

*Where exceptional families thrive*

**Issue 161**  
**September 2023**

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## What's In This Issue?

Our summer went by in the blink of an eye, but we're excited to welcome September with open arms. Maybe it's the back-to-school season, or the cooler days, but there's something about September that feels like a fresh start, and a time of wonderful possibilities.

We have a great lineup of events and opportunities for participation this month. Our IEP workshop will be returning, along with a special event in October you won't want to miss!

In this month's newsletter, we will be highlighting upcoming events, important dates, and important information for you and your family. Read through this issue of Family Pulse to hear all the latest from WRFN and beyond.



**Support WRFN**

Waterloo Region Family Network  
[www.wrfn.info](http://www.wrfn.info)  
[info@wrfn.info](mailto:info@wrfn.info)  
519.886.9150



Personal hygiene is an important aspect of everyday life, especially for those with exceptionalities who are incontinent\*, and may sometimes rely on assistance from others. While it's not always discussed, it's common for families who support a loved one with incontinence to experience increased caregiving challenges. Common stressors might include social isolation, training support workers, caregiver burnout, health issues related to wearing briefs or diapers, and inaccessible community bathrooms.

If this is something you or your family has experienced, we would like to hear from you. We're looking to gauge if there is an interest in coming together as a community to discuss these common frustrations.

We imagine there are a few families in our network who may relate to this, or alternatively have stories of success. A community discussion would allow us to come together to learn from each other and suggest possible solutions. While we understand that toilet training resources may be of interest to some of our families, we ask that this group remains a place for caregivers to identify their main concerns of health/hygiene, practicalities, training supports, and caregiver support for ongoing daily incontinence.

If this is a discussion or group you would be interested in joining, [please complete the survey](#). Once we have an idea of interest, we will send out more details to those who responded.

\*Incontinence is a lack of voluntary control over one's urination or defecation. Because accidents can be frequent, those with incontinence may need to wear absorbent undergarments and/or require assistance with maintaining their personal hygiene.

# Save The Date!



The graphic features a dark blue background on the left with a classroom scene and a large white arrow pointing right. The text 'IEP WORKSHOP' is prominently displayed in white. On the right, a white background contains the text 'Save The Date' and the date 'Wednesday, September 27'. Logos for Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Catholic District School Board, and Waterloo Region Family Network are at the bottom.

**IEP**  
**WORKSHOP**

**Save The Date**  
Wednesday,  
September 27

Waterloo Region District School Board  
Waterloo Catholic District School Board  
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education  
Waterloo Region Family Network



The graphic is framed in dark green and contains text and images related to a camp day event. It includes the date 'SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER', the title 'CAMP DAY 2023', and logos for 'WRFN & YMCA OF THREE RIVERS'. Images show people participating in archery, canoeing, and hiking.

WRFN & YMCA OF THREE RIVERS


SATURDAY  
**14**  
OCTOBER

**CAMP DAY 2023**

Waterloo Region District School Board  
Waterloo Catholic District School Board  
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education  
Waterloo Region Family Network

## 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.




*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.



**September 5, 2023**  
***The Caregiver Guide:  
Why your family needs one***

This important future planning tool holds all of the most vital information about caring for your loved one.

A panel of parents will share about how we use The Caregiving Guide, how our loved ones use it, and how it helped us to move forward with our future planning.

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.*

You're invited you to join ANC at the next meeting on Tuesday, September 5 at 7:30 - 9 pm on Zoom. The topic will be The Caregiver Guide: Why your family needs one.

This important future planning tool holds the most vital information about caring for your loved one. The Guide was developed and workshopped by a group from A New Chapter. A panel of parents will share about how its used, how our loved ones use it, and how it helped us to move forward with our future planning. As always, you'll have a chance to ask questions and share thoughts after the presentation.

Just a reminder that you'll need to rsvp to Mary Pike at [\*\*maryjpike@hotmail.com\*\*](mailto:maryjpike@hotmail.com) to receive the Zoom link for the evening.

# 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. We will be taking a break over the summer. Our regularly scheduled meetings will return in the fall.

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.

#### **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](mailto: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](http://www.sunbeamcommunity.ca/recreation-wellness-program).

### KW Habilitation

Registration is open on September 6 at 9 am for Glee with Katie, Drumming with Sam, ArtShine, Music with Katie, Music with Len and our KW Hab Activities. [Plan out your activities](#) and [register for classes](#) on September 6.

