



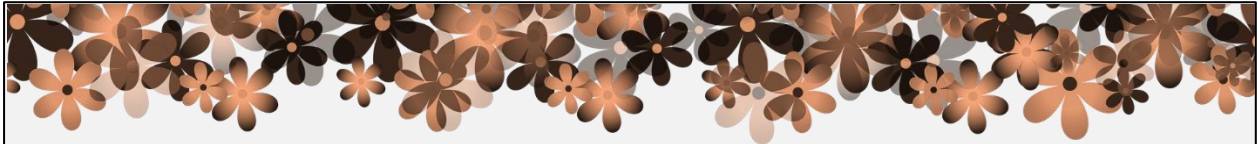
A Friendly Hello from the Windsor-Essex Family Network Team

It is hard to believe that it is April of 2023 as we write this. As always, we remain busy at Windsor-Essex Family Network (WEFN). Providing information and support to families has been our priority. We have done this using a number of avenues: email, phone for family-to-family support and follow-up support after events, updating resources and making them available from the website, and through presentations at learning events.

For the past three years, since the start of Covid-19, we have frequently pivoted in different directions, trying to respond and be pro-active based on what families need. In the beginning, this meant getting the most-timely information out to families and staying connected by phone, email and Facebook. More recently it has included events for learning and the provision of related information on our website. Information resources are available regarding school entry, school inclusion, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), transitioning into high school and beyond, affordable housing options, and more! We are looking forward to shifting some focus to changes that will be needed at 'Family Network' in the future.

Since January of 2023 'Family Network' and partners have hosted six virtual learning events. Our annual School Entry events held in early February had the largest numbers in attendance ever. We received excellent feedback from participants about the learning and the family stories that were shared. We also held two support circles events: Session two in the Exploring Support Circles series in January 2023 and Session three in February 2023. And finally, we held two My Home My Choice events - One called Shared Lives and another Affordable Housing Information. Both events included some live presentations and also personalized stories by video. All six of these events collectively touched on lives at every stage of life from pre-school through adulthood!

APPOINTMENTS: Our office is opening up to families by appointment only, due to COVID safety restrictions in the building. We continue to do a great deal of work virtually. You can reach us by phone or email at the 'network' and one of us will get back to you as soon as possible. (This article continues on page 3.)



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Windsor-Essex Family Network

Email: info@windsorsexfamnet.ca

Website: <https://windsorsexfamnet.ca/> **Phone:** 519-974-1008

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WindsorEssexFamilyNetwork/>

SIB SHARE GATHERINGS are on hold until Fall 2023 when folks will more easily be able to gather in person! The Sib team is available to support anyone who calls or emails them with an issue or who would just like some information. They will be sending out relevant resources to their email list now and again.



OUR TEAM: Our team, as always, is headed by Michelle Friesen, family leader and Executive Director. Michelle continues to work tirelessly on social justice issues that include connections with local, provincial, national and international partners, as well as with the families she supports.

Karen Wilson, as the WEFN Family-to-Family Co-ordinator, frequently provides information and supports to new families who call or email, as well as families she is already connected with. Karen leads the Enhancing Family Support for Education initiative. This initiative aims to support families with information and lived experiences with education and school inclusion. Cathy Hollands is our part-time virtual assistant. If you receive an email from family network about an event, have questions or request support it is usually Cathy who reaches out and/or who passes your family-to-family support request to a family leader.

Tina Szymczak has returned to the WEFN office as Operations Director. She is working full time and will be taking on a variety of roles. We are pleased to have her back and looking forward to 2023 and the team work ahead for all of us!

STAY TUNED! Planning is in the works for our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** . We will be partnering on the learning event portion with the My Home My Choice group. The topic will be: Supporting decisions and choices! Date to be announced soon.

We have begun launching our **Membership Drive for 2023**. A copy of our membership form is available on the back page of this newsletter. We will be adding an on-line Membership and Donation form to our website soon! We are also making plans to hold a focus group with families who have received supports from 'Family Network' to hear what their priorities are for the future.

Most exciting is the **'Spring Books Give-Away Day'** we are planning for outside our office on Saturday, May 27, 2023. This day is made possible by our partner Inclusion Press, who during the early months of the pandemic provided a large number of books to 'Family Network' for sharing with families. Although some of the books are older, we consider them valuable! These 'vintage gems' contain good information for families to draw on.



We have been waiting for the best time to hold this event as something fun outside! We will be offering a drive thru option and also some stop over time for those who want to get out of their cars! It will be done as within an 'open-house-type' time frame. Planning has just begun! So as with everything else – stay tuned. And mark your calendars for Saturday, May 27, 2023!

