

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 144
April 2022

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What's In This Issue?

April is an exciting month for the team at WRFN, as we near closer to our Evening of Elegance signature fundraising event on April 30. If you are coming, we can't wait to host you. If you can't make it this year, we understand and appreciate your continued support!

As always, this issue of Family Pulse has a wide selection of events, webinars, programs, support groups, and so much more for our families, caregivers, and self-advocates. And there's still a variety of in-person AND online opportunities for all comfort levels.

We hope your month is filled with opportunities of connection, inspiration, and warm weather! Wishing you and your family good health as we navigate through this latest stage in the pandemic.

WE'RE ON LINKEDIN!



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***

WRDSB SEAC met on March 9, 2022. At this SEAC meeting, PPM 81 was discussed. Revisions to health care would mean that work traditionally done by nurses or Personal Support Workers would have to be done by staff, and that therapy will be following families privately.

Much of the funding the Board was worried would end when contracts ended is being put in permanently, which means EAs and CYWs will be able to remain. There will be approximately \$500,000 for student health and well-being. There will also be \$240,000 of local special education funding. This and other funding means the funding for the year is almost status quo.

There was also discussion of Right to Read, which has been declared a basic and essential human right. There was a conversation about the importance of access to language and reading for early learners and how students do not need to be assessed to have access to skill learning like decoding strategies. One new teaching tool is a sound wall where students can learn and practice sound groups instead of just memorizing letters/words on a traditional word wall. The report is advising school boards as well as post-secondary institutions (faculties of education/teacher's colleges) about reading.

The next WRDSB SEAC meeting will take place on April 13, 2022.

SEAC Updates

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

WCDSB SEAC met virtually on March 2, 2022.

Chris Runstedler, Assistive Technology Resource Teacher, presented an overview of the assistive technology programs available to students and staff within the board. Chris explained the various ways that students are supported through assistive technology programs and also provided an overview regarding Special Equipment Amount (SEA) which provides funding to school boards to offset costs of equipment essential to support individual students. This need must be recommended by a qualified professional. The equipment is to provide students with accommodations essential to access the Ontario curriculum and/or Board-determined alternative programs and/or to attend school.

SEAC also discussed plans for use of the PRO Grant. We will be hosting a presentation by Paul Davis on Internet safety in May.

Association updates were shared.

Trustee Bill Conway provided a Trustee update. The update can be found through this link. **WCDSB Board Meeting Bulletin — February, 2022 - Waterloo Catholic District School Board**

The next WCDSB SEAC meeting will be held virtually on April 6, 2022.

We're All Brave

Carmen Sutherland, Coffee Club Coordinator

Last night, I was watching a show where a character had a chance to achieve a lifelong dream, and instead, she self-sabotaged and made a lot of people angry, including the character that helped her achieve the dream. When I was watching the scene where the two characters were yelling at each other, all I could think was: Can't you see that your friend is scared...can't you see that's why she wrecked her own dream?"

All this to say, I don't feel like a very brave person. It's funny because stereotypes (you know, the ones that say exceptionalities are negative) say that I should be very brave because I've "been through so much," but for me the most difficult part of my life were the sick years when I was a baby that I do not remember.

So, today, I'm here to salute all you brave parents who do the best for their children each day, when you have a million other worries, including, I'm sure: What if I'm doing it wrong?" I salute all you brave kids and teens who attend school every day, however that looks, and keep trying even through hard subjects, and weird friend issues, and teachers and therapists who challenge you. I salute the young adults and adults who have moved out, or are practicing independence, or have achieved a goal that no one really understands except for you. I salute everyone doing brave things.

One of the bravest things I've done is moving out of my parents house and going to college 2.5 hours away. One thing I learned during that time is how you have to celebrate your own accomplishments, even if no one else understands them. If someone goes to the store by themselves, and that was something they'd been too anxious to do previously, CELEBRATE! For others, that may not be a big deal, but for you, it's AMAZING! Someday, I hope to do more brave things.

Steph's Corner

Earth Day

This year Earth Day is on Friday, April 22, 2022. Did you know that the first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970? Today, more than a billion people take action on Earth Day around the world. What can we do to take care of our earth?

