

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 142
February 2022

Table of Contents

SEAC Updates 2

How am I Feeling &
What Would Best
Serve? 4

Steph's Corner 5

What's Happening
at WRFN 6

Community Info,
Resources and
Opportunities 8

What's In This Issue?

Although it's one of the coldest months here in Ontario, February is a month full of celebration! We kick the month off with Lunar New Year, Groundhog Day (as we hope for the signs of an early Spring!), followed by Valentine's Day and Family Day. And, as Steph writes, Random Acts of Kindness Day is a great chance to brighten a friend or stranger's day. A little kindness goes a long way -especially these days.

Within this special month come many new chances to participate in programs in Waterloo Region. There are really great opportunities to connect with others this month through workshops, programs for adults and kids, and support groups! We're especially excited about the summer camp planning that happens this time of year. Check it all out below.



Support WRFN

Waterloo Region Family Network
www.wrfn.info
info@wrfn.info
519.886.9150

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Region District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee Update ***Submitted by Carmen Sutherland, WRFN SEAC Representative***

SEAC began with a presentation on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) by FASD Coordinators at Sunbeam Developmental Resource Centre - Michelle Hughes and Karen Huber. They discussed how FASD is not completely preventable and how it affects many aspects of society including the health of pregnant persons, disability rights, and criminal justice. They also discussed the prevalence of FASD in the community, noting that the numbers are considered to be low due to lack of reporting, lack of diagnosis, and a lack of awareness. FASD is a lifelong disability, when people with FASD have the accommodations they need they can be very successful. Caregivers can also experience a lot of stigma, including the idea that they are enabling bad behaviour, or are over-protective, and over-involved. They discussed the amazing strengths of people with FASD, including being likeable, affectionate, and hardworking. Some things they may struggle with include learning, motor skills, and attention.

Assessments for FASD require a multidisciplinary approach, including paediatric medicine, psychology, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology. It is costly, which is one of the reasons so few assessments are able to be done per year. While the small number of diagnoses is unfortunate, one benefit of the thoroughness of the assessment is people can learn a lot about individuals through the assessments.

Mental health can be an issue with those with FASD. One reason for this is higher cortisol levels which lead to stress, persistent changes to normal stress pathways, and trauma. Other biological systems can also be affected, like self-regulation.

Later in the meeting there was a discussion of the Trustee proposed motion to look at suspensions and expulsions for students with exceptionalities. The Board needs to ask if they are looking at mitigating factors when thinking about suspensions. However, when suspensions and expulsions related to this are considered, the decision is not perfect because it is based on students who have a diagnosis under the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process, and not Individualized Education Plan (IEP) accommodations. It is clear that the data is not telling us everything we need right now.

As for the return to school, some parents are very excited to return because of both learning and mental health challenges with remote learning. Some students are anxious and overwhelmed and experiencing mental health struggles. The Board is adding even more mental health supports as well as speech language pathologists for the youngest learners.

The next SEAC meeting will take place on February 9, 2022.

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee Update
Submitted by Sue Simpson & Karen Kovats

WCDSB SEAC met virtually on January 5.

SEAC enjoyed a Special Olympics Presentation by Chris Mehak, Regional Manager, School & Youth Programs, Special Olympics Ontario. Highlights and information from the presentation included:

- Enriching opportunities for youth
- Over 150 volunteer-led communities
- 18 sports
- Provincial Games, School Championships, National Games, World Games
- Two streams – athletes with intellectual disability only or integrated teams
- Virtual School Competition: asynchronous challenges with one day meeting virtually to complete

There was an opportunity for a Q & A as part of the presentation.

SEAC continued its review of the Special Education Plan.

Association updates were shared.

Trustee updates were shared and can be found here. **WCDSB Board Meeting Bulletin — December, 2021 – Waterloo Catholic District School Board.**

The next meeting will be held virtually on February 2, 2022.

How am I feeling and what would best serve?

By Cristina Stanger, Self-Advocacy Liaison, WRFN

Over the past several years, I have spent a lot of my time and energy learning to identify how I am feeling. While this ability may come naturally to some, it does not for me. I can explain or define various words for emotions, but I cannot always notice different feelings I am experiencing or find words to express them in the moment. This is known as 'alexithymia' - which, if you break down the Greek root-words, means 'a lack of words for one's emotions.' This is a psychological concept, rather than a psychological diagnosis. It can be experienced by people with any type of neurology, though it appears to be more prevalent among neurodivergent populations.

I have been able to make some gains in my ability to label the emotions I experience with effort, practice, and professional guidance. Then along comes the pandemic. With so much going on and so many different factors at play, I'm left with a lot of space for emotional confusion. But I keep trying, and I am learning to 'check-in' with myself more often, so I am more aware of what and how I am feeling. How I am feeling also seems to change more frequently, and more suddenly, during the pandemic - as I am sure many of you reading this can relate to. This is not an easy time.

After identifying my feeling(s), I try to next identify what I need. Again, during the pandemic, this proves even more challenging. Identifying what I need almost feels like a cruel joke - I need a large block of downtime free of children, I need to visit with my sister, I need a vaccine for my four-year-old. What I need often isn't possible right now. This is further complicated by a lot of unknowns. I get caught up cycling through endless possible outcomes, falling back to my instinctive (unhealthy) tendency to try and find the 'right' answer. Faced with hard choices, there often isn't a clear solution.

But a mentor of mine taught me a new question to ask myself: What would best serve? This can be applied to either oneself, or one's household. I have found this approach to be immensely helpful, and I'd like to share why. First, this question steers me away from the desire to find a clear right-or-wrong solution and directs me toward thinking about what solution simply makes the most sense for me right now. Which leads to the second benefit. This question helps account for the context of the given situation. And finally, while I am still acknowledging my needs to a certain degree, I am also drawing my attention to what is attainable. What would best serve? Seriously, I have contemplated getting 'what would best serve?' tattooed on my arm because I could use the constant reminder that perfect solutions don't exist.

So, whether you find your feelings easily, or you need some resources (family, friend, professional) to coach you through, I hope you can find some meaning in there somewhere. And now I ask you, "What would best serve you, in your given context, in this given moment, with the options you have available?" I will ask myself the same thing.

Steph's Corner

Random Acts of Kindness Day February 17, 2022

This month, we will be celebrating "Random Acts of Kindness Day." I think we should be kind to each other every day, but maybe on this special day we can do something extra to brighten someone's day. It can be something big or small.

