

*Where exceptional families thrive*

**Issue 156**  
**April 2023**

## Table of Contents

SEAC Updates 2

Carmen's Poetry 4

Erin's EarlyON Drop-Ins 5

Virtual Camp Fairs 6

Kaleidoscope Kids 7

A New Chapter 8

ASE 9

Community Info,  
Resources and  
Opportunities 10

## What's In This Issue?

It's April! Have you noticed the days getting a bit longer and the air getting warmer?

As we transition into spring (even with some snow in the forecast), we have some exciting updates and resources to share with you! From inclusive activities, educational webinars, and special support groups, we hope this newsletter provides valuable information to support you in your role as a caregiver.

Thank you for joining us!



**Support WRFN**

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

## SEAC Updates

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

At this month's SEAC meeting, Gwentyth Le-Phuong, WRDSB Mental Health Lead, came to give a presentation about student mental health. She noted students want their teachers and caregivers to learn more about mental health and they want to learn more about mental health themselves.

She talked about the different tiers of services that may be offered to students. Tier 1 involves social-emotional learning, which is helpful for all students. Tier 2 may involve more small-group instruction, possibly provided by a child and youth worker or a social worker. Tier 3 may involve treatment outside of the school.

She also noted having a caring adult (which could be anyone at school) and tools to deal with emotional issues that may come up are important. It was also noted being out of school due to COVID-19 has caused students to be behind emotionally.

There was also discussion of situations where students may need support during other types of transitions, like when teachers change in their classrooms.

The Integrated Support program is also back in place.

The next SEAC meeting will take place on **April 12, 2023.**

## SEAC Updates

### **Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee Update** ***Submitted Erin Sutherland & Karen Applebee***

At the latest SEAC meeting:

- Director Dowling attended and was introduced to the new SEAC Committee members.
- Dan Maggiacomo, Principal with W. Ross Macdonald School (WRMS), provided an overview of programs and services for students who are blind, partially sighted and deafblind. WRMS programs offer the following; elementary, secondary, deafblind classrooms, Resource Services, short term programs, weekends at WRMS, Connections Program and the Bridges Program. Students attending a WRMS program are supported in a variety of ways including; social emotional and physical wellness offerings, benefits from specialized instruction, expanded core curriculum and greater opportunities for independence.
- Amy King, Consultant with Provincial and Demonstration Schools, provided an overview of programs and services for deaf and hard of hearing students within her role:
  - Resource Services to Outreach Programs
  - Programs for students from 0 months – 21 years old
  - Provincial and Demonstrational Schools Branch
  - Role: students consultation/programming, educator support, professional and resource development.
  - Service Types; school-aged support, individual student observation/consultation, language, reading, writing & American Sign Language (ASL) assessment, Identification Placement & Review Committee (IPRC), team and parent meeting support, staff in-services, student workshops, consultation with preschool educators, educators in training, community Partners, ASL Support Services, ASL sessions with student(s) from DSB and support with admission to the provincial school for the deaf.
- Superintendent Gerald Foran provided the following Ministry updates: Math DE streaming tutoring program will be offered by Special education teachers or third-party tutors with the funding received from the Ministry for Math support (proposal approved).
- Summer Boost Program will again be offered this summer. Dates to be released after March Break.
- Information if the Summer Spec. Education programs will continue has not been announced yet.
- Project Search is continuing next year. A parent information session was held on February 28. Four more departments at St. Mary's hospital are coming on board next year and KW Habitation will follow student in Project Search for the year.
- Special Olympics – June 12 at Resurrection Secondary School
- Individual agency updates were provided. Please see here for Trustee updates:

**<https://www.wcdsb.ca/wcdsb-board-meeting-bulletin-february-2023>**

# In Which I Share a Poem and Tell the Truth

By Carmen Sutherland, Coffee Club Coordinator

## ***A Normal Life***

She has not had a normal life...far from it.

She has never had anyone who makes her face develop sunburn even in the winter.  
She does not put on a daily mask of makeup to hide her face from the world.  
She does not have a swarm of girlfriends whose gossip buzzes in her ears every day.  
She is not the crowned jewel of the cheerleading squad, or the pulse of the prom committee.

She has learned to use keys that will eventually unlock doors to her independence.  
She can now stand so that neither her confidence or her legs tremble beneath her.  
She has taken steps that have brought many people to their feet.  
She is the driver's seat of her own destiny, and though she may hit a few potholes along the way,  
she is moving steadily towards it.

Carmen Sutherland, 2001

I wrote this poem in 2001, and I think that as a (supposedly) well-adjusted woman with a disability I'm supposed to say that I completely reject the idea of "normal" and have no regrets about my childhood/teenage years. But that would be a lie. While I *definitely* think "normal" is nonsense, I still wish I would have had some of the experiences mentioned here.

While a big part of the reason I did not have these experiences was because I felt buried in homework beginning at age 10, another factor was lack of bravery. Even now, the thought of walking toward a group of people and asking them to accept me feels intimidating.

I think that's why I wanted to co-create Coffee Club, because I wanted it to be a place where no one would feel intimidated to show us who they truly are. Everyone can - I HOPE - experience the feelings I longed for as a young person. Trust me, we can't wait to meet you!

