

*Where exceptional families thrive*

173

September 2024

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## What's In This Issue?

September brings a season of change as the fall breeze gently blows us back into school routines. This transition can be both exciting and stressful for children and their families. Remembering that routines are something we crave as human beings can be comforting when attempting to get back into them.

Fall also brings the chance to establish new habits. We're excited to offer programs and events for everyone, including two special opportunities for parents and caregivers: "On the House," where 10 lucky winners will enjoy a dinner for two, and our Individualized Education Plan workshop with local school boards.

At WRFN, we strive to connect families of children with exceptionalities to the resources and support they need. We envision a community where every family feels valued and embraced.

In this issue of the Family Pulse, you'll find a wealth of information on upcoming events, webinars, and resources designed specifically for you. We hope these offerings will keep supporting your family as fall turns over new opportunities and leaves.

Please Note the "\*" represents new items for September



**Support WRFN**

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

## What's Happening at WRFN

WRFN programs and services are available in person. Supports are also available through phone and email connections and through other virtual formats. Please reach out and let us know how we can help you and your family.

### 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](mailto:Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info) or call 226-753-9090.

### 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 during the school year. For more information, please contact Sue Simpson at [Sue.simpson@wrfn.info](mailto:Sue.simpson@wrfn.info).

### Family Resource Coach

Our Family Resource Coaches are available to meet in person, 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 opportunities available in our community.

Call Erin Sutherland at 226-808-5460 or email [Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info](mailto:Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info).

Call Leah Bowman at 226-898-9301 or email [Leah.Bowman@wrfn.info](mailto:Leah.Bowman@wrfn.info).

Call Marla Pender at 226-338-7274 or email [Marla.Pender@wrfn.info](mailto:Marla.Pender@wrfn.info).

### Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! We currently meet on Zoom, usually on Thursdays from 3 - 4 pm. Generally, we are just catching up and chatting, mixed with a little bit of watching YouTube. Coffee Club has also started meeting in-person two Mondays each month from 7 to 9 pm.

If you would like to join us, please send me an email at [Carmen.sutherland@wrfn.info](mailto: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.

# What's Happening at WRFN

**WRFN'S SCHOOL NAVIGATION WORKSHOP SERIES**  
SPONSORED BY **EASTCAP WEALTH**

**UPCOMING WORKSHOPS**

- **Back-to-School Planning (Aug 21)**
- **Communication Between Home and School (Oct 23)**
- **Making your Individual Education Plan (IEP) Work (Jan 22)**
- **Transitions (March 19)**
- **Modified Days and Safety Plans (May 21)**

  


 **WATERLOO REGION Family Network**

**EMAIL TO REGISTER**

## WRFN's School Navigation Support & September's Partnered Workshop on IEPs

Every parent wants to see their children succeed in school. That's why WRFN has focused on helping families navigate the local education system for many years.

Exciting news! One of our Family Resource Coaches, Erin Sutherland, who has helped hundreds of families navigate our local school systems, will now support families through a series of workshops started in late August. These workshops will address common questions, issues, and concerns experienced by families.

Given the increased interest in Erin's support and expertise, these workshop opportunities will allow WRFN to support more families with school navigation. They will also provide new opportunities for families to connect with and support each other. Common topics will include Back-to-School Preparation, Communication between Home and School, Modified Days, Tutoring Resources, and Year-to-Year Transitions, to name a few. Additional topics will be added based on interests expressed by families.

We are incredibly grateful to East Cap Wealth for sponsoring our workshop series. Workshops like these allow us to address specific issues for multiple families at a time, supporting more of our community, and our sponsors play a big part in making that happen.

Thank you for your support and understanding of this important change in service delivery, which will allow us to support more families with this growing need in our community.

For more information or if you have any related questions, please reach out to Erin Sutherland at [Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info](mailto:Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info).

\*Families can access important information and guidance through our new workshop series (started in late August), the next one scheduled for October, and our virtual monthly support group (offered virtually on the last Wednesday of each month).

**\*Additionally, our annual workshop on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), in partnership with both school boards, WCDSB and WRDSB, is scheduled for September 24; more details are coming soon, but it will provide an overview of the Purpose of the IEP (what it is and what it isn't) and how to develop and implement it for every child.**

**FAMILY TIME FRIDAY BLOG**



## Managing the Stress of Children Going Back to School

### Friday Family Time Blog

As summer wraps up, many families are caught in a whirlwind of emotions about the upcoming school year. For children with exceptionalities and their parents and/or caregivers, transitioning from the relaxed pace of summer back to the structured environment of school can feel daunting.

#### 1. Understanding the Transition

For many children, home has been a comforting space, free from the pressures of school. As we approach the new school year, it's crucial to understand that this change can be challenging. Kids will need to tap into several skills to navigate this transition successfully:

- Shifting Focus: Moving from summer fun to schoolwork requires some effort.
- Directing Attention: Re-engaging with tasks and maintaining focus is essential.
- Prioritizing Tasks: Balancing play and responsibilities can be tricky.
- Managing Emotions: Adjusting to a new routine can stir up various feelings.
- Tolerating Instructions: Getting used to more adult direction might take time.

**Some kids may face challenges like anxiety or social difficulties. Recognizing these hurdles allows us to provide better support.**

#### 2. Highlighting the Positives

Returning to school isn't just about hitting the books; it's also about reconnecting with friends and diving into social experiences. Here are some questions to help spark positive conversations as you gear up for the school year:

- What do you enjoy most about school?
- Who are you excited to catch up with?
- What activities or subjects are you looking forward to?

By focusing on the positive aspects of returning to school, we can help kids feel more confident and excited. It's typical for students to feel a mix of nerves and anticipation when starting something new.

#### 3. Managing Back-to-School Stress

Feeling stressed about the return to school? You're not alone. Easing into the school routine can help a lot. Here are some practical strategies:

- Open Communication: Have honest conversations about school. Address any worries your child may have.
- Practice Routines: Rehearsing morning and evening routines can make them feel more familiar.
- Visual Aids: Use schedules or visual stories to help kids understand what their day will look like.
- Engage Attention: Incorporate activities that require focus, like reading or puzzles.
- Adjust Sleep Schedules: Gradually shift bedtimes to align with school hours.
- Limit Screen Time: Start reducing screen exposure as school approaches.

Relevant Programs:

- KidsAbility: Provides programs and services to children with disabilities, including those focused on managing transitions and stress. Visit [KidsAbility](#).
- Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health (Formerly Carizon) offers counselling services for children and families, including support for managing anxiety and stress. Visit [Camino here](#).

## 4. Organizing for the Year

Organization is key to reducing unnecessary stress throughout the school year. Establishing a dedicated space for homework and school supplies can create a sense of order and control. This space should be tailored to your child's needs, whether that includes colour-coded folders, sensory tools, or other personalized touches. Involving your child in setting up their space can give them a sense of ownership and pride.

Relevant Programs:

KW Habilitation: Offers resources and support for families to create organized and sensory-friendly environments at home. [Visit KW Habilitation](#).



## 5. Effective Homework Strategies

Homework doesn't have to be a source of constant stress. By breaking down assignments into smaller, manageable tasks, you can help your child feel more in control of their workload. Celebrate small victories along the way to boost confidence and motivation.

Relevant Programs:

- Idawc (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County): Offers the "Navigating the Homework Highway" series, which includes strategies to help children with ADHD manage their homework effectively. [Visit Idawc here](#).
- Strong Start Charitable Organization: Provides literacy programs and support that can help children develop the skills needed to manage schoolwork more effectively. [Visit Strong Start](#).

## 6. Supporting Exceptional Needs

Every child's experience is different, especially those with unique needs. Communicating with teachers and support staff ensures that your child's requirements are met. At Waterloo Region Family Network, we're here to help you navigate this journey together.

Aside from the programs listed directly below our Family Resource Coach, Erin Sutherland, hosts School Navigation Workshops on the following topics:

- **Communication Between Home and School** (October 23, 2024): Understanding the different ways of communication, creating a suitable communication plan for parents/caregivers and families.
- **Making your Individual Education Plan (IEP) Work** (January 22, 2025): Identifying your child's IEP, prioritizing and understanding the process.
- **Transitions** (March 19, 2025): Teaching parents/caregivers the various transitions within the school for students with exceptional needs (such as entering the school system or starting high school) and how to prepare in advance.
- **Modified Days and Safety Plans** (May 21, 2025): Teaching parents/caregivers the purpose of modified days for their children, ensuring their modified and safety plans are formalized and aligned with their needs.

Register by emailing [Info@wrfn.info](mailto:Info@wrfn.info).

### **WRFN Drop-ins at EarlyON**

Erin also supports families with drop-in hours at Early On locations. Here is Septembers schedule:

- September 10 Roger St @ 11 am – 12 pm
- September 11 Oak Creek @ 10 - 11 am
- September 17 Water St @ 10 – 11 am
- September 18 St Boniface @ 10 - 11 am
- September 27 Cedar Creek @ 10 - 11:30 am (if booked in advance)

If you have any questions, you can reach Erin at 226-808-5460.

## **7. Helpful Resources for Caregivers**

As you prepare for the school year, check out these valuable resources from the WRDSB and WRFN:

### **WRFN Programs:**

- **School Issues 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 exceptionalities. Virtual meetings are held monthly on the last Wednesday evening from 7 - 8:30 pm. Real-life experiences, tips, and strategies are shared.
- Please email [sue.simpson@wrfn.info](mailto:sue.simpson@wrfn.info) for more information or to join the next meeting.
- **Kaleidoscope Kids:** Join our free drop-in program for children Eight years old and under with exceptionalities, along with their parents (or caring adults) and siblings. This program fosters connections among caregivers while children play in a safe, inclusive environment. Join us every Tuesday from 3 - 4 pm at EarlyON Roger St in Waterloo.

WRDSB Resources:

- **[Five in Five: \[Supporting the Transition Back to School: Suggestions for Caregivers\]](#)**
- **[Caregivers' Guide: \[Are You Ready to Go Back to School?\]](#)**
- **[Mental Health Resources: \[Mental Health Support\]](#)**



## 8. Planning for the Return

To help ease the transition, planning can be incredibly beneficial. Here are some questions and suggestions for students and families to consider: What do you like about school?