Ideas to treat others with kindness on that day:

- Shovel the neighbour's sidewalk.
- Do an extra chore around the house without being asked.
- Surprise a friend with a nice text or note, saying that you are glad that they are your friend.
- Buy someone a special treat that you know they like.
- Pay for someone else's order in a drive thru.

Showing kindness any day, especially during Covid:

- Surprise someone and make some cookies for them.
- Make food for supper for someone and drop it off.
- Phone someone to check in and ask how they are doing.

A Story of someone showing kindness to Me:

A stranger bought my hot chocolate for me at a Tim Horton's Drive Thru. They were in the car ahead of us. When we went to pay, they said that my hot chocolate had already been paid for by the person in the car in front of us. This made me feel happy. It also made me want to do the same thing for someone else.

Will you do something special on Random Acts of Kindness Day to let someone know you care about them?

Steph Prysruk

What's Happening at WRFN

All WRFN programs will be offered in virtual format or through phone and email connections until further notice. At WRFN, we're here to listen. Please reach out and let us know how we can help you and your family during these challenging times.



A NEW CHAPTER

This group is for family members & caregivers interested in preparing for the future of their youth/adult family member with a lifelong disability.

This month we are going to begin a new feature to our meetings. We have named this new feature, "Ask Us Anything" and it is just that, a chance for those who attend the meeting to ask questions or clarify points when the main part of the meeting is over.

Join our Facebook group called
A New Chapter – parent and caregiver
connections.



FEBRUARY 1, 2022

Lisa Robinson, a therapist from Andrea Warnick Consulting, is experienced at helping individuals and families become more grief literate. Join us on Tuesday, February 1 from 7:30pm to 9:00pm to consider how grief may be showing up in your life these days and how it may impact your ability to plan for the future - our next big parenting task.

All meetings are virtual
Zoom meetings from
7:30pm-9pm

If you would like to receive emails about our monthly meetings (always the first Tuesday of the month), please email Mary at maryjpike@hotmail.com and ask to be put on our email list.

What's Happening at WRFN

Last Virtual Camp Fair Session

Monday, February 28

Day Camps, Programs and Getaways for teens and adults



KidsAbility and Waterloo Region Family Network Present

Virtual Camp Fair 2022

Monday January 10th 2022, 7pm – Overnight camps

Monday January 24th 2022, 7pm – Waterloo Region Day camps for children ages 4 - 12

Monday February 28th 2022, 7pm – Day camps, day programs, and getaways for teens and adults

It's Easy to Register!

1. Sign up through the following registration links:

- [Overnight Camps](#)
- [Waterloo Region Day Camps \(4-12\)](#)
- [Day Camps/Programs/Getaways for Teens & Adults](#)

2. Receive the Zoom links by email the morning of the event, and tune in on the day(s) that you registered.

3. Join us to learn about camp options and have your questions answered by the camp directors themselves.

Questions?

For more information, contact
Sue Furey at:
sue.furey@wrfn.info
or call 226-898-9301.

Virtual Camp Nights
are **FREE** and take
place at 7 PM - 8:30 PM
each night.

See You There!

Join us, and get started with plans for your happy camper.



What's Happening at WRFN

Artful Connection

Expressive Arts

WRFN is pleased to be partnering with Wendy Newbery and Rachel Tanner from Stepping Stones Expressive Arts once again to provide Expressive Arts experiences to our community of caregivers.

No art experience needed!

Register at info@wrfn.info

CAREGIVER ART SERIES

Completed

FINDING SANCTUARY

CAREGIVER ART SERIES

OPENING DOORS

CREATIVE COMMUNITY CIRCLE

Registration Closed

NEEDLEFELT YOUR LANDSCAPE

Caregiver Art Series: Opening Doors

Wednesday, February 23, March 2 & 9, 2022

7- 9pm

- This Caregiver Art Series will focus on exploring Opening Doors using a wide variety of media and modalities
- Three-week online group for caregivers Offered in small group format

*Art kits with all your needed supplies will be provided and delivered prior to the sessions.

Registration Deadline: Friday, February 18

What's Happening at WRFN

Ask A Self-Advocate

Do you need to look at a challenge you are facing with a new perspective? Would you like to bounce ideas off someone who's been there? Cristina was diagnosed with exceptionalities as an adult, and is passionate about sharing her lived experience. Speak with Cristina to discuss your own questions and concerns to gain new insights and ideas. This program is open to individuals with disabilities, families, or service providers.

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info.

To request a booking please complete the [request form](#).

Parent Mentor Program

Through our Parent Mentor Program, we provide a means for parents to connect with each other, as well as guide, support and help empower each other to work through the highs and lows that make up their journeys. Our Parent Mentors provide information and emotional support; share ideas and strategies; and connect their mentees with community resources.

Learn more about our Parent Mentor Program [here](#).

School-Issue Parent Support Group

This peer-led group provides support, advice and a safe environment for parents who have questions or concerns about school issues affecting their children with special needs. The WRFN School Issues Support Group meets on the last Wednesday of each month.

For more information, please contact Sue.Simpson at Sue.simpson@wrfn.info.

WRFN's Family Resource Coach

During this current COVID-19 health crisis, personal support has become paramount for many families. Erin Sutherland and Sue Furey, our Family Resource Coaches, are available by phone, email, or virtual call to lend a helping hand and personal guidance to families and to connect you to updated information, resources, and virtual opportunities.

Call Erin Sutherland at 226-808-5460 or email Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info.

Call Sue at 226-898-9301 or email Sue.Furey@wrfn.info.

Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! We currently meet on Zoom, usually on Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 PM. Generally, we are just catching up and chatting, mixed with a little bit of watching YouTube.

If you would like to join us, please send me an email at carmen.sutherland@wrfn.info. I will make sure to keep you on the email list so that you receive a Zoom invite and I will also keep you aware if we ever change or add a meeting date.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Here at WRFN, we are community oriented and committed to connecting families to local events and learning opportunities.

The information provided in this newsletter is not a recommendation, referral or endorsement of any resource, therapeutic method, or service provider. You are urged to use independent judgement when considering any resource.

