

# Support Groups for Parents or Caregivers of a Child with Autism

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How support groups can help you if you have a child with autism and suggestions for finding groups to join in Washington State.

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## Why join a support group?

Many parents and caregivers of a child with autism find value in connecting with others who have similar experiences. You can sometimes find the best advice, support, resources, and comfort from other parents or caregivers.



## What should I look for in a support group?

- Not all support groups are alike. These are some of the variations you'll find:
    - In-person or online
    - With or without children there
    - With a facilitator or not
    - Some groups are for anyone caring for an autistic child, while others are specific to certain communities or situations (for example child's age or how much their autism impacts them).
  - Remember that a support group should feel supportive! In larger online forums especially (like Facebook groups), caregivers can sometimes feel overwhelmed by unsolicited advice, controversial topics or too much information. The experiences that people share might not align with yours.
  - Find the group or groups that feel informative and supportive for you.
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## Where can I find support groups in Washington State?

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### Parent-to-Parent

Parent-to-Parent (P2P) programs across Washington State offer a variety of ways to connect with other parents and caregivers, including virtual and in-person meetings, webinars, recreation programs and more. Find your local P2P program:

[arcwa.org/parent-to-parent/map](https://arcwa.org/parent-to-parent/map)

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### To Learn More

- Autism Center  
206-987-8080
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](https://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

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### The Arc

The Arc has many active county-based chapters that offer information and support to families and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD). No matter where you live, you can check out their online resources, classes and groups:

- The Arc of Cowlitz County [lifeworkswa.org](http://lifeworkswa.org)
- The Arc of Grays Harbor [arcgh.org](http://arcgh.org)
- The Arc of King County [arcofkingcounty.org](http://arcofkingcounty.org)
- The Arc of the Peninsulas [penarc.org](http://penarc.org)
- The Arc of Snohomish County [arcsno.org](http://arcsno.org)
- The Arc of Southwest Washington [arcswwa.org](http://arcswwa.org)
- The Arc of Spokane [arc-spokane.org](http://arc-spokane.org)
- The Arc of Tricities [arcoftricity.com](http://arcoftricity.com)
- The Arc of Whatcom County [arcwhatcom.org/wp](http://arcwhatcom.org/wp)

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### Washington Autism Alliance (WAA)

WAA has resources and supports for families on their website. [washingtonautismalliance.org](http://washingtonautismalliance.org)

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### Groups on Facebook

There are many parenting and support groups on Facebook. If you have a Facebook account, try 1 of the groups below. You can learn about other groups from the caregivers you meet there. Tell people what you're looking for, and check their suggestions.

- Autism Family Group - Washington State
- Raising Autistic Kids of WA
- Seattle Parents Raising Autism Recommendations
- Puget Sound Parents of Autistic Children
- WAA SPA (Washington Autism Alliance Supporting Parents of Autism) - you need to become a member on the WAA website first (it's free) [washingtonautismalliance.org/register](http://washingtonautismalliance.org/register)

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### Special Ed PTSAs (Parent Teacher Student Associations)

You can check if your school district has a Special Ed PTSA or PTA. In your online browser, search "special education PTSA" for your district.

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### Local community organizations

There are many places to look for support groups in your local community. Ask at your child's school, clinic or therapy centers. Check your local community centers, cultural centers, churches or other community gathering places.

### Special Interest Groups

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#### Father's Network

A group of dads and male identifying caregivers raising children with developmental disabilities who meet to share resource information, ideas and concerns.  
[fathersnetwork.org](https://fathersnetwork.org)

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#### Sibling Support Project

Find a local SibShop or other connection opportunities for siblings of people with special healthcare needs or disabilities, as well as other resources to support siblings.  
[siblingsupport.org](https://siblingsupport.org)

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#### Children severely impacted by autism

Search for these groups on Facebook (need account):

- Autism Parents of Non-Verbal Kids
- Support Group for Parents of Severely Autistic Children With LD
- Autism Moms of Seattle KWCB (Kids With Challenging Behavior)

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#### Parents and caregivers who have older teens and adults with autism

Search for this group on Facebook (need account):

- Moms of Autistic Teens & Young Adults

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### Multicultural and People of Color Support Groups

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In addition to the resources listed here, ask your local Parent-to-Parent if they have groups for people of color, or people who use languages other than English.

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#### The Arc Multicultural Outreach

Contact your local chapter of The Arc or visit:  
[arcwa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2022/09/Parent-Support-Multicultural-Outreach.pdf](https://arcwa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2022/09/Parent-Support-Multicultural-Outreach.pdf)

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#### Families of Color Seattle

Peer-led parent support groups for families of color  
[focseattle.org](https://focseattle.org)

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#### Open Doors for Multicultural Families

Open Doors engages and partners with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities and their families.  
[multiculturfamilies.org](https://multiculturfamilies.org)

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#### Somali Health Board

The Somali Health Board developmental screening and referrals program includes regular support groups available to the Somali community.  
[somalhealthboard.org/developmental-screening-referrals](https://somalhealthboard.org/developmental-screening-referrals)

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### Vietnamese Family Autism Advisory Board (VFAAB)

VFAAB is a community coalition that assists families with navigating the care system and works to educate the community about autism and developmental delay.  
[vfaab.org](http://vfaab.org)

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### Washington Multicultural Services Link (WMSL)

WMSL is a non-profit grassroots organization formed in 2020 by Black community members, volunteers and families who have loved ones with disabilities.  
[wmslink.org](http://wmslink.org)

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