

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 6329

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Early Learning & Human Services

**Title:** An act relating to creating the parent to parent program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Brief Description:** Creating the parent to parent program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health & Housing (originally sponsored by Senators O'Ban, Conway, Becker, Fain, Cleveland, Dammeier, Keiser, Darneille, Rolfes, Hobbs, Litzow, Angel, McAuliffe, Habib and Jayapal).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/23/16, 2/24/16 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**  
**(As Amended by Committee)**

- Identifies goals and activities of the Parent to Parent program for individuals with special health care needs.
- Requires that the Parent to Parent program be funded through the Developmental Disability Administration to a state lead organization, if funds are provided.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Senn, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins, Kilduff, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Sawyer and Walkinshaw.

**Staff:** Luke Wickham (786-7146).

**Background:**

The Parent to Parent Program.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The Parent to Parent program connects parents of children with certain disabilities and special needs with other volunteer parents who also have children with similar disabilities or special needs. The volunteer parents provide peer and emotional support. The program also offers educational trainings and workshops for parents.

There are Parent to Parent programs in 31 counties including Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Clark, Columbia, Cowlitz, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Walla Walla, Whatcom, Whitman, and Yakima.

Parent to Parent USA is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote access and quality in parent-to-parent support for all families who have children or adolescents with a special health need, mental health issue, or disability. In Washington, many of the Parent to Parent programs are hosted by The Arc of Washington State.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

Goals for the Parent to Parent program for individuals are established and include:

- providing early outreach, support, and education to parents of children with special health care needs;
- matching a trained volunteer support parent with a new parent who has a child with similar needs; and
- providing parents with tools and resources to be successful.

Activities of the Parent to Parent program may include:

- outreach and support to newly identified parents of children with special health care needs;
- educational trainings for parents to support their children;
- ongoing peer support from a trained volunteer support parent; and
- regular communication with other local programs.

If funds are provided, the Parent to Parent program must be funded through the Developmental Disability Administration to a Washington lead organization that has extensive experience supporting and training support parents.

Through a contract with the lead organization, each local program must be administered by a host organization. A parent or grandparent of a child with developmental disabilities or special health care needs shall provide program coordination and local program information. The lead organization shall provide ongoing training to the host organizations and statewide program oversight.

### **Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:**

The amended bill specifies that the goals and activities of the Parent to Parent program include serving parents who have a child with special health care needs as defined in the bill.

The amended bill removes handicapping conditions from the definition of "special health care needs."

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This Parent to Parent program is very helpful to parents. Parenting a child with a developmental disability or special health care needs can be very isolating. These parents can also feel overwhelmed by the information being thrown at them. The Parent to Parent program helps families through these difficult experiences and empowers other parents to provide that assistance. This program makes all the difference in the world when you have someone else that you can talk to that understands what you are going through and you do not have to explain the emotions that you are experiencing. Families come in many shapes and sizes and do their best, but sometimes that is not enough. Aging, financial instability, providing food and shelter, and divorce are some of the challenges that these families experience. Families are the natural supports for other families.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator O'Ban, prime sponsor; Sara Palm-Sons, Parent to Parent; and Michele Lehosky, Parent to Parent of Pierce County.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.