

Educate. Connect. Empower.

Issue 98
June 2018

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What's in this issue?

We recently heard from a parent who suggested we repeat the article on stress from a past *Family Pulse* issue. She recently re-read it and found it very helpful. In this article we address how serious chronic stress can be, talk about some common stressors, and finally list some of the easiest and most effective ways of dealing with it. We hope you find the article helpful as well!

Enjoy the beautiful weather and have a great month!



Support WRFN Today

Waterloo Region Family Network
www.wrfn.info
info@wrfn.info

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Region District School Board - Special Education Advisory Update

Submitted by Carmen Sutherland

There was discussion about the Townhall and how it was structured.

There were also some administrative updates including the fact that they are updating some of their procedures.

There was a discussion of how our Board got \$500,000 for mental health and how this money may be used this money to hire child and youth workers for the elementary schools that do not have them. This is one-time funding. The Board also received funding that is continuous to help support multidisciplinary teams.

The group has decided to support the PRO Grant for parent engagement from the Parent Involvement Committee. The group is also looking at how we can support whatever is done with the grant.

The evening ended with discussion about how to build better peer-to-peer relationships within schools.

The next SEAC meeting is Wednesday, June 13 at 7p.m. at the Education Centre, 51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener N2C 2R5.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Update

Submitted by Christine Zaza

At the May 2 SEAC meeting, members congratulated Gerald Foran on his new role as Superintendent of Learning. Renee King presented a preliminary report on the special education budget; a more thorough report will be given at the next meeting.

SEAC members have not had any luck with their efforts to recruit new members; however, the committee decided to revisit this issue in the Fall. Due to the recent change in SEAC Chair, the committee decided to defer our PRO Grant application for one year. There were no new Ministry updates and no changes to the special education plan this year, other than changes in staff and staff development.

Trustee Update

Bill Conway provided several Trustee Updates. Trustee Amy Fee has resigned so that she can run as a PC candidate in the upcoming provincial election. The French Immersion program will be offered at two more schools in 2019, and at an additional two schools in 2020. There are no school closures planned at this time; in fact, new schools, including a new high school, are in the planning stages. The St. Louis Adult Learning Centre will be moving to the St. Francis campus in 2020.

An additional meeting was held on May 23, 2018. This update was submitted by Sue Simpson.

WCDSB SEAC met for an additional meeting on May 23 regarding the presentation of the Special Education budget for the coming year. Renee King, Manager of Business and Finance, shared updated information regarding the budget. Revenues will increase due to projected increased enrolment. SEAC approved the draft balanced budget to be presented to the Board of Trustees on June 4.

Irene Holdbrook, SEAC Chair, presented to the Committee of the Whole on Monday, May 14 providing annual updates and challenges on behalf of SEAC. The presentation was appreciated and well received.

There were no ministry updates and no association updates shared at the meeting.

The next SEAC meeting will be on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, at 6:30pm at 35 Weber St. West, Kitchener.

Autism in High School

“[Autism in High School](#)” is a new web-based guide to help students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families as they navigate the transitions and common challenges of high school. This website was developed as a joint initiative between Extend-A-Family, Waterloo Region Family Network, members of the former Autism Services Waterloo Region, the Waterloo Region District School Board, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, and the University of Waterloo with generous funding from the [Sifton Family Foundation](#).

What’s Happening at WRFN

Find Your Passion - Saturday, August 25

Families, children and youth are invited to come explore many of the accessible sport and recreation opportunities that Waterloo Region has to offer! More details coming soon!

Communication My Way

Communication My Way is a peer-led augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) group for all ages and levels of AAC users and their caregivers. The group aims to connect AAC users and their caregivers in a friendly environment to develop skills and create friendships. This group is currently breaking for the summer and will begin meeting again in September.

Kaleidoscope Kids

Kaleidoscope is a free drop-in program. There is no age limit, and you are encouraged to bring your children with special needs, siblings, or come by yourself.