### LEGUp!

The [LEGUp! Fall schedule is now available!](#) Registration opened August 10, so spots may be limited.

## 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](mailto:support@lifecourseonline.com).

### SPECTRUM Youth Under the Rainbow

Join SPECTRUM across the Region as they read stories, explore art and have fun together in a safe and supported environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, families and allies. Visit <https://wrfn.info/CommunityNewsAndUpdates/Family-and-Youth-Under-the-Rainbow.htm> 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](http://www.KeepYourHeadUp.ca/mindful-moments).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### EarlyON Grandparents Connect

Join an empowering and supportive program specifically for grandparents like you who are residing with and raising grandchildren in today's complex world. This program brings together a compassionate community ready to provide you with the knowledge, resources and emotional support you need to make the most of this important role. Weekly meetings include free childminding, snacks and the opportunity to increase your circle of support! This program is Co-facilitated with Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health. Registration is required for this program. Registration will close each week at 9 am, the Monday before the programs date. Visit [www.KEYON.ca](http://www.KEYON.ca) for dates, times, and registration.

### 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/>

### City of Cambridge

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

### Skills Corner Adult Day Centre

A new program for young adults, located in Kitchener-Waterloo at Forest Hill United Church (121 Westmount Rd E). Have fun, learn new skills, socialize and grow. Register by calling 519-589-4022. Program starts Spetmber 5. Team includes Dinorah Romas, PSW and Rgistered 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.

## 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 September virtual group program calendar for Children and Youth and Young Adults! <https://www.recrepite.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 (hoping to resume as of October 2023), please visit <https://ow.ly/Oe0150Ppj84>.

### Project Read

Registration for [Project Read Literacy Network's](#) Get Set Learn is open! Get Set Learn is a fun, free program for families with children birth to age four years of age. There are two different sessions offered, please visit [projectread.ca](http://projectread.ca) for details.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health

**Camino Wellbeing and Mental Health** has space in both the School Program and Live-In Program programs for prenatal and postnatal youth (formerly Monica Place).

- Camino Herbert St. School Program in partnership with the Waterloo Region School Board, offers prenatal participants to complete their school credits and participate in prenatal parenting programs, life skills programs, and so much more.
- Intake is open for prenatal and postnatal youth. This 24/7 staff supported live-in program with onsite counseling, prenatal and postnatal programs, life skills programs, parent coaching and so much more. Please contact Andrea ([arennie@caminowellbeing.ca](mailto:arennie@caminowellbeing.ca) or 519-573-7498) if you are interested in learning more or to complete a referral.

### 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 Tonicic: [vtoncic@cambridgefoodbank.org](mailto:vtoncic@cambridgefoodbank.org) 519-622-6550 x109.

### Muslim Social Services

**Muslim Social Services** is excited to introduce a remarkable opportunity for positive community impact – the Strengthening Families Program (SFP). MSS seeks support to recruit families who will benefit from participating in the program. Geared to Newcomer families and their children aged 5 to 18 years with a desire for positive change. Starting September 20, this bi-weekly program will be held at Camino, 400 Queen St S Kitchener. For additional information, please contact MSS at [info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org](mailto:info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org).

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Workshops, Training & Events

### Passport Claim Support Virtual Drop-In

Passport Community Development Team & Central West Specialized Developmental Services are hosting a virtual drop in on September 6 and October 4 from 12- 1 pm. Have a question about passport claims? Join for a virtual lunch hour drop in where a member from the team can help answer your questions. No registration necessary. If you have any questions, contact Mercedes at

[mweeks@cwsds.ca](mailto:mweeks@cwsds.ca).

[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)

### We Need to Talk about ADHD and Dyslexia: Myths, Science, and Interventions that Work

Join this free virtual event on September 7 from 7-8 pm. We Need to Talk about Dyslexia: Myths, Science, and Interventions that Work is an exciting talk by neuroscience experts from the Possibilities Clinic! Possibilities is a centre providing evidence-based reading interventions for children and teens through virtual tutoring sessions across North America. In this presentation, Dr. Brenda Miles, a Clinical Paediatric Neuropsychologist, and Dr. Doron Almagor, a Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychiatrist, will discuss the brain, the science of Reading Disorders, and the dangerous myths about Dyslexia that physicians, educators, policymakers, and parents need to reject immediately to start supporting students who are losing time and neuroplasticity in programs that aren't working.