# What's Happening at WRFN

WRFN programs and services are slowly transitioning into being 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.

*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 this winter & spring. Meetings do not require an appointment, but are on a first-come, first-served basis.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Apr 11	Early ON   Oak Creek 80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener	10-11 am
Apr 12	EarlyON   Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	10-11 am
Apr 14	EarlyON   Cedar Creek 55 Hilltop Dr, Ayr, ON	10-11:30 am
Apr 18	EarlyON   Water St 73 Water St., N., Unit 105 Cambridge	10-11 am
Apr 19	EarlyON   St. Boniface 225 Starlight Ave, Breslau	10-11 am



### Contact Erin -

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

**More dates to come!**



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





Are you looking for the right summer camp program for your loved one? This year KidsAbility, Waterloo Region Family Network and Supporting Kids In Camp (SKIC) partnered to host a series of virtual camp fairs. We are now starting to update our website with links to view the presentations that took place in January and February.

You can also access these links here:

- Watch the **2023 [Overnight Camp Fair](#)** video
- Watch the **2023 [Day Camps Fair for Children in Waterloo](#)** video
- Watch the **2023 [Day Camps Fair for Children in Guelph/Wellington](#)** video
- Watch the **2023 [Camps for Teens & Adults](#)** Fair video
- 

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

- Watch the **2023 [Cambridge Summer Camp Planning Workshop](#)** video
- Watch the **2023 [Kitchener Waterloo Summer Camp Planning Workshop](#)** video
- Watch the **2023 [Guelph-Wellington Summer Camp Planning Workshop](#)** video



## **Kaleidoscope Kids**

**Thursdays from 3 – 5 pm**  
**KidsAbility, Waterloo**  
**(500 Hallmark Drive, 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. There is no age limit, and 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:**



Per site requirements, all adults and children (as tolerated) are asked to wear a mask on entry and during the program. Thank you for your understanding.

While we're optimistic about warmer days ahead, you never know what you're going to get in April! We want to remind parents and caregivers to always check our social media channels before heading out in inclement weather, or check our **[Community News & Updates](#)** page on our website. We will post any program cancellations here!



## 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.



### April 4, 2023 Employment Stories: A Parent's Perspective

The first of a two-part series, four parents will provide their perspective on the work experiences of their adult children with disabilities.

Next month's meeting will focus on the work of some organizations supporting employment for people with disabilities.

All 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.*

We hope you can join our next A New Chapter meeting on Tuesday, April 4 (7:30 - 9 pm), Employment Stories: A Parent's Perspective. Four parents will provide their perspective on the work experiences of their adult children with disabilities. In the discussion segment of the meeting, our participants will have time to ask the panel questions about their stories. This is the first of a two part series which will be followed up at our May meeting where we will focus on the work of some organizations supporting employment for people with disabilities.

Just as we do each month, at 9 pm we'll begin our post-meeting "Ask us Anything" discussion where parents and caregivers can ask questions on any topic they choose.

If you wish to attend this meeting, please contact Mary Pike at [maryjpike@hotmail.com](mailto:maryjpike@hotmail.com) with your RSVP. Only those who have emailed Mary will receive the link for the evening.



THEMUSEUM is pleased to offer WRFN Families 25% off the admission price—which includes access to the new EYEPOOL Gallery immersive experience.

**The discount code for Waterloo Region Family Network is EPWRFN25**

When pre-purchasing tickets on THEMUSEUM website there is a “Apply Discount Code” button in the checkout, or in-person visitors can provide the code to our Guest Services desk to receive this discount.

Some Key Accessibility points about THEMUSEUM:

- Parking is available in the City of Kitchener garage on Duke street, which has a direct connection to THEMUSEUM building on the second level. There is also a loading/unloading area directly in front of the building on King Street (no parking there, although there is surface-level parking along King Street and another city lot around the corner on Queen St).
- There is elevator access to all five floors, and the accessible washrooms are located in the elevator lobby area on every floor.
- The Eyepool installation has flashing/moving lights that could trigger photosensitive seizures.
- There's more information about the current exhibit here:

<https://themuseum.ca/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/eyepool-presents-impossible-geometries> and a short clip of the installation in action here:  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CpdP8Lgg2fj/>

# What's Happening at WRFN

## Ask A Self-Advocate

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

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at [Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info](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. The next regular meeting will take place April 26. 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.

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.

## 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

#### **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 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.

#### **Monica Place**

**Monica Place** is offering "The Village Drop-In." Young parents who live in Waterloo Region are invited to join a weekly drop-in group at Monica Place Waterloo and Monica Place Cambridge. Bus tickets can be provided if needed. Snacks are provided along with time to chat with other young parents and playtime with other children (including music and story time). There is no cost to this group. If you have any questions, please let Judy (judyf@monicaplace.ca) or Andrea (andrear@monicaplace.ca) know.

#### **Infant Massage**

This is a one-on-one 5-week course for families with babies 0-12 months of age. This program encourages and supports families through teaching stroke techniques, offers a relaxing environment, a place to ask questions, learn with others, and receive referrals to other community organizations.

