

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 182
August 2025

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What's In This Issue?

We hope you've got your planners and pens ready, because we think there's going to be some things in this issue of Family Pulse that you're going to want to write down!

Everyone at WRFN is gearing up for the busy back-to-school season. We're excited to announce the return of our School Navigation Workshop series, hosted by Family Resource Coach Lisa Cook.

But before we get too ahead of ourselves, let's remember it's still summer! There are a variety of summer programs and events happening throughout August for you and your exceptional family.

We also couldn't be happier to share our Save the Date for Camp Day 2025 at Camp Ki-Wa-Y. Be sure to read all about it and more in this month's newsletter.

We know this is another long issue, so be sure to look for the asterixis (*) to see what are the most recent additions this month.

Please Note the "*" represents new items added this month.



Support WRFN

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

What's Happening at WRFN

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

Ask A Self-Advocate

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

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at cristina.stanger@wrfn.info or call 226-753-9090.

Parent Mentor Program

Through our Parent Mentor Program, we provide a means for parents to connect with each other, as well as guide, support and help empower each other to work through the highs and lows that make up their journeys. Our Parent Mentors provide information and emotional support; share ideas and strategies; and connect their mentees with community resources. Learn more about our Parent Mentor Program [here](#).

School-Issue Parent Support Group

This peer-led group provides support, advice and a safe environment for parents who have questions or concerns about school issues affecting their children with special needs. The WRFN School Issues Support Group meets on the last Wednesday of each month during the school year. For more information, please contact Lisa Cook at lisa.cook@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 Lisa Cook at 226-338-7274 or email lisa.cook@wrfn.info
Call Leah Bowman at 226-898-9301 or email leah.bowman@wrfn.info

Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! Coffee Club currently meets on Zoom, usually on Thursdays from 3 - 4 pm. Generally, the group just enjoys catching up and chatting, mixed with a little bit of watching YouTube. Coffee Club is meeting in-person two Mondays each month from 7 - 9 pm.

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

SCHOOL NAVIGATION WORKSHOP SERIES



A free series of workshops for parents and caregivers to support your family through school navigation.



Upcoming Workshops:



6:30 – 8 PM

August 13

Back to School Planning & Communication Between Home and School

October 15

Making Your Individual Education Plan (IEP) Work

January 15

Transitions

March 11

Modified Days and Safety Plans

May 6 (VIRTUAL SESSION)

Making Your Individual Education Plan (IEP) Work



**REGISTER AT
INFO@WRFN.INFO**



500 Hallmark Dr, Waterloo, N2K 3P5

SCHOOL NAVIGATION WORKSHOP SERIES



BACK TO SCHOOL PLANNING & COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

- Get tips and strategies to help your child transition into the school year.
- Learn effective communication strategies with school staff to stay informed, address concerns, and support your child while at school.



**Wednesday,
August 13**



6:30 – 8 PM



**500 Hallmark Dr,
Waterloo**

REGISTER AT INFO@WRFN.INFO

Hosted by WRFN Family Resource Coach, Lisa Cook.

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

WRFN Drop-Ins at EarlyON

Meet with Lisa, our Family Resource Coach

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

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Sept 2	EarlyON Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	10-11 am
Sept 3	EarlyON Oak Creek 80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener	10-11 am
Sept 9	EarlyON Water St 73 Water St., N., Unit 105 Cambridge	10-11 am
Sept 10	EarlyON St. Boniface 225 Starlight Ave, Breslau	10-11 am
Sept 17	EarlyON Cedar Creek 55 Hilltop Dr, Ayr, ON	10-11 am
Sept 24	EarlyON Riverside 250 William Street, Elmira	10-11 am



Contact Lisa -

lisa.cook@wrfn.info
226-338-7274

More dates to come!

www.wrfn.info





SPECTRUM
Waterloo Region's
Rainbow Community Space



WATERLOO REGION
Family Network

SPECTRUM ON THE SPECTRUM



THE FIRST SUNDAY
OF EACH MONTH
6:30-8:30PM

A monthly drop-in group for queer and trans people in the Autistic community in Waterloo Region (Ages 18+)

info@wrfn.info | info@ourspectrum.com

Spectrum
Event Calendar







*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.

Our **"Ask Us Anything"** feature from 9-9:30 pm is a chance for those who attend the meeting to ask questions on any topic or clarify points when the main part of the meeting is over.

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



August 5, 2025

Building a Good Life:
Tips and Conversation

The ANC Planning Team will share insights and key discoveries made while helping their sons and daughters build a good life after high school.

They will discuss recreation programs, keeping special connections from high school, trying new things, respecting the voice of our kids, bringing your team together, and supporting ourselves as caregivers.

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

*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.*



July 19 or August 16 (3:00-4:00 pm)

EarlyON | Oak Creek (80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener)

Register at www.KEyON.ca on our EarlyON | Oak Creek calendar.

For support with registration call (519) 741-8585 ext.3001

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

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

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

If you have any questions, please reach out to info@wrfn.info.

