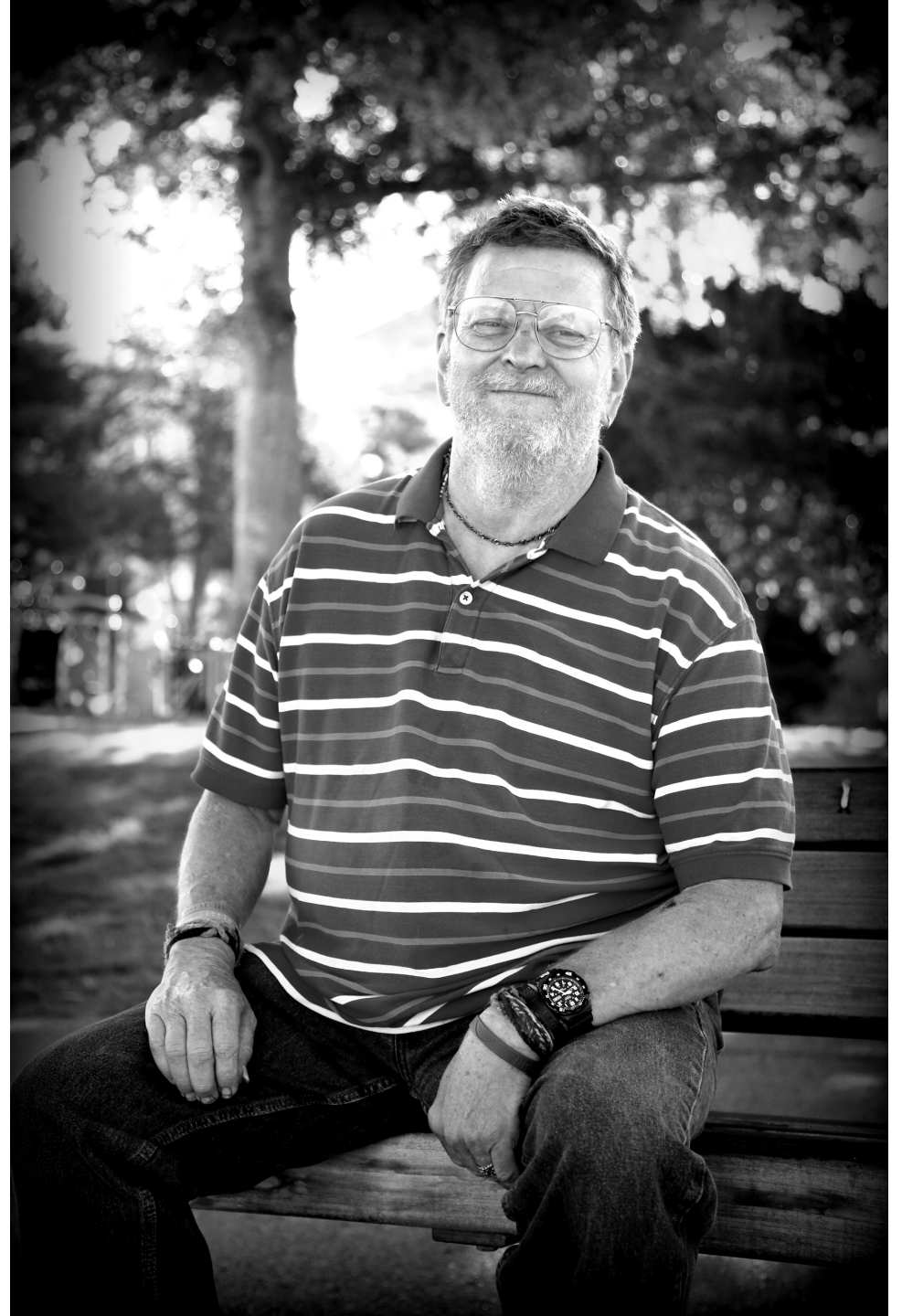


Who is
the Arc?