Shawna will be offering one-on-one and group sessions in clients' homes. Fees are \$150 (about \$30 a week). Register at [www.kwinfantmassage.ca](http://www.kwinfantmassage.ca). Please email [shawna@kwinfantmassage.ca](mailto:shawna@kwinfantmassage.ca) if you have any questions.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **LEG Up! Thursday Youth Social**

Join LEG Up! at KW Habilitation (for ages 14-21) from 6 -8 pm.

- April 20 - Hot Chocolate Fun
- May 18 - Victoria Day Celebration
- June 15 - Let's Paint

Bullas Hall KWH 99 Ottawa St.S

<https://shop.kwhab.ca/product-category/leg-up/leg-up-youth/>

### **Rainbow Drop In**

How Does Learning Happen? Through Play! Join other 2SLGBTQIA+ children (aged 0-6), caring adults, and families in play and exploration together. EarlyON facilitators are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in a play-based environment.

Rainbow drop-in takes place at EarlyON | Roger Street (YMCA Early Years) 161 Roger St, Waterloo. Upcoming dates:

- Saturday April 29, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday May 27, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday June 24, 2023 9 -11 am

<https://www.ourspectrum.com/2022/10/12/rainbow-family-drop-in/>

### **Fun Fearless Females**

Join Fun Fearless Females this March for a ton of fresh and fun activities during Girls Nights. Activities include a Plant Wellness DIY Body Products session, a paint night, and Escape Room! Don't miss out ladies. Check out the calendar at:

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

### **Community of Hearts**

Join Community of Hearts for Cooking: Mexican Dishes, a small group inclusive cooking lesson! Led by a Life Skills Educator, practice your cooking skills, learn about cooking techniques, kitchen safety and explore some of Mexican culture. Classes can be taken online or in person. In-person classes take place Thursdays (April 11, 18, 25, and May 2) from 3 – 5 pm. And virtual classes are Fridays (April 14, 21, 28, and May 5) from 3 -5 pm. Register at [info@communityofhearts.ca](mailto:info@communityofhearts.ca).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### OK2BEME

**OK2BEME**– Families in TRANSition (FIT) is a program for trans, non-binary, and gender-questioning kids and youth ages 5-18 and their parents/caregivers. FIT is open to all adults who play a primary caregiving\* role for a trans/non-binary/gender-questioning person aged 5-18. There are separate groups (by age) for the kids and youth that run at the same time in different rooms. If the young person doesn't want to attend or isn't able, the parents/caregivers can still attend the parent/caregiver group. Please visit the [webpage](#) for more info about the FIT program.

\*biological, adoptive, kinship, foster, legal guardians, informal caregiving and extended family

### 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!](#)**

### Youth Job Connection Summer Program

Cambridge Career Connections is now recruiting for the Youth Job Connection Summer Program. This program is for students 15-18 who are currently registered in school and will be returning to school in the upcoming semester! We are looking for youth who are living in Cambridge and are interested in finding part-time or summer employment. Connect with the resource room (519-622-0815 ext 223) to complete the eligibility screening form with staff.

### Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region: Virtual Open Space

Looking to connect to folks on a weekly basis?

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

Email Kim Sproul for more details at [kim.sproul@eafwr.on.ca](mailto:kim.sproul@eafwr.on.ca)

**<https://www.eafwr.on.ca/programs/community-development/open-space/>**

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **YMCA of Three Rivers**

**YMCA of Three Rivers:** YMCA of Three Rivers is offering free Spring Wellness Workshops! These workshops are open to YMCA members & non-members. Interested in going but can't make the time the workshop is being offered? Register anyways and you will receive a link to the recording of the workshop to view on your own time up to 7 days after the workshop has been delivered. Register at <https://www.ymcathreerivers.ca/health-management>.

### **Recreational Respite Virtual Services**

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practice, goals and outcomes that promote inclusion, encourage community participation and nurture social connectivity. Visit the website for the April virtual group program calendar for Children and Youth and Young Adults! <https://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! The Sensory Workout trainings and demo videos are created by Aptus' Clinical Services team, with generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

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

### **LCOworks – Employment training and job connections for people with developmental disabilities in Ontario**

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).

### **Return of the Dragon**

Return of the Dragon Martial Arts offers a safe and positive environment for students to build their skills and confidence. Whether you are looking to lose weight or wanting to learn self defense, they can help you achieve your goals. They offer Kung Fu, Kickboxing, Jiu Jitsu, Bootcamp and self defense seminars for all ages and genders. Visit [www.rotdma.com](http://www.rotdma.com) or call 519-503-6087 to learn more.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Bridges to Belonging

**BE-Friends:** BE-Friends is a volunteer matching program that connects people with any disability 17 years or older (Friend) with a community volunteer "Buddy" (19 years or older). The pair get together as often as they want, enjoy fun activities they choose and become part of each other's world. BE-Friends is a bridge to meaningful reciprocal relationships and lifelong friendships.

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

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

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

We are also matching seniors together for fun and connection. If you are 65+ and are interested in making a new friend to connect with in community, [please apply here](#).

### 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>

### Stepping Stones Expressive Arts

Stepping Stones Expressive Arts is partnering with Homer Watson House and Gallery in Kitchener to offer a full day Expressive Arts session called Retreat into Art and Nature on May 27. A light lunch (vegan) will be provided by Little Mushroom Catering. All abilities are welcome. The session is geared to those over 16 years old.

