

Educate. Connect. Empower.

Issue 101
September 2018

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What's in this issue?

Just like, that the summer is over! Once again, here we are transitioning back into the school year. We thought it would be useful to share a quick list of tricks and tools to use during the transition .

Back to school is a very busy time, during which parents need to remember to look after themselves. The reality is, transition time is a difficult time for parents. Getting to know and deal with new situations isn't just difficult for children, it's difficult for caregivers too. We hope you'll find our tips useful for your own self-care during the upcoming transition time.

Don't forget to check out What's Happening at WRFN and Upcoming Community Events—there's lots going on!

Have a wonderful month and remember to take care of yourself!



Support WRFN Today

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

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Region District School Board - Special Education Advisory Update

Submitted by Carmen Sutherland

The next SEAC meeting is Wednesday, September 12 at 7p.m. at the Education Centre, 51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener N2C 2R5.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Update

Submitted by Sue Simpson

The next SEAC meeting will be on Wednesday, September 5, 2018, at 6:30pm at 35 Weber St. West, Kitchener.

Autism in High School

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

Coffee Club Update

Hi Guys,

It's September. Can you believe it? At least we didn't get cheated out of a warm summer this year.

WEDNESDAY, September 12, 7-9 PM, Games on Tap (321 Weber St. N): We will be playing board games together. If you order food, you do not have to pay the \$2.50 entrance fee. Important Note about this event: Please let me know whether you will be attending **by NOON, Tuesday, September 11.**

Monday, September 24, bowling is back at Kingpin Bowl Lounge at Bingeman's (**425 Bingeman's Centre Drive Kitchener**)! Just like last time, if we get 12 people, it will be \$13.20 per person, and we will have the quiet room again. Please let me know if you plan to attend by **Sunday, September 9,** we will only run the event if we have the right number of people. This time, I am going to pay the bill myself and then you can pay me back, so if you could bring exact change for me, that would be great! **Also, if you say that you are attending, but do not, I will still ask that you pay.**

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

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

Carmen

What's Happening at WRFN...

Waterloo Region Family Network's 4th annual Camp Day!

Please join us on Sunday, September 23rd between 2-5pm at
Camp Ki-Wa-Y for our annual Camp Day!

Enjoy camp activities for the whole family while connecting with others. Bring your appetite because we will be roasting s'mores on the fire and having a barbeque! Everyone is welcome!

Sunday, September 23rd

Camp Ki-Wa-Y

3738 Hessen Strasse, St. Clements

Event Schedule

2-4pm Canoeing
Hiking
Rock Climbing
High Ropes
Archery
Camp Fire & S'mores

4:15-5pm Barbeque

Please register in advance by
contacting Krista McCann at
krista.mccann@wrfn.info or
519-886-9150 ext. 2



WATERLOO REGION
Family Network

*Please note that the only access to canoes is by stairs due to environmental barriers

With generous support from:

YMCAs of Cambridge
& Kitchener-Waterloo



School-Issue Parent Support Group—Do you have questions/concerns about school issues for your child/youth with special needs? Join us at our peer-led parent support group. This is a great opportunity to share questions, concerns and successful tips in a safe environment while learning from others.

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

WRFN Outreach at Early ON Child & Family Centres—Through our partnership with the local EarlyON centres we are pleased to provide monthly drop in support at EarlyON centres throughout the region. Erin is available to meet individually to discuss your concerns, no need to book an appointment. The EarlyON schedule can be found [here](#).

What's Happening at WRFN...

The Waterloo Region Family Network presents...

in partnership with KidsAbility

WRFN's Fall Session of Active Start and FUNdamentals A Sports Program Designed for Children with Special Needs!

Active Start and FUNdamentals are two programs designed to teach children with special needs the fundamental movement and sports skills needed to enjoy an active lifestyle.

Active Start is for children 3.5-7 years and targets skills such as running, jumping, catching, throwing, kicking, striking, balancing, and body awareness.

FUNdamentals is for children 8-12 years and focuses on improving the ABCs of movement including Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed, while introducing several common sports. Children are introduced to the rules and tactics of sport through a variety of activities.