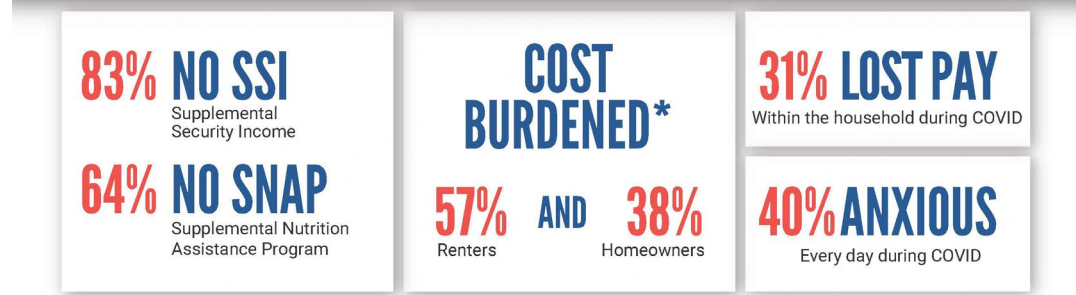
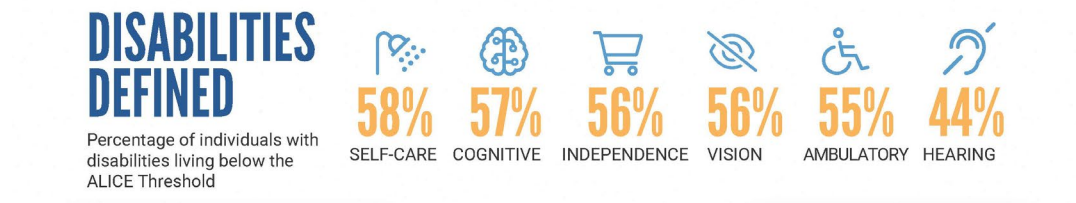
The Arc of Whatcom County is part of the largest national community-based organization advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and serving them and their families.



Disability is the largest minority group in the US and one that is open to anyone at any time.

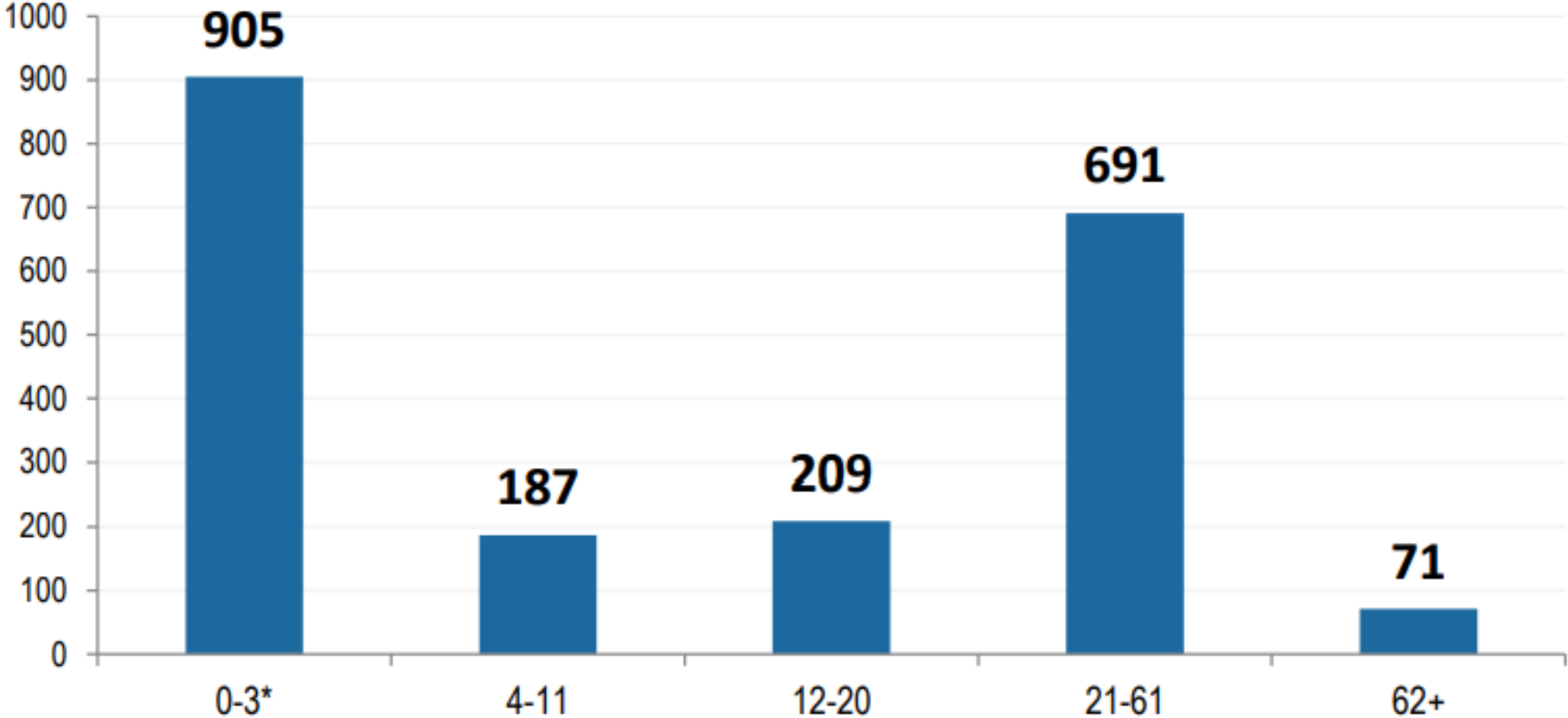
Within developmental disabilities, we know that 58% of caregivers spend more than 40 hours per week providing care for their loved one.