Kaleidoscope Kids meets every Friday (with the exception of July and August) from 10-11:30am.

Learn more [here](#).

School-Issue Parent Support Group

Do you have questions/concerns about school issues for your child/youth with special needs?

Join us at our peer-led parent support group. This is a great opportunity to share questions, concerns and successful tips in a safe environment while learning from others.

The support group is held the last Wednesday of every month, year-round. Learn more [here](#).

WRFN Fact!

We will be launching our new website soon! We’ve been working hard to create a user-friendly site that makes it easy for you to get, and stay, connected! Stay tuned for more information!!!

Stress

Acknowledging Your Stress

There is so much stress in the life of a parent of a child with special needs. This is not news. We all are aware of how much goes in to just getting through every day. Stress is just part of life, something we acknowledge as a reality, but don't often actually take into account. What's the point, really? There's nothing that can be done about the workload. That's just part of life. You may as well accept it and move on. We all do what we have to do.

And that's completely true. We all do what we have to do. Unfortunately, what we have to do often involves such high levels of anxiety that it actually affects the quality of life.

When I first decided to write an article about stress and caregivers, I was surprised at how much is out there about both the short and long-term effects of stress on caregivers in particular. We all know that it's a stressful life. I don't think you'll find anyone that will argue with you about that. I wasn't aware that Caregiver Stress Syndrome was actually a real health concern. I'd never heard of it before, but it makes perfect sense.

All the early signs and symptoms of Caregiver Stress Syndrome are things that I not only expect, but take for granted, such as headaches, hypertension and sleep problems. It escalates into anxiety and depression, memory problems and immune system problems. The symptoms can range from mild to severe, and may result in burnout and long term health problems.

The terrifying thing about this is how easy these things are to ignore. As caregivers, we are on the hook for everything. There is no safety net. We ARE the safety net. That in itself is anxiety-inducing, even before anything else. And why think about it? Nobody wants to stare down the barrel of long-term health problems because of something they can't change. So we ignore it. Probably not the best strategy, but for most of us, we are not our first priority. We advocate for self-care for our children, not for ourselves.

The big issues in life are often the ones that get dealt with. Sideline issues (such as ignoring the reality of the effect of daily caregiver-related stress and anxiety) often get ignored and pile up. We feel guilty about thinking about ourselves for even a moment when others so desperately need us. But we should think of ourselves. If we don't, our real first priorities will lose out.

Common Stressors

The stress in our lives sometimes seems so completely overwhelming. It's hard to see where one stress ends and another begins. I have put together a list of some of the most common stressors in the life of a parent of a child with special needs. It's surprising how few of them there are, really. It feels like there should be more. These are the big ones, though, the issues that permeate our lives and occupy most of our waking thoughts.

GUILT

We have guilt for the things we should be doing, should have done, are doing too much of... for unknown needs we haven't met, therapies we haven't tried, or have tried and failed at... for methods of communication that have failed, and painful medical procedures. We have general guilt about things we have no control over and guilt over our feelings of inadequacy. We have secret feelings of grief over milestones that have not been met, or will never be met. Guilt is all-pervasive, and some things are almost impossible to forgive yourself for. It's so important to acknowledge that it's there and it's not necessary.

Stress Continued

SAFETY

The safety of our children is paramount. We worry about what we are allowing our children to do, where we are taking them, and what dangerous elements we are exposing them to. They may be prone to infection, or too inquisitive, or prone to seizure. Constant vigilance is something we strive for. This is a huge stressor, and one that makes it difficult to forgive ourselves when a child is injured or something unanticipated happens.

FINANCES

This is a big one. Although it has nothing to do with the child, finances are a hot-button issue in everyone's life, especially when sacrifices are required to meet the needs of the family. Parents of children with special needs will often leave paying jobs to stay at home for their children. Therapies, medical procedures and specialized equipment may incur more expenses, and the lost income from the parent staying home is likely sorely needed. This puts a great deal of pressure on a household that may already have been struggling financially.

