



BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE



2009

Helpful tips and checklists to help you plan for your future.

Dear fellow residents,

Welcome to the Snohomish County Developmental Disabilities Resource Books, designed to provide you with helpful information that can shape and improve your quality of life.

Individually, each booklet in this series of five provides a wealth of information. But together, they create an opportunity for making the most of the Snohomish County Human Services opportunities we offer as well as connect you to programs offered by other organizations and nonprofit service providers within the area.

The topics in this series are:

- **Community Plan** – Current issues and efforts being made to improve the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- **Resource Guide** – Description and contact information for more than 250 resources.
- **Building a Successful Future** – Helpful tips and checklists to help you plan for your future.
- **Connecting to your Community** – Resources to help you connect to your community.
- **Career Path Services Guide to Employment** – Supports for individuals who are interested in working and contributing in their community.

Together, we can make Snohomish County a better place to live, work and play. Thank you for letting us do our part.

Sincerely,



Aaron Reardon
County Executive

For a copy of these publications, contact:
Snohomish County Developmental Disabilities
www.snoco.org (search "Developmental Disabilities")
ddinfo@snoco.org
425-388-7320



MISSION STATEMENT

Foster inclusive communities
that support people with developmental disabilities
to fully participate in, and contribute to all aspects of community life.



GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORTS

We design & develop supports to meet the specific needs & goals of each individual.

DIVERSITY

We promote culturally relevant supports while respecting & supporting individuals' uniqueness.

INCLUSION & CONTRIBUTION

We promote inclusive/diverse communities so people have opportunities to achieve meaningful & purposeful lives.

CHOICE

We create opportunities for individuals to have choices in their community & support individuals in advocating for themselves.

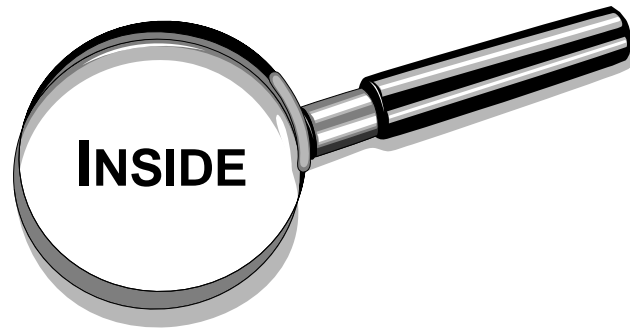
ACCESS

We promote individual and community accessibility.

COMMUNITY

We promote community-based options

WHAT'S



INSIDE

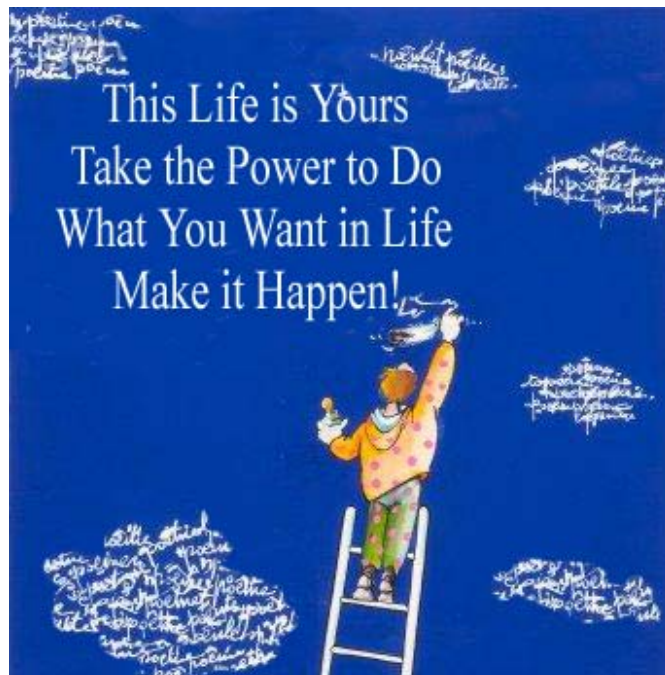
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INTRODUCTION

*Throughout our lives
we continue to build our skills,
develop relationships,
participate in a variety of experiences
and learn about resources.*

*As we progress through life,
we see the importance of how our Skills, Relationships and
Experiences provide us with the tools to be successful.*

*This book is designed
to provide you with helpful tips and information
that will assist you in planning for a successful future.*



THE SCHOOL YEARS

BE INVOLVED AND CONNECTED TO YOUR COMMUNITY

- Share and build on your skills, strengths, and interests.
- Increase your independent living skills, such as shopping, cooking and money management skills.