A partnership program of:



SAVE THE DATE

WRFN



Where exceptional families thrive

Camp Day



Camp Ki-Wa-Y
3738 Hessen Strasse,
St. Clements, ON

**SEPT. 28,
2025**



Apply for the **Canada Disability Benefit**



What You Need to Know...

As of **June 20, 2025**, individuals can apply for the CDB **online**, by **phone**, or **in person at a Service Canada Centre**.

Persons with disabilities between the **ages of 18 to 64** can apply for the benefit if they have qualified for the **disability tax credit** and meet the benefit's other **eligibility requirements**.

If you already receive the disability tax credit...

Individuals who are potentially eligible for the benefit (those who qualify for the disability tax credit and meet most of the eligibility criteria) will **receive a letter in the mail in June**. This will include a **unique application code** to access a streamlined online application or an automated Interactive Voice Response phone application.

If you still need to apply...

If you don't receive a letter and think you may be eligible, **apply for the benefit through the standard online application** or a **paper application** available in a printable form (for submission via **mail or at a Service Canada Centre**).

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/disability/canada-disability-benefit>

Looking for assistance? For more information, please contact any of the following:

Trena Barnes at trena.barnes@eafwr.on.ca

Edward Faruzel at efaruzel@kwaccessability.ca

Sue Simpson at sue.simpson@wrfn.info

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

KW Habilitation: YEP Social – Summer 2025 Session

KW Habilitation is offering a series of engaging YEP Social events for youth and young adults ages 13 to 25. These summer sessions provide opportunities to connect with peers while participating in fun, food-themed activities.

Cheesy Pizza Sliders – \$50

Scheduled for Tuesday, August 5 from 6 pm to 8 pm at Bullas Hall, this session invites participants to join in making cheesy pizza sliders. The evening includes time to eat, socialize, and enjoy the company of friends in a relaxed setting.

Summer Smoothies & Strawberry Shortcake – \$50

On Tuesday, August 19 from 6 pm to 8 pm, participants will meet at Bullas Hall to prepare fresh strawberry shortcake topped with whipped cream. They will also blend summer smoothies using a variety of fresh fruits, creating a tasty and refreshing experience.

To learn more or register for a session, [click here](#). Also, join YEP Social this fall to cook and bake delicious treats together, and show off your crafting skills! Evening events run from 6 – 8 pm, and PD Day events run from 9 am - 4 pm. Find more [information about upcoming events here](#).

KW Habilitation: The Hangout at Grant's Cafe

Join KW Habilitation at The Hangout at Grant's Café on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 – 11 am. No purchase is necessary, but there will be coffee, tea, other drinks, and snacks to buy. The space will be inviting, comfortable and a place where everyone is welcome!

Learn more at <https://kwhab.ca/the-hangout-at-grants-cafe-opens-april-1/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community of Hearts Youth Job Skills Program

This 12-week program empowers youth (ages 15-29) with developmental disabilities to develop essential job skills. The program includes 4 weeks of interactive workshops on resume building, interview tips, and 8 weeks of hands-on experience at Boxes of Hearts Social Enterprise, where participants gain real-world skills by making and selling products. This free program runs multiple times a year and includes online resources! Along with job experience and training, participants of this program receive a certificate of completion and can count on references for future employment endeavours. Email or call to register at 519-826-9056 or info@communityofhearts.ca.

Special Olympics

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

CNIB's Virtual Program Offerings

Whether it's children and youth groups, employment, 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 [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 creative events happening this month! <https://www.funfearlessfemales.ca/events>.

Cambridge Food Bank

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Level Up Youth Advisory Group (YAG)

Level Up is recruiting for their first ever Youth Advisory Group (YAG). The Level Up Youth Advisory Group (YAG) is a space for young people (ages 12–16) to shape the design of Level Up’s play-based social justice and civic action programming for kids aged 9–12. As a YAG member, you’ll meet with other youth semi-monthly for 16 sessions from September 2025 - May 2026 to co-create programs that empower your peers and contribute to a more just, equitable, and inclusive community. Applications are open until August 15. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Programs from Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region

Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region is excited to announce various programs to engage and support the community. Here’s the list of upcoming programs:

Mindful Gardening

From May 9 until October 24, Fridays at 11:30 am for 2 hours are more than just planting seeds—it’s about cultivating wellness, connection, and sustainability. In partnership with Crow Shield Lodge and Wisahkotewinowak, we empower seniors, foster intergenerational bonds, address food insecurity, and celebrate Indigenous land-based knowledge. Through mindful gardening, we’re nurturing not only the earth but also the hearts of our community.

Kids Summer Camp

Registration Now Open! This August, MSSWR is offering a vibrant and engaging summer camp for children ages 6–12. Weekly sessions will run from August 5 to 29, 2025, from 9:30 am to 3 pm. Cost: \$150 per child (\$10 discount for each additional sibling). To register, visit: www.msswr.org/ourprograms For subsidy inquiries or more information, contact: info@msswr.org For more details and to register, please visit www.msswr.org/ourprograms.

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!](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

EarlyON Programming

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

Sunbeam

Recreation & Wellness Program

This 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. It 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. 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.

