You are not Alone
Why Families Need Support

- Unexpected feelings
- New parenting challenges
Why Peer Support?

• Parents feel more comfortable sharing with a peer than with a professional

• Parents feel better able to cope with their child and their situation

• Parents are able to view their family and circumstances more positively

• Parents value helping other parents make progress toward their own goals

Singer et al, 1999
Stress

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvjzwTBjXMI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvjzwTBjXMI)
The Purpose of Parent to Parent

To match trained volunteer helping parents with parents who are experiencing a time of crisis, such as new diagnosis or seeking information.
Coming along side to offer:

- **Support**
- **Experience**
- **Information**
Helping parents are:

- Parents or family members of a child with a disability or special healthcare need. Have attended the helping Parent training.
- Offer encouragement, emotional support and information on an informal and personal basis.
- Serve as a peer model to help families adjust to their new diagnosis.
Helping Parents are NOT: Counselors or therapists Advisors, especially medical advisors.
Our Goal

- Parent is emotionally supported—“You are not alone”
- The parent has a support network—“If a parent’s world is small, the child’s world will be small”
- Parenting Skills
- Information—“Information is Empowerment”
Sharing the Journey
Parent to Parent:
Is a nationwide network
Has programs in almost every county in Washington
Our Helping Parent Trainings
The Grief Cycle

Shock and Denial

Despair and Resignation

Bargaining

Tears and Fears

Adjustment and Acceptance

Anger and Guilt
The Art of LISTENING
STORIES
Boundaries
Special Circumstances
When a family needs more than a Helping Parent
Taking Care of Yourself
DREAM OF A BIG LIFE
Resources
NUTS AND BOLTS
Helping Parent Duties

- Be a family member of a child with a disability
- Complete the training
- Complete the P2P helping parent self assessment and review with coordinator
- Demonstrate good communication skills
- Demonstrate a nonjudgmental attitude
- Commit to volunteer for one year
- Maintain confidentiality
- Make initial and follow up contact with referred parents
- Follow up with the coordinator
Referral Process

Coordinator receives initial referral and does an intake.
Coordinator matches with appropriate Helping Parent.
Coordinator contacts Helping Parent
Helping Parent contacts the family
After contact is made, Helping parent debriefs with the Coordinator.
Follow up with family served
Where We Recruit Our Helping Parents

- Parents who have benefitted from P2P
- Referrals Birth to Three providers
- Referrals from disability specific agencies
- Other Community agencies
- Referrals from other Helping Parents
Who Can Refer?

- ANYONE!
- Professionals: FRCs, Public Health nurses, CSHCN, Hospitals, WIC, disability agencies, Head Start, Schools
- Friends and neighbors
- Parents can self refer
The Cradle of Leadership

• Experiences support from P2P
• Learns to cope with stress
• Becomes connected to the community
• Becomes a Helping Parent
• Receives more training
• Becomes an advocate
• Becomes a leader
What Happening with P2P

- E-groups
- Social Media
- Ethnic Support
- Workshops and trainings
- Family Gatherings
- Support Groups- informal and formal
- Recreation Programs
- Special Sitters- Respite
- Sib Shops
- Father’s Network
- Support across the lifespan
How to Connect

• Parent to Parent USA
  http://www.p2pusa.org

• Washington State Parent to Parent
  www.arcwa.org

Susan Atkins Statep2p@earthlink.net
Cathy Murahashi cmurahashi@arcofkingcounty.org
Thank You for coming!