Enrollment for this session will be limited and there is early bird pricing. Register here: <https://bit.ly/40vgAuA>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Facing Fears Together

In six weekly sessions, teens will learn about anxiety and ways to manage with the support of a small group. Contact the CMHRT to find out more about the Facing Fears Together (Group CBT for anxiety) offered from Thursday April 27 to June 1, and June 15, 2023, from 4:30 to 6 pm. Please contact [cmhrtintake@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:cmhrtintake@uwaterloo.ca) if you would like to participate and to discuss if the group is suitable. Space is limited. For more information, please visit: <https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-researchtreatment/>

### YWCA Canada – The Next Accelerator

Are you a parent or caregiver planning for your child's post-secondary education? Connect with The Next Accelerator to learn more about the Canada Learning Bond (CLB) and how you can apply for free funding for your child's education. A child is eligible for up to \$2000 if they: are from a moderate or fixed income family, are born on or after January 1, 2004, and are a resident of Canada. Learn more at [ywcacambridge.ca](http://ywcacambridge.ca) or email [s.hohenadel@ywcacambridge.ca](mailto:s.hohenadel@ywcacambridge.ca).

### ConnectABILITY's Friendly Connections

Friendly Connections is focused on helping its community and individuals of all ages with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, overcome isolation. It aims to help improve the well-being of individuals through socializing and providing entertaining resources. Friendly Connections wants to connect with individuals across Canada through phone calls, video calls, emailing, messenger chats and good old fashion mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies! <https://connectability.ca/friendly-connections/>

### Cambridge Food Bank

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

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Kinbridge Tutoring

**Kinbridge Community Association**: FREE tutoring is available to students in grades 7 to 12 living in Cambridge. For more information contact Chad MackIntosh, Email: [chadm@kinbridge.ca](mailto:chadm@kinbridge.ca), Text or Call: (519) 496-1405.

- Monday: Preston Heights - 4:30 to 6:30 pm  
2nd Floor - 350 Linden Dr., Cambridge
- Cambridge Christopher Champlain Resource Centre (Kinbridge) - 4:30 to 6 pm  
8-125 Champlain Boulevard, Cambridge
- Tuesday: Greenway Chaplin Community Centre - 6 to 8 pm  
116 Rouse Avenue, Cambridge
- Wednesday: Kinbridge Community Association - 3 to 4:30 pm  
200 Christopher Dr., Cambridge
- Thursday: Southwood Resource Centre (Kinbridge) - 5:30 to 7:30 pm  
1-241 Southwood Dr., Cambridge
- Online: Every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 5:30 - 7:30 pm on Google Meet.

Link: [meet.google.com/mtz-puuy-ixg](https://meet.google.com/mtz-puuy-ixg)

### 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>

### 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.keepeyourheadup.ca/mindful-moments](http://www.keepeyourheadup.ca/mindful-moments).

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Workshops, Training & Events

### Woolwich Counselling

Woolwich Counselling Centre has many great small group therapy sessions and workshops for children, youth, adults, and seniors. See the link below to learn what's new this month! To register, please call 519-669-8651 or email [info@woolwichcounselling.org](mailto:info@woolwichcounselling.org).

<https://woolwichcounselling.org/upcoming-events/>

### Explore Your Future

**Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region**: Explore Your Future career expos are an opportunity for grade 7-12 students and their parent/guardians to explore opportunities for work and learning from local employers, community organizations and post-secondary institutions. This event is happening at two locations this spring: **Thurs, April 13 at Tapestry Hall in Cambridge** and **Wed, May 17 at the Aud in Kitchener**.

### Extend a Family – DSP Conference

*Journey from Trauma to Trust: Tools for Caring for Ourselves and Others*

This conference will have a mix of keynote messages, group break out sessions, sharing experiences and ideas together and feature Bonita Eby - Burnout Prevention Strategist, and Leah Jeffery, Clinical Manager and instructor at Georgian College in the Inter-professional Mental Health program. Registration is on a first come, first served basis and spots are limited. The registration deadline is April 14. To register, visit **DSP 2023 Conference - (eafwr.on.ca)**.

### WRCSB - Beyond Graduation 2023

The time to plan for your loved one with a disability is now. Join WRCSB for an evening of connecting with community supports and agencies in our Waterloo Region to help support your child's transition from high school to adult life. There will be two sessions. The first will be held April 19 from 6:30 - 7:30 pm at Resurrection Catholic High School. The next will be April 20 from 6:30 - 7:30 pm at St. Benedict Catholic High School. Please RSVP by April 1 at **WCDSB Beyond Graduation 2023**.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Autistic People and the COVID-19 Pandemic: What Have We Learned So Far?**

Thursday, April 27, 2023, 12 -1 pm

Dr. Liz Pellicano, Professor of Autism Research at University College London joins us for the latest in a series of monthly interactive workshops where we discuss different topics that are important to autistic adults. The webinars are designed and hosted by autistic adults; all are welcome. [View the flyer.](#)

For a full list of upcoming events, visit the [Autism & Mental Health Webpage.](#)

### **CADDAC 15th Annual Conference**

Join the ADHD community in Calgary this October for CADDAC's 15th annual conference on October 28 & 29! Stay tuned for more details.