Earth Day Activities:

- Pick up garbage in your neighbourhood, using gloves and proper equipment.
- Do not litter.
- Recycle paper and plastic containers using the blue boxes.
- Don't turn on any lights during the day or evening on Earth Day.
- Go on an Earth Day Scavenger Hunt – Take your camera and photograph things in nature. Appreciate the flowers, a squirrel, a tree, a bird, the leaves and the stones that are part of this earth.
- Make a pinecone and peanut butter bird feeder.
- Create a bee and butterfly garden.
- Build a vegetable garden.

My Vegetable Garden:

I am learning lots about vegetable gardens because my SIL worker and I are planning a garden in my front yard. Growing your own food is a good way to celebrate Earth Day. Having a garden is better for the environment because there is less packaging. If you have a garden, you can compost your food wastes and use them to fertilize your garden. We are going to get vegetable seeds for my garden this month and start growing them. I can hardly wait!

What will you do this Earth Day? Together we can protect our environment and make our earth a healthier place.

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

April ANC Meeting: Network Friends Share Their Stories

We would like to invite you to join our April **A New Chapter** meeting where we will be looking at Support Networks/Circles from the perspective of the friends who make up these groups. The meeting is on Tuesday, April 5 from 7:30 - 9 pm on Zoom.

Networks or Circles are groups of people from the community who intentionally gather around a person to form a social circle. Networks are key elements of adult life for many with disabilities as they are a consistent and supportive social group where members come together as a large group a few times a year, or may connect individually with the person at the centre of the network. Network friends are not paid. They are not "volunteers." They are friends who are invested in each other and who enjoy each other's company. For anyone who may be at risk of social isolation, a network or circle ensures connection and community.

Our session is titled, Network Friends Share Their Stories and will include the following:

- An introduction and overview by Lorna Aberdein. Lorna is someone with many years of network experience as a network friend, a parent of someone with a network, and as a trainer of network facilitators. She will share some of her learning about the importance of networks and what it is like to be in one.
- A panel of four network friends - Ryan Gray, Heather Morgan, Liam Morassut and Laura Ruby - will talk about how they were approached to join a network and what the experience is like for them.
- As always, we'll have a time for you to ask questions of the speakers and learn more about why networks/circles work.
- Our new feature, Ask Us Anything will follow from 9-9:30pm. This is a time for interested folks to stay on the Zoom call and ask questions about the topic of the evening or anything else they are wondering about. Sue Furey, a WRFN Family Resource Coach will be available, as will a member of the ANC planning group.

If you would like to join us for this evening, **please RSVP to Mary Pike** (maryjpik@hotmai.com) and you will be sent the link prior to the meeting.

What's Happening at WRFN

A New Chapter

Upcoming meeting topics:

April 5th – Network Friends Share Their Stories

May 3rd – Microboards: Basic Facts and Family Experiences

June 7th – Jessie-Lynn MacDonald – Self-Care: Beyond the Bubblebath

A New Chapter is a group for family members & caregivers interested in preparing for the future of their youth/adult family member with a lifelong disability. All meetings are virtual Zoom meetings from 7:30 - 9 pm. They always take place the first Tuesday of the month.

If you are interested in A New Chapter and would like to join, please reach out to Mary at maryjpik@hotmai.com. You can also join our Facebook group called "A New Chapter – parent and caregiver connections."



What's Happening at WRFN



We are so pleased to announce the return of Waterloo Region Family Network's annual fundraising event, Evening of Elegance. We would like to formally invite you to join us at our in-person event at St. George Banquet Hall on Saturday, April 30. Doors open at 6 pm, with dinner following at 6:30 pm.

We are so excited to have the opportunity to meet with you in person. Public safety and the health of our guests is our number one priority, therefore we will be following Covid-19 safety measures like wearing masks and hand sanitization during the evening. Tickets are on sale now!

[Buy Your Ticket](#)

We are excited to share that the WRFN office is moving to Waterloo!

You will now be able to find us at KidsAbility's Waterloo site! Our new address is 500 Hallmark Drive, Waterloo, ON, N2K 3P5. If you'd like to reach us by phone, our numbers have stayed the same. You can find staff email addresses on our website here, too!