Community Outreach Program

The Sunbeam Community Outreach program is a welcoming community rooted in respect and dignity, where individuals with developmental disabilities can grow their talents, build meaningful relationships, and feel supported in a safe, inclusive environment. The On-site Day Program at Kingsway Drive runs Monday to Friday, 9 am to 3 pm, year-round (excluding holidays and summer closures). This fee-for-service program accepts Passport funding. The program team will work with you to tailor an individualized activity schedule. To learn more about the program, contact Nicole Tailby, Supervisor of the Community Outreach Program at n.tailby@sunbeamcommunity.ca.

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.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Woolwich Counselling Centre: Autism and ADHD Counselling

Woolwich Counselling Centre is offering counselling for autistic individuals and those with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), both with and without hyperactivity. The two professionals running it are Kate Suffling, an Occupational Therapist, who provides individualized assessment and support. She helps clients build executive functioning skills such as time management, planning, prioritizing, and organization. The other is Jessie Quinn, a Registered Social Worker, who offers support to parents of children with ADHD or autism. She assists in emotional regulation and helps increase independence in children. For more information, visit www.woolwichcounselling.org/adhd-services/.

Region-wide tutoring information

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health provides tutoring and homework spaces that are accessible and free of cost to families and students. This service appears to be on pause for the summer, please check back again in September. For more information, visit www.caminowellbeing.ca/tutoring.

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

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

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. If you have any questions about Paving the Path to Work, please contact Miriam Braithwaite at mbraithwaite@marchofdimes.ca or 905-687-7467 ext. 227.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Recreational Respite

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practices, goals and outcomes that promote inclusion, encourage community participation, and nurture social connectivity.

Visit the website if you are interested to learn more:

<https://www.recrespite.com/virtual-services/>.

Community Living Ontario's Student Links Program: Application and FAQ (Link updated and working)

Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, **Student Links** is an opportunity for students (ages 14 to 21) who identify as having an intellectual disability to explore ideas for their future after high school. It matches students and mentors who share a common passion or interest. The goal is to enhance their capacity to make informed decisions about their future before leaving school and support the natural development of relationships and connections to their community. Student Links is tailored to meet the needs of each individual student and may include hands-on experiences, exploration of new interests, and an introduction to work, volunteer or community-based roles. Opportunities are created for students to meet with people currently engaged in or with substantial knowledge of the identified interest. After completing the application found at the bottom, the first step is for the student to meet with the Student Links coordinator and identify ideas, interests, passions, and roles they are interested in. **Fill out an application form here**, and **visit here** to see some frequently asked questions. For more information, contact Eric Humphreys, Student Links Coordinator at ehumphreys@communitylivingontario.ca or 548-405-5000.

Resilience Project

The Resilience Project, a collaborative initiative among different partner organizations which fosters resilience for families and our community, offers programs for children, youth, and families. This initiative focuses on children and youth along the prevention continuum—those at risk of or already involved with the child welfare system. Learn more and register for programs

<https://resiliencecollective.ca/programs-offered>.

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

KidsAbility Behaviour Support Services

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

Community of Hearts August Social Club Events*

Come on your own or with a friend to any of the following 16+ events with Community of Hearts in Guelph. Program fees are Passport Friendly.

- Improv Picnic (\$10) – August 3, 2 - 4 pm.
- High Tea at Community of Hearts (\$25) – August 10, 2 - 4 pm.
- Downtown Stroll and Ice Cream (\$15) – August 17, 2 - 4 pm.
- Guelph Ribfest (\$40) – August 24, 2 - 4 pm.
- Movie Night at COH (\$15) – In the Heights, August 30, 2 - 4 pm.

Learn more about each event [at this link](#). Register by phone at 519-826-9056 or by email at info@communityofhearts.ca.

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health Village Drop-In*

Join Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health for a Drop-In Village, a free weekly program for parents and caregivers with children aged 0–6. Taking place every Wednesday morning from 9:30 to 11:30 am between July 2 and October 29, 2025, this program offers a welcoming space to enjoy snacks, play, connect, and build community at Centreville Chicopee Community Centre (141 Morgan Avenue, Kitchener). Staff are available to listen, share ideas, and explore parenting questions in a supportive environment. For more information, email capc@caminowellbeing.ca or visit caminowellbeing.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Parents for Community Living - September Craft Group*

Parents for Community Living is hosting a September Craft Group, now open to the community! Join in every Tuesday from 10 to 11:30 am at 544 Bridgeport Rd East, Kitchener, for a fun and creative series of hands-on workshops. Each week features a new project: Painted Tote Bag (Sept 2), Hand Stamped Tea Towels (Sept 9), Create Your Own Coaster Set (Sept 16), DIY Candle and Jar (Sept 23), and Terracotta Scarecrow (Sept 30). Each session is \$25, and space is limited. To register, contact Sonya Mehta at sonyam@pclkw.org.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops/Events

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health Children and Parents Connecting Workshops*

Camino Wellbeing+Mental Health's Children And Parents Connecting program is facilitating a few workshops this summer! Register via email capc@caminowellbeing.ca.

