

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 163
November 2023

Table of Contents

SEAC Updates	2
Assessing the need for Trans-Autistic Support	4
What's Happening at WRFN	5
Erin's EarlyON Drop-Ins	5
Camp Day 2023	6
A New Chapter	7
Accessibility Improvements	8
Community Info, Resources and Opportunities	10

What's In This Issue?

It's always difficult to say goodbye to the warmer fall weather, longer days, gratitude and festivities that we leave behind with October. The start of November can often feel like the start of hibernation season. However, there is so much going on in the community to be excited about.

Whether your family is looking for a new activity, or support group to meet your needs, there's something special in this issue of Family Pulse for everyone.

There are a few new valuable resources that can help you navigate the complexities of raising a child with exceptionalities, and engagement opportunities to have your voice heard. Be sure to read through each section to see what's new this month!

We hope this issue of Family Pulse helps you stay informed, connected, and supported.



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

Esther Wainaina, a Human Rights Officer from the Board, came to give a presentation about the Ableism in Education Conference that the Board is putting together with community partners. The committee is anticipating this conference will take place at the end of May and the audience they hope to include is staff (including Educational Assistants) and students; parents and caregivers; Trustees and stakeholder groups, and community groups.

In terms of format, they are thinking about keynote and panel discussions and workshops, programming for students with disabilities, breakout and sensory spaces, and more. The goal of this Symposium is to “understand ableism, disability, and intersectional discrimination,” through the lived experience of those with disabilities and other marginalized identities. There is much accountability for this conference, including with the senior team, representatives from both students and staff, and other community groups.

Next there was a discussion of the importance of incorporating the needs of all students in the classroom setting, including those who are considered gifted.

In terms of other updates, it was noted that IEPs would be out the week of September 17 or sooner.

There was also a discussion of a letter that the Thames Valley District School Board had written to the Minister of Education about concerns over the amount of Special Incidence Portion Funding for students with complex special education needs. SEAC is deciding how and if we will respond to this.

The next SEAC meeting will take place on November 8, 2023.

SEAC Updates

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

School System Operational Business:

Erin Lemak, Principal of Special Education, presented the 2023-2024 Special Education Plan with two notable changes;

1. Introduction to the new provincial assessments; Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test & CAT 4 Canadian Achievement Test
2. IPRC – Principals are now required as one of three mandatory staff in attendance at an IPRC meeting.

[Access the full 2023-2024 Special Education Plan.](#)

Erin Lemak shared the plan for the year.

Gerald Foran, Superintendent, shared Student Services focus areas for current school year:

- Implementation of universal screener
- Early intervention in math
- Superintendent approval now required if requesting a Modified IEP for a student
- Expand project search to tri-cities
- Community & Active Learning program – enhance the co-op experience for students
- Build staff capacity with Applied Behaviour Analysis
- Working to address trends the Social Work team is seeing and respond to them accordingly
- Continue to build effective and responsive multidisciplinary teams

SEAC Topic discussion by group. Monthly schedule for topics to be developed.

Ministry Updates: N/A.

Trustee Updates: WCDSB Board of Trustees Meeting September 25, 2023:
<https://www.wcdsb.ca/2023/09/>

Agency Updates were provided by all.

The next SEAC meeting takes place Wednesday, November 1, 2023.

Assessing the Need for Trans-Autistic Support in Waterloo Region

In Spring 2023, Waterloo Region Family Network (WRFN) and Spectrum Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community Place (Spectrum) came together to assess the need for supports for the trans-autistic community. Trans and autistic communities face their own unique challenges navigating society. Trans individuals might experience transphobia, barriers to accessing public spaces, and threats of violence while autistic individuals can experience ableism, lack of accessibility and/or accommodations, and other forms of systemic discrimination. When someone is both trans and autistic, the discrimination they face is compounded – meaning any support given to this community is incomplete if it does not consider the intersections of their identity.

Interviews and surveys were conducted to gather insights from the community to help inform the establishment of potential programming for the trans-autistic community. We were so fortunate to work with Cayden Genik on this project. Cayden played an instrumental role in conducting interviews, research and report writing.

