



Skagit County Parent to Parent

Family Links

A newsletter for parents who have children with special needs



Is Your Family Prepared for the Pandemic Flu?

How prepared were you this November when the Skagit River swelled above flood stage? Or when an early winter snowstorm closed schools and businesses for several days? Now, imagine if Skagit County is hit with "pandemic flu." Experts say pandemic flu is inevitable—it is just a matter of when.

Did you know there are things that you can do NOW to prepare your family for pandemic flu? Don't wait until it is too late, especially if you have a child with special health care needs.

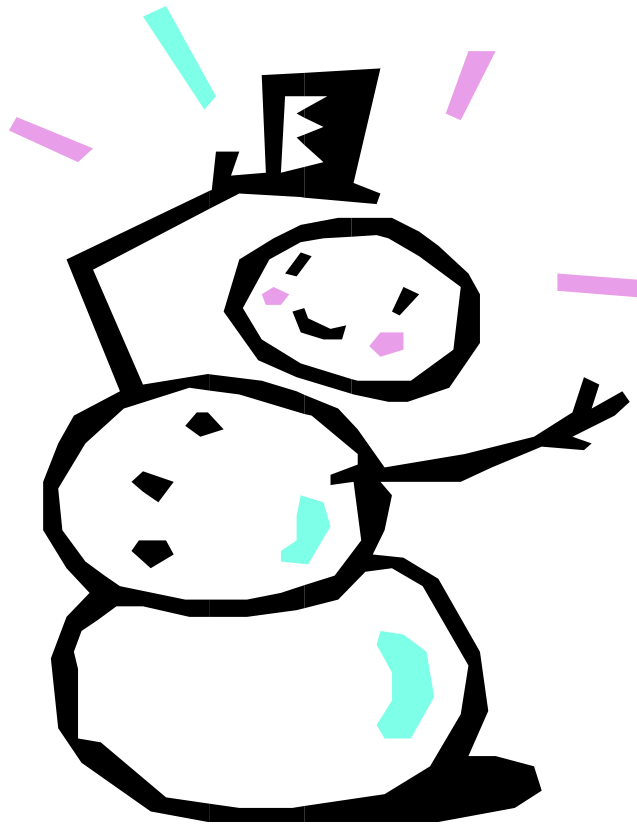
To prepare, check out these websites for the supplies you should have on hand:

www.skagitcounty.net

www.pandemicflu.gov

www.beprepared.com

www.redcross.org



**For more information contact
Donna Smith, Skagit County Public Health RN
& Local Emergency Response Coordinator at
360.419.3310 or dsmith@co.skagit.wa.us**

Hispanic Outreach Specialist HIRED!

It is with much excitement and enthusiasm that Skagit County Parent to Parent announces Alma Garibay as our new Hispanic Outreach Specialist. Alma brings to this position a wealth of

knowledge of local resources and a desire to support and nurture Hispanic parents raising children with special needs. We'll keep you posted on all of the wonderful events we plan to offer.

To reach Alma at Skagit County Padre a Padre call 416.7570 x414 or e-mail hispanicp2p@sparckids.org

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Parent to Parent Mission Statement:

- Parent to Parent programs offer emotional support and information about disabilities and community resources to parents who have a newborn or newly diagnosed child with a disability or special health care need.
- We utilize trained, veteran parents called "Helping Parents" who provide one-on-one support to new or referred parents who have a child with similar needs.

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Parent to Parent Services

Learning that your child has special needs can be a life changing experience. Parents have many questions and concerns in coping with their child's needs and their own feelings.

Personal support from another parent, who has a child with similar needs can be helpful in coping with these challenging experiences and feelings.

Parent to Parent is a network of trained "Helping Parent" volunteers, all of whom have children with special needs. They are available to provide support and information. All services are available at no cost to special needs families.

Please call Heather Milliren, Coordinator, for more resources or information on our services.



**Skagit County
Parent to Parent
360.416.7570 x401**

Parent to Parent offers:

- ◆ Emotional support for parents of children with special needs through our local, state or nationwide matching network.
- ◆ Current information and community resources on special needs for the child and family.
- ◆ Monthly parent support meetings, social events and/or educational workshops.
- ◆ Quarterly newsletters
- ◆ Presentations to parent groups, professionals and other organizations.
- ◆ Lending library located in the SPARC conference room at 320 Pacific Place, Mt. Vernon.
- ◆ Training for parents who want to become a "Helping Parent" volunteer.

P2P Partners

Skagit County Parent to Parent extends a heartfelt thanks to the following agencies for their on going financial support.