Inclusive Summer Camps

Beechwood Brainery

Beechwood Brainery is offering inclusive camps at both its Cambridge & Waterloo locations this summer! There are part time & full time options available, spaces are limited. Age groups include Critters (ages 4-6), Explorers (ages 7-10), and Leaders (ages 11-14). Camp is \$350 per week per child. Please email info@bbrainery.ca for registration information & forms.

www.bbrainery.ca

519-624-8728

Wilmot Family Resource Centre

Summer Camp 2022 is almost here! Join Wilmot Family Resource Centre's day camp for arts and crafts, science, group games, outdoor exploration. There's something for everyone with its energetic, outgoing and inclusive team! Camps run Monday to Friday from 9-4, but extended hour options are available. Registration opens February 14.

www.wilmotfamilyresourcecentre.ca

Deadlines for City Run Summer Camps

Important registration deadlines approaching for city-run camps:

- City of Cambridge registration opens Feb 1
- City of Kitchener registration opens March 1
- City of Waterloo registration opens March 9

Mark your calendars!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Summer Camp Directory

Summer Camp planning is in full-swing this month! WRFN, in partnership with KidsAbility, has been hosting a Virtual Camp Fair, spanning multiple nights throughout the month. Our next (and final) session will take place February 28. See poster on page 7 for more details. If you missed out on the first two sessions, not to worry! KidsAbility has been collecting everything you need on its website.

For recordings of the previous sessions, please see the following links:

- Watch the [2022 Overnight Camp Fair](#) video
- Watch the [2022 Day Camps Fair for Children](#) video

As mentioned, our next session will take place on February 28. It will cover day camps & getaways for teens and adults. To register, please visit:

- [Day Camps, Programs and Getaways for teens and adults](#)

In the mean time, you can watch the video from 2021's session.

- Watch the [2021 Camp Fair for Teens and Adults](#) video.

KidsAbility also hosted Summer Camp Planning workshops to help families plan a successful summer camp experience for children with exceptionalities.

- Watch the [2022 Cambridge Summer Camp](#) Planning Workshop video

The next session, Kitchener/Waterloo Summer Camp Planning, will take place on February 15. Register at: [summer planning workshop kw](#).

Registration Deadline: February 14, 2022. In the mean time:

- Watch the [2021 Kitchener-Waterloo Summer Camp](#) Planning Workshop video.

The Guelph-Wellington Summer Camp dates and times are to be determined.

- Watch the [2021 Guelph-Wellington Summer Camp](#) Planning Workshop video.

To search through the Camp Directory for Summer 2022, please see the links below:

- [Overnight Summer Camps Across the Province – Children to Adults](#)
- [Day Camps for Children: Inclusive Day Camps \(age 4-12\)](#)
- [Day Camps, Programs, and Getaways for Teens and Adults](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Programs & Recreation

Brightside ABA Services

Flurries and Friends

This program takes place February 1, 2022 - April 26, 2022 from 5-6 pm on Zoom. It's for children 7-9 years of age with a diagnosis of autism or intellectual disability. Your child will learn conversation skills, how to make and keep friends, and communicative skills.

Flexible Thinkers

This program takes place February 2, 2022 - April 27, 2022 from 5-6 pm on Zoom. It's for children 10-13 years of age with a diagnosis of autism or intellectual disability.

This group will learn about flexibility, self-regulation, and perspective taking.

To register for either program, please contact Lauren Harris at 519-894-6156 ext.

2904 or brightside@sunbeamcommunity.ca. Cost for both programs is \$710 and are Eligible Ontario Autism Program expenses.

Carousel Dance

Carousel Dance offers Integrated and specialized dance programs for children of all ages and abilities. The program focuses on adapted dance, creativity and social interaction in a fun and encouraging environment. Term 3 will start in February.

Learn more here: <https://bit.ly/3i0aONr>.

Artshine Virtual Accessible Art For Kids, Teens & Adults

Social distancing doesn't need to rob you of the joy that comes from expanding your art skills! Artshine has live video lessons via Zoom for all ages. Art supplies will be mailed to you in advance of classes!

Maximum 20 participants for personalized attention.

Click [here](#) for more information!

KidsAbility Transition to Adulthood Clinic updated

The Transition to Adulthood clinic has been renamed the School Years Transitions Clinic. The School Years Transitions Lead is available to meet with you to answer your questions and provide resources related to the transition to high school/the teenage years (age 10-14) OR the transition to adulthood (14+). This clinic is particularly helpful for those with a physical disability and addresses issues related to physical functioning at home and in the community. Clinics occur on a monthly basis over Zoom. To schedule an appointment, talk to your KidsAbility therapist or call Intake at 1-888-372-2259 x1214.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Bridges to Belonging

BE-Connected — Are you looking for a place to hang out and meet a great group of people who will always welcome you and celebrate who you are? Come join us on Wednesday nights here: from 7-8 P. M. at BE-Connected, a community where EVERYONE is welcome and belongs. Please email communityrelations@bridgestobelonging.ca for the Zoom information. Use the following Zoom link to join:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81897785039?pwd=bkpEZklwdHZZOVl5WHJVV1FobXpwUT09>

Meeting ID: 818 9778 5039

Passcode: 012889

BE-Friends Program — BE-Friends is a volunteer matching program that connects people with any disability 17 years or older (Friend) with a community volunteer "Buddy" (19 years or older). The pair gets together as often as they want, enjoy fun activities they choose, and become part of each other's world. BE-Friends is a bridge to meaningful reciprocal relationships and lifelong friendships. We have lots of fabulous friends waiting for buddies.

People are being matched and friendships are blooming. We invite you to become part of this friendship adventure!

If you are 19 years old or older and want to create an authentic friendship as a Volunteer Buddy to a person with a disability and be part of their journey to living their best life, we invite you to [Click Here](#).

Fun, Fearless Females - Stretch and Unwind

Do you find yourself sitting more often, feeling anxious, low mood, or stressed? Gentle movement can help you feel better now! Take some time for self-care. Join weekly to stretch and breathe your way into a more relaxed state. Join us from the comfort of your home on Mondays from 10:15am - 11:00am. Drop in for \$16.50+hst. Services are covered through Passport Funding. To register please email lori@funfearlessfemales.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Our Place Winter Programming

Make the Connection 0-1

This program helps parents interact with their babies in ways that promote secure attachment, communication, and brain development. This program combines hands-on activities, reflection and discussion. From February 2 to March 23 at 10 -11:30 am.

Your Toddler's Journey to Kindergarten

Learn skills and strategies for understanding and supporting your two-year-old's social and emotional development as a foundation for transitioning to Kindergarten. Starts February 22 to March 22 from 10-11:30 am.