FUTURE

Finally, the future is a huge stressor. Most of us balk at the unknown, but the parent of a child with special needs in particular will fear for the future. What kind of life will their child have? What kind of life will the parent have? The stress of trying to provide the brightest future for a child that may always need to be supported financially while still providing the best possible therapy while they are young takes its toll, both emotionally and financially.

Each of these stressors is individually difficult. Put them all together and you get the roiling cocktail of anxiety that parents of special needs children live with every day.

Adapted from [Parental Stress With Special Needs Children, What Causes Increased Stress for Parents of Special Needs Children?](#)

Tools and Techniques for Alleviating Stress

Now that we've stressed ourselves out even more about how stressed out we are, it's time to talk about what we can do about it. The level of our commitment and the level of need in our children makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to take a few moments for ourselves. That having been said, it's more important than ever that we find a few (a very few) minutes each day to invest in ourselves. By investing in our own well-being, we are investing in our whole family's future. Since we have already acknowledged that there is no safety net for us, we have to create it. There are several ways we can do this. I broke down the different approaches in the following subgroups: Basic Health, Family Time, and Support Network. All of these are necessary, and they are all small steps that are easy to miss if you are tired and stressed out. That is why they are so important to pay attention to.

BASIC HEALTH

As I was doing my research for this piece, the advice to find time for a 20-30 minute walk each day was repeated over and over. It's quiet time, time to let your mind drift and let go of the anxiety that has built up over the course of the day. After that came advice to drink lots of water, make time for five minute breathers, schedule sleep properly, and make healthy meals in advance. We have all had days where everything

Stress Continued

Having a frozen premade healthy meal on hand is a lifesaver. Drinking adequate water and allowing yourself space in your own head can often mean the difference between keeping your cool and a screaming match that you regret even while it's happening.

FAMILY TIME

We get caught up in the logistics of day-to-day life, and often don't take the time to just exist together. We need to laugh and connect with our loved ones to remind ourselves of why we do what we do. Although I'm aware that forced family time is no fun, we still have to remember to be present in the moment and enjoy the good times when they come.

SUPPORT NETWORK

It's hard to ask for help. There are so many barriers, such as pride, fear, and denial. It's much easier to insist to yourself that you don't need any help than to reach out and ask for it. It's surprising how much people want to give if you let them. They just don't know what you want and need. Reach out to family members and friend. Find a peer mentor, such as the ones offered by WRFN. Feeling alone does not help. People are social creatures, and want to know that someone understands and wants to help. Life is far more bearable when you're not alone.

I know that this time is almost impossible to find. There is always something that will seem more important demanding your attention. But the reality is that you will be far more able to deal with whatever is demanding your attention if you just give yourself a bit of a mental break. Feed yourself well and hydrate. And laugh.

Coffee Club Update

Hi Guys,

I can't believe it's June already! I hope you are enjoying the warm weather and have some fun summer plans.

Monday, June 11, 7-9 PM The Studio (109 Ottawa St., South Kitchener): We will be doing a paint night with my friend Lauren Pink. We will all ATTEMPT to paint a certain picture led by Lauren, but creativity is welcome. **Please bring \$5 to contribute to the project and RSVP by Monday, June 4.**

Monday, June 25, 7 to 9 P. M. (Beaver Creek Housing Co-Op, 590 Bearinger Rd, Waterloo, ON N2L 6C4): Pizza at Lyn's co-op. **Please bring \$3 to contribute to pizza and beverages and please RSVP by Monday, June 18.**

If for any reason you need to contact me, please use the information below:

(519) 500-7153 (Cell Phone) E-mail: carmen.sutherland@wrfn.info

Carmen

WRFN Fact!

WRFN was founded by families for families with children with exceptionalities. Through a strong network of parents and an innovative community partnership model, we are a trusted voice of special needs families, offering lifelong support for families and individuals as they navigate the world of special needs. We continually strive to advocate for an accepting and understanding community in which we Educate, Connect and Empower families and individuals.