**Skagit Preschool &
Resource Center (SPARC)**

Washington State P2P

**Division of Developmental
Disabilities (DDD)**

**Skagit County Human
Services/Developmental
Disabilities (DD)**

**Department of Health's
Children w/Special Health
Care Needs (CSHCN)**

**Office of the Superintendent
for Public Instruction (OSPI)**

Northwest Children's Fund

***Joy shared is doubled.
Grief shared is halved.***

***Thank you to our newly trained
"Helping Parents"***

∞ Jacque Bridge

∞ Cully Taggart

**Contact us if you would like to
become a "Helping Parent"
volunteer.**



Skagit County Parent to Parent 2007 Calendar

Down Syndrome Family Potlucks

Tuesday, January 2, 2007

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Saturday, May 5, 2007 ~Mexican Style~

6:00 to 8:00 PM

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Please bring a potluck dish to share.

Autism Parent Luncheons

Saturday, January 6, 2007

Saturday, March 3, 2007

Saturday, May 5, 2007

Saturday, July 7, 2007

Saturday, September 1, 2007

Saturday, November 3, 2007

12:00 to 2:00 PM (Adults only!)

► Facilitated by Cynthia Hubert

Bring your own lunch! No children, please!!!!

Events Location:

Skagit Family Resource Center
320 Pacific Place, Mt. Vernon
(across from Riverside Health Club)
unless otherwise noted.

Limited childcare and Spanish
translation provided with a minimum
48 hours notice to 360.416.7570 x401

February

Tuesday, February 6, 2007

6:00 to 9:00 PM (MEN only!)

► “Dad’s Night Out” Facilitated by Bryan Milliren

Riverside Lanes in Mt. Vernon

*Need a chance to regroup. Join us for some fun!
See page 8 for more details.*

March

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

6:00 to 9:00 PM (WOMEN only!)

► “Mom’s Night Out” Facilitated by Heather Milliren

* Eagle Room at the Burlington Hampton Inn*

*Join us for some pampering and munchies.
Limited space—RSVP by 2/10.
See page 8 for more details.*

April

Tuesday, April 10, 2007

10 AM to 5 PM

► Skagit Children’s Museum—FREE!

419 South 1st Street, Mt. Vernon

June

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

7:00 to 8:30 PM

► “Division of Vocational Rehabilitation”

*What is DVR? How can my child benefit from DVR?
Come and learn the in’s and out’s about DVR.*

More events to follow. . .

P2P & Skagit County Human Services present "Family Education Workshops Series"

Topics you want to know about as your son or daughter
with a developmental disability leaves school in transition to adulthood.

LOCATION: Skagit Family Resource Center
320 Pacific Place, Mt. Vernon (across from Riverside Health Club)

<p>April 3, 2007 6:00 to 7:30 PM</p> <p>"What About My Son or Daughter?"</p> <p><i>Employment for Everyone Including Youth with Significant Disabilities</i></p> <p>Guest presenter: Marsha Threlkeld, WISE</p>	<p>April 10, 2007 6:00 to 7:30 PM</p> <p>"Families as Effective Partners with Adult Service Providers"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The history & language</i> • <i>Advocating & communicating</i> • <i>Expectations</i> • <i>Key differences between K-12 and adult services</i> <p>Andrea Abrahamson, WPAS</p>	<p>April 17 & 24, 2007 6:00 to 7:30 PM</p> <p>"Positive Relationships"</p> <p><i>Topics covered: safety, appropriate boundary setting, self-determination, intimacy and communication.</i></p> <p>Youth are encouraged to attend on 4/17</p> <p>Guest presenter: Rick Pribbernow, Compass</p>
<p>May 1, 2007 6:00 to 7:30 PM</p> <p>"SSI and Medicaid"</p> <p><i>Learn from a leading expert in Washington State about effective use of Social Securities Benefits and Programs.</i></p> <p>Guest presenter: Susan Harrell, WISE</p>	<p>May 8, 2007 6:00 to 7:30 PM</p> <p>"Self-Advocacy"</p> <p><i>Knowing your rights and having the skills to stand up for them. Ideas to help you and your family member develop self determination skills.</i></p> <p>Youth are encouraged to attend!</p> <p>Andrea Abrahamson, WPAS</p>	<p>May 15, 2007 6:00 to 7:30 PM</p> <p>"Show Me the Money: Financial Planning for Families"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guardianships</i> • <i>Trusts</i> • <i>Letters of intent</i> • <i>Special areas of financial interest to families</i> <p>Larry Jones, Attorney</p>

REGISTRATION is REQUIRED.

Please call Malinda Bjaaland at 360.336.9395 or e-mail at malindab@co.skagit.wa.us to register.

Limited childcare and Spanish translation available with a TWO WEEK notice.