If you're interested in learning more about this study, including our objective, method, and findings, please visit <https://wrfn.info/Assessing-the-Need-for-Trans-Autistic-Support-in-Waterloo-Region.htm>.

Cayden's full report, Establishing Effective Trans-Autistic Support, [can be found here](#).

Through our collaboration, interviews, surveys, and research gathered by Cayden, it is clear there is a need in our community for a specialized program for the trans-autistic community. Therefore WRFN and Spectrum continued a partnership to build Spectrum on the Spectrum, A Social Group for queer and trans people in the autistic community! Spectrum on the Spectrum will launch on November 23 at Spectrum, 210-283 Duke Street West, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

With the guidance provided in Cayden's report, we aim to create programming that is led and informed by those with lived experience where others can feel understood and have access to reliable resources.



Spectrum on the Spectrum

A Social Group for queer and trans people 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 board games and discussion in an accepting and welcoming space.

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 or
info@spectrum.ca

OUR EVENT CALENDARS

The flyer features a circular photo of three people (two women and one man) sitting at a table with board games. A yellow ribbon with a rainbow infinity symbol is also shown. Logos for Spectrum and Waterloo Region Family Network are in the top right. A QR code is in the bottom right.

What's Happening at WRFN

WRFN programs and services are 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 fall and winter. Meetings do not require an appointment, but are on a first-come, first-served basis.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Nov 7	EarlyON Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	10-11 am
Nov 8	Early ON Oak Creek 80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener	10-11 am
Nov 10	EarlyON Riverside 250 William St, Elmira ON	10-11:30 am
Nov 14	EarlyON Water St 73 Water St., N., Unit 105 Cambridge	10-11 am
Nov 15	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



Thank you so much to everyone who joined us on Saturday, October 14 at YMCA of Three Rivers' Camp Ki-Wa-Y! We had an amazing time hosting everyone, watching families create new memories while trying new activities. The rain and cold weather were no match for all the eager kids and teens who took on the rock climbing wall, high ropes course, archery, and roasting marshmallows at the camp fire! It was an incredible time meeting new families and catching up with Camp Day regulars.

The WRFN team is endlessly grateful to YMCA of Three Rivers for having us, and providing staff to keep everyone entertained and safe. Thank you to Pillars Fine Foods and Zehrs Stanley Park location for keeping us fueled for our day of adventure!



*Parents and Caregivers
Supporting Each Other*

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.



November 7, 2023
***Wills & Estate Planning
and Disability Law***

During this session Saquiba Rahman, an Associate at Pooran Law, will join ANC to speak about Wills & Estate Planning and Disability Law. Brendon Pooran will also be dropping in on the session.

Brendon has been involved with various disability organizations for most of his life. He created Pooran Law to provide support to this community and to influence disability law and policy throughout Canada.

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
maryjpik@hotmail.com
and ask to be put on our
email list.*

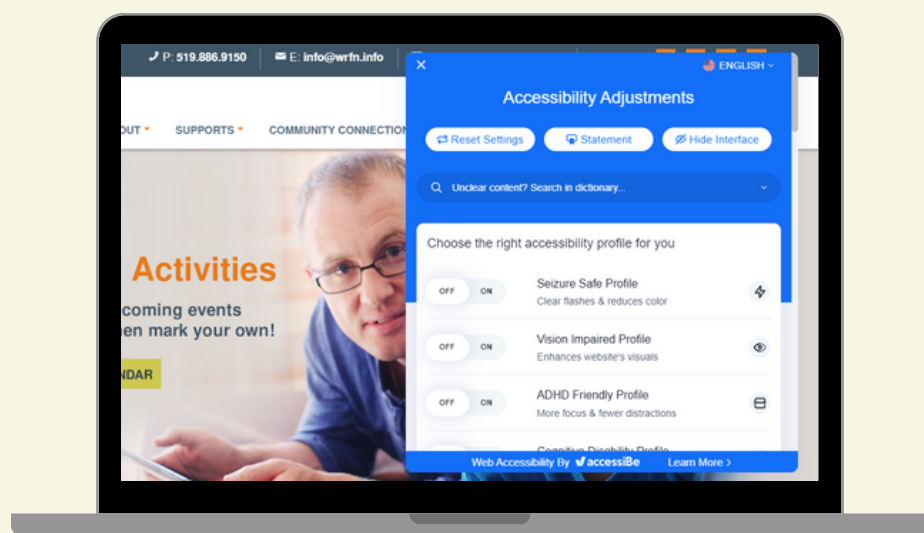
A New Chapter invites you to join the next ANC meeting on Tuesday, November 7 at 7:30-9 pm on Zoom. Saquiba Rahman, an Associate at Pooran Law, will join the meeting to discuss Wills & Estate Planning and Disability Law.