CREATE A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR SCHOOL

- Maintain close communication with teachers throughout the year.
- Share positive comments about what is working.
- Share your areas of concern.
- Actively participate in ALL planning meetings especially the annual Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.
- Ask questions, take notes, and summarize the meeting.
- Develop long and short term goals that will prepare you for adult life.
- Work on your goals at home, in the community and at school.
- Set up a time to check in on the progression of your goals.

THE TRANSITION YEARS

Students can attend school and receive support on or off campus through the school year of their 21st birthday, if they have not met their graduation or IEP goals.

AT AGE 16 DEVELOP TRANSITION GOALS

- Learn about your school district's transition programs.
- Begin transition planning by the age of 16. Regardless of your disability, there are opportunities and expectations for you to work and fully participate in your community.
- Increase community work experience.
- Utilize your skills and interests and obtain a stable job before leaving school.
- School is an entitlement program whereas adult/community programs are based on eligibility criteria and available funding.** Long term employment support through DDD is based on available funding and is not available until after the age of 21.
- Research community programs, eligibility criteria and available funding.
- Understand your rights and responsibilities.
- If you are interested in attending college, talk to a counselor in the college's Disability Resource Center regarding support needs, accommodations and financial aid.
- Obtain a Washington State ID card (at any age) from the Washington State Department of Licensing.



THE TRANSITION YEARS

CONNECT TO OTHER FAMILIES AND YOUR COMMUNITY

- Talk with older students, their parents and teachers about their experiences.
- Think about what your day will look like without school. Begin participating in a variety of activities that can continue after you finish school. This may include working, volunteering and participating in recreation and leisure activities.
- Research and get connected to community resources before you leave school.
- If you receive Medicaid and need assistance with your personal care needs, contact your DDD Case Manager.
- Local parks and recreation departments offer many activities and events. Be creative and utilize personal and community resources to help you actively participate.
- Connect to your community; find people in your community who share your interests. Share your skills in your community, make a difference.
- Participate in educational activities and events offered in your community.



AT AGE 18 BE AWARE OF TRANSFER OF RIGHTS

You Are A Legally Responsible Adult And Legally Responsible For Your Actions

Parents: When your son or daughter reaches age 18, you are no longer their legal representative unless you follow the procedures to become a court appointed guardian.

- At age 18, ALL adults assume legal responsibility for their actions.
- Many adults with special needs are able to assume their full rights and responsibilities, including making financial, medical and legal decisions.
- There are different kinds of guardianships. Not everyone needs a full or even limited guardian. Be sure to weigh your options and consider all implications. Some people may benefit from a power of attorney or protective payee to assist them in decision making.
- Pursuing guardianship is a legal process and if appropriate, should begin six to eight months before your 18th birthday.

You Are Old Enough To Vote

- Become informed about issues that affect you.
- Register to vote at your local library, city hall or state offices.



You Are Old Enough To Fight For Your Country

- At age 18, men must register with the Selective Service (local post office or www.sss.gov)

Your Earnings Are Your Own

- The income you earn and the support you receive may help to determine your need for benefits. You may be eligible to receive financial assistance and Medicaid through Social Security (**800-772-1213** or www.ssa.gov). If you are earning income and receiving Social Security benefits, it is important to report your earnings to Social Security and be knowledgeable about work incentive programs. Contact your DDD case manager for a referral to a Social Security Benefits Planner.
- If you need assistance managing your income, identify a representative payee to assist you.