We know that 1/3 of parents report that they are on waiting lists for government funded services, with an average wait of more than 5 years.

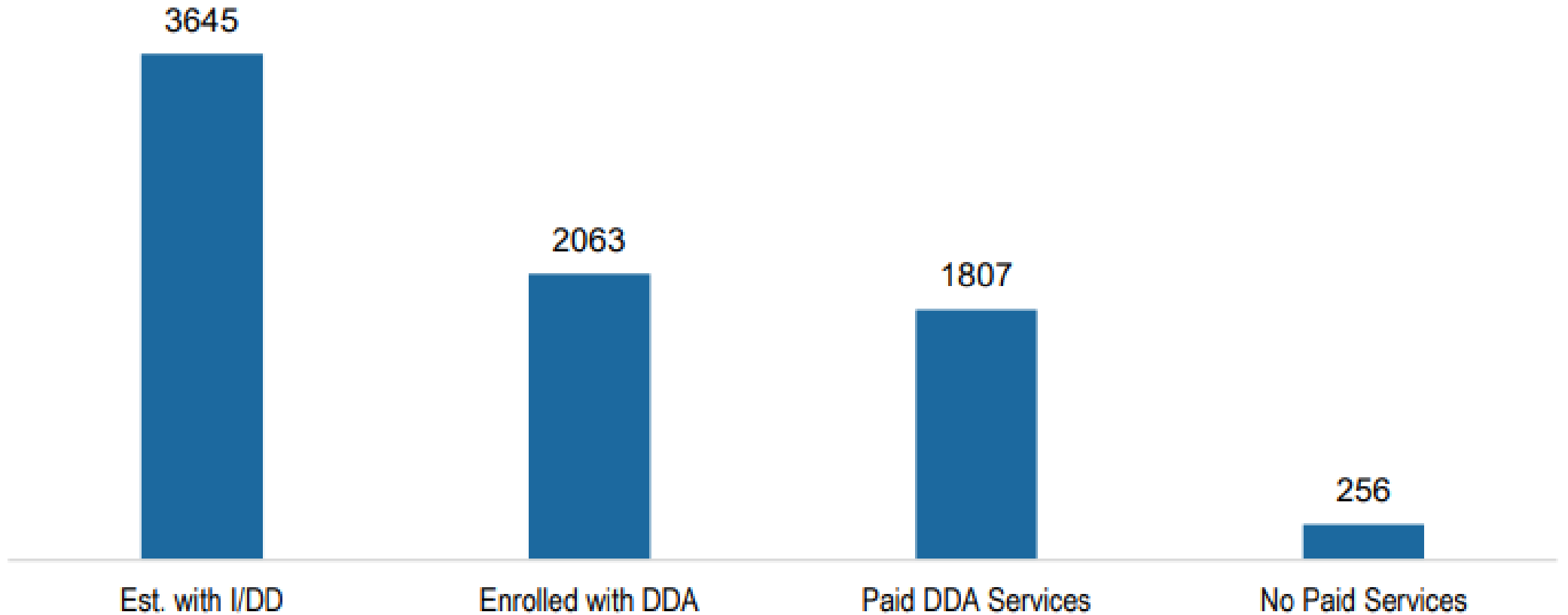


*Families that pay more than 35% of their income for housing
 Source: ALICE in Focus: People With Disabilities, July 2022