Are You Ready for Spring and Things Anew?

Simple Things We Can All Do - Take Your Pick!

We know it is difficult for many of us to go out and do the things we used to. Whether you are being COVID cautious and/or it is just impossible to leave the house – we want to offer some suggestions for things to engage in for relaxation, connection and growth. Here are a few things to consider:

Pause - many of us are not aware how important just taking a pause can be. Taking a pause, and maybe a deep breath, while dealing with a difficult or frustrating experience can help us proceed with patience and understanding. Pause and ask yourself how you are feeling, say hello to your feelings and just accept them. You don't have to "fix" them or stop them. Accept them and just be aware. You may be surprised how you then react in the situation.

Have you ever gone to Eventbrite-Discover Great Events? There you can find online events, many of which are free or low cost. There are paint nights, do-it-yourself crafts, vision boards, yoga and so much more. Tina recently signed up for an online tour of Royal Albert Hall – London, England. The Eventbrite website is <https://www.eventbrite.ca/>

Are you wanting to get out and do something outside?



The Downtown Windsor Farmer's Market is open Saturday's from 9 a.m. to 2pm. It is held at Pelissier & Maiden Lane. There is a parking garage on Pelissier that would be a short walk. Note: The Amherstburg Farmer's Market will be open on April 22, 2023.



A Change of Scenery Without too Much Effort? Are You in?

Who Do You Think I Am? with Madison Tevlin on GEM by Tina

Madison Tevlin is a Canadian actress and broadcaster. In 2022 her show "Who Do You Think I Am?" began airing on CBC Gem. Every episode Madison interviews a different person all of whom have been judged by others for how they look. With every interview Madison draws out the personality of her guest. Each episode is about 10 minutes and gives a brief but insightful glance at how people deal with proving people's assumptions wrong. Madison



loves "hearing people's stories, and her curiosity for meaningful conversation is at the heart of this show." Check the series out on Gem at: <https://gem.cbc.ca/who-do-you-think-i-am>

You can also create a free account and access more shows: <https://gem.cbc.ca/benefits>

NEW television series called PUSH by Michelle

PUSH is a new television series on CBC Gem created by Benveet (Bean) Gil. This series features Bean's friends who she calls the 'wheelie peeps'. It is the first prime time television show in Canada that features a leading cast of people with disabilities. I have watched all the episodes available on CBC's GEM television and found the series both real and refreshing! <https://gem.cbc.ca/push/s01>

You might ask why am I watching a television show about the lives of people with disabilities – when my life and work are about disability! The answers are straight forward. First, I like to think that my life and work are about living an everyday, ordinary life, and what it takes in the background to achieve that for people and families experiencing disability, including our family. Second, my daughter can't always tell me what it is like to live her life in a wheel chair -- she doesn't use words. I appreciate being challenged to understand the perspectives of people with that lived experience. Third, I was captivated at the first episode because it is about real people just living their everyday lives, and I liked the story lines and the wonderful sense of humour used at times.

This cast of friends share their ups and downs, relationships and friendships, work and home life - those things that go beyond disability, but are affected by disability as well. It takes more thinking, and more planning to get to some of the same goals as all citizens. They do this well without being seen as victims or 'inspirational-caricatures'. At the same time, I can see a glimpse of the work that goes into people being able to put themselves out there to contribute and be a valued part of their neighbourhoods and communities – something we all want. Also, a bonus, I was able to watch the show at times of the day (or night) that worked for me because it is streaming on CBC's GEM.

I will end this piece with words from the creator of PUSH taken from a CBC article: *"The show itself*



Photos this page from the CBC articles and information as per the links on this page.

just showcases our lives, our friends with disabilities, what we do, how we live. And it's not like what most people think it is," she said. "You can be successful; you can have all these things and have a disability. It's 2023, so it's about time that we start living like that." Read the full article here: [Bean Gill wants new show, Push, to challenge how you see people with disabilities](#)

Membership Spring 2023: Consider becoming a member or renewing with Windsor-Essex Family Network this spring!

Did you know that Windsor-Essex Family Network's efforts go well beyond our membership? There is no requirement to being a member to participate in anything we do. However, by becoming a member it means that you also are officially supporting the families, children, teens and adults living with various disabilities, as well as their friends and support networks. An Individual membership is \$15.00. We also offer bursaries for people living on ODSP, and/or others who are experiencing financial struggles. Check out the 2023 Membership Form on the back page of this newsletter!