WRFN has been located within KidsAbility at The Family Centre in Kitchener for the past eight years providing many great opportunities for connections within KidsAbility and with other organizations. We've enjoyed creating many lasting friendships and partnerships during that time. We will continue to offer some support group programs and events at The Family Centre in the future and look forward to staying in touch.

As of April 4, you will find us in Waterloo. We're looking forward to renewing and making new connections at our new office location and to continuing to support parents, caregivers and their loved ones from across Waterloo Region.



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.

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 Team

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

Adults in Motion Camps

Adults in Motion participants enjoy friendships, music, movement, learning new skills, special events, excursions and volunteering in the community. Join Adults in Motion for some summer days or choose full weeks that work for your schedule. Approx. age 16+. Virtual and in-person options available.

<https://adultsinmotion.org/programs/>

LEG Up! March Break Camp

LEG Up! is offering two March Break Camp options this year. First is the 3D Butterfly Canvas option on March 15, 2022 2 pm - 4 pm. The second is a St. Patrick's Day Gnome Painting class on March 17, 2022 10 am - 12 pm. Both classes will cost \$32.00. Please note that proof of full COVID-19 vaccination is required to attend all in-person classes. If you have a medical exemption, please connect directly with LEG Up!.

To register, please visit: <https://www.kwhab.ca/leg-up-registration/>

Camp Awakening

Camp Awakening focuses on outdoor recreation for children and youth with physical disabilities (ages 8-18). Kids are given the chance to increase independence, make lasting friendships, develop confidence and accomplish things they never thought possible.

For more information, [visit https://campawakening.com/](https://campawakening.com/)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Summer Camp Directory

If you missed out on the Virtual Camp Fairs that we held in partnership with KidsAbility, 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
- The 2022 Camps for Teens & Adults Fair will be available shortly

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

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Programs & Recreation

EarlyON

Registration for April Virtual Delivery programming offered online through Zoom is now live on [KEyON.ca](https://www.earlyon.ca)! EarlyON Child and Family Centre in-person locations will be closed starting April 1, 2022 to reset EarlyON environments for interactive play, learning and exploration. Closure dates for each location will be [shared here](#) once confirmed. The [descriptions of programs](#) will be changed as we move into April. Please read each program description before registering so you know what to expect. In April, Pre-Registered Drop-In will now be fully interactive! Still hoping to stay physically distanced? Watch for new Individual Family Space programming available in April at select EarlyON locations.

In-Person Registration launched on [KEyON](https://www.earlyon.ca) for all in-person locations on March 28th.

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC)

Spring Programs at LDAWC will be starting on April 12. Learn more about the programs and register at the links below!

- [SOAR](#): Are you or your child in grades 7-9 with an LD or ADHD? Looking to prepare for the changes of high school? Sign up for SOAR!
- [Social Skills](#): For youth ages 11-14 this program assists in the development of social skills and social problem-solving strategies.
- [Executive Skills](#): The Executive Skills program aims to help children with learning disabilities & ADHD with skills associated with executive functioning.
- [SOAR Sr](#): Are you or your child in grades 11-12+ with an LD or ADHD? Looking to prepare for Post Secondary Education? Sign up for SOAR SR!
- [Typing](#): For students 7-13 who would like to learn/improve on their typing skills.

Better Days, Better Nights

Does your child aged 4-12 years with a neurodevelopmental disorder have difficulties falling asleep and staying asleep? Better Nights, Better Days for Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders is a free online program based on behavioural principles that supports parents of #children aged 4-12 years old with a neurodevelopmental disorder who experiences difficulties falling and staying asleep. This online program encourages positive behaviours that will help children achieve a better quality and quantity of sleep throughout the night. To see if the program is a good fit for you and your child visit the website:

www.ndd.betternightsbetterdays.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

In Her Shoes: Employment, Entrepreneurship and Reskilling

Finding strength in the face of difficulty takes courage and ambition. We see the potential to build your future through coaching in employment and entrepreneurial training.