AGE 18-21

- Develop a daily routine of what your day will look like after you leave school.
- Keep a personal copy of school records. Obtain school transcripts, evaluations, summaries, and assessments upon leaving school to assist you in applying for and receiving services. Many school records are destroyed several years after graduating.
- Build a resume of your work skills and experiences.
- Develop and pursue your vocational goals.
- Pursue volunteer and paid employment.
- Connect to your community based on your interests.
- Use public transportation.
- Have a strong support network that believes in you.
- Find out if you qualify for various programs and if funding is available.
- Utilize Medicaid for personal care, specialized transportation and assistive technology.
- State Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)** Apply for services at any age. If eligible, you will be assigned a DDD Case Resource Manager who can assist you in understanding community resources.
425-339-4833 www.dshs.wa.gov/ddd
- Snohomish County Transition Resource Coordinator** Informs DDD eligible transition youth and their families about community resources, navigating and accessing services and connecting to vocational agencies. **425-388-7476**
- State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** Apply for Services to assist you with your employment goals. Everett **425-339-4880** Lynnwood **425-673-3180**
www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr
- State Department of Services for the Blind** Apply for Services to assist you with your employment and independent living goals **800-552-7103 www.dsb.wa.gov**



A CHECKLIST FOR SELF-ADVOCATES

BUILD YOUR STRENGTHS

- Participate in new experiences.
- Do as much as you can for yourself.
- Focus on building YOUR strengths and skills throughout your life.
- Share your skills with your community.
- Develop goals and pursue opportunities that are related to your interests.

INCREASE YOUR SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS

- Participate in self-advocacy groups. Contact the Arc of Snohomish County.
425-258-2459 www.arcsno.org
- Speak up for what you want and advocate for what you need.
- Vote. Talk to your legislators.
- Understand your personal learning style.
- Know your rights and responsibilities.
- Use assistive technology.
- Understand your disability and request accommodations.
- Be a member of local community boards and/or attend their meetings.
- Participate on planning committees.



BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

- Develop and maintain a network of family, friends and support people.
- Connect with others who have similar interests.
- Stay connected to your friends and make new friends along the way.
- Make choices about who you want to spend your time with.
- Maintain positive and healthy relationships.
- Understand different types of relationships, including strangers, co-workers, friends, family, boy/girl friends, etc.

A CHECKLIST FOR SELF-ADVOCATES

DEVELOP A PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE

- Develop an ongoing list of strengths, skills, interests, and goals.
- Share your dreams with others who can help you reach your goal.
- If you need help developing a plan, contact your DDD Case Resource Manager for a referral to Planning Services. **425-339-4833**
- Once a plan is developed, take an active role in reaching your goals. Be creative in utilizing personal and community resources to reach your goals.

CONNECT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

- Connections you make in your community may be your most valuable resource.
- Participate in community events and educational opportunities.
- Participate in activities with people who have similar interests, learn about resources and make new friends. Ask for accommodations as needed.
- Be active and get to know others in your community through social groups, church, sports, neighborhood groups, school activities, social organizations, recreational opportunities, sports, etc.
- There are many opportunities for you to become involved in your local community through parks and recreation programs, family support centers, volunteering, participating on local community boards and committees, neighborhood associations, schools and community events.
- Volunteer and use your skills to help someone in your community.
- Learn about community services and supports. Ask if you qualify, if there is funding available and if you will be on a waiting list for services.
- Attend the Transition Resource Fair in March. Visit www.snoco.org Search Developmental Disabilities.



A CHECKLIST FOR FAMILIES

BUILD ON YOUR SON/DAUGHTER'S STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS

- Provide opportunities to learn new skills and utilize the skills they have to increase their independence. Provide encouragement and support to share their skills with family, friends and the community.
- Provide opportunities to build on their skills through helping with household chores and daily tasks; encourage them to participate in as much of the task as possible.
- Encourage participation in activities they enjoy, including school activities, recreational opportunities, neighborhood events, interest groups and community events.
- Provide your child with the tools and power to be as independent as possible. Continue to ask yourself "What have I done for my son/daughter they can really do for themselves?"



DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Support them in developing positive relationships with people who share similar interests. Encourage your child to participate in activities with typically developing peers in order to develop new relationships and learn appropriate social skills.
- Help your son/daughter understand personal boundaries and personal space.
- Provide opportunities for them to increase their communication skills, utilize assistive technology, if needed.