These programs are open to children with all special needs. Registration will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Locations and Dates

WATERLOO (KidsAbility) Mondays, October 15 to December 3 Active Start @ 6-6:45pm FUNdamentals @ 7-8:00pm	GUELPH (St Joseph's Catholic School) Tuesdays, October 9 to November 27 Active Start @ 6:15-7:00pm	CAMBRIDGE (KidsAbility) Wednesdays, October 3 to November 28 No class October 31 Active Start @ 5-5:45pm	KITCHENER (The Family Centre) Saturdays, Oct. 13 to Dec. 15 No class November 3 or 17 Active Start @ 9-9:45am & 10-10:45am FUNdamentals @ 11-12:00pm
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Registration begins August 27, 2018

Cost: \$150/child for 8 weeks

Contact Krista McCann
(P) 519-886-9150 x2 (E) krista.mccann@wrfn.info

* Space is limited to 8 participants per class. SSAH can be used for registration fees. Funding can also be accessed through JumpStart and KidSport



65 Hanson Ave., Kitchener, ON N2C 2H6
Phone: 519-886-9150
info@wrfn.info | www.wrfn.info

With support from:



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

Kaleidoscope Kids meets every Friday from 10-11:30am. Learn more [here](#).

Communication My Way—Communication My Way is a peer-led augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) group for all ages and levels of AAC users and their caregivers. The group aims to connect AAC users and their caregivers in a friendly environment to develop skills and create friendships. Learn more [here](#).

What's Happening at WRFN...

PRESENTED BY BRIDGES TO BELONGING &
WATERLOO REGION FAMILY NETWORK

A NEW CHAPTER: FAMILIES MOVING FORWARD

Are you the parent/caregiver of a young adult
with disabilities?
Do you wonder how the future will look for your
child and yourself?



Please join us in sharing some of the challenges - and
solutions in supporting someone to build a full and
active life in the community.

Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 PM

The Family Centre, 65 Hanson Ave. Kitchener, Room 1024

October 9 - November 27, 2018.

To register please contact
wnewbery@bridgestobelonging.ca
or 519-603-0998 ext. 223



Ask A Self-Advocate Program... Coming November 2018

Building on the pilot project that was run in 2017, Cristina will be reintroducing the Ask A Self-Advocate Program at WRFN later this fall. If you would like to talk to someone else who understands what it is like to live with exceptionalities, or you wish to look at a challenge you are facing with a new perspective, this program might be a good fit for you. Once again, Cristina is happy to share her lived experience as an adult individual with an ASD. This program is open to individuals with disabilities, their families, or professional supports. Booking details will be made available in October, and the program will run on Mondays beginning in November.

Tips for Transition Periods

Foster an early collaborative relationship with your child's teacher

Introduce yourself and your child, addressing their specific needs and what that might mean for the classroom . Try to do this in a way that indicates you believe in and appreciate the support of your child's teacher. If there are issues, be as much involved in seeking a solution as you are in voicing your complaint.

Let everyone settle in to a routine

Although it's tempting to immediately start advocating, it's sometimes best to let your child and their teacher settle into a new routine before you begin addressing issues. Let them get to know each other on their own terms.

Communication Logs

Logs are a simple and effective way to track what is happening in school, therapy appointments, and other situations that you are not able to monitor yourself. They will give you a bigger picture of what is happening and can be an effective tracking tool.

Make the morning as simple as possible

Set your morning routines as quickly as possible and stick to them. This may include setting specific areas for backpack, shoes, clothing, lunches etc. the night before. Streamline your routine so there is lots of time for the structure your child needs without rushing.

Be proactive about sensory needs

Plan ahead for a sensory diet, or indicate to your child's teacher what kind of sensory environment your child responds best to. Arrange for your child to have the quiet, or focusing tools they need.

Discuss the family calendar

Once a week, gather everyone together and discuss the coming week's schedule. Display a calendar so they can see what's happening, what day children have sports, what day parents may be working late. Anything that deviates from your child's specific routine can be discussed ahead of time.

Foster excitement and enthusiasm

Discuss things that are happening at the school with your child and let them know what their options are. Fostering a positive attitude toward the changes in your child's life can open them up to possibilities they might not otherwise have considered.

Tips for Parental Self-Care During Transition Periods

Make time for yourself

Even when there's not any time, take a breather. Constant stress and worry isn't good for anyone. Take a 10 minute walk by yourself or with a friend, or just sit by yourself. Don't feel selfish or guilty – positive care begins with caring for yourself.

Let others help

It's easy to get sucked into the mindset that you need to do everything. Others may not do things the way you would, but the people who love you want to help. Let them.

Create a list of needs

This is related to the previous tip. Often when people offer help, you don't know what they can do. Later you'll realize what you should have asked for, but feel badly because you may have missed the opportunity. If you keep a list of needs, you will not find yourself in this situation. You will always be able to assign a task and say thank you for their help.

Enlist other caregivers

If it can be managed, leaving your child with a family member or sitter can have benefits such as developing resilience and adaptability. This can occasionally give you a few hours to regroup, run errands, or just be by yourself.