Upcoming Learning Events by Windsor-Essex Family Network and partners

Keeping a Support Circle Alive Over Time, Session 4

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 – 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Registrations are open for people who have not attended a previous session – All are welcome! Topics will include:



- Intentional planning for sustainability
- Role of the independent facilitator/supporter
- Rhythm of a Support Circle
- Supporting the person's planning and decision-making
- Potential challenges and safeguards



Judith, of LifePath Training and Facilitation, is a sibling, independent facilitator, adult educator and author with more than two decades of experience assisting people and families with Support Circles.

ADVANCE REGISTRATIONS: For those who have already pre-registered for this session, there is no need to register again! **NEW REGISTRANTS WELCOME!** [Register Here](#)

Early Communication Strategies

Thursday, April 27, 2023
10 to 11 am

John McGivney Children's Centre, Windsor-Essex Family Network and the Enhancing Family Support for Education group are pleased to be partnering on this learning opportunity.

Families interested in registering are encouraged to include their questions about communication ahead so that the presenters can prepare and be responsive to the needs of participants!

Please register in advance with your questions or topics of interest!

Phone: 519-252-7281

Email: info@jmccentre.ca

EARLY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Are you looking for strategies to help your child communicate? Join John McGivney Children's Centre Speech Language Pathologists for a webinar to discuss topics like:

- Pre-language skills
- Non-verbal communication
- Strategies including interactive play, music, modelling etc.
- & so much more!

**Thursday, April 27
10 to 11 a.m.**

Advanced registration is required.
Please RSVP by April 20:
519-252-7281 or info@jmccentre.ca

When RSVPing, please be prepared to submit any questions in advance!

Windsor-Essex Family Network
Enhancing Family Support for Education

Other Local Learning and Support

Parents for Children's Mental Health Support Group Meetings



- **Wednesday, April 19, 2023 - 6:30 - 8:00 pm**
- **Thursday, May 4, 2023 - 1:00 - 2:30 pm**
- **Wednesday, May 17, 2023 - 6:30 - 8:00 pm**

LOCATION: Regional Children's Centre (Huot Building), 3901 Connaught Ave, Ozad Room

This meeting is hosted by parents for parents! Come out and meet other families who understand. For more information, please email: windsor@pcmh.ca

Planning for Success: Preparing Now for the Future

Wednesday, May 17, 2023 , 6 - 8 pm

LOCATION: St. Joseph's Catholic High School, 2425 Clover Avenue, Windsor

Are you or your loved one in high school looking toward adulthood? This is an ideal opportunity for students, parents, families, caregivers, educators, friends and others to gather and learn about who in Windsor-Essex assists young people who live with developmental or related disabilities after high school. [***Register Here***](#)

Explore topics like: Employment Supports, Continuing Education, Volunteer opportunities, Income Supports (ODSP), Independent Facilitation and Planning, Community Support Organizations

6:00 - 6:45 pm - Presentations

- Employment Supports - Community Living Windsor; Community Living Essex County
- Community Integration through Cooperative Education (CICE) - St. Clair College

6:45 - 8:00 pm - Information Booths by local organizations,

View the flyer here: [Planning-for-Success-Flyer-Spring](#)



Children First offers several parent and child groups for families who have children ages zero – six.

Head over to their website and see if anything interests you. <https://www.children-first.ca/news-events/>

Triple P - positive parenting groups are put on regularly by Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital and their partners. For parents of children ages 0-18. Head over to their site to find something helpful for you. <https://www.hdgh.org/triplep>



Topics of Interest

School Inclusion

Inclusive Education and 5 Moore Minutes!

As Dr. Shelley Moore says on her website, "Inclusive Education: It's not more work, it's different work!" Dr. Moore recently defended her Ph.D. dissertation entitled, *Transforming inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities in secondary academic classrooms : a case study*. You can get to the study by using this link:

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/soa/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0422961>

Dr. Moore's website offers insightful 5-minute videos on inclusion for educators. These videos are also inspiring for parents and allies to watch. Take a look and get inspired by the analogy in this video using a bowling analogy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYtUJ8MjIY>

Explore the site by going to <https://fivemooreminutes.com/>



Let's Chat... about Inclusive Education

This is a webcast series produced by Inclusive Education Canada (IEC). The hosts are joined by researchers, educators, parents, and advocates who are engaged in the effort to make Canadian schools inclusive. We watched several in the series and they are all well done and informative. Of note is Episode 7 with Bluesette Campbell and Anna McQuarrie who are parents of children who experienced inclusion. They share the challenges and successes as well as some concrete tips for parents who are on their own path in working with their child's school. <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2022/02/22/lets-chat-about-inclusive-education-episode-7-ft-bluesette-campbell-and-anna-mcquarrie/>