Upcoming Events

EVENTS

Autism Ontario Upcoming Events

Swimming—Guelph—June 16— Families are invited to come out for an enjoyable swim at the West End Community Centre! The pool and slide will be used only for Autism Ontario's for the hour!

[Registration](#) is required.

Indoor Playground—Cambridge—June 24—Children with ASD, their siblings and caregivers are invited to Playfit Kids Club. [Registration](#) is required.

Ceramics Event—Guelph—June 25— Children with ASD (ages 5-18) and their siblings (ages 5-18) are invited to Play with Clay, Guelph's paint your own pottery studio. [Registration](#) is required.

Kids Bubble Soccer—Waterloo—July 22—Children with ASD and their siblings, all aged 8 and up, and who are at least 4' tall, are invited to an evening of bubble soccer. [Registration](#) is required.

Sensory-Friendly Screenings

Cineplex Entertainment in partnership with Autism Speaks Canada is delighted to present Sensory Friendly Screenings. This program provides a sensory-friendly environment for individuals with autism spectrum disorder or anyone for whom the environment is suitable and their families to view new release films in theatres across the country.

Tickets are available the Tuesday before the screening. Find more information [here](#).

Upcoming film(s):

June 9—[Solo: A Star Wars Story](#)

June 30—[Incredibles 2](#)

Upcoming Community Living Dances

Community Living dances are sponsored by KW Association for Community Living and City of Kitchener. All dances take place at the Downtown Community Centre, 35 Weber St. W. Kitchener, from 7-9:45pm.

June 8 – Sunny Days – Sunglasses and sunhats

If you have questions please contact Lillian – 519-741-9422 OR Susan 519-654-7023

Count Me In March

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region's 6th Annual Count Me In March – A Disability Pride Event. Enjoy family-friendly activities, inspirational speakers, entertainment, snacks and refreshments, and a community march down King St.

June 14, 2018 from 5:00-8:00pm at Kitchener City Hall.

To RSVP, please join the event page at: <https://bit.ly/2KhqJUp>

Upcoming Events

Christian Horizons Summer Social

Christian Horizons is inviting everyone to their Summer Social at Steckle Heritage Farm!

Performances by Amazing Andrew, live music, strawberry social & ice cream.

Wander the charming farm and see the farm animals.

Wednesday, June 27 from 1:00 – 4:00p.m. RSVP: <https://summersocial2018.eventbrite.ca/>

Light House Adult Summer Prom

Wear your best formal or Hawaiian attire, or come as you are! For ages 16+.

Friday, June 15th from 6:30-9pm at Light House.

The cost is \$10 (includes snacks and refreshments)

RSVP by June 8th by calling 226-338-2681 or lighthouseprograms@gmail.com.

Spring Fling Dance

A community event. Everyone is welcome!

Friday, June 1st, 6:30-8:30pm at 317 Franklin St. N Kitchener

\$2/Person, Support Persons FREE , Pop/Water and Pizza \$1

adultsinmotionwr@gmail.com or 519-5773723

Relationships, Support Networks, Microboards and More!

This provincial event will be an opportunity to get connected with volunteers, allies and affiliates moving toward the incorporation of a Provincial Microboard Organization.

Agenda will include:

- Intro and some history: Why a Microboard? Why a Provincial Body?
 - Relationships: Support Networks, Circles
 - Differences between Ontario and B.C.
- The journey to making the decision to Incorporate
- More about Microboards, going deeper with family stories, B.C. and Ontario experiences

The conference will take place at Community Living Windsor on June 20th.