Brendon Pooran will also be dropping in on our session. Brendon has been involved with various disability organizations for most of his life. He created Pooran Law to provide support to this community and to influence disability law and policy throughout Canada.

Accessibility Improvements to our Website!



Our website just got a bit more accessible! We've integrated AccessiBe's accessWIDGET, an adjustment tool that makes accessibility modifications based on a user's accessibility needs.



Visit www.wrfn.info to give the tool a try!

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 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. Our next scheduled meeting will take place November 29. For more information, please contact Sue Simpson at 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.

Call Leah Bowman at 226-898-9301 or email Leah.Bowman@wrfn.info.

Call Marla Pender at 226-338-7274 or email 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. The next get together will be a Halloween movie night at 99 Ottawa Street South (KW Habilitation) October 23.

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

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

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.

Shore Centre – Pride and Joy

SHORE Centre is excited to share their newest program “Pride and Joy”—a free prenatal education series for 2SLGBTQIA+ families. Topics include: pregnancy and prenatal planning, labour and birth, comfort measures, postpartum care and planning, newborn care, birthing locally as a 2SLGBTQIA+ family. Pre-registration is required. For more information, call 519-743-9360.

Hope for Families Counselling Centre

Hope for Families Counselling Centre is hosting a monthly social gathering for families with Trans and gender diverse children and teens. Contact holly@hopeforfamilies.net for more information.

P4P - Planning and Facilitation Collaborative

The **Planning and Facilitation Collaborative (PFC)** has gone live! The PFC is a space where professionals and aspiring professionals can gather together to share knowledge and experiences, while also continuing to develop their skills and expertise through a series of online courses on planning and facilitation.

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 new 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.

- The Recreation & Wellness program is 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, which are intended to address the community participation services and support needs of individuals.
- 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.

Youth Exploring Possibilities - YEP Social at KW Habilitation

YEP is a social program for youth ages 13-21. This month, join YEP on:

- November 13 - Paint Party (PD Day) - 10 am - 12 pm
- November 8 - Science Night
- November 22 - Autumn Baking - 6 - 8 pm

See the [full calendar here](#) and [register here](#).

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 November!

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

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!](#)

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.

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> to see a full list of upcoming events and where to register.

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](#).

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!

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.

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.

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. Program starts September 5. 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.

Ray of Hope – Youth Employment Program

Ray of Hope also has a paid Work Readiness Training Program for young people (between the ages of 18-30) looking to gain training and experience to transition into the labour market. Participants go through 6-weeks of in-class education. During that time, they get essential certifications like Safe Food, Smart Serve and First Aid. After, they are supported with internal or external work placements up to 20 weeks. The next group starts November 13. To register, please contact Josh at 519-578-8018 Ext 229 or jhealey@rayofhope.net.

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.

YMCA of Three Rivers

YMCA of Three Rivers has officially partnered with the KW Titans, a local professional basketball team that's part of the Basketball Super League (BSL), formerly National Basketball League of Canada (NBLC). As part of this partnership, the KW Titans are co-leading the Teen Basketball (Ages 13 – 18) programs, which are now free to anyone in our community. They are also running a basketball skills program called the **KW Titans Skills Academy**, (Ages 9-18) and that is starting in the coming weeks. You can find all the specific [details on the Youth Programs webpage](#).

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 or register at [Join the Nurture Youth Group! \(google.com\)](#)

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Recreational Respite

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 November 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!](#)

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>

Oak Bridge Academy - Acknowledging the Sibling Experience

[Acknowledging the Sibling Experience](#) (ASE - pronounced ACE) is a well-being curriculum for siblings of neurodiverse individuals-that is divided into two subgroups (grades 5-8 and grades 9-12). The ASE curriculum incorporates psychoeducational and psychotherapeutic tools that are strategically implemented across the 7-week program. If you are interested in being contacted when ASE opportunities resume, please visit <https://ow.ly/Oe0150Ppj84>.