Kids Have Stress Too!

Stress in preschool and kindergarten-age children can look and feel different from our stress as parents. In this group, parents/caregivers of children 3-6 years old will become more aware of children's stress and learn to help them deal with their stress. Session #1 starts on February 1 until March 8 at 6:30-7:30 pm and session #2 starts February 2 until March 9 from 1-2 pm.

The Be"Tween" Years

Come together with other parents/caregivers of children 8-12 years old to discuss the day-to-day parenting of the ever-changing Tween in your life. Sessions start February 23 and runs until April 6 at 7-8 pm.

<https://www.ourplacekw.ca/programs>

Recreational Respite Virtual Services

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practice, goals and outcomes that promote inclusion, encourage community participation and nurture social connectivity. Visit the website for the February virtual group program calendar, for Children and Youth and Young Adults!

<https://bit.ly/30TF1YF>

March of Dimes Connect & Share

Wouldn't it be wonderful to visit with someone regularly who shares your interests? March of Dimes virtual Connect & Share program was designed to make that happen.

You will be matched with a volunteer who shares your interests and your buddy will visit with you (as often as you like) – just for the fun of it.

You can have phone visits or you can have a video call using a platform like Zoom.

<https://bit.ly/3906Lfl>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Torchlight Service: Connect Virtual Adult Programming

Torchlight's Connect Program offers a variety of fun interactive activities for a small membership fee. The Virtual Program team assists and supports participants in resolving technical issues, basic education on how to access online programs, program schedules and reminders via email.

Learn more about the Connect Membership at <https://bit.ly/3x0Sd9A>.

CNIB's Virtual Program Offerings

Whether it's children and youth groups, employment workshops, tech sessions or book clubs, CNIB's innovative programs are designed to educate, entertain and engage! CNIB's free programs are available to Canadians who are blind or partially sighted as well as their families, friends and caregivers.

Visit their website to learn more: <https://bit.ly/38cRE1o>

ConnectABILITY's Friendly Connections

Friendly Connections is focused on helping its community and individuals of all ages with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, overcome isolation.

It aims to help improve the well-being of individuals through socializing and providing entertaining resources. Friendly Connections wants to connect with individuals across Canada through phone calls, video calls, emailing, messenger chats and good old fashion mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies!

<https://connectability.ca/friendly-connections/>

Province-Wide Monthly Virtual Groups for Adults with FASD

The Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at ABLE2 is happy to announce the first two Province-wide virtual groups for adults living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). They include the FASD Educational Group and the FASD Social Group.

Both groups will be held monthly. You can participate at your comfort level from the comfort of your home.

For more info contact the Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at 613-761-9252 Ext. 234 or fasd@able2.org.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

EarlyON Waterloo Region

EarlyON will open registration February 1 to 11 for online programs. They are working with the Ministry of Education, Region of Waterloo and local Public Health to determine when in-person locations will be able to reopen safely again. February 14 – February 28th programming will be shared in the coming weeks.

Online programming will continue during the closure. You can register for online programming using the “Virtual Delivery” calendar in **KEYON**. As a result of the closure of in-person programs, even more online programs have been added for your family to enjoy!

Check their website earlyyearsinfo.ca for information about programs!

You're invited to take a look at MOVE by GoodLife Kids!

MOVE is designed exclusively to get youth with special needs active, and is offered FREE to families. Registered participants get access to three live online small-group sessions each week led by one of MOVE's passionate coaches.

Learn more at: goodlifekids.com/MOVE/

Virtual Sensory Storytime

Join KPL for stories, games and songs during Sensory Storytime.

Children of all ages and abilities are welcome.

Registration is required: <https://bit.ly/3odj8NZ>

Kijingle

Kijingle Inclusive Music Education & Music Therapy is an innovative, creative, family-centred organization. They will continue to offer both in-person and virtual music and music therapy programs. Learn more at: kijingle.ca.

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region: Virtual Open Space

Looking to connect to folks on a weekly basis?

Join one of the virtual Open Spaces on Monday evenings! Both begin at 6:30pm.

Email Kim Sproul for more details at kim.sproul@eafwr.on.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops & Training

Sunbeam Development Resource Centre

Information Session on Financial Supports (Virtual)

Join Sunbeam to learn more about the various financial supports, including eligibility criteria, which are available to families who have a child ages 0-18 diagnosed with Autism and/or Intellectual Disability. Appropriate for: Family or community members who want to learn more about financial supports. This workshop will not cover OAP Funding. Presenters will be Audrey MacLeod and Lindsay Hickey. Join on Tuesday, February 8, at 11 am to 12:30 pm. Please register by February 4.

Workshop on Discussing Puberty & Sexuality with Your Child (virtual)

This workshop will address body and behavioural changes that occur during puberty. We will give you resources and strategies to help you guide your child through this next step in their development and give them the knowledge and skills to keep them safe. This is appropriate for parents and caregivers of children with developmental disabilities. Presenters will include Louise Rodgers, RN, BScN and Jessica Fortunato, M.A., BCBA. Join on Tuesday, February 22, from 6 pm to 7:30 p.m. Please register by Feb 18.

Interested persons can go to Sunbeam's website to register online at:

<https://www.sdrc.ca/workshops-and-training/> or they can email r.khanam@sunbeamcommunity.ca, or call 519 741 1121 ext. 2201 to register.

REFOCUS: Reinforcing Executive Functioning with Optimism, Compassion, Understanding, and Support

This program through CADDAC will provide parents and caregivers with important information about executive functioning and how it impacts children and teens with ADHD. Group members will learn tools and strategies to help them support their children with the areas of executive functioning that are challenging for them, and practice applying them in their homes.

This program start February 17 and runs until April 28.

<https://bit.ly/33SBwnm>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Your Tax Questions Answered

Part 1 of this webinar took place back in January, but part 2 is coming up soon!

Part 2: Using the Disability Tax Credit & Other Information

Evening session - Wednesday February 2, 2022 7 pm

Lunchtime Session - Thursday February 3, 2022 11:30 AM

This one-hour workshop will describe how to claim the Disability Tax Credit once approved, and offer information about other Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) disability-related tax programs. A representative from CRA will present and answer your questions.

<https://www.sdrc.ca/workshops-clinics-training/>

Community Living Ontario

Community Living Ontario is teaming up with PooranLaw to host two webinars.