Upcoming Workshops

“Calming Ourselves in Stressful Moments”

A free workshop about calming young children ages 3-7

January 27, 2007

9 AM to 1 PM

Cascade Room

Skagit Valley Hospital

**Call 360.588.8229 or
360.856.9049 to RSVP**

College Goal Sunday Washington

January 28, 2007

2 PM

Everett Community College

A free, on-site program to help students and their families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for higher education. Call 206.706.5979 for more info.

Positive Behavior Support Using Functional Assessment to Design Positive Behavior Support Plans

January 31, 2007

12:30 to 4:30 PM

(bring your own lunch)

DDD Region 3 Office

840 N. Broadway, Everett

**Contact Kristin Ihrig at
425.339.4828 or
ihrigkr@dshs.wa.gov**

Upcoming Conferences

“Resiliency”

**You Are the Expert/
ADHD Conference**

March 9 & 10, 2007

Convention Center

Lynnwood, WA

Learn about laws and law changes, behavior, advocacy and self-advocacy, effective IEPs, self-care, Birth to Three services, ADHD, transition and much, much more.

**Cost: \$75 pp includes meals
Call 800.572.7368 or
www.washingtonpave.org**

“Connections”

**Early Childhood
Conference**

March 17, 2007

Skagit Valley College

Choose from over 45 workshops on early childhood issues for parents and professionals.

Visit

**www.connectionsconference.org
or contact Tracy Ulrich
tracyulrich@verizon.net or
360.629.8181 for more details.**

Limited scholarships available.

Infant & Early Childhood Conference

May 2-4, 2007

Meydenbauer Center

Bellevue, WA

**Visit www.ieccwa.org or
contact Tracy Ulrich
tracyulrich@verizon.net**

**or 360.629.8181
for more details.**

**Scholarships available through
PAVE 800.572.7368**

“SPARC Your Engines” Dinner & Auction

5th Annual

“SPARC Your Engines”

Dinner & Auction

Saturday, March 10, 2007

5 to 10:30 PM

Skagit Valley Casino

\$60/per person

*(filet mignon or
sugar and seared salmon)*



...SPARC...

**serving children with
special needs and their
families for over 43 years**

**To purchase your tickets,
please call
360.416.7570**



Be Your Child's Health Care Advocate

1. **You're the expert when it comes to your child.** If you suspect a health problem, speak up. Ask questions and pursue answers until you're satisfied.
2. **Your doctor works for you.** If your doctor won't listen to or explore your concerns, find another doctor who will. Ask for referrals from friends and talk to potential doctors by phone. A brief conversation will give you a sense of their availability and communication style. If you're satisfied with your doctor, but don't agree with his diagnosis of your child be sure and get a second opinion.
3. **Be an active participant in discussions** about your child's medical evaluations. Ask why a test or procedure is necessary, what the results will indicate, and when they will be available.
4. **When finding help for a child** with significant health or developmental issues, the "what ifs" can ruin your life: What if we'd begun therapy sooner? What if we'd had this teacher instead of that one? Make your decisions based on the knowledge available to you now. Research through the Internet, friends, and organizations connected with your child's needs



to broaden your base of knowledge, but don't waste time feeling guilty about what you haven't done.

5. **After you have a diagnosis, connect** as soon as possible with an organization related to it for support and information. The Parent to Parent USA network (www.p2pusa.org) connects parents of newly diagnosed children with trained and experienced veteran parents. Another useful resource is the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (www.nichcy.org)

Source: July/August 2005 Mumsense magazine published by MOPS International.

Curious about Sign Language?

- There are many different sign languages in the world. Each country has its own. In the United States, [many] people use American Sign Language, but someone who uses ASL may not understand Japanese Sign Language or Italian Sign Language, just like people who speak English may not understand Japanese or Italian.
- ASL is a language just like any other. It has its own words and its own grammar. The word order in ASL is different from English. In ASL, "What is your

name?" would be signed this way: "Your name what?"

- You can spell any word with the manual alphabet, also known as finger spelling. In finger spelling, there is one sign for each letter of the alphabet. Use finger spelling for proper names, place names, or anything else you don't know the sign for.
- Facial expressions and body language are very important parts of signing. Not using your face or body while sign-

ing is like using a robot voice all the time—boring! So remember to use your face and body!

Source: <http://pbskids.org/arthur/print/signdesign>

For more information on local sign language classes contact Skagit Valley Community College or Joel at Bellingham's Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center (360.647.0910)

Autism Parent Support Luncheons *Facilitated by Cindy Hubert*

Dates: Saturdays
 January 6, 2007
 March 3, 2007
 May 5, 2007
 July 7, 2007
 September 1, 2007
 November 3, 2007

Times: 12 to 2 PM

Location: Skagit Family Resource Center
 320 Pacific Place, Mt. Vernon

Bring your own lunch!
Adults only please!!!!