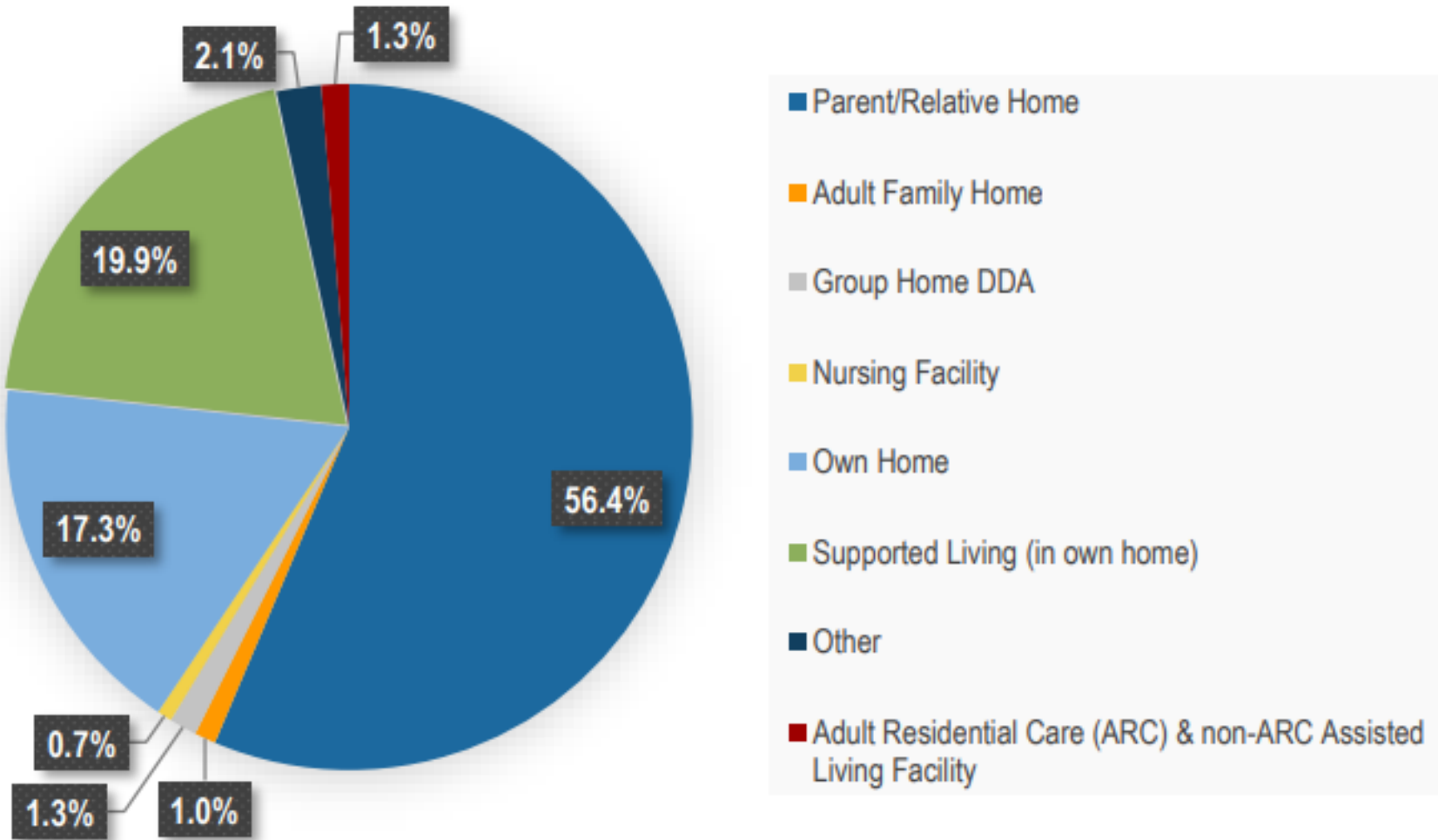
Whatcom DSHS/DDA enrollment by Age



Individuals Receiving DDA Services, Whatcom County



Residential Settings, Adults 18+ Enrolled with DDA in Whatcom County



In Whatcom County, families continue to be the primary source of support and care for over 3,600 people with developmental disabilities.



Nationally, the employment rate for people with developmental disabilities is 15%. In Washington state, those employees work an average of 4 hours per week. Most adults with developmental disabilities are living on supplemental security income alone.



In connecting with the Arc of Whatcom County, parents and caregivers can access support meetings, workshops, training events, and self-advocacy skill development.