To see a full listing with links to videos, go to <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2022/01/14/lets-chat/>



Advocacy and Information for School Inclusion in Ontario

Inclusion Action in Ontario (IAO) is the leading voice in Ontario for the inclusion of students with disabilities in education and community. They believe that inclusive education is the foundation of an inclusive life. Check out this link for frequently asked questions and resources to assist you on your journey: <https://inclusionactionontario.ca/faqs-additional-resources/>

Or just visit their site at: <https://inclusionactionontario.ca/>

INCLUSION ACTION IN ONTARIO

Canada Disability Benefit – Good News with Work Ahead

The Canada Disability Benefit legislation (Bill C-22) passed in House of Commons

Bill C-22 The Canada Disability Benefit is an act intended to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of people with disabilities. In Canada, 23% of Canadians with disabilities live in poverty. The bill recently passed the third reading in the House of Commons and is currently in the Senate for review. It is up to the Senate to make amendments such as providing protection to people with disabilities by including a broad definition of disability and ensuring there are no claw backs. Groups like *Disability Without Poverty* continue to campaign for the

Senate to pass the Bill as soon as possible. See what they have to say about the 'new' Canada Disability Benefit: [Disability without poverty press release March 2023](#)



Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Information

An Introduction to the RDSP

April 25, 2023 11am – Noon



This 45-minute webinar offered by P4P Planning Network introduces the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). Questions and Answers follow the presentation. The RDSP is a made-in-Canada, long-term savings vehicle designed specifically for individuals with disabilities. What to expect at this webinar:

- An understanding of the RDSP and potential government contributions
- Knowledge of the latest updates and changes to the RDSP
- Tips and advice on free resources that can be consulted for additional information

Register for the April 25th RDSP Webinar at this link:

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ejo496z35102e4b9&oseq=&c=&ch=>

RDSP Plan Holders, Budget 2023 and Supported Decision-Making

Following a recent Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario gathering the conversation moved to concerns about the looming December 2023 deadline to the Federal government's temporary measures which allowed a qualifying family member (spouse, common law partner, parent) to open and oversee an RDSP. Anxiety was running high. Without that provision, many people with a developmental disability in Ontario would be unable to open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) or access funds saved on their behalf without first giving up all their legal rights through a guardianship order.

The recent Federal Budget 2023 announcement outlined the government's intention to extend the RDSP qualifying family member provision until December 31, 2026 - another 3 years. The government also plans to expand the provision to include adult siblings of an RDSP beneficiary.

These extensions to the provisions have brought down anxiety for now. However, they are temporary, and they do not help people who have no family. We need to continue to encourage the Ontario Government to find an alternative to guardianship – such as supported decision making. This is when the person with a disability is able to retain their rights to make legal decisions about their own life with the help of people they choose. There are other places in Canada (including one territory and five provinces) that have put in place approaches that enables people to be supported with their decisions, and be able to open an RDSP.

To read about Legal Capacity and Supported Decision Making in Ontario and what you can do, go to the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO) website at the following link:

<https://individualizedfunding.ca/action-needed-for-ontario-citizens/>

To read more about Highlights from the 2023 Budget related to 'disability' go to:

PooranLaw: [Budget Highlights March 2023, PooranLaw](#) OR

Inclusion Canada: [Press Release Budget 2023, Inclusion Canada](#)



Unpaid Caregivers Hold Support Systems Together

Did you know that the Ontario Caregiver Coalition is the voice of caregivers in Ontario? This Coalition advocates for recognition and support for the family, friends and neighbours whose unpaid care is the hidden backbone of Ontario's health system. The information on this page comes directly from their website. Learn more at: <https://www.ontariocaregivercoalition.ca/>



The Ontario Caregiver Coalition has called on the Ontario Government to:

- ensure home and community care services that are reliable, accessible, high quality and sufficient to needs. Strong home and community care services enable caregivers to ensure their loved ones receive the care they need and deserve, juggle their multiple responsibilities, and avoid burnout.
- prevent and address caregiver financial distress. Caregiving is expensive, both because of its impact on labour force participation, and because out-of-pocket costs can be significant. Caregiver financial distress can impact on caregiver health and wellbeing, negatively affect the quality of care, and lead to premature or unnecessary admission of care recipients into institutional settings.
- strengthen and expand respite options, to ensure respite that is accessible, flexible and meaningful for caregivers.

