t.wheeler-thompson@co.island.wa.us
www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent

For Up-To-Date Information:
Visit our new website under Island County
Human Services/Parent to Parent
**[https://www.islandcountywa.gov/
Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx)**

Another Great Way to keep informed is to
join our Facebook Page at
**[https://www.facebook.com/
islandcountyparent2parent/](https://www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent/)**



Free Developmental Screenings Ages Birth to 3 Years Old

Toddler Learning Center provides therapy, education, and parent support for children 0-36 months with developmental delays on Whidbey Island. TLC's therapy, educational, and parent support services are provided in the home. Therapists and teachers support parents and caregivers in implementing therapeutic practices into daily routines facilitating a child's development. North & Central Whidbey - 360-679-1039 South Whidbey - 360-221-6808 x4420 www.tlcwhidbey.org

Free Preschool Screenings for Developmental Delay Ages 3-5 Years Old

South Whidbey School District—Free Child Development Screening Day – April 21 Preschool Age (3 – 5 years)

Contact Marie prior to April 18th, @ 360-221-6808 ext. 2206 to set up an appointment.. If you would like your name on a list to be contacted about future dates, please call Marie at 221-6808 ext. 2206.

Screening days will be posted on the school website under Special Education.

Oak Harbor School District—Free Child Development Screening Day—April 15th Ages (3-5) Call (360)279-5928 to schedule an appointment.

We'll give your child the skills they need to learn and thrive. If your child is eligible, this free preschool program is what you've been waiting for.

Friday, June 3, 2016 Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Center in Oak Harbor. Call 360.279.5928 for your free appointment.

To be eligible, your child must be: Age four by September 1, 2016, Not currently enrolled in a preschool program, Space is limited, so call today!

Coupeville School District –3rd Friday of every month at 9, 10 or 11am. Contact Amy Bishop, Secretary for Special Services (360)678-2472 to set up your appointment.

Stanwood/Camano Island School District —Call (360)629-1236 to set up a time or ask questions.