Maintain contact with your emotional support

Don't isolate yourself. Make time for the people who support you, not just for emotional support, but for fun. Remind yourself why they are in your life. This can be difficult when your child needs you close by, but there are ways around it. Invite people over after your child goes to bed, share a meal or just have a conversation on the phone.

Give yourself a break - don't expect perfection

Decision making for children with special needs is extremely difficult, and there will rarely be an easy right answer. Don't be hard on yourself if it turns out a decision you made didn't pan out. Ask yourself: would I have made this same decision again, given the information I had at the time? If the answer is yes, then give yourself a break and move on. Remember you have your child's best interests at heart, which is why you made that decision in the first place.

Upcoming Events

EVENTS

Autism Ontario Upcoming Events

Pizza & Games Night—Cambridge—October 15 - Children with ASD, ages 8-18, along with their siblings, also ages 8-18 are invited to pizza and game night at Playfit Kids Club in Cambridge! Register [here](#).

Cooking Class—Kitchener—September 23 and October 21—Children with ASD, ages 5-18, along with their siblings, also ages 5-18 are invited to prepare a delicious meal at Real Canadian Super Store.

Register for the September event [here](#). Register for the October event [here](#).

Sensory-Friendly Screenings

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

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

Upcoming film(s):

[Small Foot](#) - October 6

[Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween](#)—October 27

[Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald](#)—November 24

Special Sibs—Guelph Wellington

Being a sibling can be challenging at times but also very rewarding. During this fun-filled therapeutic program, siblings will meet others who can relate, share their experiences together – both positive and negative – and learn how to understand their brother or sister better. Facilitated by a KidsAbility Social Worker and a community partner, siblings will have fun, enjoy snacks and share in activities with other kids who understand what it's like growing up as a sibling!

Recreation programming is offered for children with special needs ages 6-13 at the same time as Special Sibs (must have a sibling attend that group to participate).

For Siblings ages 6-13. The cost is \$10/child or \$20/family.

All events take place at Bulldog Interactive Fitness, 259 Grange Road, Guelph.

Individual event dates:

Monday, October 15, 6pm-8pm

Monday, November 26, 6pm-8pm

Monday, February 4, 6pm-8pm

Monday, April 15, 6pm-8pm

Monday, June 10, 6pm-8pm

The registration deadline is two weeks prior to each date. Call 1-888-372-3359 x6202 to register.

Upcoming Events

Special Sibs—Waterloo Region

Being a sibling can be challenging at times but also very rewarding.

During this fun-filled therapeutic program, siblings will meet others who can relate, share their experiences together – both positive and negative – and learn how to understand their brother or sister better. Facilitated by a Social Worker and community partner, siblings will have fun, enjoy snacks and share in activities with other kids who understand what it's like growing up as a sibling!

For Siblings ages 7-10. The cost is \$5/child.

Individual events and locations:

Saturday, September 22, 1-4pm at the KidsAbility Waterloo site

Saturday, November 17, 1-4pm at Idea Exchange, Clemens Mill , 50 Saginaw Parkway, Cambridge

The registration deadline is two weeks prior to each date. Call 1-888-372-2259 x 6202 to register.

PROGRAMS/RECREATION

Time for Brothers & Sisters

Hosted by Developmental Services Resource Centre - Waterloo Region, this is a 6 week group for siblings of youth with autism. This group will be co-facilitated by an Autism Behaviour Consultant and Social Worker.

Youth, ages 11-14 will meet others who have similar experiences and challenges, in a supportive, fun environment that will encourage sharing.

The group is free but a referral and registration are required. Learn more by calling 519-741-1121.

PEEPS Friday Night Social Program

Come on out, one Friday a month, meet new people, kick back and have some fun.

The program runs September to June, 6:30-8:30.

The cost is a \$5.00 donation to the Helping Hands Social Enterprise.

Visit the website to learn more at www.lighthouseprograms.com.

Light House - Adult Day Program for Individuals 18+

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

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

Upcoming Events

Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre

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

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

Gym Drop-In for Youth

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

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

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

Sky Zone Sensory Jumps

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

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

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

There are a number of support groups that run throughout the community on a variety of different topics. Visit the Events Calendar on our website to learn more about these opportunities: <https://wrfn.info/events/>.

Groups include, but are not limited to:

Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH) Support Groups (includes ADHD and general groups)

Community Mental Health Support Groups for Family & Friends (includes general and addiction groups and mental health groups)

Tick Talk Tourette Group

Mothers Addressing Autism Together

Premie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington Region (Premie POWWR)

Fathers Group—for Fathers of a child with an intellectual disability and/or autism

The A-Team Waterloo Region— A peer support group for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

Sleep and Your New Baby

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

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

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

Upcoming Events

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County Family Conference

This event is intended for parents and caregivers of children with learning disabilities. The focus is on providing parents with tools and strategies to aid them in supporting their children. The conference will include keynote speaker Dr. Peg Dawson, speaking on Beyond “Lazy and Unmotivated”: Why Parents and Teachers Need to Know about Executive Skills and a choice of breakout sessions led by inspiring professional speakers.