Separation Anxiety in the Early Years

August 6 from 12 – 2 pm at [EarlyON | Water Street](#) & August 20 from 10 am -12 pm at [Camino Charles St](#). Join Camino to discuss how to manage and support your young child's anxiety around separating from their primary caregiver. Interpretation and child minding is available, must be requested at registration.

Toilet Learning

August 12 from 10:30 - 11:30 am at [EarlyON | Water Street](#) & August 12 from 3 - 4 pm at [Camino Charles St](#). This workshop is for parents and caregivers of children 18 months – 4 years old. Interpretation and free childminding are available during the workshop.

DSO - Introduction to Technology for Independence Life Skills and Activities of Daily Living*

On August 12 at 12 – 1 pm, join Development Services Ontario for a Housing Navigation Lunch and Learn. Join DSO Housing Navigators over lunch for a demonstration of the new Technology for Independence: Home, Community Safety, and Personal Health e-learning video (module). This session will be hosted in a virtual format and is open to people with developmental disabilities, their family members and/or support networks, as well as developmental services professionals in Ontario. [Learn more and register here](#).

Housemate Mixer*

Are you or someone you support looking for a Housemate? WRFN, Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services and Developmental Services Ontario - DSO Central West Region have partnered to bring you a Housemate Mixer on August 13 from 6 to 8 pm. Join us at 205-1120 Victoria St N in Kitchener to learn how to look for a housemate, how DSO Housing Navigators can support you, and what families are looking for. This mixer will be hosted by Christina Hall (DSO Housing Navigator), WRFN Family Resource Coach Leah Bowman, and Amber Noseworthy (Sunbeam). To register, please email Christina at c.hall@sunbeamcommunity.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Seeing the Whole Story: Neurodivergence Through an Intersectional Lens*

A free community workshop for parents, caregivers, and allies navigating identity, education, and neurodiversity on August 20 at 5 pm. Join for a dynamic in-person and virtual (livestream available) community workshop that explores how intersectionality and neurodivergence can shape the everyday experiences of children, youth, and families. This three-hour evening session will dive deep into identity, inclusion, and real-world tools for navigating school systems, supporting neurodivergent individuals, and creating more equitable communities. This free workshop is designed especially for parents, caregivers, and allies who want to better understand how race, class, disability, and other identities interact — and how to turn awareness into action. [Learn more and register by August 17 here.](#)

CADDAC Understanding Your Child's ADHD*

Are you struggling to understand and navigate your child's new ADHD diagnosis? Do you feel overwhelmed with all the information and unsure what to believe? This three-week introductory program on September 15, 22, and 29 will help you learn what ADHD actually is, and how it can affect your child at home and school. The course aims to teach parents and caregivers the basics of ADHD and strategies to help manage adverse symptoms. This 3-week program is meant to be a first step for parents with a newly diagnosed child. It will explain the basics of the condition, along with how it may be showing up at home and school.

<https://caddac.ca/programs-events/understanding-your-childs-adhd/>

CMHA's Mental Health for All Conference*

Don't miss CMHA's Mental Health for All Conference, September 23–25, 2025 at the Hilton Toronto. There will be compelling speakers, mental health leaders, frontline workers, and people with expertise from lived experience. Register now and be part of the movement shaping the future of mental health care in Canada.

<https://whova.com/web/4Mlkpyyk6rT1BE8Ej44ImKM0SkSvDzuG7B%40luRnr3mc%3D/>

2025 Provincial Network DS HR Forum*

The 2025 Provincial Network DS HR Forum will take place October 28 – 29. Presented in proud partnership with [CSBT](#), this year's theme — Healthy People at Work — is all about building supportive, resilient workplaces where teams can thrive. Connect with leaders and innovators from across the DS sector for a day and a half of: workforce Initiative updates, hot-topic HR legal sessions, fresh strategies in tech, wellness, and learning, and expanded networking. [Register here](#) and stay up to date with the full agenda at www.provincialnetwork.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Newcomer Information Night*

Join WRFN and the community for Newcomer Info Night: Children & Youth Fair on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, from 6 to 8 pm at the Kitchener Public Library – Central Library (85 Queen Street North, Kitchener). Whether you're new to the area or not, this free event offers a welcoming space to connect and celebrate inclusivity. Enjoy an Indigenous Welcoming with Joanee Davis-Smoke, connect with local organizations providing resources for children, youth, and families, and take part in fun activities including a children's area, youth-led programming, and parent workshops. Interpretation will be available in Arabic, Spanish, Tigrinya, and more. Light refreshments will be provided, and the first 100 attendees will receive free prizes! www.kwmulticultural.ca/nin2025

Partners for Planning -

Crafting Your Individualized Housing Action Plan Workshop*

In this 10-week facilitated workshop called Crafting Your Individualized Housing Action Plan, families gain practical tools, expert guidance, and a supportive space to take real steps toward helping their family member create a home of their own. The next workshop starts this Fall on Tuesday, September 23, 2025 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The program will run over the course of 11 weeks each Tuesday, with 6 whole-group sessions, 3 facilitation sessions, and 1 consultation with housing expert, Kelly Casey. The final date of the workshop will be December 2, 2025.