- What are you most looking forward to?
- What have you missed?
- What are your favourite subjects/activities?
- Who are you looking forward to seeing?

Additionally, consider practical aspects of the school day:

- What will your typical morning look like?
- What time will you need to leave for school?
- How much sleep do you need, and what time should you go to bed?
- If you need to shift your bedtime and wake-up time before school starts, when should you start making this shift?
- Would it be helpful to practice your morning and evening routine?

## 9. Getting to School

Think about how you'll get to school:

- Will you walk or ride your bike?
- Will you go by yourself, or do you want a family member to come with you, maybe even just for the first while?
- How long will it take you to get to school, and what time will you have to leave the house? Should you practice the route to check the time?
- Do you take the bus? If so, do you know where your stop is and what time you need to be there?

## 10. Preparing for the Day

Here are some additional considerations:

- Do you want to plan what you wear?
- Do you want to pick out certain clothes for the first day or first week?
- What school supplies will you need?
- What do you already have at home?
- What items need to be organized in the morning or the night before?
- Can you design a system that would help?

Sometimes, having a little reminder of home in your backpack can provide comfort.



## 11. Lunch Planning

Thinking about lunch can also ease some stress:

- What will you take for lunch?
- Are there recipes you want to try now?
- Do you have lunch containers that you can open on your own?
- Make a grocery list for a typical school week.

## 12. Addressing Concerns

It's natural to have worries about returning to school:

- What could be hard about going back to school?
- Is there anything that you're worried about?
- How are you going to handle that?
- Who can help you with the problem?

We hope that this blog helps ease some of these worries and you can always reach out to WRFN directly should you need more detailed support.

### Cited Resources:

1. Waterloo Region Family Network
2. KidsAbility
3. Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health
4. KW Habilitation
5. Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County
6. Strong Start Charitable Organization
7. Caregiver's Guide to Setting the Stage for Return to School from WRDSB
8. Supporting the Transition Back to School: Suggestions for Caregivers From WRDSB

*Do you have a question about community resources or child development?*

## WRFN Drop-Ins at EarlyON

### Meet with Erin, our Family Resource Coach

Erin will be hosting in-office drop-in meetings at various EarlyON locations. Meetings do not require an appointment, but are on a first-come, first-served basis.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Sept 10	EarlyON   Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	11-12 pm
Sept 11	EarlyON   Oak Creek 80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener	10-11 am
Sept 17	EarlyON   Water St 73 Water St N, Unit 105, Cambridge	10-11 am
Sept 18	EarlyON   St. Boniface 225 Starlight Ave, Breslau	10-11 am
Sept 27	EarlyON   Cedar Creek* 55 Hilltop Dr, Ayr	10-11:30 am



### Contact Erin -

erin.sutherland@wrfn.info  
226-808-5460

*More dates to come!*



[www.wrfn.info](http://www.wrfn.info)



*\*a timeslot must now be booked in advance for this location*



Tuesdays, September 3, 10, 17, 24  
3:00pm - 4:00pm

**EarlyON | Roger Street**  
**(161 Roger St, Waterloo)**

As special needs families, life is constantly changing but together we can help each other see that it remains beautiful.

**Come play, connect, support and be supported  
as we bring our differences together.**

Kaleidoscope Kids is a free drop-in program for children under 8 years of age and their parent or caring adult. You are encouraged to bring your children with special needs, siblings or come by yourself.

**No registration required.**

If you have any questions, please reach out to [info@wrfn.info](mailto:info@wrfn.info)

**A partnership program of:**



EarlyON is mask-friendly environment. Masks are no longer mandatory in our facilities.

**Important:** While Kaleidoscope Kids is a drop-in program, families new to EarlyON will need to register with KEyON before arriving or when they arrive. Register for free at [www.KEyON.ca](http://www.KEyON.ca).

A background image of a campfire at night with people's silhouettes around it.

WRFN AND YMCA OF THREE RIVERS PRESENTS

# CAMP DAY 2024

Sunday, September                      From

## 22                      11 AM - 4 PM

EMAIL [INFO@WRFN.INFO](mailto:INFO@WRFN.INFO) TO REGISTER  
INDICATING HOW MANY ADULTS & HOW  
MANY CHILDREN WILL BE ATTENDING

WRFN's Camp Day in partnership with YMCA of Three Rivers has returned! Join us for a chance for your family to give camp a try in a safe and supportive environment. This is a drop-in event. Snacks will be provided throughout the day along with S'mores at the campfire.

  **YMCA of  
Three Rivers**

CAMP KI-WA-Y  
3738 HESSEN STRASSE,  
ST. CLEMENTS, ON

**Important: Limited spots remain. Email [Info@wrfn](mailto:Info@wrfn) and let us know how many will be attending.**



On The House - is a FREE dinner out for two with care provided for dependents on **Monday, September 30, 6 pm-7:30 pm**

Enter the draw to win a dinner @ Borealis Grille & Bar (4336 King St E, Kitchener, ON N2P 3W6). Care @ KidsAbility Kitchener site (4273 King St E Unit B, Kitchener, ON N2P 2E9). Contact Leah Bowman at 226-898-9301 or Leah.Bowman@wrfn.info with any questions.

Registration is now open until Sept 13th! [Click here](#) or Scan



Presented by



This is an ASD Collaborative Initiative

# SPECTRUM ON THE SPECTRUM

A SOCIAL GROUP FOR QUEER AND TRANS FOLKS  
IN THE AUTISTIC COMMUNITY

Waterloo Region Family Network and Spectrum present Spectrum on the Spectrum, a monthly drop-in group for queer and trans people in the autistic community who are 18+ in Waterloo Region. This is an opportunity to gather and enjoy activities including board games, crafts, colouring, and discussion in an accepting and welcoming space. Games and materials will be provided, but participants are welcome to bring in their own activity/art supplies if they would like.

**Join us on the 4th Thursday of every month!**



**SPECTRUM**  
210-283 DUKE ST W.  
KITCHENER, ON  
N2H 3X7

For more information,  
please contact:

[info@wrfn.info](mailto:info@wrfn.info) OR  
[info@ourspectrum.com](http://info@ourspectrum.com)





## A NEW CHAPTER

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

We have a new feature to our meetings called "Ask Us Anything" from 9-9:30pm. This is a chance for those who attend the meeting to ask questions or clarify points when the main part of the meeting is over.

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



### September 3, 2024

Talking with Caring Experts

Hello ANC friends,  
We hosted The Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence (CCCE), an initiative of the Azrieli Foundation, launched in 2022 with a mission to support caregivers and make Canada the greatest world to give and receive care. We learned about CCCE, how they are supporting and advocating for caregivers and care providers across the country

All other meetings are virtual Zoom meetings from 7:30pm-9:00pm

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



# EarlyON Resource Page

## EarlyON September Programming\*

You can now register for EarlyON programming. You and your family are invited to [drop in to an EarlyON location](#) throughout Waterloo Region and in the City of Stratford. Specialty and online programs that require pre-registration are also available. Check out the [KEyON calendars](#) for more information. To view the monthly program calendars by site, or to register for specialty programs, login to your [KEyON](#) account and select the EarlyON location of your choice.

## Cambridge Family Early Years Centre

[Cambridge Family Early Years Centre](#) is offering “Young Parents Connect,” a free family program for pregnant and parenting youth, Tuesdays from 1-3 pm. Call the centre at 519-741-8585 for the next session start date. Each week the group cooks a meal to enjoy together and discuss a parenting topic/resource/service that is of interest to the group. At the end of each session, join EarlyON staff for a fun interactive circle time with the children. Cambridge Family Early Years Centre, Unit 105, 73 Water Street North, Cambridge, Ontario.

## EarlyON Grandparents Connect

This program brings together a compassionate community ready to provide grandparents with the knowledge, resources, and emotional support needed if they are the legal guardians or primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Weekly meetings include childminding, snacks, and the opportunity to increase your circle of support. EarlyON | Oak Creek (80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener). Email [capc@caminowellbeing.ca](mailto:capc@caminowellbeing.ca) to register.

## Rainbow Family Drop-In

Rainbow Families drop-in runs Thursdays at EarlyON | Roger St from 3:30 - 4:30 pm. Join other 2SLGBTQIA+ children (aged 0-6), caring adults and families in play and exploration together! EarlyON Educators and a SPECTRUM Registered Early Childhood Educator are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in a play-based environment.

EarlyON Onsite Services. EarlyON Centres partner with a variety of community agencies to provide onsite appointments for your child and family. [Learn more.](#)

## Early Learning and Child Care Navigator

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Navigators seek opportunities to assist families in accessing Child Care, EarlyON programming, and other services that support the healthy development of children aged 0 – 6. They focus on supporting families who experience barriers accessing these services.

- [Send an online request to meet with an Early Learning & Child Care Navigator Request](#)
  - [Email an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator](#)
  - For more info please visit [ELCC Navigators Landing page](#)
- Call 519-741-8585 ext. 3008 and ask to speak with an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator

## EarlyON Mobile Sites

In addition to our Centres, EarlyON offers mobile drop-in at various sites in the Waterloo Region. Join other children, caring adults, and families in play and exploration together! EarlyON Educators are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in our play-based environment. To learn more about our mobile sites, call 519-741-8585 x3001 or visit the [Locations Page](#).

## 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.*

### Programs & Recreation

#### **\*COH Sunday Socials September Events**

##### ***Sunday Afternoon Football***

Sunday, September 8th, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Cheer on the Buffalo Bills as they face the Arizona Cardinals at Community of Hearts. Wear your favourite jersey, enjoy snacks, and be part of the team spirit! Cost: Free.

##### ***Riverside Park Games***

Sunday, September 15th, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Join us at Riverside Park for an afternoon of fun! Meet at the Concession Stand and enjoy games like frisbee, bocce ball, and cornhole. Cost: \$10.

##### ***Royal Axe Throwers***

Sunday, September 22nd, 3:30 PM - 5:00 pm

Test your skills with axe throwing at the Royal Garrison, followed by drinks at the Roundtable. Enjoy 1-hour of throwing and socializing. Cost: \$35.

