

You got this! What you do every day to support your child is making a difference!

What Can I do while my Child is on a Wait List?

While your child is waiting for an evaluation or services you can:

- 1. After your child's doctor sends a referral, contact the office where your child was referred. Some questions to ask:**
 - Did the office receive my child's referral?** If the office did not receive a referral and a referral is required for services, follow up with your child's doctor's office and request they send another referral.
 - What do I need to do to get my child on the wait list?** You might be required to call the office, complete an intake packet, or register on the office's website to get a child on the wait list or schedule an appointment for an evaluation, **even if your child's doctor sent a referral.**
 - Are there forms I need or have the option to complete prior to my child's appointment? How can I get those forms?** Filling out forms prior to your child's appointment can help cut down the time spent at your child's appointment.
 - Do you prefer communicating by phone or email?** Using the office's preferred method of communication might increase your chances of a quick response.
 - Do you accept my child's insurance?** It's always helpful to confirm that an office accepts your child's insurance and your insurance provider will cover the evaluation or services. You can find more information about insurance, tools, and other helpful insurance information at: <https://whatcomtakingaction.org/category/how-to-handouts-videos/taking-action-handouts/health-coverage/>
 - Do you have a cancelation list?** Sometimes children can be evaluated sooner if another family cancels their appointment. When a cancelation occurs, some offices will call families on the cancelation list until someone picks up their phone. If you do receive a phone call from an office, try picking up the phone ASAP. Do not let the call go to voicemail.
- 2. Get your child on more than one wait list:** Having your child on more than one wait list can better their chances of getting seen sooner. You can find out more information about wait times and options for [Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy](#) and [Autism & Developmental Evaluations](#) at: www.whatcomtakingaction.org
- 3. Look at the website where your child was referred:** Websites have information about what is needed prior to your child's evaluation, what to expect, forms, resources, and other helpful information.
- 4. Check in periodically to see where your child is on the waitlist.**
- 5. Keep track of where your child was referred and the date they were referred, especially if they've been referred to more than one place.**
- 6. Make sure the office where your child was referred has your current phone number and other contact information.** Make sure to let the office know if your phone number changes. Check to make sure your voicemail box is not full and is setup so they can you leave a message.
- 7. Keep track of who you spoke with:** When you speak with someone about your referral, write down the name of the person you spoke with, date you spoke with them, and the information they gave you. Keep this information in one place such as a notebook. Keep copies of email exchanges with those you have communicated with.
- 8. Keep copies of your child's medical and educational records. Never give away the last copy!** Seattle Children's Hospital has ideas and tips on their website for organizing your child's records: <https://cshcn.org/planning-record-keeping/care-organizer-for-parents/>

What Other Services Can I Access?

The easiest way to find services and support for your family and child (ages birth to 21) is to call SEAS for service navigation by a local, knowledgeable and caring person.

SEAS
Single Entry Access to Services
phone: 360.715.7485
fax: 360.676.6729

For a comprehensive [Resource Directory](#) and helpful informational tools, visit www.whatcomtakingaction.org

Your child might be able to access other services and support while waiting for an evaluation or services. These are some of the services offered in the community. For more ideas see our [Community Services for Children with Special Needs handout](#).

Educational Services:

(Birth to Three): Enroll your child in [Early Support for Infants and Toddlers](#) (ESIT). ESIT helps you get Family Resource Coordination and access to therapies such as Speech and Occupational Therapy (if your child qualifies). Contact [Single Entry Access to Services \(SEAS\)](#) at (360)715-7485 for an evaluation.

(Age 3 or older): Get your child enrolled in [school district services](#). If your child qualifies, they may be able to receive: developmental preschool, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and/or therapies such as speech and occupational therapy. Contact your school district's special services office for more information about Child Find Screenings & Evaluations.

Counseling, Family Therapy, and 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 and the whole family. For more information about mental health resources, see [Community Services for Children with Special Needs handout](#).

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapy:

ABA is a method used to reduce challenging behaviors and to help people gain and improve 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 see: [ABA Handout](#) (NOTE: You can get your child on the waitlist for ABA therapy if they are on a wait list for an autism evaluation).

Clinical Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy:

PT/OT/SLP Clinic Wait Times

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.

Occupational Therapists: An OT helps with the development of motor skills used in daily living. The OT may focus on sensory issues, coordination of movement, and balance, and include self-help skills such as dressing, eating, or grooming.

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

Family Support and Information:

- [Parent to Parent](#) offers 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.
- [National Association of Mental Illness](#) or [NAMI-Whatcom](#) has family trainings and support groups.
- Online support groups and local websites such as www.whatcomtakingaction.org or [Bellingham Parents of Children with Special Needs](#) on Facebook can be very helpful. You can find additional groups and websites on [Whatcom Social Media Handout](#)

Special Note for Children Referred to GIDES:

If your child has been referred for a developmental, behavioral, or autism evaluation through GIDES, and you have questions, or if you want help finding resources or supports for your child and the rest of your family even before the evaluation, contact (please note that email is not a secure form of communication):

PeaceHealth Patients:
Kay Hilt, Patient Navigator
PHMG Pediatrics: 360-752-5611
KHilt@peacehealth.org

All Other Patients:
Mary Jo Durborow, Care Coordinator
The Arc of Whatcom County: 360-715-0170 ext: 307
maryjod@arcwhatcom.org