<https://www.planningnetwork.ca/resources/person-directed-planning-crafting-your-individualized-housing-plan>

CADDAC's 17th Annual ADHD Conference*

CADDAC's ADHD Conference on November 1 & 2 at the University of British Columbia Nest Conference Centre, 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.

<https://caddac.ca/programs-events/caddacs-17th-annual-adhd-conference/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

PooranLaw

PooranLaw shares valuable resources aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities and their families. With a commitment to providing expert legal guidance, PooranLaw addresses the complexities of various legal issues affecting the community. While individuals with disabilities may face barriers to decision-making at various life stages, there are often less restrictive and more accessible alternatives to guardianship. The appropriate solutions depend on the specific decisions facing each individual.

To assist families, PooranLaw provides wraparound legal services tailored to every stage of life. This includes:

- Accessing educational supports
- Advocating for fairness in the workplace
- Advising on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Navigating relationship and marriage breakdowns
- Building secure futures through complex tax, trust, and estate planning, including comprehensive domestic contracts

Explore the “Decision-Making Tree” to understand the different areas of decision-making under the current legal framework in Ontario.

For more information about the services offered, visit [PooranLaw](#).

Surrey Place and CAMH – New Online Mental Health Toolkit

The Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Program (DDPCP) at Surrey Place introduces a new toolkit designed to assist physicians in addressing the mental health needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

These resources complement the [Canadian guidelines on primary care for adults with IDD](#), filling essential gaps in specialized supports. View the [Mental Health Toolkit here](#).

Porchlight: Quick Access Counselling

Porchlight offers single-session Quick Access counselling sessions, letting you get help sooner, when you need it. Because, sometimes, you need a little help, sooner. Call now for your appointment: 519-621-5090 or visit porchlightcnd.org

Information, Opportunities & Resources

ConnectABILITY Roommate Matching Webpage

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

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

Partners for Planning: Update to the Special Services at Home Guidelines

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

Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region: Autism Mental Health Support

Are you a parent of an autistic child or teen or an autistic adult seeking mental health support? The Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region is here to help. This collaborative includes six Community Mental Health Agencies in the region, with over 50 therapists offering professional autism-informed therapy. Locations throughout Waterloo Region include Kitchener, Cambridge, Waterloo, Elmira, and New Hamburg. Virtual and telephone appointments are also offered. The central intake can connect individuals with the CCWR agency of choice. Flexible payment options include a sliding scale based on income, insurance benefits, or OAP core funding. Eligibility for other funding may also be discussed during intake. To register for counselling, visit counsellingwr.ca or call 519-884-0000.

<https://counsellingwr.ca/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) Collaborative

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

211

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

Ask a Nurse at the Welcome Spaces

Public Health Family Nursing services are available at three Welcome Space locations, offering one-to-one, drop-in support from Public Health Nurses. This service is provided from 9 am to 3 pm on the following days:

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

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

Ontario Caregiver Organization

The Ontario Caregiving Organization has a number of [resources and e-learning opportunities](#) for caregivers, healthcare workers, volunteers, and employers available on its website. A new and improved [SCALE Program](#) will also begin Fall 2025. The SCALE (Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment) Program can provide you with skills you need to find a balance between your caregiving responsibilities and personal needs.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Aide Canada

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

Breastfeeding Dashboard

Canada's "[Breastfeeding Dashboard](#)" is now available on Public Health Agency of Canada's Public Health Infobase platform. Along with this data tool, the first edition of Canada's Breastfeeding Progress Report is available. The data provides an overview of breastfeeding rates in Canada, including information on breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity, examined by various geographic and sociodemographic factors.

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

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](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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.](#)

EarlyON Onsite Services & Mobile Services

EarlyON Centres partner with a variety of community agencies to provide onsite appointments for your child and family. [Learn more](#). EarlyON also offers mobile drop-in at various sites in the Waterloo Region. EarlyON Educators are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in our play-based environment. To learn more about mobile sites, call 519-741-8585 x3001 or visit the [Locations Page](#).

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.

RecLife GMA

RecLife GMA provides recreational and life skills services for individuals with disabilities in Mississauga. Their programs offer a variety of routine-based activities, life skills support, and social activities tailored to the needs of participants within the center. Some examples include board games, meal planning, trampoline parks, and more. Their online programs offer a variety of interactive options, including social groups, cooking classes, and life skills support, all accessible from the comfort of home. Learn more by visiting www.reclifegma.ca or emailing reclifegma@gmail.com.

Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence:

Survey insights from caregivers and care providers across Canada

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County: Resource Page

Whether you're a student, parent, educator or caregiver, you'll find valuable information on local programming, learning disabilities, IEPs and other supportive resources in the community. The page is designed to support you with the information and connections needed to navigate learning disabilities and ADHD. Visit the [page here](#).