##### ***Mijidaa Mates***

Sunday, September 29th, 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Wrap up the month with lunch at Mijidaa (37 Quebec St, Guelph). Join us for great food, drinks, and company. The cost is \$40.

All programs are Passport Funding Friendly. For more details and to register for these programs, email [info@communityofhearts.ca](mailto:info@communityofhearts.ca) or call 519-826-9056.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **CADDAC Online Support Group for Non-ADHD Partners\***

Beginning October 8th and running through November 12th, an online support group for non-ADHD partners will be available. This series of sessions provides a supportive environment in which to share experiences and connect with others while navigating similar relationship dynamics. Learn more and register here:

<https://www.lilianaturecki.com/supportgroup>.

### **Ontario Caregiver Organization Programs**

#### ***Caregiver ID Programs***

Available in healthcare settings, these programs formally identify caregivers, recognizing their role in patient care.

***Partners in Care Pandemic Toolkit:*** Designed for hospitals, long-term care homes, and other care settings, this toolkit provides tools to facilitate caregiver engagement during COVID-19.

#### ***Caregiver as Partners e-Learning:***

A two-module series for healthcare providers, offering practical tips and strategies for working with caregivers.

#### ***Time to Talk Toolkit:***

For providers across care settings, this toolkit promotes meaningful conversations between staff and caregivers.

**Health Privacy and Consent Resources:** Resources to help caregivers understand privacy and consent rules to optimize care partnerships.

#### ***E-Learning Module for Caregivers:***

A 1.5-hour learning module to help caregivers communicate effectively with care providers.

#### ***Ontario Caregiver Helpline:***

A 24-hour helpline offering information and referrals to connect caregivers with support. Call 1-833-416-2273.

#### ***OCO Caregiver Programs & Services:***

Programs supporting caregivers, including peer support groups and SCALE Program.

#### ***Resources to Support Meaningful Engagement and Co-Design with Caregivers:***

Resources and tools for organizations and caregivers to engage in meaningful co-design efforts.

For more information, visit [ontariocaregiver.ca](https://ontariocaregiver.ca) or contact [partners@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:partners@ontariocaregiver.ca)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **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>

### **Sunbeam**

Sunbeam's Recreation & Wellness Program enhances the quality of life of program participants. With a focus on recreation, socialization, inclusion, and community, including both physical and emotional wellness, the Recreation & Wellness team provides fun and engaging programming at various community locations.

- Offered as a fee-for-service option to individuals living with a developmental disability.
- Program participation is an eligible activity for the use of Passport Funds.
- For all activities and events, participants must be accompanied by their own support person or a family member.

For more information about this program, its calendar of upcoming events, and how to register please click to visit: [www.sunbeamcommunity.ca/recreation-wellness-program](http://www.sunbeamcommunity.ca/recreation-wellness-program).

### **Fun Fearless Females**

Fun Fearless Females offers a variety of supportive services and social events and programs that create a welcoming environment for all women to have fun, try new things (be fearless) and connect with other women. Check out the events calendar to see all the festive and creative events happening this month!

<https://www.funfearlessfemales.ca/events>

### **Cambridge Food Bank**

Cook, stuff, plant, bake and play at the Cambridge Food Bank! To learn more about and register for programs offered at Cambridge Food Bank, please contact Vanessa Tonic: [vtoncic@cambridgefoodbank.org](mailto:vtoncic@cambridgefoodbank.org) 519-622-6550 x109.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Siblings Canada: Savvy Siblings

Siblings Canada, in partnership with PLAN, is delighted to introduce [\*\*Savvy Siblings: Strengthening the Financial Security of Your Sibling with a Disability\*\*](#). Funded by the Government of Canada, this free online course is for adults who want to play a role in improving the financial security of their siblings with disabilities—whether today or in the future. [\*\*Register for Savvy Siblings today!\*\*](#)

### LCOworks

LCOworks is a free online program that supports positive employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities, a traditionally underrepresented and at-risk population in the labour market. Any Ontario resident with a developmental disability is eligible to participate in LCOworks. Email to apply or learn more at [\*\*support@lifecourseonline.com\*\*](mailto:support@lifecourseonline.com).

### SPECTRUM Youth Under the Rainbow

Join SPECTRUM across the Region as they read stories, explore art and have fun together in a safe and supported environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, families and allies. Visit [\*\*https://wrfn.info/CommunityNewsAndUpdates/Family-and-Youth-Under-the-Rainbow.htm\*\*](https://wrfn.info/CommunityNewsAndUpdates/Family-and-Youth-Under-the-Rainbow.htm) to see a full list of upcoming events and where to register.

### Karis & Humber College's Culinary Skills Development & Employment Program

Get hands-on kitchen training from professional chefs through in-person & virtual ETraining with Humber College's Culinary Skills Development & Employment Program. This program is open to adults 18+ with a developmental disability. Learn more and fill out an [\*\*application here\*\*](#), then email your application to Mary Lou Kelly, Program Coordinator: [\*\*mkelly@karis.org\*\*](mailto:mkelly@karis.org).

### City of Kitchener

Are you an older adult looking to learn about tech? Join one of the [\*\*Kitchener Tech Connect\*\*](#) courses. Programs are being offered in person at the Downtown, Kingsdale, Chandler Mowat & Doon Pioneer Park Community Centres. These free tech courses are for older adults in our community looking to improve social connections, access to information and digital literacy. [\*\*Click here\*\*](#) to see upcoming courses and to register!

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Keep Your Head Up Foundation

Join Keep Your Head Up Foundation for its new Waterloo Region Youth Mindfulness and Movement program for all ages of individuals living with the effects of traumatic brain injury (there's also a national program available, too). These are free virtual classes to do activities like gentle yoga, meditation, beading, painting and more. Registration is now open! Visit [www.KeepYourHeadUp.ca/mindful-moments](http://www.KeepYourHeadUp.ca/mindful-moments).

### Special Olympics

Visit the Special Olympics events calendar to get additional information, resources and registration links for events coming up in Kitchener-Waterloo. <https://www1.specialolympicsontario.com/events/calendar/>

### Ready. Set. READ!...

**Kitchener Public Library:** Ready. Set. READ!...is a program for JK, SK and Grade 1 students. Through stories, literacy games and reading in small groups with volunteers the program aims to show kids reading can be fun! Sign up online at: <https://kpl.events.mylibrary.digital/event?id=55160> or by phone: 519-743-0271 x261.

### YMCA Diabetes Fit

Are you struggling to get started with healthy habits like exercise? Are you at risk of, or living with type 2 diabetes? Join our free Diabetes Fit program to build life changing habits at home or at the YMCA. Join at the Chaplin Family YMCA (250 Hespler Road, Cambridge) on Mondays from 2:30 – 4 pm, until 24. Virtual classes take place on Thursdays from 6:30 to 8 pm, April 4 until 20. [Learn more here](#) or contact Marsha at [marsha.phillips@ytr.ymca.ca](mailto:marsha.phillips@ytr.ymca.ca).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **\*CAMH Virtual Mindfulness**

Join the September Mindfulness in 30 Program for families, leaders, and frontline staff. The program runs every Wednesday from September 4 to 25, 2024, from 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. Please register here, and you can view the [flyer here](#).

### **LEG Up Additional Program Offerings\***

#### ***Fall Baking Classes with Michelle!***

**Pumpkin Roll:**

Kick-off September 12 with learning to create a moist, tender pumpkin roll packed with fall spices.

#### ***Classic Pumpkin Scones:***

On October 3, whip up flaky pumpkin scones topped with a delicious maple glaze. These scones are perfect for sipping with your favourite hot drink.

#### ***Pumpkin Cream Cheese Muffins:***

Join us on October 10, 2024, to bake these flavour-packed muffins with a creamy cheesecake ripple,

#### ***Mini Pumpkin Tarts:***

Wrap up the series on October 17 with these heavenly bites bursting with cozy fall flavours

All these classes are \$37 each and take place at LEG Up! Classroom, 109 Ottawa Street South, Unit D. Fall

### **Craft Classes with Annita!**

#### ***Make Your Own Mini Strawflower Wreaths:***

Kick off the season on September 24 by creating a beautiful wreath using strawflowers grown at KWH's Our Farm.

Wood Round Pumpkin On October 1, enjoy crafting with wood rounds, florals, and paint.

#### ***Modge Podge Pumpkins:***

On October 15, 2024, dive into the messy fun and transform a plastic pumpkin with colourful napkins using Modge Podge.

#### ***Zentangle Fall Leaves:***

Unleash creativity on October 22, 2024. Design unique fall leaves using markers and patterns in a relaxing Zentangle style.

All classes are \$37 and take place from 10 am to 12 pm at Grant's Café, 99 Ottawa Street, South 1st floor, KWH, except for the Zentangle class, which will be held in the OAA Class (Vibe) room.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Fun Activities at LEG Up!**

#### ***Yahtzee:***

Kick off the month on October 4. Dive into this classic dice game that challenges your math skills and mental focus.

#### ***Disney Trivia:***

On October 18, put your Disney knowledge to the test while enjoying great company.

#### ***Charades:***

Wrap up the month on October 25 with a lively game of Charades. Show off your acting skills and practice teamwork.

All these classes are \$37 each and take place at LEG Up! Classroom, 109 Ottawa Street South, Unit D. Fall

The classes will be added to the KW Habilitation Shop on September 6 at 9:00 AM. You will not be able to make LEG Up! Fall class purchases until registration opens. Visit the KW Habilitation Shop here: <https://shop.kwhab.ca/product-category/leg-up/>.

For questions, reach out to the LEG Up! Team at [legup@kwhab.ca](mailto:legup@kwhab.ca) or call 519-208-2225.



## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **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 fashioned mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies!

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

### **City of Cambridge**

The City of Cambridge has two yoga programs for youth: Adaptive Yoga for teens with disabilities (13-21 years) on Wednesdays 6 – 6:50 pm and Girls Only Yoga (10-14 years) on Wednesdays 7-7:50 pm. For the Adaptive Yoga classes, participants can bring a program assistant when using a PAL card and there will also be a Leisure Buddy to support the class. For more info, connect with Jenn at

[blanchardj@cambridge.ca](mailto:blanchardj@cambridge.ca).