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 519-622-6550 x109.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Mindfulness in 30

This program will run for 4 weeks, every Tuesday, from November 28 to December 19, 12:30 - 1 pm. This group is open to all care providers, including family caregivers, leadership and management professionals, as well as care providers in health, home care, and disability support services, including direct support professionals, and administrative support staff. Sue Hutton, a mindfulness teacher with 40 years of experience, will lead the program. The program has been developed at the CAMH Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre in Toronto, Ontario. This program was made possible by the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence.

[About this Program | Mindfulness in 30 \(camhx.ca\)](#)

KidsAbility Behaviour Support Services

KidsAbility has provided quality Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services in Waterloo/Wellington for over 20 years. At KidsAbility, you can find the following range of behavioural supports: One-to-one ABA programs, social skills group, March Break ABA camp, caregiver coaching and workshops, Shake'n'Bake Cooking group, resource navigation, and caregiver support groups. For more information, please book a free consultation at GPS@kidsability.ca or call 519-886-8886 ext. 2242.

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.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops, Training & Events

Canadian Caregiving Summit - Working Together

The Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence (CCCE) is hosting the first Canadian Caregiving Summit from November 6 -8, 2023 in Ottawa. This in-person and online event will bring together lived experience experts, leaders, policymakers, and researchers across the age, disability, and illness communities to work together to build the foundation of a national caregiving strategy. For more information and to register, visit the [website](#).

P4P

The Value of Family-to-Family Connection and Family Networks

For over 75 years, families in Ontario have come together to build better lives for their loved ones with a disability. This webcast on November 7 at 7pm will discuss the power of family-to-family connections and the impact circles of support can have on caregiver's lives and the lives of their loved one with a disability. In addition, it will cover the value of Family Support Networks and their role in providing places for families to meet and connect with one other.

[Partners for planning – The Value of Family to Family Connection and Family Networks \(planningnetwork.ca\)](https://planningnetwork.ca)

Bridges to Belonging Future Planning Series

Join Bridges to Belonging for a free online event on Thursday, November 9 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm with Dr. Sandy Shamon as she discusses the extremely important topic of Advance Care Planning. Under the umbrella of Advance Care Planning, she will discuss:

- Health Care Consent and Substitute Decision Makers
- Power of Attorney - Personal Care; Capacity and Guardian and Trusteeship
- Goals of Care Discussions
- Advance Directives

[Future Planning Series 2023-2024 Registration for Advance Care Planning with Dr. Sandy Shamon \(google.com\)](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Guelph Wellington Family Network Pizza and Planning Party

Good news! Parent/caregivers have received a grant from the Ontario Caregiver Organization to start a Family Support Network in Guelph/Wellington. You are invited to a Pizza and Planning Party on Monday, November 13 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm! Come out to the West End Community Centre (Community room 2) share your ideas for fun social events, speakers, networking and more. [Please RSVP here](#). Can't make the Pizza and Planning Party? Share your ideas for future events, speakers and networking.

Waterloo Seniors Fair

The City of Waterloo and KW4 Ontario Health Team presents an opportunity for seniors and caregivers to learn more about community programs and services that can help older adults remain healthy, active and connected in the Waterloo community. November 16, 3 – 7 pm. WMRC Community Pavilion, west entrance door C, 101 Father David Bauer Drive, Waterloo. Register by calling 519-579-1020.

2023 CYPT Annual Forum: “Coming Together in Changing Times”

The CYPT Annual Forum is almost here! This is an opportunity for all members connected to the CYPT to gather, plan, and learn together. The forum will take place on Monday, November 20 and the afternoon of Tuesday, November 21. This year, the Annual Forum will feature topics including:

- Design Principles for Belonging (care of the Othering & Belonging Institute)
- Modelling that shows the impact on belonging if young people had access to free transit ridership (care of RunWithItSynthetics)
- A sneak peak of the 2023 Youth Impact Survey data

Microboards – Free Fall Workshops

Register now for the Fall series, which begin in early November. Sessions on governance, employing and contracting staff, financial management and more will be offered via zoom and are geared for those who are already part of a Microboard, or are planning to be. Know someone who's not sure if a Microboard is right for them? They can register for our Introduction to Microboards workshop on November 29. Space is limited for all workshops so register early! Register here: [MyCommunityHub](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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.