### **Bridges to Belonging: Pathways to Belonging**

Join Bridges to Belonging on May 16, from 10 am - 4 pm at The Family Centre (65 Hanson Avenue, Kitchener) for a full day of sharing, story telling, activities and learning about the various paths and intersections a person with diverse identities, including disability, can explore for meaningful connection and contribution on their journey to belonging. Individuals, families, organizations, and service providers are all welcome. Community organizations are invited to showcase their services and individuals with disabilities and diverse identities are invited to show their gifts and strengths.

This is a Passport Eligible Event. Learn more and get tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/pathways-to-belonging-tickets-591770089267>

### **Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre**

Held at Kitchener Public Library Central Branch, "Living Life to the Full" is an interactive, 8-week course based on the principles of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT). In groups, participants work through topics related to overall mental well-being to gain skills and knowledge to cope with life's everyday challenges. Tuesday, May 2-June 20, 2 - 3:30 pm. <https://livinglifetothefull.ca/>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### City of Kitchener

**City of Kitchener** is offering workshops geared to adults on the following topics:

- Wills and Power of Attorney; what happens when you don't appoint a Power of Attorney
  - Learn about the role of Public Guardian and Trustee of Ontario, who is designated to make decisions on your behalf when a Power of Attorney is not appointed by you in advance. Also learn about the Succession Law Act of Ontario, and the benefits of making a will in advance.
  - Wednesday, April 12
  - 10 – 11 am
- Plan for Peace of Mind: end of life planning
  - Join us for this helpful information session & gain peace of mind for you & your loved ones that your final wishes will be in order
  - Thursday, April 19
  - Rockway Centre, Heritage Room
  - 10:30 - 11:30 am Presentation with Q & A
- Workshop for older Adults
  - April 13 - Tips & Strategies for Brain Health
  - April 20 - Fraud Prevention
  - April 27 - Aging in Place
  - May 4 - Taking Care of Yourself While Caring for Others
  - Kingsdale Community Centre
  - 9:30 - 10:30 am

Register for all programs at: <https://bit.ly/3FRMFoc>

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## 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 PHAC'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 6 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 new 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\*\*](#)

### **National Advisory Council on Poverty**

National Advisory Council on Poverty's 2022 report on the progress of Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. The council interviewed 1000 people across the country about the underlying and overlapping causes and impacts of poverty and hosted eight small-group sessions where people with lived expertise of poverty could share their personal stories. Those conversations and the insights that the participants shared are the foundation of this report.

[\*\*https://bit.ly/3D15p2m\*\*](https://bit.ly/3D15p2m)

### **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/\*\*](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.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Ontario Caregiver Association

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

### Family Compass Waterloo Region

Family Compass Waterloo Region is a central website to guide families to services for children, youth, and families in our community. The website offers the option to find information about general services for children and youth as well as specialized services that can help to address developmental concerns. To learn more, please visit <https://www.familycompasswr.ca>.

### Fostering Information from Family & Children Services

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

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### 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 \(planningnetwork.ca\)](#)**

### Take5

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

Visit the **[Take5 website](#)**.

### 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)**

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Inclusion Canada

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

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

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

#### *Pathways to Home Ownership*

The Pathways to Homeownership project demonstrated inclusive models of homeownership and created resources to help people with disabilities (and their families) purchase their own homes. Inclusion Canada is currently working on new resources to support Pathways. It will be coming soon. Learn more here:

<https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2>.

#### *CRA Info Sessions:*

In February, the Canada Revenue Agency released its most recent pre-recorded webinar sharing information on the different tax benefits and credits that are available for people with disabilities. This webinar might be helpful to you! It includes information on:

- Disability Tax Credit (DTC)
- Child Disability Benefit (CDB)
- Canada Workers Benefit (CWB) disability supplement
- Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and Home Buyers Plan (HBP)
- Canada Caregivers Credit (CCC)
- Ways to do your taxes and other CRA services.

You can find the link to Webinar on the Benefits and Credits for Persons with Disabilities here [English Video](#) / [French Video](#)

The CRA also has some of its past webinars available online that include more information on the different tax benefits and credits available for people with disabilities. You can access these webinars here:

- Video: Webinar for persons with disabilities - Part 1 [here](#)
- Video: Webinar for persons with disabilities - Part 2 [here](#)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Inclusion Canada Continued...

#### *Free Income Tax Clinics:*

Do you need help with your tax return? You may be able to get your taxes done by a volunteer for free.

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) is a longstanding partnership between the CRA and community organizations and their volunteers.

Through this program, community organizations host free tax clinics where volunteers file tax returns for free for people with a modest income and a simple tax situation. There are also options to get help in person, over the phone or virtually. To learn more, [click here](#).

To find out if you're eligible for a free tax clinic, [click here](#).

To find a tax clinic in your area, [click here](#).

### Breakaway Passport Services

Breakaway Passport Services is a unique, person-centred approach to providing people with meaningful, engaging, Passport-approved activities. The team at Breakaway has worked in the field of developmental services for over 20 years combined. Their mission is to enhance the experience of people who live with intellectual disabilities by supporting them to engage in their community, develop relationships, pursue interests, and direct their lives. Connect with the team at [www.breakawaypassportservices.com](http://www.breakawaypassportservices.com), [breakawaypassport@gmail.com](mailto:breakawaypassport@gmail.com), or call 519-721-7932.