### **Skills Corner Adult Day Centre**

A new program for young adults, located in Kitchener-Waterloo at Forest Hill United Church (121 Westmount Rd E). Have fun, learn new skills, socialize and grow. Register by calling 519-589-4022. Team includes Dinorah Romas, PSW and Registered EA and Child Youth Worker. Dinorah has 10+ years of experience working with special needs adults and kids on the spectrum. Georgina Radu has 20+ years of experience in the field, both professionally and personally. She is a registered EA.

### **KidsAbility Behaviour Support Services**

Find support for your family with Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services offered at KidsAbility locations across Waterloo Region and Guelph-Wellington. The team works closely with you to address your family's needs by creating a personalized plan within carefully set up packages for you and your child with the tools to support and succeed. Explore fee-for-service options for your child by connecting with at [GPS@kidsability.ca](mailto:GPS@kidsability.ca). For more information and a current list of service offerings, visit us [www.kidsability.ca](http://www.kidsability.ca).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### MoveMeant For All

Inclusive fitness training for all individuals with special needs, mental health, trauma and more. Contact Courtney Hughes at 519-503-4489 or [move.meantforall@gmail.com](mailto:move.meantforall@gmail.com).

### Join the Smart Waterloo Region Nurture Youth Group

This is a youth group for those who like to connect with plants, and who are curious about learning ecological design and food forest planning. Join the SWRIL Nurture Youth Group! We meet Wednesday evenings from 5-7 pm at Communitech and Steckle Heritage Farm. We will be meeting weekly to:

- do fun hands-on activities like seed sprouting, kombucha brewing, apple pressing, etc.
- explore regenerative design concepts.
- learn about nature, the land, and our relationships to our traditional and local foods.
- train our creative problem-solving skills through IDEATION and innovation sessions!
- enjoy movies and hear from inspiring food-systems folks, locally and abroad.

Email Nikola at [nbarsoum@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:nbarsoum@regionofwaterloo.ca) or register at [Join the Nurture Youth Group! \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com).

### Region-wide tutoring information

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health provides tutoring and homework spaces that are accessible and free of cost to families and students. For more information, visit [www.caminowellbeing.ca/tutoring](http://www.caminowellbeing.ca/tutoring).

### Level Up

[Level Up](#) in partnership with the City of Waterloo and City of Kitchener are facilitating three eight-week play-based programs introducing kids aged 9-12 years to topics crucial to generating a social justice practice. Register now at [City of Waterloo ActiveNet](#) and at [City of Kitchener ActiveNet](#)!

### Corte

Corte Kitchener is an exciting and unique racquet and social club! Our programs are designed to offer fun and competitive play for all types of players, from beginners to advanced! Questions? Please reach out to our Pickleball Director, Matthew Pitts: [matthew@corte.ca](mailto:matthew@corte.ca).

<https://cortekw.ca/programs>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Recreational Respite

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practices, goals and outcomes that promote inclusion, encourage community participation, and nurture social connectivity. Visit the website for the May virtual group program calendar for Children and Youth and Young Adults! <https://www.recrespite.com/virtual-services/>

### Sensory Workout

Sensory Workout is a program that combines what we know about exercise and sensory processing to make physical activity more accessible and enjoyable for all! Aptus' Clinical Services team created the Sensory Workout training and demo videos, with generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services.

[Check out Sensory Workout on YouTube!](#)

### 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://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/rec/connect>

### Spectrum BRIQ House

BRIQ House is Spectrum's monthly group for Black, Indigenous, and other Racialized Queer folks in Waterloo Region! Come meet for discussions and community building. We connect both in-person at Spectrum and virtually on Zoom.

### Cambridge Food Bank

Cook, stuff, plant, bake and play at the [Cambridge Food Bank](#)! To learn more about and register for programs offered at Cambridge Food Bank, please contact Vanessa Tonic: [vtonic@cambridgefoodbank.org](mailto:vtonic@cambridgefoodbank.org) 519-622-6550 x109.

### Resilience Project

The Resilience Project from FACS Waterloo has some new programming for children, youth, and caregivers this summer. Learn more and register for programs <https://resiliencecollective.ca/programs-offered>.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Black Youth Mental Wellness Circle**

The African Community Wellness Initiative staff are trained for Afrocentric Clinical Therapeutic Practice with individuals, families, groups and youth. They now offer a Black Youth Mental Wellness Circle, a space for Black youth (ages 13 – 18) to engage, connect and grow, on Tuesdays from 6 – 7:30 pm. For more information, please contact [chantal@africancommunitywellness.org](mailto:chantal@africancommunitywellness.org). Register at <https://africancommunitywellness.org/mental-health-wellness/>.

### **Sports for Special Athletes Programming**

A volunteer-run organization that provides subsidized recreation and sports for teens and adults with exceptionalities in the Waterloo Region. We focus on fitness and fun and sometimes forget all about the score. We are inclusive and never leave anyone on the bench. Pay a \$20 annual administration fee (from Sept-Sept) no matter how many sports you participate in. Plus, a \$5 sports fee for each sport you sign up for. Some sports may have additional program costs; for example, Basketball for beginners will be on Fridays from 6:30 pm to 8:00 starting October 11, 2024; the cost is \$165, including a \$50 sports fee. Or Adapted Swimming will be on Thursdays, starting October 10, 2024, at 253 Fisherville Rd. The cost is \$100. Contact Don Clarke at (519) 744-4881. **Visit here for contact information** to register

### **Student Links Program: Application and FAQ**

Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Student Links is an opportunity for students (ages 14 to 21) who identify as having an intellectual disability to explore ideas for their future after high school. It matches students and mentors who share a common passion or interest. The goal is to enhance their capacity to make informed decisions about their future before leaving school and support the natural development of relationships and connections to their community. Student Links is tailored to meet the needs of each individual student and may include hands-on experiences, exploration of new interests, and an introduction to work, volunteer or community-based roles. Opportunities are created for students to meet with people currently engaged in or with substantial knowledge of the identified interest.

The possibilities are endless! After completing the application found at the bottom the first step is for the student to meet with the Student Links coordinator and together identify ideas, interests, passions and roles they are interested in. **Fill out an application form here** and see some frequently asked questions by visiting <https://studentlinks.es/faqs/>.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### March of Dimes

#### ***Paving the Path: Beginning my Journey to the World of Work***

Has a disability or other barrier prevented you from imagining yourself in the workforce? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a job? Do you want to learn about the types of jobs that best suit your personality? Would you like to know how working would affect the benefits you currently receive? If you answered yes to any of the questions above, Paving the Path for Work can help. This 6-week program offered by March of Dimes Canada is for people who have had limited exposure to employment but want to learn more. Offered virtually and in person. For more information or to register for an upcoming session, please contact: Steven Hendry at 519-501-9868 or email [shendry@marchofdimes.ca](mailto:shendry@marchofdimes.ca).

### Muslim Social Services Programs

Muslim Social Services KW provides a professional, confidential, and affordable counselling service at The Family Centre Hub. Counselling services extend to individuals, children, couples, and families, including group therapy sessions conducted in various languages. We are dedicated to offering culturally sensitive counselling tailored to victims of gender-based and domestic violence.

#### ***Al-Nour Project***

The Al-Nour Project is an exclusive program for young women aged 13-25, to uplift, inspire, and empower. They participate in both fun group activities and focus on building relationships. The program will be facilitated by the counsellor Fatima Haneef, once a month on Thursdays from 6 to 8 PM. To register and for more info, visit our website at [www.muslimsocialserviceskw.org](http://www.muslimsocialserviceskw.org), email [info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org](mailto:info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org), or call (519) 772-4399 ext. 2707.

#### ***Neighbors Helping Neighbors***

Every Friday evening, from 5 to 7 pm at the Chandler Mowat Community Centre, join the "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" program. This initiative, facilitated by Community Connector Sally Alkarmi, reaches out to all women to create a healthy and supportive environment. The program aims to reduce the risk of isolation and promote diversity within the KW area.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### ***ThriveTogether Youth Program***

Join the exclusive ThriveTogether Youth Program every Friday from 5 PM to 7 PM at The Family Centre, 65 Hanson Ave, Kitchener. This program is designed for young men aged 14-20 and combines sports and social activities to promote mental well-being. Participants can earn volunteer hours, enjoy snacks, and receive bus tickets.

For More information visit <https://www.muslimsocialserviceskw.org/>.

### **Adults in Motion: Summer and Winter Camps**

Adults in Motion offers engaging Summer and Winter Camps for adults (18+) with diverse needs. These camps provide enriching experiences tailored to individual interests and abilities. With a supportive 5:1 camper-to-staff ratio and personalized skills and needs assessments, every camper gets the attention they deserve.

#### ***March Break Camp***

Are you looking for fun and supportive activities during March Break? Adults in Motion's March Break Camp is designed for adults (18+) with diverse needs. Participants can enjoy a week of engaging activities in a safe and inclusive environment. This program is perfect for individuals seeking enriching experiences during the school break.

#### ***PD Days Camp***

Adults in Motion offers a PD Days Camp for adults (18+) with diverse needs. These single-day camps are ideal for those looking for an enriching and flexible way to spend their day off. With activities tailored to individual skills and interests, participants will enjoy a fulfilling experience.

#### ***School Transition Programs***

Transitioning from high school can be a significant step, and Adults in Motion provides specialized School Transition Programs to support adults (18+) with diverse needs. These programs facilitate a smooth transition by focusing on skills development and personal growth.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### ***Virtual Camp (Lubdub)***

Adults in Motion offers Virtual Camp Days through [Lubdub] (<https://www.lovelubdub.com>) for those who prefer online activities or cannot attend in person. These sessions provide a variety of engaging and fun online activities tailored to adults (18+) with diverse needs. Join from anywhere and enjoy the inclusive and supportive environment of Virtual Camp.

### ***Free Program Trials***

Are you not sure if these programs are the right fit? Adults in Motion offers the opportunity to try out any of their programs for free! This allows participants to experience the camps and activities without any commitment.

For more details and to register visit <https://www.adultsinmotion.org>.