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

CYPT Belonging Expo Keynote

Did you miss the keynote discussion at the Belonging Expo? Or maybe you want to re-watch the discussion about the importance of belonging? The recording of the conversation is now available on YouTube! Watch Oluseun Olayinka, Dr. Dillon Browne, and Youth Connector Kian discuss children & youth belonging from a grassroots and academic perspective.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzV9Jwbjyaw>

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.

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 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

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

<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>

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

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 \(planningnetwork.ca\)](#)

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/3dRvlo2>

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

EarlyON Onsite Services

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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, 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 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](https://traveltoolsforautism.com) | [Pearson Airport \(torontopearson.com\)](https://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.

Supporting alternative level of care (ALC) for patients with a dual diagnosis to transition from hospital to home – practice guidance report

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**](#)

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. [Join the next Waterloo PCMH meeting on November 15 at 7 pm.](#)

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 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.

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 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 us at 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. 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 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. The next meetings will take place Thursday, November 9 and December 14.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Groh at 519-731-3923 or 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 rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca.

CADDAC Support Groups

ADHD Support Groups - Adult ADHD and Parent Support Groups

CADDAC is excited to announce that our ADHD Support groups for both Adult 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!](#)

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

Infant & Child Studies Group at University of Waterloo

Infant and Child Studies Group is a group of researchers interested in better understanding child cognition: so how kids learn! All studies are designed as games for children to play while we observe how they respond to various toys, videos, or sounds. The activities are fun for the kids, and help us understand concepts like how children learn new words, when children can begin to understand math, or what learning strategies kids use to understand new concepts. We deliver studies in person, as well as online and in take-home formats. Learn more or sign up at: <http://uwaterloo.ca/infant-and-child-studies-group/>

Autism & Mental Health Services – Focus Group Participants Needed

The Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region (CCWR) is a collective of five nonprofit counselling agencies that together are aiming to improve the quality and integration of mental health services for Autistic Youth & their families. Looking to hear from:

- Autistic Youth
- Caregivers of Autistic Youth & Children
- Mental Health Professionals (Social Workers, Psychotherapists)
- Allied Health Professionals (Behaviour Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists)

The aim of the focus groups is to hear about your experiences accessing and navigating supports as caregivers, autistic youth, and health professionals. Your voices will help to shape how we provide neurodivergent mental health services and work with community partners in the future.

Please email Kelly.reitzel@woolwichcounselling.org to participate.

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.

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.

Perinatal Mental Health Survey

Are you a parent/guardian of a child born in or after 2018, or are you currently expecting a child? Do you live in the Waterloo region? The Research Shop and Perinatal Mental Health Alliance in the Region of Waterloo want to hear from you. Share your experiences in talking about mental health with medical health professionals by [answering this short survey](#).

LDAWC

The LDAWC (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County) is asking for parent feedback through a [quick 5-minute survey](#). The survey results will help the LDAWC plan and build workshops and programs that can better support our community and the families that are working to advocate for every child to reach their full potential.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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>

Counselling Collaborative Waterloo Region

[Counselling Collaborative Waterloo Region](#) is seeking focus group participants to offer input into the development of our Ontario Autism Program Innovation Grant to support a region-wide approach to mental health services for autistic children, youth and their families. Please see attached flyer for details.

2023 Pandemic Canadian Autism Needs Assessment Survey

Autistic adults (18+ years) and caregivers of autistic children of any age are invited to participate in the 2023 Pandemic Canadian Autism Needs Assessment Survey. This is a survey to better understand the evolving impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on you and the services and supports you access. This is an anonymous survey. The survey is scheduled to close on November 13, 2023.