Register by Friday, June 15, 2018 for the in-person location in Windsor:

On-line at: <https://tinyurl.com/MicroboardsEvent>, Email: bill@webps.ca Phone: 519-966-8094, Ext. 7

To find out about a ZOOM GATHERING near you please email: kcpsolutions2@gmail.com

Ball Hockey Tournament

Face off with your friends, family and neighbours on June 9th. Gear up for a day filled with fun at the Stanley Park Community Centre. Enjoy family-friendly activities, a free BBQ lunch and entertainment courtesy of the

Stanley Park Community Association, and a garage sale from 7am-12pm at St Anthony Daniel Church.

All ages and abilities are welcome. Build your own team or register as an individual. Registration is free.

Register: eafwr.on.ca/ballhockey

Upcoming Events

PROGRAMS/RECREATION

New Day Program for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

The Michael Fleming Centre is Cambridge's newest day program for adults who have developmental disabilities! The facility is wheelchair accessible, offers a full sized gym, beautiful kitchen, and a great outdoor space! Participants can expect a full day of leisure activities including art, music, physical activities, animal therapy, gardening, games and so much more! To learn more about this program or sign up, please visit www.michaelflemingcentre.com or call 519-404-3287.

Bulldog Fitness Summer Camps

Bulldog Summer Camp offers a wide range of fun, adventurous and thrilling activities! Weekly themed events, workshops, special guests and trips to local parks are offered. This is a Ministry Licensed, inclusive camp with low staff to camper ratios.

Ages: 3-13 **Time:** 8am – 5pm with an option of extended care **Cost per week:** \$195

Location: 259 Grange Road, Guelph.

Learn more about the weekly themes [here](#).

Learn more about Bulldog Fitness at www.guelphbulldog.com.

Gym Drop-In for Youth

The Family Centre runs a drop-in gym program Monday evenings from 6-7:30 p.m. This program is for youth ages 8-17 that are affiliated with Family and Children Services and/or the Family Centre Community Partners.

This is a great opportunity to get active, have some fun and try out different sports.

For more information contact [Caitlyn Morton](#).

Axon Music Therapy—Fall Programs

Preschool Groups—The First Notes (0-2), Music on the Move (ages 2-4)

Autism n'Music (ages 4-8)

Adult Programs (ages 16+)

\$13 per class Register online at www.axonmusictherapy.com.

Contact 519-841-4982 or janel@axonmusictherapy.com for more information.

SkateABLE Program Registration

The SkateABLE™ program was developed so that children and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities can take part in ice skating in a welcoming, caring, and stimulating environment.

All adaptive equipment is provided free of charge.

Fall and winter registration is now open at www.skateable.ca.

For more information please see the following flyers: [Waterloo SkateABLE](#) [Kitchener SkateABLE](#)

Upcoming Events

Ray of Hope Day Treatment

Like a Rebel – In a society that profits from your self-doubt, liking yourself is a rebellious act.

Who: Individuals who identify as female or non-binary When: Tues. July 3rd – Fri. July 20th, 10am – 2:30pm

Claiming Your Life – Watch your words for they become thoughts; watch your thoughts for they create your world. Who: Individuals who identify as male or non-binary

When: Tues. August 7th – Fri. August 24th 2018, 10am – 2:30pm

Where: Day Treatment's new location at 659 King St. E

How: Contact (519) 743-2311 x 516 or info@rayofhope.net

Firefly Summer Camps

Robotics – It's never too early to discover STEM. FIRST LEGO League Jr. is designed to introduce science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts to kids ages 6 to 10.

Date: August 7-10, 2018 **Time:** 8:30-4:30 **Where:** 51 Breithaupt Street, Kitchener **Cost:** \$ 425.00

Jr. Robotics – Campers will build their Lego models with working motors, sensors and pulleys. They will program their models exploring a variety theme based activities. Children will also enjoy outdoor play, group games, and swimming.

Dates: July 16-20 & August 20-24 **Time:** 9:00 – 1:00pm **Where:** KidsAbility Waterloo **Cost:** \$230.00

Music Therapy Summer Camps – Each sessions is customized to each clients strength's, challenges and treatment goals.