### **Locations and Contact Information:**

**Adults in Motion operates in multiple locations to serve the community better. Reach out to the nearest centre for more details and to sign up:**

Oakville: 141 Bronte Rd | 289-400-3723 | [[oakville@adultsinmotion.org](mailto:oakville@adultsinmotion.org)]

(<mailto:oakville@adultsinmotion.org>)

Cambridge: 653 King St E (Preston) | 519-277-3723 |

[[cambridge@adultsinmotion.org](mailto:cambridge@adultsinmotion.org)] (<mailto:cambridge@adultsinmotion.org>)

Hamilton: 627 Main St E | 905-541-3723 | [[hamilton@adultsinmotion.org](mailto:hamilton@adultsinmotion.org)]

(<mailto:hamilton@adultsinmotion.org>)

Kitchener: 317 Franklin St N | 519-577-3723 | [[kitchener@adultsinmotion.org](mailto:kitchener@adultsinmotion.org)]

(<mailto:kitchener@adultsinmotion.org>)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Community of Hearts Evening fall Programming\***

#### ***Dancing with Friends at Community of Hearts***

Get ready to dance and have fun with friends at "Dancing with Friends," a program hosted by Community of Hearts! The sessions will occur on Wednesdays in September, come out on 18 and 25; in October, join on the 2 and 9. from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. Participants will engage in group dance games, learn new dance moves, and even pick their favourite songs to dance along to. It's a great way to stay active, enjoy light exercise, and connect. Snacks will be provided to keep you energized while you dance.

#### ***Singing with Friends***

Join the fun at Community of Hearts for "Singing with Friends" on Wednesdays this fall for four dates: in September, come out on the 18 and 25; in October, join on the 2 and 9. This passport-friendly program is designed to bring people together through the joy of singing. Participants will sing warm-up games, explore different types of music, and enjoy karaoke to their favourite songs. Get together and enjoy Wednesday evenings in a fun, supportive environment. Snacks will be provided.

#### ***Inclusive Fitness (Fall Session)***

Join this four-week program to help participants build gym confidence, set fitness goals, and improve overall health. It is perfect for beginners or those with experience in fitness.

#### ***Gym Confidence***

The sessions will teach participants how to use gym equipment and practice positive self-talk. These sessions are available on Sundays from 12:15 pm to 2:15 pm, from September 15 through October 6, or on Fridays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, from September 13 to October 4.

#### ***Mobility & Strength***

Classes will focus on balance, coordination, and range of motion for everyday activities. They are offered on Mondays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, starting September 16 until October 7, or on Sundays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, or from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, running from September 15 through October 6.

The cost is \$250 for small group sessions or \$300 for one-on-one sessions, and the program is passport-funding friendly.

Single Mingle at Community of Hearts

All sessions will occur at the Lifelong Learning Centre, 55 Wyndham St. N. in Guelph. To register, email [info@communityofhearts.ca](mailto:info@communityofhearts.ca) or call 519-826-9056.



# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Workshops, Training & Events

### **Navigating the Homework Highway with the Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County\***

Join ADHD coach Beth Timlin for a free two-part series designed to help children and their families manage the challenges of ADHD. Beth brings her expertise and personal understanding to empower kids to succeed in school and beyond. The series will take place on September 10th and 17th, 2024, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at John F. Ross, 21 Meyer Dr, Guelph, ON. For more details, visit [www.ldawc.ca](http://www.ldawc.ca). To register, visit [Eventbrite](#).

### **Motion Preventative Maintenance Day\***

On Tuesday, October 1, Motion is hosting a complimentary preventative maintenance day at its Kitchener location, 1362 Victoria St. N. Clients may take advantage of complimentary pre-scheduled in-shop inspections of their equipment. Products included are wheelchairs (manual and power), mobility scooters, and walkers/rollators. Schedule your appointment by calling Motion Kitchener at (519) 885-3160, emailing [kitchener@motioncares.ca](mailto:kitchener@motioncares.ca), or RSVP online at <https://motioncares.ca/preventative-maintenance/#register>.

### **CADDAC's Centre Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) 16th Annual ADHD Conference\***

Save the dates for November 2nd and 3rd, 2024, in Oakville, Sheridan Conference Centre, 1400 Trafalgar Rd, Oakville, ON L6H 6W4. This is an essential learning opportunity for individuals with ADHD, their families, educators, and healthcare professionals. Keynote presentations by Ari Tuckman will address important topics such as "How to Actually Get Things Done" and "Better Relationships with ADHD." Additional discussions will cover ADHD in older adults, marginalized communities, puberty, long-term memory, and more. You can register for both days for \$255 or a single day for \$135 plus HST [here](#).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### ***ADHD Virtual Summit\****

On October 8 and 9, join world-class researchers and clinicians as they discuss the latest research in ADHD. Discover how to improve the assessment and treatment of ADHD as we explore trending topics, including ADHD and the youth mental health crisis, ADHD in girls and women, ADHD in adults 50+, and racial and ethnic disparities in ADHD care. This is an event you won't want to miss! All sessions will be recorded and available for registrants to view for 30 days post-event. [Register here.](#)

### **The Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership: Waterloo Region Migration Film Festival**

The Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership invites participation in the Waterloo Region Migration Film Festival on September 20, 2024, from 4 PM to 5:30 PM at the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum at 10 Huron Road, Kitchener. This year's festival features the film *A Passage Beyond Fortune* (2022), which delves into the Chow family's lineage and highlights the often-overlooked history of Chinese Canadian communities in Moose Jaw. On September 20, 2024, the festival celebrates migration stories that shape the region. This is an opportunity to engage with powerful narratives and connect with the diverse community! Register here: [Waterloo Region Migration Film Festival](#)

### **LDAWC Family Conference**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC) is hosting a Family Conference on Saturday, October 19th, 2024, from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. This event is included in the September Newsletter because spots fill up quickly. Taylor Reid will be the keynote speaker. Sponsored by SickKids, this conference is designed to provide valuable information and support to families dealing with learning disabilities. For more information and to register, please visit [here.](#)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Resources

#### **Aging and Elder Care: Time for Transformation\***

This book includes essays on caregiving, the importance of relationships as we age, ways to enhance home care, and many ideas for healthy aging. It can be ordered [online here](#) or purchased at Wordsworth Books in Waterloo, located on 96 King St S, Waterloo, ON.

#### **SNR Collaborative\***

The SNR Collaborative offers support to Licensed Child Care Programs in Waterloo Region for children up to 12 years old. KidsAbility and KW Habilitation make up the SNR Collaborative, which aims to streamline services and ensure all children can thrive in early learning environments regardless of their abilities. Early Childhood Educators, parents, and caregivers can contact the SNR Collaborative with questions about a child's needs. The Collaborative operates within a tiered services model to provide tailored assistance. Visit their website for more information on programs, tips, strategies, and referrals. To contact KidsAbility, please email [spotservices@kidsability.ca](mailto:spotservices@kidsability.ca). For inquiries related to KW Habilitation, you can reach them at [earlylearning@kwhab.ca](mailto:earlylearning@kwhab.ca). If you have any questions, you can call SNAP at 519-514-7627 or email [snap@kwhab.ca](mailto:snap@kwhab.ca). For inquiries regarding the SNR Collaborative, please email [Kristy](#) or [Carlyn](#).

#### **CAMH; New Blog Post & Video\***

Yona Lunsky's latest blog post discusses the inspiring "brother. do. you love. me." event at CAMH. The post delves into the heartfelt discussions and unique sibling perspectives that made the evening unforgettable. Read the blog [here](#). You can also watch the video of the event in its entirety via [YouTube here](#).

#### **Ask a Nurse at the Welcome Spaces\***

Public Health Family Nursing services are available at three Welcome Space locations, offering one-to-one, drop-in support from Public Health Nurses. This service is provided from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on the following days:

- Waterloo: Mondays at 99 Regina St S
- Kitchener: Tuesdays at 20 Weber St E
- Cambridge: Thursdays at 150 Main St

Nurses can assist with questions on pregnancy, growth and development, feeding, child health, and local health services. For more information, e-mail [Lrintche@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:Lrintche@regionofwaterloo.ca)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Aide Canada

Many of Aide Canada's resources relate to autism, but there are also plenty that apply to all disabilities. There is a parent series of "Ask a Question" where families & self-advocates can respond with their experience. There is also a resource page where you can borrow books and items and is available Canada wide. Check it out at [www.aidecanada.ca](http://www.aidecanada.ca).

### Breastfeeding Dashboard

Canada's "[Breastfeeding Dashboard](#)" is now available on Public Health Agency of Canada's Public Health Infobase platform. Along with this data tool, the first edition of Canada's Breastfeeding Progress Report is available. The data provides an overview of breastfeeding rates in Canada, including information on breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity, examined by various geographic and sociodemographic factors. Reasons for not breastfeeding and reasons for stopping breastfeeding before six months are also presented, as are rates of vitamin D supplementation of breastfed infants. Questions related to the new materials can be directed to: [dca\\_public\\_inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca](mailto:dca_public_inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca)

### 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 or email [jdigirolamo@ccrw.org](mailto:jdigiolamo@ccrw.org)

<https://www.ccrw.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 get you set up. To learn more visit <https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/atech/hitech>.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Plexus**

Plexus is a network of FASD support and services in Waterloo Region. The services of the Plexus team are available to children, youth, and families living with (potential) FASD up until the age of 18 or 21 and still attending school. You must reside in the Waterloo Region. A referral can be made by the individual or their legal guardian. Plexus will also accept referrals from extended family members, family physician, or any agency acting on the individual's/family's behalf if permission to do so has been provided by the individual or their guardian. Referrals can be made here: [Plexus Referral](#).

### **Positive Behaviour Supports Corporation (PBS Corp.)**

PBS provides high-quality Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy to children and adults diagnosed with autism or other qualifying diagnoses. Services are provided in the home, school, and community settings. ABA is implemented in real-world situations with the parents being an integral part of ABA therapy. PBS also offers respite services for your family.

<https://www.teampbs.com/>.

### **Family Support Network for Employment**

FSNE is a family-led coalition advocating for employment opportunities and jobs in the open labour market for individuals with developmental disabilities who face higher employment barriers.