Legal Guide to Engaging Support Workers For People With Disabilities

This session will include an introduction to the Legal Guide and will highlight key takeaways from each chapter and the resources that are included in the guide. The audience will learn about important legal issues related to paying support workers, including: funding sources; understanding the differences between employees and "independent contractors"; best practices for hiring workers; key rules for managing support workers; health and safety and human rights issues; insurance and taxation considerations; and special rules related to live-in support workers.

Join on Tuesday, February 1, from 7 - 8:30pm

Meeting Registration - Zoom

Estate Planning Guide

Join us for an overview of the Inspiring Possibilities: Estate Planning Guide, jointly prepared by CLO and PooranLaw. Following a review of the guide's highlights and legislative updates, participants will leave with a better understanding of: Administration of trusts and estates—with a particular emphasis on the role and responsibilities of trustees—including the disposition of assets; tax filings; financial statements and investment considerations; ODSP reporting; and other related legal matters.

Join on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 from 7 -8:30pm

Register here

Information, Opportunities & Resources

WWDSS Evening Speaker Series

Speech & Language Development: Come join Heather McLennan, Speech Language Pathologist and listen to her discuss Speech & Language Development for your family member with Down syndrome. What can you be working on at home? What should you be focusing on for Speech and Language development? What games and activities are best? Heather will discuss things like this and more in this workshop that is geared to parents and caregivers.

- Thursday, February 3rd, 2021
- 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
- ZOOM (A zoom link and password will be sent to those who register)
- Members \$5 each, Non-Members \$15 each

Register by Tuesday, February 1st and make sure you are logged in as a member in order to get the member rate: <https://www.wwdss.ca/event/292>

Social Skills: Heather McLennan has been working on social skill development with children, teens, and young adults with Down syndrome in our community for more than 30 years. What should you be focusing on for your son/daughter to practice social skills at home? What are the best ways for your family member with Down syndrome to develop their social skills no matter their age. Heather will be discussing these things and more in this workshop that is geared to parents and caregivers.

- Thursday, February 10th, 2021
- 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
- ZOOM (A zoom link and password will be sent to those who register)
- Members \$5 each, Non-Members \$15 each

Register by Tuesday, February 8th and make sure you are logged in as a member in order to get the member rate: <https://www.wwdss.ca/event/291>

Lutherwood: Modern Approaches to Interviews

On February 15 from 1 pm- 2 pm, Lutherwood is hosting a webinar on modern approaches to interviews. Are you confident to talk about yourself in an interview? Lutherwood will discuss ways to help you prepare and shine during the next chance you have to meet with an employer. Register at <https://bit.ly/3r3uXhr>
Other events from Lutherwood can be found at:

<https://www.lutherwood.ca/employment/events>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Parenting Now

Winter 2022 Parenting Series

This series of one-hour positive parenting “snapshots” will get you thinking about your choices as a parent and help you develop strategies to become the parent that you want to be. Each session stands alone. You can attend just one or all of them. All Snapshots will be presented on Zoom. Registration is required.

Teens: The Joys and Frustrations.

- Tuesday February 8, 2022 from 7 – 8 pm

Encouragement or Praise. What is the Difference?

- Thursday February 17, 2022 from 12 – 1 pm

Connection or Correction. How do they work together?

- Monday, March 21, 2022 from 7 – 8 pm

Positive Parenting ‘Conversation Series’ – Chat with Kris and Teresa

This series of one-hour positive parenting conversations will be less “formal” than our workshops. The intention of our conversation series is to invite and encourage parents & caregivers to join us for conversation and strategies on your parenting journey. One of our Parenting Now Staff will facilitate each session. They will be presented on Zoom; registration is required and limited to 15 participants.

Let’s Talk about “Social media and screen time” – We live in a world filled with social media, is your child spending too much on screen time? How about you as a parent? Share some concerns and strategies.

- Tuesday, February 22, 2022 from 12 – 1 pm

Let’s Talk about “Teens – the Joys and Frustrations” Come with your stories, questions & concerns, share support and learn strategies from each other.

- Thursday, March 10, 2022 from 7 - 8 pm

To register for any Parenting Now webinars or for more info, contact: parenting@kwcounselling.com.

Individualized Funding Coalition

Join the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario for its next Coffee & Conversations gathering on Wednesday, February 16 at 6:30-8:00 pm. These have been attended primarily by individuals and families but also by independent facilitators, allies, and partners who have been able to answer questions and give ideas.

<https://bit.ly/3nYa5zu>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)

Bricks and Mortar: Exploring Your Home Ownership Option

Thursday, February 10 at 10-11:30 am

Join DSO Housing Navigators for a free virtual presentation on various types of home ownership options and resources. Topics covered will include: affordable home ownership, building on what you have, co-ownership and co-housing, tiny homes, condominiums, funding opportunities (that may exist in your area), guides to help you, the value of partnerships. It is open to people with a developmental disability, their family members and/or support networks, and professionals in Ontario.

<https://conta.cc/3g3BATP>

National Advisory Council on Poverty

In December, the National Advisory Council on Poverty (the Council) released our 2021 report, **Understanding Systems**. The Council has organized its first phase of engagement sessions around seven broad themes related to poverty in Canada. Each session will be held virtually over Zoom. The dates, times, themes and discussion questions for each session are as follows:

- Session 1: The future of work: From precarity to security
 - Date and time: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 1 to 2:30 pm
- Session 2: For communities, by communities: Grassroots responses to poverty
 - Date and time: Thursday, February 10, 2022, 1 to 2:30 pm
- Session 3: The poverty trap, chronic and transient poverty: vulnerabilities and opportunities throughout the life course
 - Date and time: Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 1 to 2:30 pm
- Session 4: Transitions in and out of support systems: poverty prevention, early interventions, and targeted supports
 - Date and time: Thursday, February 17, 2022, 1 to 2:30 pm
- Session 5: The future of health and poverty: Building resiliency, equity and justice
 - Date and time: Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 1 to 2:30 pm
- Session 6: Future proofing Canada's social safety net
 - Date and time: Thursday, February 24, 2022, 1 to 2:30 pm
- Session 7: Climate change and poverty: Addressing vulnerabilities, creating resiliency
 - Date and time: Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 1 to 2:30 pm

Please RSVP through our Secretariat's e-mail address at EDSC.CCNP-

NACP.ESDC@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca for all sessions you wish to attend, no later than January 31, 2022.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

KidsAbility Summer Camp Planning Workshops

Are you thinking about a summer camp for your child? Join KidsAbility for a summer camp planning workshop over Zoom! This workshop is designed to give caregivers and service providers the information they need to plan a successful summer camp experience for a child with special needs.