[Register now](#)

### The City of Kitchener

The [City of Kitchener](#) is hosting a Community Open House at [Forest Heights Community Centre](#) Saturday September 9 from 1:30-4:30 pm.

### DSO: Creating your Individualized Housing and Support Plan Series

This three-session workshop series is designed to help you begin creating an individualized housing and support plan for you or a family member with a developmental disability. NOTE: It is recommended you attend all three sessions (September 13, 20, & 27) as the content of each session is connected.

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ejwniw5a1b86bb43&oseq=&c=&ch=>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **DSO Technology to Support Independence**

Join DSO Housing Navigators on September 14 at 2 pm for a virtual presentation on various types of technological assistance available today and how it might be used to support independence. While technology can never replace human connection, it can certainly help to increase independence thus decreasing the need (and expense) for human “just-in-case” supports.

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ejwniw7b392c6533&oseq=&c=&ch=>

### **P4P**

#### ***An Introduction to Parent and Caregiver Advocacy in Ontario's Schools***

Navigating the education system, when your child has diverse learning needs, can often feel frustrating and overwhelming. Having a good understanding of the system and knowing what resources are available can equip families with the tools they need to advocate for their child's education. In this webcast on September 20 at 7 pm, panelists will offer insights on how to advocate for your child's education and explore important educational legislation and resources.

[Partners for Planning - An Intro to Advocacy in Ontario's Schools \(planningnetwork.ca\)](http://planningnetwork.ca)

#### ***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 \(planningnetwork.ca\)](http://planningnetwork.ca)

### **Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region**

Have you ever wondered how organizations in Waterloo Region are improving child and youth well-being? Come to the Belonging Expo on Thursday, September 28 from 6-8pm at the Kitchener Public Library and find out! This event is free and open to the public. <https://childrenandyouthplanningtable.ca/expo/>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Optimizing Primary Care for Refugee Newcomers Conference**

On Friday, September 22 from 7:30 am – 5 pm, The Refugee Primer will provide clinicians with practical skills to address the unique needs of newly arrived refugees to Canada. This one-day conference at Women's College Hospital in Toronto will allow clinicians to identify common and serious health challenges that confront their refugee patients and describe an approach to management of these conditions. It will also help clinicians identify resources to address the existing resource gaps that arise in the care of refugee populations. The Primer will provide opportunities for health care providers to participate in and join existing networks of refugee-serving clinicians.

Register [Here](#)

### **Partners for Planning**

P4P will be offering a fall 2023 session of Developing Your Individualized Housing Action Plan, a 10-week virtual program, beginning on Monday, September 25 at 6:30 -8:30 pm. The workshop will run each Monday evening for two hours, for 10 weeks. The cost for the workshop is \$1,600 and is considered a Passport-reimbursement expense. If you would like to secure a spot in the fall session, complete the form linked below and send a deposit of \$250.00 to secure your spot.

[Housing Workshop Form Link](#)

### **CADDAC Conference**

CADDAC's ADHD Conference, on October 28 and 29, provides information for adults with ADHD, parents and/or caregivers of children with ADHD and their families, as well as educators and allied health professionals.

Venue: Foothills Academy, 745 37 Street NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 4T1, Canada

<https://caddac.ca/programs-events/caddac-2023-annual-adhd-conference/>

### **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/>

# 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 six months are also presented, as are rates of vitamin D supplementation of breastfed infants. Questions related to the new materials can be directed to: [dca\\_public\\_inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca](mailto:dca_public_inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca)

### Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

CCRW Employment Services help job seekers with disabilities get connected with local businesses. They provide industry-specific training, workplace accommodation and adjustment planning, employer matching, and access to a hidden job market.

For more information or to register, call: Jennie Di Girolamo – Employment Facilitator (519) 571 6788 ext. 7661 or email [jdigirolamo@ccrw.org](mailto:jdigiolamo@ccrw.org)

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

### March of Dimes Hi, Tech!

If you have a disability and are 18 years or older, you are eligible to be matched with a tech support coach. Your coach will answer your technology questions and help get you set up. To learn more visit <https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/atech/hitech>.



## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Plexus**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Rainbow Community Calendar**

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

### **Imagine Canada**

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

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

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

### 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)

### 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](http://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 | Pearson Airport \(torontopearson.com\)](https://www.torontopearson.com/travel-tools-for-autism-and-other-diverse-needs)

## 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. 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/>

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

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

#### **Province-Wide Monthly Virtual Groups for Adults with FASD**

The Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at ABLE2 is happy to announce the first two Province-wide virtual groups for adults living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). They include the FASD Educational Group and the FASD Social Group. Both groups will be held monthly. You can participate at your comfort level from the comfort of your home. For more info contact the Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at 613-761-9252 Ext. 234 or [fasd@able2.org](mailto:fasd@able2.org).

## 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 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, September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14.

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

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

The return of the Virtual Support Group for Teens with FASD. This group meets every Wednesday night at 7 – 8:30 pm.

Contact Rob for more information [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

### **Vulnerable Persons Alert - Support Bill 74**

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

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

### **Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada**

Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada is looking for young people (ages 14-18) with a passion for supporting mental health and well-being of youth in their community to join the Stress Coach Chatbot Advisory Council.

Anyone in Canada aged 14-18 is eligible to apply!

By joining this council you will:

- Be one of the first people to try the NEW Stress Coach Chatbot out and learn stress management strategies.
- Have your voice heard by providing feedback on the Chatbot to better support people your age.
- Gain volunteer hours to graduate high school.

[Register here by September 25, 2023.](#)

### **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/>



## 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).

### 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

## Access Recognition Awards

The [Guelph Barrier Free Committee](#) is excited to announce that the Access Recognition Awards are back! The ARAs are nomination based, and there are two categories:

### 1. Outstanding Contribution of an Individual or a Business:

- This category recognizes an individual (or a group of individuals) who has made an outstanding contribution above and beyond the expectations and requirements of the current Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (IASR) by recognizing, removing and/or preventing barriers for individuals with disabilities recognize individuals or businesses who have made an outstanding contribution above and beyond the , and outstanding accomplishments of individuals.

### 1. Outstanding Accomplishment of an Individual:

- This category recognizes an individual (or a group of individuals) with a disability who has/have overcome personal barriers to accomplish or fulfill a goal or a dream.

Nominations will open on Tuesday, September 5 and close on Tuesday, October 10 (6 weeks).

## CADDAC: ADHD in the Workplace

Is your company looking to learn more about Neurodiversity in the workplace? CADDAC's new ADHD workshop is designed for Managers and HR Professionals working with people with ADHD.

By the end of the workshop, participants will have a deeper understanding of ADHD and how it can impact work performance, as well as practical tools and strategies to ensure employees with ADHD are able to thrive in the workplace.

If your company is interested, please contact us for more information!

[Learn more](#)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:tov.study@queensu.ca).

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Accessibility Standards Canada

### *Public Review of Draft Accessibility Standard on Employment*

Review the draft accessibility standard on employment!

- **[CAN-ASC-1.1 Standard on Employment](#)**

The goal of this standard is to address work-related barriers caused by both individual actions and systems. This standard envisions a work environment that is accessible, inclusive, and barrier free. It imagines a place that is free of discrimination, regardless of a worker's (dis) abilities. We want your feedback!

Please **[send us your input](#)**.

### **Key requirements of the standard**

This standard will:

- Develop organizational systems, policies, and practices. Develop structural supports and show leadership
- Engage, educate, and create a supportive culture in the work environment
- Create a disability management system. Accommodate the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in the work environment
- Identify, prevent, and remove barriers encountered during recruitment, hiring, and onboarding
- Identify, prevent, and remove barriers encountered in worker retention, professional development, pay equity (compensation), performance management, and job separation

Please consult the **[draft standard on our website](#)**. Your feedback will help ensure that our accessibility standard effectively removes and prevents barriers. Leaning on the knowledge and lived experience of a diversity of stakeholders, including people with disabilities, leads to better standards.

The public review will run until Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 11:59 pm.

### **Options to provide feedback**

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

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

You can find all the necessary instructions on how to send us your feedback on our **[website](#)**.

Should you need any assistance with this public review process or have questions, please **[contact us by email](#)**.

**[View this message in French](#)**.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Community News

#### EarlyON

Extended hours at some EarlyON | Waterloo Region locations will be coming into effect as of September first. This includes Saturday hours at EarlyON | Roger Street, EarlyON | Water Street, and EarlyON | Oak Creek.

#### 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).