Autism Outreach Project Courses & lending library
Call 888.704.9633 or
www.esd189.org/autism



Assistive Technology

Submitted by Holly Guttu, OTR/L, MED

More than ever before, technology makes it possible for children with disabilities to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Parents may have seen or heard about this type of technology and wondered how it might help their children. This equipment is frequently called "assistive technology." Assistive Technology (AT) helps a person with a disability do something s/he otherwise cannot do. AT can be anything from a simple device, such as a magnifying glass, to a complex device, such as a computerized communication system. AT includes both the *devices* and the *services* needed to use the devices effectively. *AT services* might include assessing a child's need for AT and the *training* a child and his teacher, aide and family need to use the AT.

How can assistive technology help my child? The potential of technology to help children with disabilities is tremendous. Assistive technology can help children be more self-sufficient at home and in school, communicate with friends and family, get out into the community and as they grow older, find employment.

How do I find out if AT can help my child? The best place to begin is talking with your child's teacher, Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist or Physical Therapist. There may be low tech devices and strategies that are already being used in the classroom or in therapy, which could expand to the home and community. Discussion about AT can also occur at your child's IFSP/IEP meeting. According to IDEA 2004, the AT needs of your child must be "considered" as part of the IEP process.

The term "assistive technology" may not appear on the IEP forms used by your child's school. Instead, the form may use terms such as "accommodations, supports, program modifications or supplementary aids and services." Although there is no single approach to considering your child's AT needs, one approach the IEP team might follow is:

◇**Communication:** *voice output devices, communication boards, picture schedules.*

◇**Adaptive Seating and Environmental Control**

◇**Transition:** *work, school to work, electronic organizers.*

For more information visit:

<http://www.fctd.info/>

A Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology is available to download from their website. It contains information on funding sources, tips from parents who have children using AT, examples of devices, definitions of frequently used terms and additional resources for learning more about AT.

Information in this article taken and adapted from the Family Center on Technology and Disabilities' Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology.

AT Resources in Washington State

Each of the sites listed below offer a range of resources. The information provided here is posted on their websites. A Google search will help you locate more AT services in the state. The sites listed are for informational purposes only.

Deaf Web of Washington

www.deafweb.org/assist.htm

Information about phone amplifiers, video relay services, computer and software resources, cochlear implants, sign language fonts, etc.

DO-IT U of W

www.washington.edu/doit/

Video presentations, publications, universal design for learning and access information.

Special Education Tech Center Central WA University

www.cwu.edu/~setc/

Lending library to schools, workshops, newsletter tips and strategies for using technology.

Washington AT Act Program

<http://watap.org>

Quarterly bulletins, loan programs, funding information and discussion groups.

Washington Talking Books and Braille Library

<http://www.wtbbl.org/>

Serving children and adults. Currently only for Seattle residents, however, will be open to others in the state in July 2008.

Washington State School for the Blind

www.wssb.org/

StatewideTechnologyServices.asp
Accessible software, Braille activities, orientation and mobility activities, lending library, resource list, etc.

AT on the IEP

Points to consider:

- ◆ Best Practice recommends documenting the decision making process used to consider the need for AT. This could include analyzing the tasks required in a skill or instructional area, the child's current level of performance, and recommendations for the type of access needed in order to complete the task.
- ◆ IDEA 2004 does not specifically state where AT should be documented in the IEP. (www.natri.uky.edu)
- ◆ When AT services and/or devices are included in the IEP this is at no additional cost to the child or family.
- ◆ Lack of availability of equipment or cost alone cannot be used as an excuse for not providing AT services. (Taken from www.Idonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/at-iep.html)

Learn more on line at www.gpat.org



Skagit County Parent to Parent
 c/o SPARC
 320 Pacific Place
 Mt. Vernon WA 98273
 Phone: 360.416.7570 ext 401
 Fax: 360.416.7580
 Email: p2p@sparckids.org

Non-Profit Org
 US Postage PAID
 Permit No. 9
 Mt. Vernon, WA

Support for parents whose children have special needs

Dad's Night Out!



Tuesday, February 6, 2007
6 to 9 PM
Riverside Bowling Lanes,
Mt. Vernon

Facilitated by Bryan Milliren

For: Dads, uncles, grandfathers or male caregivers of a child with special needs.

*Join us for a time of fun and fellowship.
 Don't bowl?
 Come anyway and simply have a good time.*

Cost: Shoe rental/game fees

Look for the P2P balloons!

Mom's Night Out!



Tuesday, March 6, 2007
6 to 9 PM
Eagle Room~Hampton Inn,
Burlington

Facilitated by Heather Milliren

For: Moms, aunts, grandmothers or female caregivers of a child with special needs.

Need some pampering? Then join us for paraffin hand treatments, facials, note card making and delicious munchies.

Cost: Free! *Spa products available for purchase.*

Limited space—RSVP by 2/10