This survey has been developed in partnership with autistic people, caregivers, Autism Speaks Canada, Autism Alliance of Canada, and McMaster Autism Research Team, with financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada. We are grateful to our collaborators, Fédération Québécoise de l'autisme, Autism Yukon, and Pacific Family Autism Network for their help on this project. [Qualtrics Survey](#) | [Qualtrics Experience Management](#)

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.

For more information and to enroll:

Phone: 416-535-8501 ext. 32817

Email: n-and@camh.ca or hsiang-yuan.lin@camh.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Disability Without Poverty – Help Shape the CDB!

Disability Without Poverty is launching a cross-Canada project focused on outlining the priorities, values, and recommendations of people with disabilities, especially those living in or near poverty, to shape the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). This will help policy makers and government officials understand the needs and perspectives of this population and be sure the CDB reflects those needs. The project is taking place in three phases:

- An online questionnaire focused on values and priorities.
- Guided peer-to-peer conversations.
- A second online process focused on the details, so we can test what we learned.

They will share an interim report and a final report on their website, with stakeholders and with government. If you are a person with a disability OR the caregiver or family member of a disabled person who needs assistance to participate: Access the online questionnaire and learn more about the project at <https://www.disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca/take-action/shape-the-cdb>. Head over there to share your thoughts and perspectives!

If you are interested in going deeper, you can volunteer to join Disability Without Poverty's peer-to-peer conversations, the second phase of the engagement which will be taking place in December. To sign up to volunteer please share your email address by following [this link](#).

If you have any questions you can email shapecdb@disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca, call (833) 537-1822 or text 833-947-1153.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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.](#)

Laurier University Study

Engaging communities in developing culturally relevant solutions to autism service disparities. Are you a service provider with a minimum of 1 year experience working directly with autistic children and or caregiver of autistic children from newcomer or indigenous families? Researchers at Laurier would like to hear from you. Participation in this study will take approximately 2 hours and all participants will receive \$100 gift certificate of their choice or cash e-transfer. If you're interested, please contact larc@wlu.ca.

CanChild

Researchers at CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research have developed a new questionnaire to measure parents' experiences with healthcare services for their children with disabilities. Now we would like to have parents test it out and share their feedback! Complete a set of questions to tell us about your experiences with healthcare services. You will receive a \$20 e-gift card upon completion! Interested in participating? Want more information? Please email the study team at mpoc2@mcmaster.ca.

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.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Accessibility Standards Canada

The deadline for the public review of [CAN-ASC-1.1 Standard on employment](#) is extended to November 14, 2023. Please read the [draft standard on the website](#).

This standard envisions a work environment that is:

- accessible,
- inclusive,
- barrier-free, and
- without discrimination.

Your feedback will help ensure that accessibility standard effectively removes and prevents barriers.

The public review will run until Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 3 pm.

You can provide your feedback on the draft standard using one of the following methods:

- [Complete the online form](#) on the website.
- Download the [fillable form in a PDF format](#) and send it by email, along with any related files.
- Submit your comments in text, audio, or video format.

All the necessary instructions on how to send your feedback or how to contact Accessibility Standards Canada can be found on their website.

EarlyOn Early Years Assessment Survey

The [Early Years Needs Assessment Survey](#) is for parents and caregivers in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo who have children ages 6 and under (or who are expecting a child). The quick survey includes questions about personal and family characteristics, current and anticipated early years and childcare needs, and current early years experiences.

This quick survey is designed to get a pulse on families' needs so we are hoping to hear from parents and caregivers who are currently attending Early Years programs and services including EarlyON, and those who are not attending.

The survey responses will be used to continue to adjust EarlyON programs and create new services to find the best way to support families with children under age 6 in our Region.

[Fill out the Early Years Needs Assessment today!](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

2022 Early Years and Child Care Profile

The Region of Waterloo, Children's Services has recently published the [**2022 Early Years and Child Care Profile**](#) (EYCC Profile), which is fully accessible and available electronically on the Children's Services website, as linked above. The EYCC Profile provides a snapshot of Early Years and Child Care programs and services in Waterloo Region for 2022. If you have any questions about the data or information, please reach out to [**CHSAdmin@regionofwaterloo.ca**](mailto:CHSAdmin@regionofwaterloo.ca)