[Click here to find out their mission and explore resources.](#)

### **Rainbow Community Calendar**

[The Rainbow Community Calendar](#) from SPECTRUM collects 2SLGBTQIA+ events from organizations across Waterloo Region (and sometimes in Guelph-Wellington). SPECTRUM's events will include the name in the title. Please read the details of each event carefully.

### **Imagine Canada**

Imagine Canada has a ton of great resources and information on non-profit and charity sector-related policy in their newsletter, The Early Alert.

<https://bit.ly/3IH2kQg>

### 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.
- *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](#).
- *Caregiving Communities* : a new portal that provides an easy way for people to search for organizations in their community that can help with: Grocery pick up and delivery, delivery of prepared meals, medication pick-up, social support – friendly phone calls, accessing communication devices like a tablet, mental health support, spiritual support, providing things to do like books, games and crosswords. [www.ontariocaregiver.ca/caregivingcommunities](http://www.ontariocaregiver.ca/caregivingcommunities)

### 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>.

### CanFASD Mental Health Resource and Practice Guide

The CanFASD Research Network released a new resource that all mental health professionals need in their toolbox. This resource is grounded in the belief that people with FASD are capable of significant change and personal growth. It is therefore imperative that, as mental health professionals, we continue to explore how we can adapt our supports so that individuals with FASD can benefit from practices suited to their unique strengths, challenges, and neurodevelopmental needs. [Towards Healthy Outcomes for Individuals with FASD](#)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Partners for Planning

Every high school graduate deserves a bright future. The Beyond Graduation Toolkit can help families think creatively, collaborate with school teams, and explore pathways that can lead to a full and meaningful life for their son or daughter once they reach the end of their high school career. Designed for parents with a child transitioning out of high school in the next few years, this new toolkit provides critical concepts and resources that can help parents prepare for this transition. It includes:

[Partners for Planning - Planning for a Good Life Beyond Graduation Toolkit - Overview \(planningnetwork.ca\)](#)

### The Royal Mental Health Care & Research

The Royal Mental Health Care & Research is one of Canada's foremost mental health care, teaching and research hospitals, located in Ottawa. The Institute of Mental Health Research, affiliated with the University of Ottawa, brings together leading mental health professionals, scientists, and technology to gain a deeper understanding of the brain, and investigate innovative approaches to preventing and treating mental illness. To learn about The Royal's programs, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/3dRvIo2>

### 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](http://www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca)

### Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence: National Caregiving Strategy Engagement

Read the full report, Caring in Canada, and learn about Canada's National Caregiving Strategy's development. The report is available here [Report: Caring in Canada - Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence \(canadiancaregiving.org\)](#)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Access 2 Card

The Access 2 card is designed for individuals with permanent disabilities who need attendant support at participating venues. The card allows the attendant to enter for free while the cardholder pays regular admission. Eligibility extends to people of all ages and disability types. It's accepted at numerous venues across Canada, including many movie theatres and recreational sites. To obtain the card, the person with the disability fills out an application form on the Access 2 website, which requires confirmation of need from a healthcare provider. The card costs \$20 for three years or \$30 for five years, and once the application is submitted, cards are typically issued within 4 weeks. Visit here to apply [Access2 - Easter Seals Canada Access 2 Entertainment Program \(access2card.ca\)](https://www.access2card.ca).

### CAMH Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre brother New Blog Post

In a new blog post, Dr. Yona Lunsky shares her aging and brain health journey within the developmental disability community. This exploration has led to the Brain Health-IDD Project, which aims to understand and address brain health in this community. [Read the Blog](#).

### Kerry's Place Brave Space

Brave Space, a collection of resources, services and supports from 2SLGBTQ+ Youth and their families, is a step to honour, empower, and support everyone who lives at the intersection of autism and the 2SLGBTQ+ spectrums with information and evidence-informed resources and services. Kerry's Place aims to support those in our community who are navigating, or supporting a loved one who is navigating, their journey of discovering their identity within the spectrums of gender and sexuality. They are collaborating with subject matter experts to help ensure that the supports developed are evidence-informed and in line with current best practices for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

<https://www.kerrysplace.org/brave-space-at-kerrys-place/>

### CAMH New Report Innovative Practices in Supporting ALC Patients with a Dual Diagnosis\*

A [new report](#) highlights innovative practices used by hospitals and community organizations across Ontario to support successful hospital-to-community transitions for alternate levels of care (ALC) patients. Organized around the ten core transition components of the Practice Guidance report, it aims to promote knowledge exchange and facilitate implementation, primarily for health and developmental service providers. Visit the [project website](#) for more information and resources.



## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Guelph Wellington Family Network

A group of family members and unpaid caregivers supporting an adult with a developmental disability. The Network is peer-based and led by families. The Guelph Wellington Family Network helps build connections and friendships, supports members through networking, education, and socializing and connects members to opportunities, supports, and information.

[familynetworkGW@gmail.com](mailto:familynetworkGW@gmail.com)

### Indwell

Indwell is a Christian charity creating affordable housing communities to support people seeking health, wellness & belonging. They are one of the fastest-growing developers of new supportive affordable housing in Ontario. Looking for housing? Visit <https://indwell.ca>.

### Qualia Counselling Services

Qualia Counselling Services is accepting new clients at all six locations with no waitlist. Qualia Counselling Services offers counselling sessions, in person and by telehealth, with skilled clinicians. They offer services for children (5+), adults, families and couples. Qualia Counselling Services provides the most evidence-based interventions to help individuals of all ages become their best self. In addition to therapeutic services, Qualia offers a robust selection of professional development courses, workshops, lunch & learns, bootcamps and CBT supervision to professionals. Follow the link provided for further details.

<https://qualiacounselling.com/training/>

### Pearson Airport

Pearson Airport has partnered with Autism Ontario and Magnusmode (creator of the Magnus Cards app) to create an activity book to help prepare for travel. The airport also has sunflower lanyards that can be requested to signify the presence of an invisible disability. There are 20 different Magnus Card decks (on phone app) to help navigate aspects of travel. For more Pearson Airport neurodiversity support options, please visit: [Travel tools for autism and other diverse needs | Pearson Airport \(torontopearson.com\)](#).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### HCARDD Updated Website

Explore the newly revamped H-CARDD website to learn how the team has been working together with scientists, clinicians, service providers, policymakers, and people with developmental disabilities to improve the health and health care of adults with developmental disabilities. Here is what you will find on our website:

- [Projects](#) - Get an overview of H-CARDD's projects, including our latest report, [Supporting Alternate Level of Care Patients with a Dual Diagnosis to Transition from Hospital to Home: Practice Guidance](#)
- [Health Care Resources](#) - Access a wealth of resources tailored for health care professionals, family caregivers, and adults with developmental disabilities
- [Knowledge Exchange](#) - Explore easy-to-read summaries, snapshots, reports, newsletters, podcasts, and videos.
- [H-CARDD Blog Posts](#) - Dive into our archive of blog posts spanning from 2014 to the present.

### Practice Guidance for ALC Patients

Adults with developmental disabilities who also have a psychiatric condition, often referred to as a dual diagnosis, face a significantly higher risk of becoming Alternate Level of Care (ALC) patients. These individuals no longer require hospital-level care but remain hospitalized due to a lack of suitable community settings. In this report, the H-CARDD team presents a comprehensive set of principles and core components designed to guide and support the successful transition of ALC patients with a dual diagnosis from hospitals to community settings in Ontario. Download our full report and summaries:

[Full Report](#) - [Summary](#) - [French Summary](#) - [Easy Read Version](#)

### 211

Life can be hard, but finding help is easy. Contact 211 day or night to find support for all of life's challenges. Call toll free at 1-877-330-3213. 211 is free and confidential and offers support in 150+ languages.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Accessibility Services Offered Through the KPL**

#### ***Borrow a Chromebook***

Kitchener Public Library partnered with the City of Kitchener to expand WIFI access in public spaces. Community members can now borrow Chromebooks from the collection to take home for a one-week loan period. The devices are available at all five library locations.

#### ***Daisy Reader with Download Content***

Daisy readers are intended for customers who are blind, have low vision, or have another form of print disability. KPL recently purchased 15 new Daisy reader machines with enhanced navigation functions for easy use. They've added eight Victor Stratus machines to play Daisy audio discs and digital direct-to-player content through the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) digital library. They also have five Victor Stream readers, a smaller pocket-sized device that only plays digital direct-to-player content.

The library has been lending Daisy Readers and Daisy discs for a long time, but this is the first time lending Daisy devices with pre-loaded digital direct-to-player content. Staff can pre-load a mix of about 50 titles of different genres and interests on the Stratus and Stream readers, and the content rotates every few months. Customers can also complete a reading profile, and library staff will load additional digital content that suits their reading interests and preferences on a device for them.

#### ***New Yoto Mini Collection***

The Yoto Mini is an excellent audio format for young kids. The small audio player plays audiobooks encoded on colourful plastic-coated cards. The Yoto players and accessories are nicely designed, attractive, and easy to use and manipulate. They are for children from birth to 12 years old. They are accessibility friendly for users with print, learning or developmental disabilities. The current collection includes 13 Yoto players, each with a set of audio cards on a different theme.

#### ***Visiting Library Service***

Visiting Library is a free service that provides monthly delivery of library material to Kitchener residents who cannot visit the library in person.

Visiting Library customers can select their library material by placing holds through the catalogue or have a Visiting Library Selector (volunteer) gather library material based on their DiscoverRead form (reading profile).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Employment Solution's Developmental Disabilities and Home Care**

AO Employment Solution provides individuals living with Developmental Disability with professional personalized care including respite care, personal care, overnight care, and care management services. Learn more at <https://www.aoemploymentsolution.ca/>.