Access 2 Card

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

Kerry's Place Brave Space

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

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

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>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CanFASD Mental Health Resource and Practice Guide

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

Indigenous Relations Circle

The Indigenous Relations Circle, an initiative of Autism Alberta's Alliance, is interested in the Indigenous and autistic experience in Alberta. It's newsletter is distributed four times per year and includes work that their circle is doing and includes events happening around the province that you may be interested in. Their goal is to increase connection and community between Indigenous Autistic communities. If you are interested please subscribe [here](#).

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

Pearson Airport

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Kitchener Public Library: Access to Technology Programs

Chromebook Borrowing: Community members can now borrow Chromebooks from the library for a one-week loan period, available at all five library locations.

Daisy Readers with Digital Content: The library has added Daisy reader machines with enhanced navigation, including Victor Stratus and Victor Stream devices that can play Daisy audio discs and digital content. Staff can pre-load devices with a mix of titles based on customer reading profiles.

Yoto Mini Collection: The library has a collection of 13 Yoto Mini audio players, which use colorful plastic-coated cards to play audiobooks for children from birth to 12 years old.

Additionally, the library's Visiting Library Service provides monthly delivery of library materials to Kitchener residents who cannot visit the library in person.

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

Guelph Wellington Family Network

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

familynetworkGW@Gmail.com

The Belonging Collective*

The Belonging Collective Community Calendar promotes inclusive, public events and programs that support community connection and accessibility across Waterloo Region. This resource is designed for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, caregivers, support staff, professionals working in developmental services, and community members seeking to engage in inclusive opportunities. Reflecting a shared commitment to building belonging, the calendar is open to everyone in Waterloo Region. [Explore it today!](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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/>

Early Learning and Child Care Navigators

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

- [Send an online request to meet with an Early Learning & Child Care Navigator Request](#)
- [Email an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator](#)
- For more info please visit [ELCC Navigators Landing page](#)

Call 519-741-8585 ext. 3008 and ask to speak with an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator.

Woolwich Counselling Centre: Autism and ADHD Counselling

Woolwich Counselling Centre is offering counselling for autistic individuals and those with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), both with and without hyperactivity. The two professionals running it are Kate Suffling, an Occupational Therapist, who provides individualized assessment and support. She helps clients build executive functioning skills such as time management, planning, prioritizing, and organization. The other is Jessie Quinn, a Registered Social Worker, who offers support to parents of children with ADHD or autism. She assists in emotional regulation and helps increase independence in children. For more information, visit www.woolwichcounselling.org/adhd-services/.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Support Groups

PFLAG Waterloo, Wellington & Perth Region (Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)

The Waterloo Wellington Perth Chapter of PFLAG invites you to attend our support group focusing on topics of interest to parents, family and friends of LGBTQ individuals. PFLAG Canada is Canada's only national organization that helps all Canadians with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. More info at: <https://www.facebook.com/PFLAG.WWP/>

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario

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

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!

SHORE Centre Stork Secrets*

Stork Secrets is a peer support group program for expectant and postpartum parents who may be experiencing challenges to the adjustment of new parenthood, or who may be experiencing some form of perinatal mood and/or anxiety disorder (PMAD). This program is for anyone who is currently expecting a child or is a new parent (whether through birth, adoption, or surrogacy) and offers support and a space to share experiences, obtain information and resources, and overcome feelings of isolation commonly felt during the perinatal period. Weekly sessions offered both virtually and in-person in English and Arabic.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CIA - Connecting, Interests and Activities

CIA is a group in Waterloo Region for adults (18+) with Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) level 1. The purpose of the group is to create a safe and supportive space for people to have fun, meet and connect with others, and take part in activities. Join if you're looking for a positive place of belonging! Meetings take place at the Downtown Community Centre (35 B Weber Street West), in the Multi-Purpose Room on the second Thursday of each month. This is a drop-in group, so folks are welcome to join anytime between 5 and 7 pm. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Groh at 519-731-3923 or grohtech@xplornet.com.

Street Therapy*

Street Therapy is a fee-for-service psychotherapy clinic with multiple locations in Kitchener. Street Therapy offers a bi-weekly ADHD support group on Tuesday Nights from 7-8pm at 231 Frederick Street, Kitchener. Focus Foragers ADHD Support Group for Adults with Executive Function Deficits is a supportive group where specific strengths and challenges related to ADHD, resources and coping strategies are discussed. Please note that this group is not intended to replace group therapy. It provides evidence-based information and peer support.

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

Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society - New Parents Connect*

The New Parents Connection Program is a great opportunity for moms who have a child with Down syndrome (up to age 6) to share celebrations, struggles, and goals with one another. It is also an opportunity to learn about timely information and resources in a comfortable and supportive environment. The program runs multiple times each year, new moms are encouraged to register for this free program as soon as they are ready. Free childcare is provided. Go to WWDSS.ca or email info@wwdss.ca for more information.