- 543 parents and family members participated in peer-facilitated support groups.
 - 538 parents and family members attended social and networking events.
 - 536 contacts were made with Hispanic families seeking peer parent support.
 - 83 trained “helping parents” were available to provide mentorship and support to families of children with developmental disabilities and delays.
-
- 2368 Individuals received an electronic monthly newsletter providing information on disability resources and services.
 - 543 Individuals received assistance to navigate the service system and/or advocate for their family member with a disability.
 - 159 individuals participated in family/ caregiver training.
 - 85% of respondents on average indicated that they were satisfied with the information/ training received.
 - 221 people participated in community inclusion/ disability awareness presentations.

We provide support to parents of children with developmental skill disabilities in the following ways:

- Provide social and networking opportunities for parents and family members of children with disabilities and delays.
- Provide emotional and educational support for parents of children with developmental disabilities by parents of children with disabilities.
- Provide training to parents so that they can assist, support, and mentor other parents in one-to-one relationships, based on having children with similar diagnoses and facing similar family issues.



When we do that we see:

Decreased isolation, improved health and stability of families with a child or children with developmental disabilities and/or delays.

Improved ability of families to cope with the grieving and education process often associated with initial diagnosis.

Network creation of support among families with children with developmental disabilities and delays, including both parents and non-disabled siblings.



We provide:

information and education in navigating service systems

education on relevant service system eligibility and entitlement

Individualized family support, problem-solving and identification of support goals to develop a plan of action

E-alerts with timely information on local events and legislative issues

workshops and training programs to identify and meet long term planning needs.

Senior Family Caregiver Support

Technical Assistance to schools and community groups to promote and support awareness and inclusion



We provide Community Information & Education:

One-on-one information, education, and referral assistance to individuals, families, and community members related to accessing the developmental disabilities service system

Information and education to Whatcom County school districts and school district staff regarding: Promoting and encouraging self-determination and inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities; Navigating the developmental disabilities service system; and Transitioning young adults with developmental disabilities ages 12-21 from school district to adult services

Assistance to individuals and families in defining, developing, and using natural (i.e. unpaid) supports in the community



We provide:

Support and advocacy for the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in community boards, groups, and organizations.

Training to parents/caregivers to better support and advocate for the needs of the individual with developmental disabilities in their lives.



That looks like:

Increased understanding of and access to the developmental disability service system and special education system for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families/caregivers, and/or the community at-large

Improved transition of youth with developmental disabilities to adult services

Increased ability of individuals with disabilities to advocate for themselves, make their own choices, and self-direct the services and supports they receive



2,368 households receive our monthly newsletter



April is Autism Acceptance Month

Autism acceptance means embracing and valuing autistic people as autistic people instead of being afraid of us, having low expectations, or trying to find a way to make us not autistic. The Americans With Disabilities Act says "disability is a natural part of the human experience." Autism is a natural part of the human experience, and autistic people are members of our community, citizens, friends, family members, and fellow humans. Accepting autistic people is about honoring human diversity and making sure that everyone is included, valued, and contributing in our society. 1 in 54 people are autistic. You probably know an autistic person. Autism acceptance means you want us around. At its heart, autism acceptance is about accepting autistic people, instead of being afraid of us, having low expectations, or trying to find a way to make us not autistic.

Acceptance might look like:

- helping your child learn to use their AAC (Augmentative and alternative communication) device
- fighting stigma and stereotypes about autism and autistic people
- hiring an autistic person to work for you at the same wage as a comparable non-autistic person
- snapping your fingers instead of clapping for applause so your coworker isn't hurt by the noise
- making sure autistic people are included and respected in your community and that your community is accessible

Acceptance is not passive tolerance. Acceptance is an action. Does acceptance mean no therapies, no education, no intervention, just letting my kid stay where they are forever? Isn't acceptance passive? No! Acceptance is not passive. Acceptance is an action. Acceptance means doing everything you can so that your autistic child will grow up into the best autistic adult they can be, supporting your autistic friends in a world that is not designed for us, and working to make our world a better, more inclusive, safer place for autistic people of all ages and abilities.

Resources:
www.autisticadvocacy.org
www.autismacceptancemonth.org



Go to www.arcwhatcom.org and sign up for the **FREE** newsletter!

We'll keep you up-to-date on workshops and training opportunities, gatherings with other parents, as well as recreation and fun in Whatcom County

How do we measure our impact?

How to we measure income stability or economic mobility?



We measure belonging
and inclusion, being valued
in community



We measure power
and autonomy.



We measure social connections



With families leading the way and support from the Community Impact Fund, The Arc provides support, customized to meet the unique and individual needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.



This is our legacy as
families

This is how we live United
leading, teaching, and
encouraging one another