30 minute sessions: \$50.00 60 minute sessions: \$80.00

Subsidies may be available. Music Therapy groups are covered by SSAH.

To learn more about these programs or to register please visit <https://fireflytherapy.ca/>.

Healthy Women, Healthy Family, Healthy Community

A free Arabic women's group that takes place every Tuesday from 5:30pm - 7:30pm at Our Place Family Resource Centre (154 Gatewood Dr. Kitchener). Topics include: accessing community resources, healthy eating, healthy pregnancy, family planning and rights.

Contact Wasan or Hoda at 519-745-2531/226-600-4464 OR

newcomerhealth@shorecentre.ca / wasan@kwmc.on.com

Moms & Daughters Group

A free Arabic moms and daughters group on Monday evenings at the Kitchener Downtown Community Centre. The main goal of this group is to resolve the cultural barrier between moms and their daughters and open a comfortable discussion about puberty changes and their body image. Learn tips to create and maintain a healthy mother-daughter relationship.

Contact Wasan or Hoda at 519-745-2531/226-600-4464 OR

newcomerhealth@shorecentre.ca / wasan@kwmc.on.com

Upcoming Events

Programs at Sunbeam Centre

Sunbeam Centre offers a variety of Passport & Fee-for-Service opportunities (including Adult Respite and Day Program). To see their latest brochure please click [here](#).

Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre

Our Place has shared their [May calendar](#).

Check out all the great programs they have running throughout the Region www.ourplacekw.ca.

Our Studio Programs and Events

Our Studio has a variety of weekly, monthly and summer sessions that include:

Our Studio Monday Arts Collaboration, Maloney's Musical Saturdays, Make your own Take Away -Cooking with Cathy, Karaoke Party, Ladies Paint Night, Maloney's Musical & Our Studio Art Camp

Learn more about these opportunities [here](#).

Light House - Adult Day Program for Individuals 18+

Light House offers a personalized experience in a group setting by encouraging each individual to engage in a variety of meaningful activities in a manner most suitable to their specific needs. As participants are adults, they will enjoy a program that is AGE and DEVELOPMENTALLY appropriate. With the VOICES and HELPING HANDS initiatives, individuals will be provided with opportunities to learn with, and from each other while connecting and giving back to our community.

To learn more about Light House please see their website: www.lighthouseprograms.com

Sky Zone Sensory Jumps

Sky Zone will turn off the music and dial down the distractions for the comfort and pleasure of their exceptional guests, friends and families. Sensory Jumps are held **every Thursday from 4:00pm - 5:00pm**

Sky Zone will do their best to make every effort to accommodate all jumpers.

Please call us at 519-804-4455 if you have any questions. Cost: \$15 + tax each, chaperones are free.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parents for Children's Mental Health Support Groups

Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH) run the following monthly support groups:

ADHD Parent Support Group—The third Wednesday of each month (except July, August & December)

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM **Location:** Front Door, 1770 King St. E., Kitchener Upper level

Family/Caregiver Support Group— The fourth Tuesday of each month (except July, August & December)

Time: 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. **Where:** Lutherwood, 285 Benjamin Road, Waterloo

Please visit the website for more information http://www.pcmh.ca/Waterloo_SupportGroups

Upcoming Events

APSGO - Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario Kitchener/Waterloo Chapter

www.apsgo.ca

APSGO is a non-profit, non-denominational group that meets once a week. The group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7:15-8:45pm at The Rock Spa, 396-B Victoria St. N. Kitchener.

APSGO works with parents of acting-out youth to offer support, strength and coping strategies on a wide range of issues.

Chapter Leader: Steve Keczem 519-888-1053 or 1-800-488-5666. For more information click [here](#).

Community Mental Health Support Groups for Family & Friends

General Mental Health Support Group - 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 - 8pm at
Grand River Hospital (KW Site)

Addiction and Mental Health Support Group - 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8pm at
Grand River Hospital (Freeport Site)

Both groups are continuous and members can join anytime!