Autism Sibling Support Group Offered by Brightside*

Sibling group is offered by the Brightside team as part of Foundational Family Services for siblings of children with autism. The participating sibling must be 11 or younger and the sibling with autism must be registered with the OAP to be eligible. There are several dates, all at the Hanson location, including October 10, November 17, and March 19. All days offer two sessions at either 9 - 11 am or 1 - 3 pm. Please note that each sibling may only sign up for one date/time. Register by e-mailing r.khanam@sunbeamcommunity.ca. To learn more, please visit <https://www.sdrc.ca/autism-sibling-support-group-offered-by-brightside/>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sunbeam Development Resource Centre

Monthly Fathers' Support Group

If you are a father in Waterloo Region who has a child (of any age) with an intellectual disability and/or autism. The group meets monthly. It is a great opportunity for dads to discuss a wide range of topics related to parenting a child with an intellectual disability and/or autism. Fathers learn from guest speakers as well as from each other, sharing wisdom, understanding and a chance to talk to other dads who "get it." Some of the topics discussed in the past year were: mindfulness, sharing the diagnosis and advocating for your child. The Fathers Support Group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 8:00 pm. Please call 519-741-1121 for more information about how to join.

Mothers' Support Group

The Mothers' Support Group monthly groups are offered at two different times including a daytime and evening timeslot. Daytime sessions take place the last Friday of the month from 10 am to 11:30 am. The Evening time is on the last Tuesday of the month from 7 to 8:30 pm. The purpose of the group is to connect with other mothers, share ideas, learn more about community resources and get support. Speakers are often invited to share information on topics of interest to group members. Some of the topics discussed in the past year were anxiety, school issues and grief.

Please call 519-741-1121 for more information about how to join either.

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support was created to provide a safe space for families of African descent to come together to meet and connect, share resources, expertise and needs, inspire and support one another through our unique and often challenging and isolating journey of raising Black children or supporting a sibling, of any age, with a disability. This is a volunteer-run group that meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 7 – 8:30 pm via Zoom. They also offer a daytime option on the third Tuesday of each month from 1 - 2 pm. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees. Contact: For more details or to register, please contact bpsgroup2020@gmail.com.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CADDAC Support Groups

Youth Peer-facilitated Support Groups*

CADDAC is excited to introduce the official launch of new Youth ADHD Support Groups for teens and young adults aged 16-24! Each session will offer a brief educational component to help relate a chosen topic to ADHD (i.e. Procrastination; sleep; advocacy; etc.) Based on the topic and information shared, participants are then invited to discuss how this relates to them, share strategies and to offer support to peers with similar lived experience. A team of peer facilitators are there to provide a safe and inclusive space for you to listen, share and feel validated.

<https://caddac.ca/programs-events/youth-peer-facilitated-support-group/>

ADHD Support Groups - Adult ADHD and Parent Support Groups

CADDAC is excited to announce that ADHD Support groups for both Adults and Parents are now back in session! In addition, a new Western Time zone Parent Support Group has been added. You do not need to join the group of the time zone you're in. You can join whichever regional meeting that fits in your schedule.

[Learn more and register!](#)

ADHD and Substance Use Disorder Peer-led Support Group

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

P4P Planning and Facilitation Collaborative

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

Help Shape the Future of FASD Support in Ontario

Have you used the [FASDinfoTSAF.ca](https://fasdinfoTSAF.ca) website, attended FASD training for service providers, or participated in FASD support groups? Health Nexus is seeking your feedback on our FASD programs to help improve support for individuals and families across Ontario. Share your thoughts in our anonymous survey [here](#) and help shape the future of FASD support in the province. Your input makes a difference.

Laurier University: Shared Reading Research Study

A research team led by Dr. Gottardo and Dr. Wood at Wilfrid Laurier University is conducting a 14-week study focused on shared reading strategies with children. Families will attend five in-person sessions featuring fun literacy games and activities (about one hour each). At home, participants will read picture books provided by the research team and complete a brief diary entry each week for nine weeks. Caregivers will receive \$15 via e-transfer after each in-person session (totalling \$75), with bus fare compensation available upon request. Participants can keep all at-home materials, including books and reading strategy resources. This study has been approved by the Laurier Research Ethics Board (REB #8508). To learn more or participate, fill out [your information here](#) or email Katie at reid4150@mylaurier.ca.

CYPT Youth Impact Project

The Youth Impact Project is back! The [Children and Youth Planning Table](#) and [Smart Waterloo Region](#) have \$50,000 to give out to youth ideas for positive change in our community! Young people living in Waterloo Region can submit their project pitch online for up to \$5,000 in funding. The Youth Decision Making Team will be evaluating applications until November 9 – or until the money runs out! <https://childrenandyouthplanningtable.ca/yip/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Opportunity to Provide Feedback on an Accessible Fitness App

Lee-Anne from Sekond Skin Society is in the process of designing an innovative fitness app that aims to make fitness classes more accessible for individuals with varying abilities and limitations. The app includes a range of accessibility features, allowing people to participate in fitness classes both online and in person.

Lee-Anne is looking for feedback from individuals with diverse disabilities to help improve the app—especially for those who use assistive technology. She is offering a free trial to anyone interested in trying it out.

If you or someone you know would like to access the app or provide feedback, please reach out to Lee-Anne at lee-anne@sekondskinsociety.com.