A CHECKLIST FOR FAMILIES

- Apply for services through the **State Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)** at ANY AGE. **(425-339-4833)** Keep your DDD case manager informed of your support needs.
- Understand decisions to be made at age 18. (See Page 4)
- Be an active participant in helping your son or daughter reach their goals.
- Understand your child's disability and assist in asking for accommodations.
- Network and share your information and resources with other families. Learn about educational opportunities, networking and ways to connect to other families through the Arc of Snohomish County. www.arcsno.org **425-258-2459**
- Get involved in advocacy efforts. Parent Coalitions and self-advocacy groups help improve the service system by advocating with a unified voice. Learn about leadership and advocacy through The Arc of Snohomish County. www.arcsno.org **425-258-2459**
- Educate the community on the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. Get involved in local community boards or committees.
- Do not assume community resources will be readily available to meet your needs. Resources are limited, eligibility criteria changes, and funding can be inconsistent.
- Contact a Special Needs Attorney to assist you in developing a Will and a Special Needs Trust. A Special Needs Trust can assist in paying for supports, services, and expenses not covered under current benefits.



- Research the Life Opportunities Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund that assists families in planning for the future. www.ddlot.org **888-754-8798**

PLAN FOR YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

INCREASE MONEY MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Go shopping; learn how much things cost. Buy things on sale and use coupons when possible. Develop a budget and save for items you need and want.
- Begin to build credit history. Have your name listed on electricity, water, rent, etc.
- Have your own bank account. Know what money you receive and participate in paying your bills and expenses.
- If you need someone to assist you in managing or co managing your finances, think about having someone co signing your checks or being a financial payee. Be involved in decision making regarding your finances as much as possible.



PLAN AHEAD

- Contact a Special Needs Attorney who can assist you in developing a will and a Special Needs Trust. A Special Needs Trust can help pay for supports, services and expenses not covered under your current benefits
- Research the Life Opportunities Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund that helps families plan for the future. Matching funds may be available. www.ddlot.org 888-754-8798



EMPLOYMENT IS THE FIRST STEP TO FINANCIAL SECURITY

Regardless of your disability, Washington State expects all working age adults receiving DDD employment services to be employed or on a pathway to employment. The intent is to engage everyone in his/her community as an active and contributing member.

DEVELOP AND BUILD SKILLS

- Take inventory of the skills you have to offer to the community.
- Build your employability skills and learn new skills.
- Review your list of skills and pursue employers who need these skills.
- Try a variety of volunteer or paid work experiences.
- Job shadow and learn about different kinds of jobs.

DEVELOP A VOCATIONAL PROFILE

- Include copies of vocational assessments in your profile.
- Create a list of skills, strengths and interests.
- Request letters of recommendations from employers, educational staff etc.
- Write down what you liked and did not like in work experiences.

EMPLOYABILITY CHECKLIST

Punctual and Dependable

- Ready for school/work on time
- Call if late or absent

Takes Pride in Work

- Do careful and accurate work
- Attempt to correct mistake

Respects Authority

- Be polite
- Follow directions

Shows Enthusiasm

- Take initiative to start new duties
- Shows up on time

Appearance

- Good personal hygiene
- Wear appropriate clothing

Communication

- Work well with others
- Asks questions
- Communicates concerns

Flexibility

- Adjusts to changes
- Able to learn new tasks

SOCIAL SECURITY

TWO TYPES OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

SSI - SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

- SSI provides a basic living allowance to assist individuals with room and board. The amount an individual receives is based on their basic living expenses.
- You may also be eligible for Medicaid while receiving SSI.
- Medicaid is a requirement for a variety of community services.
- Individuals cannot exceed \$2000 in resources.

SSDI - SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE

- SSDI is based on the amount you pay into Social Security while you are employed. SSDI benefits can be accessed if you become disabled or if you have a disability and your parent is disabled, retired or deceased. The amount you receive is based on the amount paid into the system.
- When receiving SSDI you may also be eligible for Medicare.