Please click [here](#) for more details or call 519-749-4300.

Home Caregiver Support Program

Supporting the Caregiver in your Time of Need

This program is designed to train, educate and peer mentor you, the non-professional caregiver, as you provide care for your loved one on their end-of-life journey.

For more information click on the [flyer](#).

Tick Talk Tourette Group

Anyone that is impacted by Tourette Syndrome (and associated disorders – OCD, ADHD, anxiety, sensory processing, etc.) is welcome to the monthly meetings that take place at Extend-A-Family.

Contact wellington-waterloo@tourette.ca for details.

Preemie POWWR Chat and Play Groups

Join other moms and dads of children born prematurely, talk openly about your questions and concerns amongst a group who understands. Bring your children along for interaction with other preemies at different stages. Groups take place in Kitchener and Cambridge. Click [here](#) to see a list of upcoming dates.

Contact Carolyn at preemiepowwr@gmail.com to learn more.

STROKE RECOVERY CANADA® a program of March of Dimes Canada

Linking Survivors with Survivors is a peer support initiative providing free hospital visits to stroke patients and their families and friends wishing to connect with fellow survivors.

For further information please contact: Barbara Moore, Community Co-ordinator
1-866-380-0758 ext 263 or 519-579-5530 ext 263

Upcoming Events

Father's Support Group

The Fathers' Support group is open to Fathers in Waterloo Region who have a child (of any age) with an intellectual disability and/or autism.

It is a great opportunity for Dads to discuss a wide range of topics related to parenting a child with an intellectual disability and/or autism. Fathers learn from guest speakers as well as from each other, sharing wisdom, understanding and a chance to talk to other Dads who "Get it".

The group is hosted by DSRC and meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, from 6:30 – 8:30 pm, at 1120 Victoria Street North.

Please call Catherine Legere at 519-741-1121 ext. 2209 for more information.

The A-Team Waterloo Region

The A-Team is primarily run by individuals with Aspergers Syndrome, for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, with some assistance from Waterloo Region Family Network. The goal is to create a safe and welcoming environment to meet fellow adults with Aspergers Syndrome, discuss topics of interest, share experiences, and embrace our neurological diversity. This program is open for adults 19+ who are either diagnosed or self-identify with Asperger's Syndrome and who are seeking support. The program welcomes individuals who are able to function at a vocational level.

Upcoming Date(s): June 21

Time: Optional pre-meeting social begins at 7:00pm (come meet other participants in a casual, relaxed, and supportive setting).

Discussions start at 7:30pm and run until approximately 9:00 pm.

Location: KW Habilitation

RSVP is required to ateam.waterlooregion@gmail.com

A-Team also has a website. It has information about the group including a group description, FAQ page, and participant code of conduct. Check it out www.ateamwaterlooregion.wordpress.com/

Waterloo Region FASD Caregiver Support Group

The Waterloo Region FASD Caregiver Support Group is currently on hold and reassessing how to best support caregivers.

If you are interested in attending a future FASD caregiver support group contact Karen Huber at k.huber@dscwr.com.

Support Groups for Adults with ASD (19+) and Parents/Caregivers of Adults with ASD (19+)

Groups run separately, but are held at the same time.

Upcoming Date: May 10, 2018

Time: 6:00pm to 8:00pm **Cost:** Free **Location:** Extend-A-Family, 91 Moore Avenue, Kitchener.

Upcoming Events

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

Sleep and Your New Baby

Get to know more about your baby's sleep cycle and how to respond. A free session for parents of newborns from birth to 12 weeks of age. You may bring a family member or friend for support.

Offered at your Ontario Early Years Centre in Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.

Reserve your spot today at www.earlyyearsinfo.ca/sleep-sessions.

RESOURCES

KidsAbility Resource Guide

The KidsAbility Program and Activity Guides for Spring/Summer is a great resource for local programming.