Saturday, October 20 from 8:30-3:30pm. To learn more or to register click [here](#).

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County Upcoming Workshops

[Preparing for the School Year—IEP 101](#)— September 19, 2018 from 7:00—9:00pm.

[The Myth of IQ](#)—November 28, 2018 from 7:00-9:00pm

[Non-medication and Medication Intervention for ADHD](#)—December 6, 2018 from 7:00-9:00pm

All workshops are \$15 for non-members, \$10 for members.

Disability, Relationships, and Safety Education

Aldaview Services & Shore Centre invite you to join them for Disability, Relationships, and Safety Education. These Education Sessions are presented in a non-judgemental, safe environment where participants are free to share opinions and thoughts as well ask any questions they may have.

Program topics can include, but are not limited to:

Relationships & Dating; Staying Safe Online; Informed Decision Making; Consent & Boundaries
Gender & Sexuality; Birth Control & Pregnancy Options; Safer Sex & Sexually Transmitted Infections

When: Starting Thursday, September 27, 2018 for 8 consecutive weeks -Thursdays

Time: 1:00 – 2:30 pm Where: Aldaview Services, 332 Hamilton Road, New Hamburg,.

RSVP by Friday, September 14, 2018 to confirm your spot in the group to
Tammy Broughtonà tbroughton@tcmhomes.com or 519-662-5174 extension 9.

Disability, Relationships & Safety: A Workshop for Parents

Parents, caregivers and support staff are essential to those they care for. SHORE Centre provides support and education to increase your knowledge and comfort in talking about and teaching sexual health. You are invited to an information session on Tuesday, September 11, from 6-8pm at Aldaview Services.

This is also an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the [Disability, Relationships, and Safety Education program](#) that will be held for individuals with a variety of abilities beginning September 27.

To learn more or to register please contact Laura Kochera at lkocher@tcmhomes.com.

Upcoming Events

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Training Series for Caregivers

This is a four-night Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) training series for Caregivers hosted by Developmental Services Resource Centre.

- Learn how prenatal exposure affects the brain
- Learn how FASD impacts behaviour with a focus on executive and adaptive functioning

Identify what is needed to support individuals living with FASD

- Learn about local resources and supports available to families

The training takes place October 3, 10, 17 and 24.

Register with Karen Huber, FASD Coordinator at k.huber@dscwr.com or at 519-741-1121 ext. 2246.

Space is limited so register early.

RESOURCES

NEW KidsAbility Fall Resource Guide!

The KidsAbility Program and Activity Guides for Fall is a great resource for local programming.

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

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

FASD Caregiver Consultations

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

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

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

Check out FamilyCompassWR.ca!

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

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

Upcoming Events

Do you have Passport funding?

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

Help Paying for Child Care

The Region of Waterloo helps parents pay for licensed child care so they can go to work or school knowing their children are well cared for. Families of different sizes and incomes can apply.

To view a graphic of what you would pay if you received subsidy click [here](#).

Learn more about this program at www.regionofwaterloo.ca/help-paying-for-child-care

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Wilfrid Laurier University—Research Participants Needed

Are you the mother of a child with a developmental disability?

Hello. My name is Laura MacGregor and I am a doctoral student at Wilfrid Laurier University. I am completing a study of mothers who have a child with a developmental disability where the child's disability interferes with typical communication. My study focuses on how mothers experience interconnection with their child and how they describe this interconnection to others, particularly health professionals. In other words, I am interested in how mothers learn to "read" their children. I am asking mothers of a child of any age who has a developmental disability as well as a communication challenge to consider participating in my study. If you are interested I would love to hear from you via macg4706@mylaurier.ca or (519) 885-3467. This study has been reviewed and approved by the university ethics committee (REB #5750).

Ontario Autism Services Study

If you are a parent or primary caregiver of a child or youth diagnosed with autism living in Ontario you are invited to provide your feedback on Ontario autism services, education, and family stress & well-being through an online questionnaire. Please click https://wlu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2c8jIj8w8pOZWaV for more information on this project. The survey should take approximately 15-30 minutes of your time. As a small token of thanks for your participation, you may choose to enter a draw for a grand prize of \$500 or one of three consolation prizes of \$100, following completion of the survey.

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