

# Island County Parent to Parent Newsletter

**Are you anxious about meeting new people? Me too. Join us and engage as little or as much as you want. Check us out. No pressure.**

**December  
2025**



PARENT to PARENT

## Holiday Party

*with Island County Parent to Parent*



### Helpful Resources

#### Parent to Parent:

[https://  
www.islandcountywa.gov/  
/198/Parent-to-Parent](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/198/Parent-to-Parent)

#### Informing Families:

[https://  
informingfamilies.org/](https://informingfamilies.org/)

#### DDA is now DDCS:

[www.dshs.wa.gov/dda](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda)

#### Learning Disability Association of WA

[www.ldawa.org/  
resources/](http://www.ldawa.org/resources/)

#### Disability Rights of WA

[www.disabilityrightswa.org](http://www.disabilityrightswa.org)

### The Center

51 SE Jerome Street, Oak Harbor

Saturday, December 13

Noon-2:00pm

Hosted by Island County Parent to Parent  
(The old Senior Center, by the pool)

Parent to Parent Annual Holiday Party  
Come One! Come All! Celebrate the holidays with other families  
on a similar journey, supporting a child/adult with special needs.  
Free Event for All Ages & All Abilities! , Potluck, Hot Cocoa Bar,  
Arts & Crafts and of course, Santa.  
Santa will be making an appearance about 12:30ish  
Tiffany (360)632-7539 for more details.

**All Ages, All Abilities Welcome!**

Questions: Tiffany (360)632-7539 call/text



Want to know more about  
Parent to Parent? Check  
out our website and  
Facebook page.  
(360)632-7539 Call/Text



# Winter Events

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| December 6th<br>2:00pm         | Sensory Friendly Movie: <b>Zootopia 2</b> at Oak Harbor Cinemas. Low lights, lowered sound, trained staff, sensory break area in lobby, and being with others that “get it” when you kiddo/adult can’t sit still, makes noises, stims, etc.                        |
| December 6th<br>4:30pm         | Sensory Friendly Zone at the <b>Santa Parade</b> on Pioneer in Oak Harbor. Parade starts at 4:30pm. About 15 minutes. No horns, whistles, loud music, etc. Our location is in front of My Sister’s Closet with parking just around the corner. Look for the signs. |
| December 13th<br>Noon–2:00pm   | <b>Holiday Party</b> with Parent to Parent. Potluck, arts & crafts, music, hot cocoa bar and of course, Santa. Santa will be arriving about 12:30.   |
| December 22nd<br>1:00pm–2:30pm | <b>Bowling Fun</b> for the Whole Family. \$8 per person. 90 minutes of bowling and shoe rental. RSVP required: <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1956880435059?aff=oddtcreator">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1956880435059?aff=oddtcreator</a>                 |
| January 3rd<br>2:00pm          | Sensory Friendly Movie: <b>SpongeBob Search for SquarePants</b> at Oak Harbor Cinemas. Low Lights, lowered sound, trained staff, sensory break area in lobby, and being with others that “get it” when your kiddo/adult can’t sit still, makes noises, stims, etc. |

## Parent to Parent FREE Resource Toolkit:

### Services, Resources, Community: Support and More



Our resource toolkit can help you identify support, resources and activities in and around Island County. You will receive a folder full of programs, providers, disability & autism resources, support groups, Developmental

Disabilities Community Services DDSCS information, our monthly newsletter and more. We just need your snail mail address. Email Tiffany.t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov Our toolkits and resource guides are also available in English and Spanish on our website

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/198/Parent-to-Parent>



# A Sensory-Friendly Guide to a Smooth Holiday Season

## Understanding Sensory Sensitivities

Many children with autism have sensory sensitivities, which can make the holiday season overwhelming.