[Birth to 5 Years Program & Activity Guide](#) or [6 Years & Up Program & Activity Guide](#)

Guides can also be found on the KidsAbility website at www.kidsability.ca

Check out the new FamilyCompassWR.ca!

Find and connect to local services for children, youth and families. The website offers three doors to help you find the resources you need.

1. Search for services: a self-search database for local health, social and recreational services for children and youth.
2. I Have a Concern: do you have a concern about your child's development? Answer a few short, confidential questions to get connected to a local organization that can help.
3. Resources for Parents: connect to Parenting Now to learn, find support and connect with other parents.

FASD Caregiver Consultations

Families and service providers can have a chance to sit 1:1 with our FASD Project Coordinators to ask questions and learn more about diagnosis, financial supports, parenting strategies, recreational opportunities, ideas for school and/or community resources.

When: Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month. No appointment necessary. Just drop in.

Where: 99 Regina Waterloo Rm 208 (Waterloo Region Public Health)

Do you have Passport funding?

For free help and advice on what is available to you, where to find supports to purchase or how to spend your funding, contact Lisa Hardeo, the Passport Community Developer for Waterloo Region, at Developmental Services Resource Centre – 519-741-1121 ext. 2227, or by email at l.hardeo@dscwr.com.

Upcoming Events

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Ontario Autism Services Study

If you are a parent or primary caregiver of a child or youth diagnosed with autism living in Ontario you are invited to provide your feedback on Ontario autism services, education, and family stress & well-being through an online questionnaire. Please click https://wlu.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2c8jlj8w8pOZWaV for more information on this project. The survey should take approximately 15-30 minutes of your time. As a small token of thanks for your participation, you may choose to enter a draw for a grand prize of \$500 or one of three consolation prizes of \$100, following completion of the survey.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University research ethics board (REB #5422).

Are you looking for a Church family to connect with?

Are you looking for a Church family to connect with? Koinonia would love to meet you! They have recently begun to provide support options for families who have children with special needs, available at their 9am service. Their sensory room is open and they have a team of “buddies” ready to support children in their classrooms. Visit www.kcf.org/kids for more details.

Autism Ontario’s Provincially Speaking Survey—2018 Edition

The information you provide will help Autism Ontario give informed feedback to stakeholders across Ontario. They will also incorporate your valuable perspective into their future programs and advocacy work. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You may also save your answers as you go along, and return to the survey at any time to complete it. The survey will be open until **June 5th, 2018**.

[Autism Ontario – Survey 2018](#)

Physical Activity and Sport for Young People in the Region of Waterloo

Physical activity and sport are important for social, physical, and psychological development; however, there are many barriers that hinder families from becoming active. The purpose of this research is to examine the physical activity and sport involvement of young people within the Region of Waterloo and determine if there are any barriers to participation. The findings will be used to develop programs that fit the needs of families in the region. The survey can be accessed at: <https://goo.gl/SrLUzW>.

KidsAbility Young Adults Facebook Group

The KidsAbility Young Adults Facebook group aims to keep young adults with disabilities (ages 14-25) informed about opportunities and events happening in Waterloo Region, Guelph and Wellington county. You can look forward to information regarding social events, volunteer and employment opportunities, educational events and more. The KidsAbility Young Adults group page is facilitated by the KidsAbility Youth Advisory Council (KAYAC). Check out the Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KidsAbilityYoungAdults/>

Upcoming Events

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Childcare Support Opportunity

Help is needed to care for two children, 2 years old and 4 years old. Both children have a seizure disorder. Mom is currently at home with the children but needs support to assist in the home.

Hours: Monday - Friday between the hours of 9am-6pm (negotiable schedule) Work starts in August 2018.

Location: private residence in Kitchener

Job Responsibilities:

provide care for both children in a safe and fun environment; educational play with toddlers; light housekeeping (vacuum, mop, dishes); G-Tube feeding (training will be provided); assist during medical emergency (training will be provided)

Police check and references required. If interested, please contact Hilde at care.wong24@gmail.com