### **Surrey Place and CAMH – New Online Mental Health Toolkit**

The Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Program (DDPCP) at Surrey Place introduces a new toolkit designed to assist physicians in addressing the mental health needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). These resources complement the Canadian guidelines on primary care for adults with IDD, filling essential gaps in specialized supports. [View the Mental Health Toolkit here.](#)

### **2023 Youth Impact Survey Data Briefs and Snapshots**

This data brief overviews the 1,867 responses received, covering UNICEF's nine child and youth well-being domains. It offers insights into the post-pandemic well-being of young people in the Waterloo Region. [View the briefs.](#)

#### **2023 Youth Impact Survey Geography Snapshot**

This snapshot report separates data by four geographic regions—Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, and the Townships—to give a more detailed picture of child and youth well-being across the Waterloo Region. [View snapshot.](#) [View Geography deep dive.](#)

#### **2023 Youth Impact Survey Age Snapshot**

This snapshot report presents data segmented by three age groups: ages 9 to 12, 13 to 15, and 16 to 18. [View snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

#### **2023 Youth Impact Survey Immigrant Snapshot**

This snapshot report compares the experiences of children and youth born in Canada with those not born in Canada, highlighting well-being trends between these groups. [View snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

#### **2023 Youth Impact Survey Gender Identity Snapshot**

This snapshot report breaks down data by gender identities—boy, girl, and gender diverse—to provide a detailed picture of child and youth well-being. [View Snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

#### **2023 Youth Impact Survey Sexual Orientation Snapshot**

This snapshot report compares the responses of children and youth from various sexual orientations to offer a clearer picture of their well-being. [View the snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### ***New Youth Impact Survey Experiences of Homelessness***

This snapshot compares the responses of children and youth who have experienced homelessness to those who have not. [View the snapshot](#). [Request the deep dive](#).

### **Tiny Home Communities: Innovation or Segregation?**

With the ongoing housing crisis, several Canadian provinces are developing tiny home communities for vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities. Senior Policy Analyst Rachel Mills explores how these well-intentioned solutions can sometimes lead to harmful outcomes. It's crucial to learn from history and build truly inclusive communities. [Read the full article](#).

### **Partial Day Attendance in Canadian Schools: an Inclusive Education Canada Roundtable**

Inclusive Education Canada held a roundtable discussing the issue of partial day attendance, where students with intellectual disabilities are forced to attend school for only part of the day. This practice disrupts learning and can lead to isolation. The roundtable featured leading experts and Mr. Kelly Lamrock, K.C., the New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate, who recently released a powerful report titled "A Policy of Giving Up". [Access the report](#) and [watch the roundtable](#).

### **Re:Action4Inclusion: Empowering Youth for Inclusive Communities**

This project from [Community Living Ontario](#) aims to empower youth to take individual and collective action to make schools and communities more inclusive. The goal is to change the Canadian disability narrative and make a real difference. This initiative has empowered thousands of youth across Ontario to become community leaders in their schools and communities. Over 100 provincial events have been hosted to educate youth and continue to reframe their understanding of inclusion. Youth have been provided various platforms to share their lived experiences with community stakeholders.

Are you interested in learning more and joining the Youth Advisory Committee? Please complete a Youth Advisory Committee Application 2024

<https://form.jotform.com/241634797390264>.

For more details visit ([reaction4inclusion.com](https://reaction4inclusion.com)). Join the movement to make schools and communities more inclusive!

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **ConnectABILITY Roommate Matching Webpage**

Are you looking for a roommate or want to post your own roommate ad? ConnectABILITY has got you covered! Their roommate matching webpage is a fantastic resource where you can find and post ads that accommodate your specific housing needs. Whether you need a space that's accessible, close to transit, or just a great fit for your lifestyle, ConnectAbility.ca makes it easy to connect with potential roommates in our community. Check it out today and find the perfect match for your housing needs. Visit:

<https://connectability.ca/connected-families/forum/housing/>.

### **Partners for planning: Update to the Special Services at Home Guidelines**

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) has updated the Special Services at Home (SSAH) guidelines to align with CanChild's F-Words in Child Development. Families can now use their SSAH funding flexibly to support their child's interests and development. [Visit the MCCSS website](#) for the new guidelines. P4P has created an [SSAH Overview video and resource page](#) to help families navigate SSAH applications.

## Support Groups

### **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/>

### **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 7:15 pm. Go to [apsgo.ca](http://apsgo.ca) for more information.

### **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](mailto:fasd@able2.org).

### **Qualia Counselling Services – New Moms Experiencing Postpartum Anxiety and Depression**

Qualia Counselling Services is extremely excited to announce the launch of a brand-new support group for new moms! The support group has an 8-week program designed for New Moms Experiencing Postpartum Anxiety and Depression. This specialty group is for new moms looking for a welcoming space to learn, share, and practice skills and techniques to manage their emotions and thought patterns as they lead a balanced life through their postpartum. For more information, please contact our administration team at [info@qualiacounselling.com](mailto:info@qualiacounselling.com) or [visit our website](#).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support**

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support 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. This is a volunteer-run group that meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 7 – 8:30 pm via Zoom. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees. Contact: For more details or to register, please contact [bpsgroup2020@gmail.com](mailto:bpsgroup2020@gmail.com).

### **South Asian Wellness Group**

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 6 to 7:30 pm on Zoom with occasional in-person meetings. 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. 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](mailto:selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca).

### **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!

### **Virtual Peer Support for Newly-Diagnosed Autistic Women**

Researchers are evaluating the impact of participating in a [virtual peer support program](#) on the well-being of newly-diagnosed autistic women. Who can participate? Adults 18 years or older who identify as a woman, have received a formal diagnosis of autism in the last 8 months, and live in Ontario. [See flyer for additional details](#). Questions? Contact Princess Owusu at [AWPeerSupport@camh.ca](mailto:AWPeerSupport@camh.ca).



## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **CIA - Connecting, Interests and Activities**

CIA is a group in Waterloo Region for adults (18+) with Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) level 1. The purpose of the group is to create a safe and supportive space for people to have fun, meet and connect with others, and take part in activities. Join if you're looking for a positive place of belonging! Meetings take place at the Downtown Community Centre (35 B Weber Street West), in the Multi-Purpose Room on the second Thursday of each month. This is a drop-in group, so folks are welcome to join anytime between 5 and 7 pm.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Groh at 519-731-3923 or [grohtech@xplornet.com](mailto:grohtech@xplornet.com).

### **Virtual Support Group for Adolescents with FASD**

The return of the Virtual Support Group for Teens with FASD. This group meets every Wednesday night at 7 – 8:30 pm. Contact Rob for more information at [rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca](mailto:rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca).

### **Street Therapy**

Street Therapy is a fee-for-service psychotherapy clinic located at 177 Victoria St. N in Kitchener. Street Therapy will be offering a monthly ADHD support group starting January of 2024. The group will take place virtually on the first Saturday of every month throughout the year. Their goal is to help provide the local ADHD community a safe space to connect with like-minded individuals and encourage access to a neuro-inclusive community. Please see the following link for details.

<https://www.streettherapy.ca/groups/>

### **Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society Support Group**

Mothers Connection is a group supporting Moms with young children with Down syndrome with childcare provided. Go to [WWDSS.ca](http://WWDSS.ca) or email [info@wwdss.ca](mailto:info@wwdss.ca) for more information.

### **Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) Past Webinar Presentations**

Are you interested in accessing the recordings of CADDAC's seminars from the live presentations at the 15th Annual ADHD Conference? Please click the link below!

<https://caddac.ca/past-premium-conferences-workshops/>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **CADDAC Support Groups**

#### ***ADHD Support Groups - Adult ADHD and Parent Support Groups***

CADDAC is excited to announce that our ADHD Support groups for both Adults and Parents are now back in session! In addition, we are excited to introduce a new Western Time zone Parent Support Group. You do not need to join the group of the time zone you're in. You can join whichever regional meeting that fits in your schedule. [Learn more and register!](#)

#### ***ADHD and Substance Use Disorder Peer-led Support Group***

Through these virtual group sessions, participants will receive emotional support and mentorship, critical education about ADHD, and strategies on how to manage some of the core symptoms that have led to substance use. These groups will be offered in different time zones across Canada and will be peer-led by trained Peer Support Facilitators.

<https://caddac.ca/programs-and-events/#support-groups>

### **\*Moms Connecting with Moms Postpartum Support**

Starting September 18, 2024, Qualia Counselling Services offers an 8-week support group for new moms dealing with perinatal/postpartum anxiety and depression. Meeting Wednesdays from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm, this group provides a safe space to share experiences, build support networks, and learn techniques for managing postpartum symptoms. The cost is \$300, with a 'pay what you can' option and potential funding through NIHB. For more details, contact

[info@qualiacounselling.com](mailto:info@qualiacounselling.com).

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Engagement Opportunities

### Vulnerable Persons Alert - Support Bill 74

There is a Bill in front of the Provincial legislature right now called Bill 74 Missing Persons Amendment Act. It proposes to amend the Amber Alert system to add vulnerable people - children and adults with disabilities, adults with dementia, other vulnerabilities. The bill passed second reading and is waiting for the Justice Policy Committee to set dates to hear depositions to then pass it in the house. You can help push the government to pass this act! Show your support by emailing your MPP and ask them to pass Bill 74. Sign the petition here:

[https://www.moniquetaylormpp.ca/vulnerable\\_persons\\_alert](https://www.moniquetaylormpp.ca/vulnerable_persons_alert)

## Siblings Canada

### *For Families*

Are you a sibling of a person with a disability? Watch the webcast, [Understanding the Experiences of Siblings of People with Disabilities](#). The session sheds light on some of the research Siblings Canada has done on siblings of individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities, and the challenges, joys, and important roles that siblings play in the lives of their family members with disabilities. After watching the video, you will have the chance to [answer 3 questions to help with the work](#) they do.

### *For Service Providers*

If you work for a community agency, service provider, or disability organization, Siblings Canada wants to learn more about how organizations are including siblings in their programs and services. [If you want to contribute to this research, please consider completing this 5-minute survey.](#)

### P4P Planning and Facilitation Collaborative\*

The Planning and Facilitation Collaborative (PFC) is live! This space allows professionals and aspiring professionals to share knowledge, experiences, and develop skills through online courses on planning and facilitation. We invite planners and facilitators to join the PFC and help spread the word. For more information, visit this [link](#).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Community of Hearts

Community of Hearts is looking to add some new programs to its Day Program as well as some new group Evening Programs! They are currently discussing the subject options with participants during the Day Program and would also love caregivers, supports, and participants' who attend other programs feedback! The survey should only take you 2-3 minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3N725XM>

### WRDSB

The WRDSB is building a public education system where every student can experience success - but, they can't do it alone! These three new engagement plans will allow them to better hear from the students, families and community members they serve: <https://wrdsb.social/468vSsf>

### **Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre Research Study: Clinical trial of nabilone for severe behavioural problems (aggression) in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities**

The aim of the study is to improve the well-being of adults with developmental disabilities and distressing behaviours through the use of Nabilone medication. Open to adults with a developmental disability, difficulty managing anxiety or frustration, 25 years of age and older.