- In Her Shoes: Newcomer Women - Is for visible minority newcomers between the ages of 16-65 Investment: 8 weeks, 15-25 hrs/week Monday - Friday
- In Her Shoes: Youth & Youth Express! - Is for young women aged 15-30 who are experiencing barriers to securing employment. Investment: 11-18 weeks, 30-40 hrs/week Monday – Friday
- In Her Shoes: Uplift - Reskilling In Specialized Technology - Is for job seekers who are ready to upgrade their technology skills to secure immediate employment in roles which require specialized technological expertise between the ages of 16-65. Comprehension of computer software, statistics and excel is required. Investment: 2-3 semesters, 15-30 hrs/wk dependent on individual needs

To learn more and register visit: inhershoesyw.com

University of Waterloo Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment

- Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) is an evidence-based 8-week group intervention that offers parents simple and practical parenting skills and strategies. For parents with children 3 to 11 years with challenging behaviors and who would like to learn new ideas and to gain support from other parents in a similar situation. Wednesday nights from 6 to 7:30 pm, beginning on April 20 2022 and ending on June 8 2022. The group will be facilitated by PPP certified facilitator Dr. Marjory Phillips in conjunction with a resident and senior doctoral student in clinical psychology.

HOW to REFER to Triple P: Interested parents are invited to complete the [PPP Intake Information Form](#). Parents will be contacted for a quick intact phone call.

Continued on the following page...

Information, Opportunities & Resources

University of Waterloo Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment Continued...

- Facing Fears Together (FFT) is a cognitive-behavioural treatment (CBT) group program designed to help adolescents age 15 to 18 years to understand and reduce their anxiety with the support of their peers facing similar challenges. This 6-week group will run on Thursdays from 4:30 to 6:00 pm beginning in late April (dates To Be Confirmed). The group will be led by senior doctoral students in clinical psychology at the University of Waterloo and be supervised by Dr. Elizabeth Stevens.

HOW to REFER to FFT: Interested parents or teens are invited to complete the [FFT Intake Information Form](#). Parents/Teens who express interest in the groups will be contacted by CMHRT staff to arrange a more detailed assessment at the CMHRT to determine their eligibility for the group. Non-eligible clients can be referred to the individual waitlist at the CMHRT.

LEGUp!

Sign up today and bake in your own home! Virtual Spring Baking Class 10:30 am - 11:30 am. Check out the [schedule of baked goods here](#). [Click here](#) to register today!

Get Set Learn

Get Set Learn is accepting registration for the spring 2022 session. GSL is a fun, free program for families with children 0-4 years of age. It helps children get ready for school while the parents learn and practice skills to support their children. Parents also learn skills that can help with their future goals. GSL spring program is online and starts April 19. To register, visit <https://projectread.ca/programs-and-services/programs-for-families/sign-up/>, email info@projectread.ca, or phone (519) 570-3054.

Post-Pandemic Support & Resiliency Program for Children & Youth

St. James Anglican Church is running a free community program that will support vulnerable children and youth (age 5-17) in processing and healing from challenges faced during the last two years. The program will utilize a variety of therapeutic approaches; visual art, movement, yoga, social support, talking, listening and learning. Register at <https://stjamesang.ca/events/>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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.

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 April 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

Bridges to Belonging

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

If you are 17 years old or older, living with a disability, and want someone to spend time and build a lasting friendship with, we invite you to [Click Here](#) and fill out an application to be matched with a Buddy Community Volunteer.

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](#).

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. The following is the Zoom information through May 18, 2022.

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

Meeting ID: 818 9778 5039

Passcode: 012889

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

Brightside ABA Services

Flexible Thinkers: May 18 - Aug 17, 2022 from 4:30-5:30 on Wednesdays. For children 8-10 years of age with a diagnosis of autism or intellectual disabilities. Topics covered include, flexibility, self-regulation, and perspective taking. This program offers weekly group sessions with ABA consultants, assessment of your child's strengths and needs, and a summary report of your child's progress. Your child will have the opportunity to develop their executive functioning skills. Deadline to Register: April 29, 2022

Job Readiness: May 17- Aug 16, 2022 on Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30 pm. For youth 15-18 years of age with a diagnosis of autism or intellectual disabilities. This program will include resume writing, social skills, on the job interview skills. This program offers weekly group sessions with ABA consultants, assessment of your child's strengths and needs, and a summary report of your child's progress.