SOCIAL SECURITY

TO APPLY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

- Eligibility for SSI prior to age 18 is based on your family's income. After the age of 18 individuals who are unable to earn a living wage due to their disability may be eligible for Social Security benefits. (Apply in the month of your child's 18th birthday.)
- Contact the local Social Security Office to obtain application materials and information regarding medical and financial eligibility for disability benefits. **800-772-1213**. A large portion of the application can be completed online at www.ssa.gov
- After applying for benefits, call Social Security monthly to follow up.
- Social Security will determine if you are eligible for SSI, SSDI or both.
- If denied Social Security benefits, you have the right to appeal within 60 days. This could also result in receiving a retroactive payment.

WORKING WHILE RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

- Once you are earning an income, you must send your monthly pay stubs to Social Security in order to avoid overpayment. An overpayment may result in the loss of your SSI and Medicaid eligibility.
- Social Security also encourages people with disabilities to work and has several work incentive programs available to assist with paying for work related expenses. For more information, contact the Social Security office or contact your DDD case manager for a referral to the Social Security Benefits Assistance Program.



HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL

MEDICAL INSURANCE

- Check your medical insurance eligibility criteria. Children over the age of 18 may continue to be covered if they are still attending school or are disabled.
- Look for employment options with medical benefits.
- Be knowledgeable of health insurance coverage.
- At age 18, choose an adult health care provider.



MEDICAID

- Medicaid is usually issued with SSI. If you receive SSI but not Medicaid, call the local DSHS Community Service Office. **425-438-4971**
- Find a physician who accepts Medicaid.
- Make sure the DD column has a XX checked on your Medicaid Coupon for additional coverage. If it is not XX checked, call your Division of Developmental Disabilities Case Manager. **425-339-4833**
- Adaptive equipment, assistive technology, specialized transportation and personal care **may** be covered under Medicaid.
- Call the Special Needs Transportation Hotline for assistance with getting to medical appointments. **425-258-4227** or **800-223-8145**

MEDICATIONS

- Understand the purpose and side effects of medications.
- Track the effects of medications.
- When having prescriptions filled ask your pharmacist help you be independent by packaging medications in bubble packs, pill boxes, etc.

HOUSING AND LIVING

PLAN AHEAD

- Decide if you plan to live alone or with others.
- Decide if you plan to rent or own a home.
- Learn about public transportation options.
- Stay close to support networks.
- Save money in a Special Needs Trust Fund.
- Understand landlord and tenant responsibilities.
- Develop a basic credit history. There are several programs to assist limited income individuals with purchasing a home.
- Research public housing options such as Section 8 and subsidized housing. Learn about eligibility criteria and be prepared for waiting lists. Clearly identify your disability on the application and inquire about set aside dollars for individuals with disabilities. Everett Housing Authority www.evha.org 425-258-9222 Housing Authority of Snohomish County. www.hasco.org 425-290-8499



INCREASE LIFE SKILLS

- Increase Your Shopping and Money Management Skills** Make a shopping list by using words or pictures. Know where to find items in the store. Make and follow a budget. Make a list of personal items and clothing you need. Save your money and watch for items on sale.
- Increase Your Household Skills** Help with cooking, cleaning, shopping and you're your personal hygiene.
- Build Credit** Have your name on bills and pay them on time. Open a bank account.
- Medicaid Personal Care Needs** If you need direct physical assistance for your personal care needs, contact a DDD Case Manager. **425-339-4833**

TRANSPORTATION

- Develop a transportation plan that may include taking the bus, biking, walking, driving, or carpooling.
- Learn about public transportation options.
- Take the bus with your family and friends to learn the routes in your community.
- Obtain a reduced bus fair pass for Everett, Community and Sound Transit. Bring proof of disability, forms signed by your doctor, a photo ID, and a small service fee. The reduced fair pass will work for all fixed routes in the area. Community Transit **425-353-7433** www.communitytransit.org and Everett Transit **425-257-7777** www.everetttransit.org
- If you need assistance learning the bus route, use the travel training program offered through Community Transit. **425-348-2379**
- If you are unable to ride the regular bus, Everett Para Transit **425-257-8801** and Dial-A-Ride DART **425-347-5912** provide door-to-door services.
- For an interactive internet-based resource to help you find options in Snohomish, King and Pierce County, go to www.findaride.org





Snohomish County
Developmental Disabilities