In this free parent workshop, you will learn about:

- How to find inclusive and specialized camps in your community
- The different types of inclusion supports available and how to access them
- Funding options for camp fees and specialized supports
- Sharing information about your child
- Preparing your child for camp
- Municipal and YMCA camps and supports available

Registrants will receive a Zoom link via email the morning of the workshop.

Kitchener/Waterloo Summer Camp Planning Workshop:

Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Location: Online via Zoom

Register: <https://summerplanningworkshopkw.eventbrite.ca>

Registration Deadline: February 14, 2021

Questions? Contact Meg Shirley at mshirley@kidsability.ca or 519-886-8886 x1302

Healthy Sleep Habits – Helping You Get a Good Night's Sleep

It's important for caregivers to stay healthy and get a good night's sleep, especially when you are worried about your loved one. This Ontario Caregiver Organization's webinar features sleep expert, Alanna McGinn, who will teach you how to incorporate proper sleep hygiene into your daily life, with tips and strategies to quiet your mind, shorten sleep onset, and strengthen your relationship with sleep and your bed.

February 24, 2022 at 12 -1 pm.

[Register here.](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Ontario Independent Facilitation Network

OIFN has shared 2 of 3 Building Capacity in Independent Facilitation OIFN Shared Learning Events. The last will occur in March:

- March 1 & 3, 2022: Conscious Listening and Speaking

OIFN believes in learning together and sees people, along with the support of their loved ones, as the directors of their lives.

Please know that, where costs would stop someone from participating, OIFN has some bursaries available for people, family members, and/or loved ones, and independent facilitators. There is a link to the Bursary Request Form on the flyer.

If you have any questions, please contact Bill Rollo, OIFN Administrative Assistant, at 519-966-8094 or brollo@oifn.ca.

<https://tinyurl.com/OIFNSharedLearning21-22>

A Vision for Quality Mental Health Care for All

On February 24, 2022 from 12 - 1 pm, join The Mental Health Commission of Canada for a conversation with health leaders on quality mental health care for both service users and healthcare workers. Hear the vision and first-hand experiences of members of the Quality Mental Health Care Network, co-led by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and HealthCareCAN.

Register at: <https://bit.ly/33P1rfQ>

Partners for Planning (P4P)

Are you interested in learning about the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), a made-in-Canada, long-term savings vehicle designed specifically for individuals with disabilities? Then register for one of P4P's upcoming *Intro to the RDSP* webcasts.

- [Thursday, February 10 at 3pm](#)
- [Wednesday, March 9 at 10am](#)
- [Thursday, April 21 at 2pm](#)
- [Wednesday, May 18 at 12pm](#)
- [Monday, June 13 at 3pm](#)

For more information about the RDSP be sure to check out the RDSP resources on the [Planning Network](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Family Alliance Ontario

Despite the unknowns, we can take steps. It's time to help your loved one live their best life, now, and in the future. No need to travel this road alone —especially as Covid carries on. We can share ideas, advice and support with like-minded families. What are some Covid-friendly ways that your family can connect with other families? Check out the fifth and final action guide in our Managing the New Normal series to learn more.

Managing The New Normal Action Guide Here: [Connecting to Family Networks and Supportive Relationships](#)

DON'T FORGET TO READ:

[Action Guide One: Moving Beyond the Pandemic](#)

[Action Guide Two: Staying Healthy and Motivated](#)

[Action Guide Three: Reconnecting with Friends and Family](#)

[Action Guide Four: Opportunities to Get Involved](#)

Resources from Inclusion Canada

Pathways to Home Ownership — The Pathways to Homeownership outlines an inclusive model of homeownership and provides solutions to the problems faced by people with intellectual disabilities when buying their own house as well as resources to navigate the process.

[Learn more here: https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2.](https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2)

Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

CCRW Employment Services help job seekers with disabilities get connected with local businesses. They provide industry specific training, workplace accommodation and adjustment planning, employer matching, and access to a hidden job market.

For more information or to register, call: Jennie Di Girolamo – Employment Facilitator (519) 571 6788 ext. 7661 | [jdigirolamo@ccrw.org](mailto:jdigiolamo@ccrw.org)

<https://www.ccrw.org/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The Family Support Network for Employment

FSNE is proud to announce the launch of the “Learning Path to Employment,” an online course designed for families of individuals with a developmental disability. The goal of the course is to provide individuals and their families with the knowledge and tools they need to advocate for, and secure, meaningful paid employment. The course can be found here: <https://fsne.ca/courses/learning-path-to-employment/>. The course can be accessed 24/7, is free, and there is no time limit in which you must complete it.

You Don't Have to Do this Alone - Parents for Children's Mental Health

If you are a parent/caregiver worried about your child, or a young person looking for help yourself – please reach out. Our network of child and youth mental health centres has 4,000 professionals ready to help children, youth and families with free counselling and treatment. We provide care in person, on the phone and virtually. No problem is too big or small.

Find your closest child and youth mental health centre here:

<https://www.family.cmho.org/>

March of Dimes Hi, Tech!

If you have a disability and are 18 years or older, you are eligible to be matched with a tech support coach. Your coach will answer your technology questions and help you get you set up.

To learn more visit shorturl.at/yEGK3.

Take5

Take5 is an online space for children and youth in foster care, in group homes, or living away from their parents in Ontario. On Take5 you can find information for your age on things like: coping with stress, stuff about your identity and culture, relationships, and who to ask for help. You can also find activities, podcasts, videos and online events. Take5 is for children 6 to 12 and youth 13 and above.

Visit the [Take5 website](https://take5.ca).

Shared Connections

Inclusive and Accessible Tech Support

Shared Connections can help you get connected, finding & adapting technologies to meet your unique needs. Shared Connections is a non-profit committed to inclusion for people with multiple disabilities.

www.sharedconnections.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The Vulnerable Persons Registry

The Vulnerable Persons Registry promotes communication between vulnerable persons, the people who support them and the police. This information will assist officers when responding to an emergency involving the vulnerable individual. The registry provides quick access to critical information about a registered person, such as who to call in an emergency, a detailed physical description, and any particular sensitivities that the person may experience.

www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca

KidsAbility Resources

Foundational Family Supports — KidsAbility provides Foundational Family Services to anyone in the community — no diagnosis needed. Staff will work with you to find workshops, resources, groups, support and more to help you be successful. You do not need to be a KidsAbility family to access these services. Learn more about this support at <https://kidsability.ca/foundational-services>.