Transition to Highschool: July 12, 2022 - Aug 25, 2022 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3 pm. For youth 13-15 years of age with a diagnosis of autism or intellectual disability. Topics include time management, working in groups, organizational skills, bullying, hygiene, and money handling.

For Job Readiness and Transition to Highschool, please apply by June 21, 2022.

To register contact Lauren Harris at 519-894-6156 ext. 2904 or brightside@sunbeamcommunity.ca

YMCA of Three-Rivers

Wednesday, April 6 & 13, 2022 | 6:30 pm – 8 pm

- Walking Well Into Spring- For many of us walking has become our primary form of exercise. But what does it mean to walk well?

Register at: <https://www.ymcacambridgekw.ca/en/health-fitness-aquatics/ark/community-health-and-wellness-workshops.asp>

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

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>

Kijengle

Kijengle 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: kijengle.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

Abilities Centre

Join the Abilities Centre for Virtually Together: You. Me. We. These sessions are designed for children of all ages to be physically active, socially interact with their peers, and have fun in a inclusive and supportive online environment. Virtually Together sessions run from 6-7pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Participants are welcome to join any and all sessions, or drop in as they are able! Registration is free and no diagnosis is required- siblings and friends are welcome to join!

<https://bit.ly/3Mes536>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops & Training

FSNE: Job Developing with Certainty in a World of Uncertainty

On April 5, 2022 from 1 – 2:30 pm, via Zoom. Cost: \$49+ HST/participant, discounts for 5 or more participants. COVID-19 continues to challenge many employers as they deal with the uncertainty of opening and closing and losing and urgently hiring staff. This webinar will cover the practical “now steps” to take to re/activate employer relationships and land jobs for your active job seekers. Contact Angela Hoyt Evolution Group Inc. angela@revolutiongroup.com

Lutherwood: Modern Approaches to Interviews

It can be uncomfortable to talk about yourself in an interview, but it doesn't have to be! Join Lutherwood on Tuesday April 19 virtually to learn about how to sell your skills, qualities, and abilities in an upcoming webinar! Registration is available at <https://bit.ly/3tObb3T>.

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, 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

Bridges to Belonging Future Planning Workshop

On May 12, 2022, from 6:30-8:30 pm, learn about the important considerations and legal aspects of Advanced Care Planning. Dr. Sandy Shamon is a primary care physician, palliative care specialist, and sibling to her sister living with a disability. Dr. Shamon will provide insights and perspectives through both a personal and professional lens related to the Health Care Consent, Advanced Care Planning considerations and Advance Directives, Goals of Care Discussions, Substitute Decision Makers. David Amy is a Partner of Amy Appleby and Brennan Law Firm in Waterloo specializing in Wills, Estates, Trusts, and Henson Trust. David will provide legal expertise regarding, Capacity, Power of Attorney - Personal Care and Guardian and Trusteeship. Paul Arsenault CFP®, PFP® will also be on hand to answer any financial questions that may be related to advanced care planning.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Fundamentals for Caregivers

This is a 3-part Training for caregivers supporting individuals with FASD. Learn how FASD is a brain and whole-body disorder, how it impacts behaviour with a focus on executive and adaptive functioning and identify what is needed to support those living with FASD. There will also be a focus on local resources and supports available to families. Sessions take place on June 2, 9, and 16 at 6:30 pm to 8 pm on Zoom. If you're interested, register with Michelle Hughes, FASD Coordinator at m.hughes@sunbeamcommunity.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Doctors Answer Self-advocates' Questions About COVID-19

Do you have questions about COVID-19 as we head into spring? Watch as Azrieli advisors ask their questions about COVID-19 and Drs. Jiwa, Lunskey, and Niel give their answers to questions such as: "If so many people have their vaccine, why is there another COVID wave?", "How do I stay safe around someone who doesn't have the vaccine?" and "How do I cope now that there are fewer COVID rules?".

[COVID-19 Question & Answer \(Spring 2022\) - YouTube](#)

The Value of an Experiential Learning Model for Family Medicine Residents

Disability and Health Journal by Slick, et al.