### Indwell

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

### 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>

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Support Groups

### Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH)

If you are a parent/caregiver worried about your child, or a young person looking for help yourself – please reach out. Our network of child and youth mental health centres has 4000 professionals ready to help children, youth and families with free counselling and treatment. We provide care in person, on the phone and virtually. No problem is too big or small. The next Waterloo PCMH **regular support group meeting** will take place April 25. The next **ADHD support group** will take place April 19. Find your closest child and youth mental health centre here:

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

### 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/>**

### Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington remains available online through a private Facebook group. They look forward to returning to the Cambridge Family Early Years Centre as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. In the meantime, they suggest you review the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation's website to see the supports and resources available to you during this pandemic.

Visit: **<https://www.cpbfbpc.org/covid19>**

### 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)**.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support, formally known as The Black Parent & Caregiver Support Group (BPSG) was created to provide a safe space for families of African descent to come together to meet and connect, share resources, expertise and needs, inspire and support one another through our unique and often challenging and isolating journey of raising Black children or supporting a sibling, of any age, with a disability. This is a volunteer-run group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. via ZOOM. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees. Contact: For more details or to register, please contact us at [bpsgroup2020@gmail.com](mailto:bpsgroup2020@gmail.com).

### **South Asian Wellness Group**

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 6 pm 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. This group is intended for folks who identify as South Asian to connect and build community with one another. ALL Self Help & Peer Support groups are open to adults living in Waterloo Wellington communities who identify as living with mental health or/and substance use issues. To join this group or if you have questions about it, please send us an email: [selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca](mailto:selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca). To view this information in Punjabi, please [click here](#).

### **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!

# 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. 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.

## **The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario**

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario (APSGO) is for parents struggling with the behavior of a child, youth or young adult. APSGO support groups help parents/guardians develop effective strategies, set limits and boundaries, and build better relationships with their children. The group currently meets via Zoom on Wednesday at 7:15pm. Go to [apsgo.ca](https://www.apsgo.ca) for more information.

## **Strong Moms, Safe Kids**

The Strong Moms, Safe Kids group is now accepting referrals for the spring session! Spring session will take place weekly on Wednesdays from 5:30-8 pm starting April 19, 2023 and concluding on June 21, 2023. The group is provided free of charge. SMSK supports families in the healing process and in regaining their confidence and skills. SMSK provides opportunities for families to interact together in a large group format then also provides separate smaller groups for mothers, older children, and younger children. <https://www.kwcounselling.com/counselling/group-supports/>

## **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 [rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca](mailto:rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca).

## **CADDAC Support Groups**

CADDAC's virtual support groups are a safe space for you to share your experiences with others who understand what it means to have ADHD or parent a child with ADHD. [\*\*Programs and Events - CADDAC\*\*](#)

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Engagement Opportunities

### Queens University Research

#### *Participate in Online Emotional Research*

This online study is looking at the emotional life of adolescents on the autism spectrum or neurotypical controls. Participants and their caregiver will complete a few questionnaires and will receive a \$20 and a \$10 Amazon gift card for their time. Looking for parents of individuals who are non-verbal, aged 12-18, on the autism spectrum. Contact [asd@queensu.ca](mailto:asd@queensu.ca) or call 613-533-2894.

### Volunteers Needed for Study on Covid-19 Stigma

Are you of East Asian or Southeast Asian descent between the ages of 16-19? Did you contract Covid-19 during the pandemic? You may be eligible to participate in a study to explore your experiences. Participation involves completing an online demographic form, answering interview questions about your lived experiences from a researcher. Everything is done virtually OR in-person at York University and the interview will take about an hour to complete. To participate, please contact Nasteho Hasan at 647-575-2891 or email [nhasan28@yorku.ca](mailto:nhasan28@yorku.ca).

### University of Calgary

#### *Exploring the Mental Health Benefits of Participating in Physical Activity Study*

A senior psychology student at the University of Calgary is recruiting youth between the ages of 15 to 24 years, who have been diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disability and engage in some form of physical activity (i.e., daily walking, running, soccer, biking). These youth will be asked to complete a screener survey and a 1-hour interview (online or in-person). Youth will be given a \$20 gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation. For more information, please contact Henna at [henna.hans1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:henna.hans1@ucalgary.ca). All inquiries will be kept strictly confidential. This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (REB#21-0687).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### York Parenting Project Study

Are you the caregiver of an infant 3 – 10 months old? You may be eligible to participate in an interesting virtual study examining caregiver experiences and infants' reactions to caregivers' use of technology. This study will take approximately 45 minutes to complete + a few questionnaires. Participants will be paid \$20 and will be entered into a raffle to win 1 of 4 prizes valued at \$150-\$200. If you are interested in participating, please contact [yorkparentingproject@gmail.com](mailto:yorkparentingproject@gmail.com).