ConnectAbility.ca COVID-19 Resources

Supporting individuals, families and caregivers.

Find answers to your COVID-19 questions, share experiences and discover events to stay active and connected. Visit <https://connectability.ca/covid-19/>

Family Compass Waterloo Region

Family Compass Waterloo Region is a central website to guide families to services for children, youth, and families in our community. The website offers the option to find information about general services for children and youth as well as specialized services that can help to address developmental concerns.

Family Compass has added a page specifically pertaining COVID-19 resources for children, youth, and families. It can be reached at <https://bit.ly/3t0lkar>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Ontario Caregiver Association

SCALE Program: Caregiver Needs and Well-being: [**SCALE \(Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment\)**](#) focuses on topics relevant to new or experienced caregivers, including caregiver stress, managing feelings of anxiety or guilt, and self-care for the caregiver. Registration is required.

Caregiver 101: Learn about caregiving roles, conflicts in caregiving, caregiver burnout, what to expect, developing resilience, and what supports are available. Access the online course [here](#).

Young Caregivers Connect: Young Caregivers Connect is a website to help young caregivers aged 15-25. The website was designed in collaboration with, and for, young caregivers and offers information and resources and a way to connect that address their unique needs. Visit the website [here](#).

Time to Talk Podcast: Join Host Michelle Jobin along with experts and caregivers, to discuss things that matter most to caregivers. Access the podcast [here](#).

CNIB Scholarships & Awards

Every year, CNIB's scholarship program awards multiple scholarships, bursaries and other awards to people who are blind or partially sighted in recognition of their educational aspirations and achievements.

[Click here](#) to learn more about these opportunities and to apply.

Safe Voluntary Isolation Site

A safe place for you to stay to help you rest and recover, and to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within your home and in the community. There are no costs to you.

To learn more visit: [**regionofwaterloo.ca/IsolationSite**](https://regionofwaterloo.ca/IsolationSite)

Email: safeisolation@regionofwaterloo.ca

Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities — How to Stay Safe, Well and Connected

There is lots of talk right now about COVID-19 or the Coronavirus. We may come across lots of information out there, but it is not always easy to understand and it can be confusing. This page has resources from around the world and information to support people with developmental disabilities and their families during this time.

[**https://bit.ly/3hWruX8**](https://bit.ly/3hWruX8)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Support Groups

Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society (WWDSS)

The Mothers' Connection group is a great opportunity for moms who have a child with Down syndrome (age 6 and under) to share celebrations, struggles, goals, practical information, and resources with one another. The program runs monthly, every second Wednesday at 1:30pm (currently online). WWDSS also offers a Mom's Night Out and Dad's Night Out program for parents to connect and support one another. For more information please email info@wwdss.ca.

Transgender Partners and Friends Peer Support Group

The Partners, Family and Friends of Transgender Folks Peer Support Group is a support group for non-transgender folks in the orbit of transgender folks where they can discuss their challenges and build community and solutions. Participants are welcome to share or simply listen and learn from the experiences and perspectives of others. The group meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Please request access information by emailing trans@ourspectrum.com.

PFLAG Waterloo, Wellington & Perth Region (Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)

The Waterloo Wellington Perth Chapter of PFLAG invites you to attend our support group focusing on topics of interest to parents, family and friends of LGBTQ individuals.

PFLAG Canada is Canada's only national organization that helps all Canadians with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

More info at: <https://www.facebook.com/PFLAG.WWP/>

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County Virtual Peer Support Network

Are your kids staying engaged with online learning? Are you looking for ideas to keep them (and yourself) motivated?

Join the Peer Support Network and meet other parents on a similar journey to yours. LDAWC peer support network's goal is to provide an informal setting to share experiences, challenges, successes and resources.

This group takes place the second Monday of the month from 7:00-8:30pm

Learn more on their [website](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington remains available online through a private Facebook group.

They look forward to returning to the Cambridge Family Early Years Centre and Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. In the meantime, they suggest you review the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation's website to see the supports and resources available to you during this pandemic.

Visit: <https://www.cpbfbfbpc.org/covid19>

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support, formally known as The Black Parent & Caregiver Support Group (BPSG) was created to provide a safe space for families of African descent to come together to meet and connect, share resources, expertise and needs, inspire and support one another through our unique and often challenging and isolating journey of raising Black children or supporting a sibling, of any age, with a disability. Sawubona is a Zulu greeting. It literally means "I see you." More than words of politeness, sawubona carries the importance of recognizing the worth and dignity of each person.

Location/Meetings: This is a volunteer-run group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. via ZOOM. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees.

Contact: For more details or to register, please contact us at bpsgroup2020@gmail.com.

Chronic Pain Monthly Support Group

This group is focused on discussing chronic pain coping strategies and how you can apply them in your life. Short mindfulness exercises will be included. Led by a facilitator who has experience with chronic pain. People can register anytime. Contact intaketeam@carizon.ca for more information or to register.

Stork Secrets

Stork Secrets is a pregnancy and postpartum adjustment peer support group from Our Place. If you're feeling nervous, anxious or overwhelmed about parenthood, you are not alone. Stork Secrets is a place for support, discussing coping strategies, ask questions and develop friendships. To register, visit www.ourplace.ca/programs.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The A-Team of Waterloo Region

The A-Team of Waterloo Region is primarily run by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, with some assistance from Bridges to Belonging. Their goal is to create a safe and welcoming environment to meet fellow adults (age 18+) with Asperger's Syndrome (ASD – level 1), discuss topics of interest, share experiences, and embrace their neurological diversity.

Please go to <https://ateamwaterlooregion.wordpress.com/about/> for more information on how to register and attend the upcoming virtual meetings!

Super Dads Super Kids

This is an online group for dads with children ages 0-6. Join the group to talk about what you think it means to be a dad. Learn ways to connect with your child.

Participate in fun activities with your child(ren). Started: January 13, 2021 When: Thursdays, 7:30-8:30 pm or Saturdays 9:30-10:30 am. Where: Zoom

Contact Roberto at capc@carizon.ca to register or for more information.