Here are some examples of sensory sensitivities during the holidays:

- **Sensory overload:** Many children on the spectrum have heightened sensory sensitivities, making them more sensitive to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures. The holidays are packed with sensory stimuli, such as bright lights, loud music, crowds, and unfamiliar smells, which can lead to:

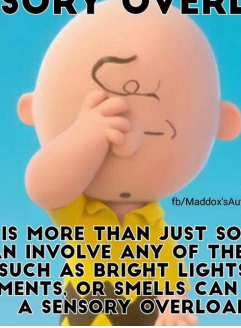
- **Anxiety:** Feeling overwhelmed by sensory input can trigger anxiety and difficulty coping.
- **Meltdowns:** Sensory overload can lead to emotional outbursts or meltdowns.
- **Behavioral changes:** Increased irritability, withdrawal, or repetitive behaviors may occur.
- **Physical discomfort:** Headaches, nausea, or fatigue can result from sensory overload.
- **Unfamiliar environments:** Family gatherings, parties, and travel expose children to unfamiliar environments, adding to sensory overload.

**Changes in routine:** The holidays often disrupt regular routines, making it harder for children to adjust to sensory experiences.

- **Holiday decorations:** Bright, flashing lights and loud decorations can be particularly overwhelming for children with sensory sensitivities.

Overall, holidays can be stressful for children with autism, so let's discuss what you can do to make this experience smoother. For full article What to do if a child/adult has a sensory overload during the holidays? <https://riseupforautism.com/blog/a-guide-to-a-sensory-friendly-holiday-season-for-autism>

### SENSORY OVERLOAD



IT IS MORE THAN JUST SOUNDS.  
IT CAN INVOLVE ANY OF THE SENSES.  
THINGS SUCH AS BRIGHT LIGHTS, CROWDS,  
MOVEMENTS, OR SMELLS CAN TRIGGER  
A SENSORY OVERLOAD.

## How to Help Your Child Calm Down During the Holidays

What to do if a child/adult has a sensory overload during the holidays?

- Recognize the signs
- Create a safe space
- Take a break
- Use calming strategies:
  - Deep breathing
  - Positive affirmations
  - Sensory input

## Have you checked out our website recently?

Oh boy, there is lots of new content, resources, information and more.

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/198/Parent-to-Parent>

Hard copies of these resource guides, Family Toolkits and “Island County Transition: School-age to Adulthood In Depth Guide: English” are also available. Email [t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov). Provide your contact information to ensure a reply.

### Island County Disability Resources

- ◆ Island County Disability Resource Guide: English & Spanish
- ◆ Island County Autism Resource Guide: English & Spanish
- ◆ Autism Resources for Families website. English & Spanish
- ◆ Special Education Quick Guide: English
- ◆ Island County Behavioral/Mental Health Resource Guide: English

### Other resources: Ages & Stages

- ◆ P2P Resource Birth to Three
- ◆ P2P Resource Three to Six
- ◆ P2P Resource Six to Fourteen
- ◆ P2P Resource Fourteen to Twenty One
- ◆ P2P Resource Twenty One-Adulthood

### Transition Support & Resources

- ◆ Transition Packet Info, Timelines and Checklists
- ◆ Transition IEPs, Services, Planning
- ◆ Transition DDA
- ◆ Transition Employment Support
- ◆ Transition HS vs College
- ◆ Transition Advocacy and Social Emotional
- ◆ Transition Resource Federal State Local
- ◆ Transition Legal and Financial Planning
- ◆ Transition Healthcare
- ◆ Transition-Toolkit PAVE

## Island County Parent to Parent

### Support & Resources for Special Needs Families in Island County

**Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson ,Coordinator**

**105 NW 1st Street Coupeville, WA 98239**

**(360)632-7539 call/text**

**Email: [t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountwa.gov](mailto:t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountwa.gov)**

**\*\*Check us out on Facebook for up-to-date resources, information and activities \*\***

**[www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent](https://www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent)**

**We have resource guides on our website:**

**\*Island County Parent to Parent Disability Resource Guide**

**\*Autism Spectrum Disorder Resource Guide & website <https://www.pilotace.org/>**

**\*Special Education Quick Guide**

**\*Island County Behavioral Health Resource Directory**

**\*Island County School Age to Adulthood Transition Guides**

**<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/198/Parent-to-Parent>**

**\*All events are subject to cancellation or rescheduling. Check our Facebook Page before you head out to the event\***