### York University

*Study Asian-Canadian youth identities in a pandemic era: Arts-based research*

Are you an Asian-Canadian youth between the ages of 16 - 24 years with an ancestry/origin from the following countries: China, Philippines, or India? Would you like to participate in an arts-based study to explore youth identity? If yes, we invite you to participate in our project. You will take part in drawing a simple visual art, followed by an individual interview. For further details, please contact Attia Khan at [attiakh2@yorku.ca](mailto:attiakh2@yorku.ca), Tel: 416- 736-2100 Ext. 44527.

### Time Poverty Study

A York University Masters Student is looking for participants for a study investigating time poverty. They are looking for participants 18-65 years old, who are caregivers (paid or unpaid), and immigrant women from the English-speaking Caribbean. Contact for more information: [taylersi@yorku.ca](mailto:taylersi@yorku.ca).

### Psychology, Law and Neurodevelopment Research and Policy Group at U of G (PLAN)

PLAN is inviting youth and young adults between the ages of 12 and 24 with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) to participate in a study. Youth are eligible to participate whether they have had actual contact with the criminal justice system as our study asks about both hypothetical and real-world legal decisions. Youth will be asked to answer questions relevant to their own past experiences. To participate, youth must be able to speak English and must currently reside in Canada. Interested individuals can email: [PLANLab@uoguelph.ca](mailto:PLANLab@uoguelph.ca) or call 519-824-4120 ext. 53622.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Laurier University**

Volunteers are needed for a Laurier University students' research study on the lived experiences of parents with children with developmental disabilities navigating the school system. They are looking for parents or caregivers of a child with a developmental disability using the public school system in Ontario. Participants will complete a background questionnaire (5-10 minutes) and a one-on-one semi-structured interview (30-90 minutes). Participants will also be able to add, remove or clarify any information shared during the interview by reviewing the transcript. To participate, please contact [dias8170@mylaurier.ca](mailto:dias8170@mylaurier.ca).

### **CADDAC – ADHD Advisory Committee**

The Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) is looking for individuals who have lived experience with ADHD and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) to join our ADHD Advisory Committee. The committee members will meet quarterly (4 times) per year and will help with the development and design of our ADHD and Substance Use Support Groups. Participants will receive a stipend for their time. Must live in Canada.

<https://bit.ly/3z9FOCE>

### **Health Nexus: The Confidence Project**

The “Confidence Project” aims to deliver to pregnant, breast/chest feeding Canadians, and those planning to become parents vaccine information to better able to make informed decisions about the COVID-19 vaccine for themselves and their families. The Confidence Project seeks breast/chest feeding, pregnant people, planning to be or new parents to respond anonymously to our survey on the COVID-19 vaccine, before, during pregnancy or while nursing a baby. To respond to the survey in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi and Arabic, [click here](#).

### **SickKids – Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion**

Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion: if you are a researcher or community builder, please take a moment to [complete this survey](#) and help inform the development of new ways to communicate child development to parents.

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Partners 4 Planning

Last month we shared a message from the RDSP Action Coalition outlining a legal issue a person with a developmental disability may face after 2023 when trying to open an RDSP. While the federal government has a temporary measure in place, it will expire in 2023. This means that the only way a person with a disability, who may not have legal capacity, can open an RDSP is if another person becomes their legal guardian. Imagine someone having to relinquish ALL THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS simply to open an RDSP. And there are other situations where guardianship will be required in order to access and use an RDSP.

Please visit [www.weneedaction.ca](http://www.weneedaction.ca) to learn more about the issue and what you can do to help. You can visit the RDSP Action Coalition on social media platforms to share our posts and contact Natalie Jones at [njones@p4p.ca](mailto:njones@p4p.ca) to receive materials you can share on your social media platforms.

The RDSP Action Coalition is comprised of representatives from [Autism Ontario](#), [Community Living Ontario](#), [Family Alliance Ontario](#), [PooranLaw](#) and [Partners for Planning](#).

## SHORE Centre

SHORE Centre is launching a prenatal education program catered to queer families in the region and would like feedback! Complete the survey here:

<https://tr.ee/QAJQvUnE0w>

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Accessibility Standards Canada

There's still time to join one of Accessibility Standards Canada's new technical committees. They are accepting applications until April 18, 2023, for these technical committees:

1. [Technical committee for Acoustics in the Built Environment](#)
2. [Technical committee for the Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services](#)
3. [Technical committee for Accessible Travel Journey](#)

This is a unique opportunity for you to be a leader for accessibility and inclusion. You will find all the information you need by consulting the above webpages, including the form to submit your application.

## ***Recruiting for the current Outdoor Spaces technical committee! Become a member!***

Be part of the Technical Committee on Outdoor Spaces

Do you know what it takes to make outdoor spaces accessible for everyone? Take part in the development of Accessibility Standards Canada's standard on outdoor spaces. The existing [technical committee on outdoor spaces](#) is looking for new members in the following stakeholder categories:

- People with disabilities\*
- Indigenous peoples\*
- Academic and research bodies
- Standards users
- Government and authorities with jurisdiction
- Non-governmental organizations
- Standards development bodies

\*Please note: People with disabilities and Indigenous peoples are encouraged to apply. They can be part of any stakeholder category.

If this interests you, [please email ASC directly](#). They will be happy to discuss the opportunity and selection process in more detail.

