

Ways for Families of Kids with Special Needs to get a break in Whatcom County

It is a necessity-not a luxury-to take a break from time to time. When you take a break to **recharge**, you will be able to give more and enjoy doing it. And your child will benefit as well. They can form new friendships, experience new environments or people, and have fun. When your child has a special need, handing over responsibility can be a challenge, below are some suggestions and options.

Before you decide what type of care is best for you and your family, assess your funding options:

Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA): If you are a DDA client, you may be eligible for state funding '**respite**' services. These services can be in your home or community setting and can be daily, weekly or for a set amount of time. Work with your case manager to determine program eligibility and options. Learn more [here](#).

Medicaid: If you have Medicaid, and your child needs **assistance with personal care**, you may be eligible for additional assistance. Contact your DDA provider and ask about the Community First Choice (CFC) Program at 360-714-5000. Learn more [here](#).

Community Support: **Lifespan Washington** provides 'respite vouchers' to Washington families who don't have access to funding through other program can be used with contracted agencies.

Private Pay: Private pay options provide greater flexibility but many families may be eligible for Medicaid or other community supports as well.

Depending on funding, and needs, your options vary. Care can be in different locations including:

- **In Home Care:** A care giver that comes to your home for a few hours daily, weekly or as needed. Services can last from a few hours to overnight, and may be arranged directly or through an agency.
- **Out of Home Care:**
 - **At a community organization/camp/facility:** Drop off programs that provide activities or care
 - **In the community:** Daily or weekly programs offered by **community based organizations**

Another option is when families of children with special needs take turns watching each other's kids. Support groups for families with your child's condition are a good place to meet families. Contact **The Arc of Whatcom County** to learn more at 360-715-0170.

Home Care Agencies

Home care agencies recruit, train and are responsible for the care provided by the aide they send to your home. You can visit the [Carina Care Registry](#) or [Home Care Referral Registry](#) to refer you to a qualified provider. Listed below are some personal care agencies that work with children with special health care needs.

Organization	Phone	Funding option
Visiting Angels	360-671-8388	Private pay & through DDA or Medicaid
Cascade Connections	360-594-4216	Private pay & through DDA or Medicaid
Community Support Solutions	425-672-8787	Private pay & through DDA or Medicaid
Sunrise Services	360-755-3802	Private pay & through DDA or Medicaid
Rescare	360- 715-9936	Private pay & through DDA or Medicaid

Private Hires

You can find, hire, train and supervise an aide yourself. Learn more from the Family Caregiver Alliance Fact sheet [hiring in-home help](#) or about [how to become an individual provider](#).

Organization	Phone	Funding option
Super Sitters through P2P	360-715-0170	Private pay
Bellingham Nanny Connection	360-224-1866	Private pay & Lifespan Washington
WWU Student Employment	360-650-3158	Private pay
Childcare Aware NW	1-800-446-1114	Private pay & DSHS

Out of home care

Here is a list of a few camps or programs available in the community that offer inclusive programs.

Organization	Information	Phone	Funding option
FACES-NW	Summer programs for school age children with autism	360-389-2151	Private pay & DDA
Buddy Break	Free program designed to give caregivers of kids with special needs a break.	360-398-1442	Free
Max Higbee Center	Regular programs for teens and older with developmental disabilities	360-746-7181	Private pay & DDA
Lions Camp Horizon	Summer programs for youth 14 years and older with disabilities	360-371-0531	Private pay & DDA
Pure Fitness Martial Arts	Martial Art classes for 6 years old and up.	360-223-2645	Private pay & DDA
Bellingham Parks & Recreation	Programs and activities for youth 3 and older	360-778-7000	Private pay
YMCA	Before and after school programs	360-255-0532	Private pay & DSHS

Washington State Summer Camp Directory for Children with Special Needs

All families can receive support and services through [The Arc of Whatcom County](#), they can be reached at 360-715-0170.

Everyone deserves and needs a break.