Groups from Muslim Social Services

Resilient Girls — Building young girls' resilience, self-esteem, networking skills and know how about family dynamics during COVID-19 related uncertain times. Ages 13-18.

Contact counsellor@muslimsocialserviceskw.org or call 519-772-4399 x 2707.

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario (APSGO) is for parents struggling with the behavior of a child, youth or young adult.

APSGO support groups help parents/guardians develop effective strategies, set limits and boundaries, and build better relationships with their children.

The group currently meets via Zoom on Wednesday at 7:15pm.

Contact Steve Keczem at 519-888-1053 or go to apsgo.ca for more information.

Strong Moms, Safe Kids

Strong Moms, Safe Kids is a program from KW Counselling for mothers who may have experienced abuse in intimate relationships. Interpreters can be provided for those not comfortable communicating in English. The group provides time for families to learn about the impact of abuse together, and also provides smaller groups for mothers, youth and younger children. If you are interested in talking about whether the Strong Moms, Safe Kids program is right for your family, please call 519-884-0000 and ask for the Strong Moms, Safe Kids Coordinator.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

South Asian Wellness Group

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-In group every Thursday from 3 pm to 4:30pm. With a South Asian Peer Facilitator fluent in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, this group will focus on coping, recovery, and fostering hope from a South Asian lens. This group is intended for folks who identify as South Asian to connect and build community with one another. ALL Self Help & Peer Support groups are open to adults living in Waterloo Wellington communities who identify as living with mental health or/and substance use issues. To join this group or if you have questions about it, please send us an email: selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca. To view this information in Punjabi, **[please click here](#)**.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

Every Canadian Counts (ECC) Call for Stories

The ECC has put out a call for stories from individuals living with disabilities across Canada. You can help by asking your supporters, contacts, family and/or friends to tell the personal stories that will convince policymakers and the wider Canadian public of the need for better services and supports. If you have stories of your own to share, please do.

For more information about the stories project and how you can share your own stories please visit [here](#).

Intersection of disability and cultural identity survey

Individuals aged 18+ are invited to participate in a research survey that will help reinvent an inclusive environment, via disability programming, by understanding the needs of different cultural groups. For more information, please email makh0100@mylaurier.ca.

Please [click here](#) for the flyer and instructions how to participate.

Elmira District Community Living

As part of the Elmira District Community Living strategic plan to transform day supports, they are seeking input from potential, future participants who live within their catchment area. Any feedback is appreciated. No identifiable information will be shared unless you choose to provide them with your contact information at the end of the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HBYHDYY>

State of employment for individuals with a developmental disability in Ontario

Since 2018, the Family Support Network for Employment (FSNE) has been working to discover possibilities and advocate for needed transformations in the developmental services and employment system. FSNE is currently taking a survey on the state of employment for individuals with a disability in Ontario to fill the current gaps in knowledge on this topic. To participate, visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TS7ZJBJ>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CAMH Virtual Healthcare Study for Patients with Developmental Disabilities

During COVID-19 there has been a huge increase in the delivery of virtual primary care. CAMH is conducting interviews (online or by phone) to learn what is working well and what needs to be improved to support high quality care for patients with developmental disabilities.

Interested or want to learn more?

Contact Avra Selick at avra.selick@camh.ca or 416-535-8501x30127

Advocacy Kit for Increasing Special Services at Home

People for Personalized Funding (PFPF) has created an advocacy kit for increasing Special Services at Home.

Bulletin from PFPF about Special Services at Home **How to Take Action**

Survey: Use of Services for 0-6 Children by Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMHP) at the Hospital for Sick Children, in collaboration with the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (The Centre), Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN) and Children First would like to hear your thoughts about how our child and youth mental health system can improve the quality of services for children under 6 throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more at <https://bit.ly/39fKVFe>.

Accessibility Standards Canada

The public review for the draft standard ASC/CSA B651.2, *Accessible design for automated banking machines and self-service interactive devices* is now taking place.

Considering accessibility in the design of products, systems, environments and facilities is key to ensuring equity for Canadians with disabilities.

Public review of the draft standard is open until March 18, 2022.

Interested parties may access the draft on the [CSA Group website](#). Select your language of preference from the menu in the top right.

A one-time registration is required. You are invited to comment directly online.

We are proud to collaborate with CSA Group in contributing to a more inclusive and barrier-free Canada.

For additional information or questions, please [email CSA Group](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

Basic Income Guarantee is the best way to improve lives

This piece in the Hamilton Spectator was written by Colleen Cooper and Carol Stalker. It discusses the Ontario government's Poverty Reduction Strategy launched over a year ago, and highlights some of its shortcomings discovered by disability rights activists. To read this article, visit: <https://bit.ly/3rSFMet>

Ontario Increasing Access to Services for Children with Autism

The Ontario government is making it easier for families to access services in the needs-based Ontario Autism Program (OAP) with the selection of the Independent Intake Organization (IIO), which will help families navigate the program from intake to funding. The province is also launching the Entry to School Program to support children on the autism spectrum entering kindergarten or Grade 1 for the first time and awarding grants to service providers to hire and train new clinical staff so they can support more families.

The IIO will be delivered through a partnership between Accerta Services Inc., McMaster University, Autism Ontario, and HealthCare 365. The IIO partners bring together significant experience in administering public programs, supporting children and youth on the autism spectrum and their caregivers, care coordination, service navigation, research, and healthcare education.

The IIO is scheduled to start supporting families in spring 2022 and will play a key role in providing more families with funding to purchase core clinical services for their children and youth. For more information, visit:

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001279/ontario-increasing-access-to-services-for-children-with-autism>

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region

Extend-A-Family is in urgent need of homes for its FamilyHome program which places people with exceptionalities in need of housing with a family sponsor. Providing a caring, stable home environment that promotes acceptance, a focus on dignity, and helping to create belonging are the foundations of FamilyHome.

<https://www.eafwr.on.ca/programs/familyhome/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre CAMH

In response to the rapid spread of the Omicron Covid-19 variant, CAMH has shared the following resources to help those who are feeling uncertain .

- In the latest H-CARDD blog, Dr. Yona Lunskey shares five important actions we can take to stay safe right now. [Read the Blog Post here](#)
- We also have a new Easy Read pamphlet about the third vaccine shot and how to go about booking an appointment. [Find the Easy Read here](#)