**Deadline: April 14, 2023.**

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## **Accessibility Standards Canada Continued...**

### ***Accessibility Plan***

In December 2022, Accessibility Standards Canada published its first Accessibility Plan for 2023 to 2025.

This plan will guide them as they continue addressing barriers in the priority areas under the Accessible Canada Act. This first iteration of the plan is one of the many ways they implement the vision, mission, and values. You're invited to [read the plan!](#) You can also submit feedback on the plan, or any issue related to accessibility on any of the platforms.

Please visit ASC's website to learn about the many ways you can [send your feedback.](#)

### ***Collaboration with CSA Group: 3 new standards***

On February 16, Accessibility Standards Canada and CSA Group [announced the publication of three new co-branded accessibility standards.](#) The collaboration brings improvements and updates to older standards on accessibility.

- [\*\*CSA/ASC B651, Accessible design for the built environment.\*\*](#) It is a new edition of a previous standard.
- [\*\*CSA/ASC B651.2, Accessible design for self-service interactive devices\*\*](#) including automated banking machines. The standard is a revision and combination of two previously existing standards: CAN/CSA-B651.1:09 (R2020) and CAN/CSA-B651.2-07 (R2017).
- [\*\*CSA/ASC B652, Accessible dwellings.\*\*](#) This new standard contains recommendations for accessible home design, helping to set the standard for affordable, adaptable, and accessible homes across Canada.

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Community News

### **Bridges to Belonging Announces ABIDE**

Bridges to Belonging is thrilled to announce ABIDE (Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity). Equity-seeking people and families, grassroots ethnocultural organizations, and religious groups will have access to A Community Connections and Capacity Building Facilitator as a resource to access programs, services, and community resources for people with diverse identities including disabilities to live their best lives as valued citizens across Waterloo Region. For more information contact [info@bridgestobelonging.ca](mailto:info@bridgestobelonging.ca).

### **Inclusion Canada: Where is the Canada Disability Benefit Now?**

As the legislative process continues, we wanted to provide you with an update on the current status of the legislation to create Canada Disability Benefit, C-22.

Bill C-22 has passed second reading in the Senate of Canada and is now up for consideration in a Senate committee. The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science & Technology (SOCl) will consider Bill C-22 and offer recommendations for the Senate to consider before Third Reading and the final vote on its passage.

The bill is at a critical stage in its legislative process. Inclusion Canada is calling on the Senate to pass C-22 without further delay or any substantial amendments. This will ensure that we can move on to the regulatory process as quickly as possible with the objective of getting this new benefit to people with disabilities as soon as possible. The need is urgent and the circumstances are dire.

On Wednesday, March 22, Krista Carr, EVP of Inclusion Canada, spoke to the first meeting of the Senate SOCl Committee. She urged Senators to seize on the opportunity to make a historic impact on the lives of people with a disability in this country. She requested that they do everything in their power to ensure that the legislation is passed as quickly as possible so the work on the design of the benefit can start.

[Click here to watch Krista's full testimony](#)

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## 2023 Federal Budget Update

### Pooran Law

The Liberals released their [2023 Federal Budget](#). The budget primarily targets dental care, inflation relief, investments to building a clean economy and ways to create a stronger working middle class.

In our [latest Insights article](#), PooranLaw summarizes some key improvements that could significantly impact people with disabilities, their families, and community-based organizations.

### Inclusion Canada

Inclusion Canada is encouraged to see the federal government prioritize disability inclusion throughout Budget 2023. Some victories are obvious, and others are a bit more nuanced.

“While some elements of the budget are promising, far too many people with intellectual disabilities are living in dire poverty” says Robin Acton, President of Inclusion Canada. “As parents, our constant worry is the financial security of our children. We urge the swift passing of Bill C22, the Canada Disability Benefit Act, our family members cannot wait”.

Yesterday's budget committed \$21.5 million to the groundwork for the development of the Canada Disability Benefit. We are encouraged by this commitment, however we will be looking for a more substantial commitment to the actual funding of the benefit in the fall economic statement after the Bill receives royal assent.

Buried within Budget 2023 was an important nod to people with intellectual disabilities' right to decide. Budget 2023 extends the “qualifying family member provision” until December 2026 and has extended this provision further to allow siblings to also become plan holders where the decision making capacity of the individual with the intellectual disability is called into question. Most importantly, the federal government has issued a call to action to the provincial and territorial governments to address issues around guardianship for people with intellectual disabilities. We call on all levels of government to respect Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and enact, without delay, supported decision making legislation.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Inclusion Canada Continued...**

“The UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities is clear — all people have the right to exercise their right to decide” says Executive Vice President of Inclusion Canada, Krista Carr. “Inclusion Canada will continue to demand that the Federal Government take the lead in abolishing legislation that violates the decision-making rights of persons with disabilities.”

Another subtle victory for people with intellectual disabilities in Canada: the government intends to pilot a new automatic tax filing system for vulnerable Canadians. This has the potential to remove roadblocks and improve access to government benefits and programs for people with disabilities.

While Budget 2023 is encouraging, it is missing crucial commitments to the disability community such as inclusive childcare, housing, and mental health support. We will work with our disability partners and community to ensure the full inclusion of people with a disability is a top priority in all government spending.