Phone: 416-535-8501 ext. 32817

Email: [n-and@camh.ca](mailto:n-and@camh.ca) or [hsiang-yuan.lin@camh.ca](mailto:hsiang-yuan.lin@camh.ca).

### OMSSA Recreation Providers Survey

This Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) survey collects baseline information about recreational care availability across Ontario. Results will help identify gaps in provision, staffing and funding across the province.

[Take the OMSSA Recreation Providers Survey here.](#)

### **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Lab at Queen's University**

The ASD Lab at Queen's University is running an online study called the Tone of Voice study. We are trying to better understand how youth perceive emotions through tone of voice. We are seeking youth with and without autism between the ages of 13-18 to participate in our study. The study takes about 75 minutes to complete over Zoom with an experimenter, and youth will be compensated \$30 for their time. If you have question or would like to participate, please contact Daniel at [tov.study@queensu.ca](mailto:tov.study@queensu.ca).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Queens University Study – Caregiver Stigma Experiences**

This study aims to better understand the impact that stigma can have on caregivers of autistic children. This study involves five questionnaires which will take about 45-60 minutes for you to complete. Looking for primary caregivers of autistic children to participate. Must be fluent in English. Please email [asd@queensu.ca](mailto:asd@queensu.ca) to participate.

### **Karis Disability Services – Host Families Needed**

We are looking for caring families and individuals: please consider sharing and welcoming a person with a disability into your home. In addition to personal rewards, as a Host Family you will receive ongoing training and support from professional staff and non-taxable financial remuneration. Part-time (respite) host families are always welcome to apply!

E-mail: [gwfamilyhome@christian-horizons.org](mailto:gwfamilyhome@christian-horizons.org)

<https://christianhorizons.org/host-family-services/>

### **Federal Survey Re: Registered Disability Savings Plans**

The federal government is currently hosting a survey on Registered Disability Savings Plans. If you or a relative have an RDSP, we would encourage you to complete the survey, which can be found here: [www.pra.ca/SurveyCDSP](http://www.pra.ca/SurveyCDSP).

### **Shared Picture Book Study**

Wilfrid Laurier University Department of Psychology invites parents/caregivers of children age 3-5 years to participate in a “shared picture book study.” During the one-hour sessions, parents will do a survey and children will engage in literacy games with the researcher. Parents will take home picture books to explore together with their child in between sessions. Commitment time: five (5) in-person sessions 3-4 weeks apart. If you have any questions, please email Katie Reid at [reid4150@mylaurier.ca](mailto:reid4150@mylaurier.ca).

### **ADHD Community Needs Assessment Survey**

CADDAC is looking to expand its programs and services in Canada, and would like to get a better understanding of how to support individuals living with ADHD and their families. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. Those who complete the survey will be entered into a draw to win 1 of 3 \$50 Amazon gift cards!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JFHP55X>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Barriers for Participation in Physical Activity Study

You're invited to participate in an online survey to help a Wilfrid Laurier University PhD student gain valuable insights into the topic, barriers and facilitators of physical activity among adults with intellectual disabilities. Feedback will be used to identify resources, tools, or program needs to promote physical activity of this population in subsequent study.

If as a caregiver (parent, guardian, friend, and relative) you are an adult over the age of 18, free from intellectual disabilities, provide care, and are knowledgeable about the daily patterns of an adult aged 18-64 with an intellectual disability and are interested, you would complete an online survey (about 15-25 minutes) about demographics, physical activity levels of the person with intellectual disabilities, and the physical activity barriers and facilitators you perceive adults with intellectual disabilities experience. This study has been approved by Wilfrid Laurier University's Research Ethics Board (REB#8659).

[https://wlu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_d6m5iWuZ5QajCHc](https://wlu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d6m5iWuZ5QajCHc)

Please feel free to contact the facilitator, Hashem, at [faal8600@mylaurier.ca](mailto:faal8600@mylaurier.ca) if you have any questions/concerns.

### Disability Without Poverty: Canada Disability Benefit Update: Draft Regulations Open for Feedback

The new Canada Disability Benefit offers a maximum of \$200 per month, far below community recommendations. For more information, read the [Disability With Possibility Report](#). Stay tuned for the upcoming #BetterTheBenefit poster campaign.

Draft Regulations - Available online [here](#) for feedback until September 23.

Steps to Take:

1. Apply for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) to be eligible for the CDB.
2. File your taxes, even with zero income.
3. Share your stories and advocate to MPs through emails, meetings, and community events.

Send a Letter to Your MP - Use this [link](#) to send a letter easily.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **\*Community of Hearts Social Committee - Call for Members\***

Community of Hearts invites individuals to join their Social Committee this fall to help plan and host inclusive social events for adults with disabilities in Guelph. If you have a disability, support someone with a disability, or want to assist in creating engaging community activities, this is a beautiful opportunity to get involved. Members will receive a \$50 honorarium for attending all four meetings, which will take place on the first Tuesday of each month from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM: September 3rd, October 1st, November 5th, and December 3rd. Meetings will be held at the Community of Hearts Lifelong Learning Centre, located inside Old Quebec St Mall, 55 Wyndham St N, T28, Guelph, ON. Refreshments will be provided. For more information or to join, contact [info@communityofhearts.ca](mailto:info@communityofhearts.ca) or call 519-826-9056

### **CAMH: Azrieli Neurodevelopment Centre Brain Health-IDD Study\***

The Brain Health-IDD virtual education programs will be offered again this fall. These programs are open to the following individuals:

- [Adults with a developmental disability aged 40 years and older](#)
- [Family caregivers aged 60 years and older caring for an adult with IDD OR caregivers \(any age\) of an adult with IDD aged 40 years and older](#)
- [Health and social service providers support adults aged 40 years and older with IDD.](#)

For more information, email [brainhealthIDD@camh.ca](mailto:brainhealthIDD@camh.ca).

### **Volunteer Opportunities with LDAWC\***

If you're looking to make a meaningful difference in a child's life, the Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC) offers several rewarding volunteer positions. Volunteers will gain valuable experience working with children with suspected or diagnosed learning disabilities, earn volunteer hours, and receive graduate school reference letters. Training and supplies are provided.

#### ***Reading Rocks***

A literacy support program that focuses on improving the reading skills of children with learning disabilities. Volunteers can work one-on-one with a child to help them progress on their literacy journey. For more details or to apply, contact [ldwacrr@gmail.com](mailto:ldwacrr@gmail.com) or call 519-837-2050.

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### ***Executive Skills***

A program that helps children develop essential executive functioning skills such as planning, organizing, and time management. Volunteers will work closely with children to enhance these skills in a fun, supportive environment. For more information, contact [ldawcexecutiveskills@gmail.com](mailto:ldawcexecutiveskills@gmail.com) or call 519-837-2050.

### **SOAR**

A program is designed to support children in developing their social and organizational skills. Volunteers can help children build confidence and practical skills to navigate their academic and social environments. To apply, contact [LDAWCSOAR@gmail.com](mailto:LDAWCSOAR@gmail.com) or call 519-837-2050.

For more information about these volunteer opportunities, visit [www.ldawc.ca](http://www.ldawc.ca)

### **Spectrum Events Calendar and More\***

Check out the [Rainbow Community Calendar](#) where you'll find details on SPECTRUM's groups and events. This is also your clearinghouse of 2SLGBTQIA+ events in Waterloo Region.

### ***QRIB Hangouts***

Come join the QRIB community hangouts, where Queer, Racialized, Indigenous, and Black individuals foster a home away from home! In collaboration with the Willow River Centre, Spectrum's BRIQ House hosts get-togethers with refreshments (ex., Karaoke, bonfires, etc). The events are free though capped at 30 people, so we recommend RSVPing! All allies are welcome and encouraged to donate (ex. \$5) to the Willow River Centre to support safer queer racialized spaces locally. [RSVP here](#).

### ***Recruiting Board Members***

Spectrum is looking for individuals with the following experience or skills: finance and accounting, IT, legal and liability, or governance. This is a great opportunity to network and build connections within the community.

They strive for their board to match their community as fully as possible. Therefore, they are especially interested in hearing from candidates who identify as non-binary and/or Black, Indigenous, or Racialized. If you are interested, visit [here](#).



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## News

### **Inclusion Canada: Canada Disability Benefit - Hear From Those It Impacts**

Inclusion Canada is disappointed by the federal budget's allocation of a maximum of only \$200 per month for the new Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). This amount falls significantly short of what the community recommended and is insufficient to meet the needs of people with disabilities living in poverty. A social media campaign featuring several board members expressing their concerns about the CDB has been launched. Explore their opinions through the video series and check out the updated policy brief for detailed insights. [Access the vision and design for the CDB](#) and the [French version here](#).

### **H-CARDD Holds First Annual Brain Health-IDD Summit\***

The Brain Health-IDD team recently held its first annual summit, gathering 52 participants from six provinces, including scientists, clinicians, people with disabilities, and family caregivers. Attendees learned about virtual education programs for self-advocates, families, and [service providers funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\) in partnership with the Azrieli Foundation and its Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence](#). Program teachers shared valuable lessons on aging, caregivers' challenges, and those they care for.

The summit also introduced the second [Brain Health-IDD study](#), funded by the same brain health initiative and conducted in collaboration with nine community agencies across Canada. This study aims to enhance the spread and scale of an IDD dementia screening program.

Next year's summit is eagerly anticipated. Stay tuned for upcoming Communities of Practice sessions, where brain health and aging topics will be explored in-depth-

### **CARDD Team at IASSIDD 2024 World Congress\***

The H-CARDD team will present their work to the global intellectual disability research community at the IASSIDD 2024 World Congress in Chicago. To stay updated, follow the hashtag #iassidd2024 on social media.