To learn more, check out the short demo video: <https://youtu.be/V1s3ON-2u9I?si=vFoG2mLemeAmbe0g>.

Inclusion Canada: Invitation to participate in future research projects

Inclusion Canada often asks people with lived experience to participate in research projects. This typically involves participating in online focus groups or national surveys. Research opportunities are usually available in English and French. They include a variety of topics that impact people with an intellectual disability and their families. Inclusion Canada has compensation guidelines for participating in research. They are building a contact list of people interested in participating in research projects. If you would like to be invited to participate in future research projects, [please sign up here](#).

University of Calgary National Survey of Black children and youth

Researchers at the University of Calgary are recruiting participants for a national survey of Black children and youth in Canada. This is the first exclusive national survey of Black children in Canada with a central goal of "Transforming the Lives of Black Children and Youth in Canada". They are interested in understanding Black parents and Black youths experience regarding the social and economic outcomes of Black children and youths in Canada. Black parents living in Canada who have children age 0 to 13 years old and Black youth living in Canada who are age 14 to 25 years old are invited to participate. The survey is interviewer administered. Participants receive \$20 for participation. Please contact transformblacklives@ucalgary.ca to participate.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

PhD Research Study Participant Recruitment

A PhD student at York University is recruiting participants for a research study titled “Exploring the Mental Well-being of Black Women Living in Poverty and At Risk of Intimate Partner Violence: A Grounded Theory Study.” This study has been reviewed and approved by the York University Research Ethics Board. The goal of this study is to understand how intimate partner violence and poverty jointly impact the mental well-being of Black Canadian women. The research seeks to inform better supports by identifying urgent needs, barriers, and facilitators to accessing services. You might qualify if you reside in an emergency/crisis women’s shelter within Ontario; Are experiencing poverty; Are over the age of 16 years old; Can speak, read, and write in English. To participate, please contact: Danielle, PhD Candidate York University, School of Nursing Email: dfw@yorku.ca.

Virtual Peer Support for Newly-Diagnosed Autistic Women

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

Live-In Familyhome Provider Opportunity*

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region is seeking one or two individuals to move into a 2–3 bedroom accessible apartment and provide support to a 46-year-old non-verbal woman with limited mobility and some vision impairment. She enjoys music, singing, being around others, and car rides, and she would prefer at least one female roommate. Support needs include personal care, mobility assistance, and meal prep, with daytime support provided by a Direct Support Person on weekdays. This opportunity includes free room and board, a non-taxable daily per diem paid bi-weekly, and ongoing support from a FamilyHome/SIL Coordinator. The role requires a shared living commitment of at least six months, with the potential to extend up to three years or more. For more information, contact Kyla Segin at kyla.segin@eafwr.on.ca or [visit here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Provincial Network Developmental Services HR Forum Awards

Great work deserves to be seen — and celebrated. Let's shine a light on the difference-makers. Do you know a person or organization that goes above and beyond in the developmental services sector? Share their story and nominate them for a Provincial Network Developmental Services HR Forum Award. The deadline to apply is September 15. The awards available for nominations include:

Agency Leadership Award

This award is designed to recognize and celebrate organizations that embody the very best qualities and practices in direct support workforce development. The core objective of the Provincial Network HR Committee is to improve the personal outcomes and quality of life of people and families supported. Organizations nominated for this award will be able to demonstrate how their philosophy and work practices advance the goals of the Provincial Network HR Committee.

Agency Leadership Award

Direct Support Professional Leadership Award

This award is designed to recognize and celebrate employees who embody the very best qualities and practices in services and supports. The core objective of the Provincial Network HR Committee is to improve the personal outcomes and quality of life of people and families supported. Direct support professionals nominated for this award will be able to demonstrate how their philosophy and work practices advance the goals of the Provincial Network HR Committee.

Direct Support Professional Leadership Award

Agency Wellness Award - Presented in Partnership with CSBT

This award recognizes organizations that show leadership in employee wellness within the developmental services sector. Nominations should highlight key wellness initiatives, their goals, and the people involved in making them happen. Submissions should demonstrate measurable impacts on staff well-being, engagement, and retention, and show how wellness efforts have improved care for the people supported. Applications can be a 3-minute video or 800-word write-up.

Agency Wellness Award - Presented in Partnership with CSBT

Information, Opportunities & Resources

News

Canada-wide News Shared by Inclusion Canada

Community Living Ontario released a new report, Still Tangled in Red Tape, one year after their previous report demonstrating how Ontario's Employment Services Transformation has had a disastrous impact on disability employment service providers. [Read the report here.](#)

Inclusion Alberta issued a public statement against the Government of Alberta's decision to increase rent by 63% for Community Housing tenants who receive AISH. This increase comes soon after the Alberta government's announcement that they will clawback the Canada Disability Benefit. [Read more here.](#)

Inclusion BC opened registration for their Family Leadership Series in Campbell River! Families can register for free, and will gather for two days of learning ways to strengthen their advocacy and access resources to help build a better life for their loved ones. More information and registration can be found [here.](#)