Members of the H-CARDD program looked at why it is important to give family medicine residents hands-on training instead of just lecture-type teaching when it comes to developmental disabilities by comparing residents' knowledge, comfort, and skills based on the type of learning received. They conclude that it is time to not only invest in more teaching about this population but also to consider how the teaching is done.

<https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S1936657422000152>

Mental Health and Well-being of Adults with IDD during COVID: A Narrative Review

Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities by Lunskey, et al.

This review article summarizes what is known internationally about the mental health of adults with intellectual disabilities during COVID-19, from multiple perspectives. It also explores various efforts to prevent or treat mental health difficulties with this group and makes some suggestions about what needs to be considered during pandemic recovery.

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

System Navigator Anti-Black Racism for WRDSB

Phyllis Peprah is the System Navigator for the Waterloo District School Board. In this role Phyllis is dedicated to building trust between African, Caribbean and Black Students and Families and WRDSB. Phyllis is seeking to engage African, Caribbean and Black families living in Cambridge who may not be well connected to resources and supports in the community. phyllis_peprah@wrdsb.ca 519 570 0003 ext. 4270

Information, Opportunities & 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

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

Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)

You've applied to DSO - now what? While you're waiting for Ministry-funded services, here are some things you can do.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tveyIWXA_Y

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>.

Fostering Information from Family & Children Services

Are you interested in learning more about fostering? For general information about fostering, please visit <https://www.facswaterloo.org/foster>.

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**

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>

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 4:30 pm. 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](#).

Sharing and Caring FASD Support Group

This is a virtual speaker series and peer support group from SKHC's Four Directions Mental Wellness Program. All caregivers, individuals with FASD and their support persons are invited to share, learn and find support for their FASD journey. The next session takes place Wednesday, March 23 from 6 - 8 pm. Guest speakers include Zoe Higgins, SLP, and Kelly Oreskovich, MSW, RSW, *Building Social Skills, Building Resilience*. For more information and to register, please contact Kelly, FASD Coordinator at 705-675-1506 ext. 239 or email at koreskovich@skhc.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

City of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge is conducting its second Community Satisfaction Survey as part of its Strategic Plan – Cambridge Connected. The survey allows the city to check in with its community, and will help determine resident satisfaction with City services, strategic plan and identify areas for improvement. The survey is open until April 10.

www.engagewr.ca/cambridge-community-satisfaction-survey-2022

McMaster University Research on Postpartum Depression Treatment

McMaster University is conducting a research study to determine if women who receive an online peer-delivered CBT-Informed support for postpartum depression improve more than women who receive standard healthcare. You may be eligible if you are living in Southern Ontario, 18 yrs+ and have a baby under 12 months.

For more information please email: peercbt@mcmaster.ca

Disability Without Poverty

Please click on the link below, go to the survey tab, and make sure that, at every chance you get, you add comments in the 'Other' box to state what needs to be fixed for people with disabilities to not be left behind in the Spring federal budget. This is our only chance since none of the boxes have the word 'disability'.

<https://www.letstalkbudget2022.ca/let-s-talk-budget-2022>

Need help figuring out what people with disabilities need? Go to

<https://www.disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca/>

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](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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>

University of Waterloo Cognitive Development Lab

The Lab has not been able to run in-person studies since the onset of COVID-19. However, the lab has developed studies that families can participate in remotely. It is now running a number of studies for children of a variety of ages (typically 40-60 minutes that involve interacting remotely with a researcher). All studies run by the Cognitive Development Lab are not for profit, are completely voluntary, and have been approved by a University of Waterloo Ethics Board. The studies are designed to be child-appropriate and engaging, and kids typically have fun participating.

Additional information about the lab can be found here: [Cognitive Development Lab](#) and information specifically about remote participation can be found here: [CDL remote participation](#).

Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (HCARDD)

Research Study: Health for Adults with Developmental Disabilities during COVID-19:
A Virtual Course

This new research study is now recruiting participants. It is looking for adults 18+ with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD), their families, and service providers from across Canada to help evaluate the impact of a 6-week online program exploring the physical and mental health needs of adults with IDD and strategies to address them. [Read about the study here](#). Interested? Fill out the [Expression of Interest and Collaboration Form](#), email hcardd@camh.ca or call 437-328-6761.

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

- *Survey on Accessible Information for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

If you are an adult 18+ with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD) or a caregiver of an adult with IDD, we want to hear from you. We want to understand how to make information from the Government more accessible and understandable.

Fill out the survey and you can enter a raffle for a prize. [Click here to find out more](#), email AIIDD@camh.ca or call 437-328-6761.

[Consent Form \(camhx.ca\)](#)

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](#)

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>.

University of Guelph Child Emotion and Mental Health Lab

A Clinical Psychology PhD Student at the University of Guelph is researching parental self-efficacy, or how well a parent feels able to meet their child's needs, in parents of children with an autism spectrum disorder. They are asking for parent volunteers with a child who is 6-18 years old and has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (including autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome, or pervasive developmental disorder – not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS)) are welcome to participate. This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board (REB# 21-05-012). To learn more and participate, [click here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Inclusion Canada

Inclusion Canada is launching the *This is Ableism* campaign, funded by Allstate Canada. Ableism is the view that it is “normal” to not have a disability, and that “normal” is preferred. It’s discrimination on the basis of disability. The *This is Ableism* campaign brings together people with disabilities’ own reflections on ableism, and invites us all to consider what we can do to combat discrimination in our own homes, communities, and workplaces. [Visit their website](#) to learn more about ableism and its impact on the lives of persons with disabilities.

Family Matters: Job Loss & COVID-19 Findings Now Available

This project worked with families and self-advocates to better understand the impact of job loss during the pandemic and considerations for future supports for families and individuals. You can see the report and its findings here:

<https://inclusioncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Final-Report-EN-Oct-27.pdf>

Inclusion Canada to Support Implementation of a Canadian Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

The federal government committed to implement a plan to create a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). Inclusion Canada is partnering with [Muscular Dystrophy Canada](#) and [Independent Living Canada](#) to consult on and inform the development of Canada's first Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). There are four specific pillars to the plan: Financial Security, Employment, Disability Inclusive Spaces, and A Modern Approach to Disability.

You can [read more here](#) on this collaborative work which aims to ensure all people in Canada have the opportunity to provide feedback for the plan.

Accessibility Standards Canada

The review period for the draft accessibility standard ASC/CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment, will be open until April 24, 2022. This is a revision of an existing standard. It has requirements for making built environments accessible to individuals with a range of disabilities. It updates old standards to include: new accessibility research, details on colour contrast, developments in tactile directions, and more clarity on how to meet the needs of these standards.

You are now able to review the standard, and contribute your experience in accessibility. Interested parties may access the draft on the [CSA Group website](#). A one-time registration is required. You may comment directly online.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Breastfeeding Buddies (BFB)

BFB is looking for parents (in particular who speak another language, are new Canadians, those with mental health and addictions, LGBTQ2S+, single parents, BIPOC, youth, multiples etc) who have 6 months lived experience with breastfeeding, chest feeding and or pumping to join their volunteer team. BFB training is being held in-person May 12, 13, 14 (all 3 days are mandatory). As this is a volunteer opportunity, knowing how this stage of life can be busy, meals (light breakfast and lunch), transportation and financial support for childcare for all 3 days is offered. Please reach out for more info: 519 772-1016 and share this application link to those interested:

<https://www.breastfeedingbuddies.com/neve-home/about-services/volunteering/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

Ontario teachers get new tool to promote disability inclusion

Project Inclusion is a learning resource for Ontario educators that's built around the voices and experiences of students with disabilities, their families, and school board staff. The website offers five learning modules on disability, accessibility and inclusion for staff working with students in kindergarten to Grade 12. It was created by Holland Bloorview and funded by the **Ontario Ministry of Education**. Over 300 students, parents and Ontario school board educators helped develop the content by taking part in interviews and a survey, and reviewing material. Two teachers from Bloorview School Authority narrated the modules and teams from Holland Bloorview worked together to craft and produce them.

Ontario teachers get new tool to promote disability inclusion | Holland Bloorview

Project Inclusion | Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Lutherwood Employment Support

In person appointments are now available! Virtual services will continue moving forward. Lutherwood also has a Job board, which you can find here:

<https://www.lutherwood.ca/employment/job-board>

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/>

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 Lunsky 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](#)