THE FACTS: There are 3.3 million or 29% of Ontarians who are unpaid family caregivers. This includes 500,000 young carers between the ages of 15 – 24 years of age providing on average 14-27 hours of care per week. Family caregivers are experiencing job losses and significant financial distress due to caregiving often being a full-time job, significant out-of-office expenses and narrow eligibility criteria under government financial assistance programs.

In Canada, it is estimated that family caregiving is worth \$30-40 billion in “free” labour.

How These Programs We are Advocating for Would Work

We are advocating to change and improve the current caregiver landscape in Ontario:

1. **Enhance self-directed funding programs**, such as Passport, Family Managed Home Care, Special Services at Home, and the Attendant Care program. These programs can provide flexible, reliable and high-quality services for those families whose needs they meet. However, narrow eligibility criteria, inflexible rules, financial barriers, and lengthy waitlists reduce the potential impact of these programs.
2. **Provide direct financial supports to caregivers**, whether through a refundable tax credit or a caregiver allowance. Only a small percentage of caregivers - about 8% - receive financial supports from government, despite the heavy financial impact of caregiving. Financial supports are the number one unmet need of caregivers. Evidence indicates that direct financial supports to caregivers are highly effective and efficient at enabling care in the community, thereby reducing institutional costs. There are proven models in Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Quebec that the Ontario government can draw on in developing a model.
3. **Strengthen Ontario's home and community care system**, which has been under significant strain. Without a strong home and community care system, families find themselves having no choice but to access the more expensive acute and long-term care systems.

Individualized Funding

About Individualized Funding - What is it?

Check out this power point presentation developed by the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario to learn more about individualized funding: [About Individualized Funding-Fall 2021](#)

2023 Passport Guidelines – Learn about the Latest Changes

During COVID-19 restrictions Passport Guidelines were expanded and new items were approved for purchase such as gaming items (consoles, games), streaming subscriptions, behavioural interventions and some delivery fees. As of April 1, 2023, these expenses will no longer be approved. Passport guidelines have been updated with new eligible expenses including:

- A \$2,000 maximum annual reimbursement for Community Participation Support supplies and equipment, which includes sensory items and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- A \$3,000 maximum annual reimbursement for technology-related good and services, which includes hardware, electronics and related services

For more information go to the pdf document: [Passport Program Guidelines, Effective April 1, 2023](#)

2023 Special Services at Home Guideline Changes

Some of the COVID-19 temporary eligible expenses have been made permanent including some sensory items, technology (up to a maximum of \$1500 annually), arts & crafts materials, some fitness equipment. It is important for families to make sure the item or service they intend to purchase is an allowable expense. For more information check out this link to the updated SSAH guidelines: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/special-services-home-program-guidelines>

Social Justice Issues

Lack of Individualized Funding for Support – Do you have a story?

The Individualized Funding Coalition of Ontario (IFCO) has heard from many people, families and loved ones expressing what funding is needed for them to be supported and live an everyday, ordinary life. We have heard the same thing from families at Windsor-Essex Family Network. Here is a partial list of the concerns that have come forward to IFCO:

- *I don't have enough funding for the support workers I need.*
- *The 10% increase in Passport Funding was not enough to pay the \$3.00/hour pay enhancement required. I have run out of funds, and have to use less hours of support.*
- *I only have \$5,500 in Passport Funding. It is not enough to find a worker to support me each week. It is not enough to support any community involvement and contribution.*
- *I have no funding at all.*
- *I face barriers to living life as a full citizen. (Examples that came forward, barriers due to: poverty, lack of supports and funding, lack of affordable and accessible housing, no one to support with connections and relationship building, lack of flexibility with funding, pressure to live in a long-term care institution because there are no adequate supports, family caregivers aging, unable to afford needed medicine, etc.)*
- *I want someone, like an independent facilitator, to assist with thinking about the future and support with taking actions over the years to contribute and be part of community.*

-
- *I want to support people with individualized funding (as a family or trusted others) with their decisions and have it legally recognized.*
 - *I have to choose between PPE supplies and hours of support. Why do agencies receive additional funds to pay for their PPE supplies, and people and families don't?*

IFCO: According to IFCO, most recently it has been people, families and other loved ones using Passport funding that have been in touch to voice concerns. With the reform of developmental services that government is undertaking through their *Journey to Belonging* plan, people are waiting even longer for funding support. IFCO and partners have also heard from others including:

- People with physical disabilities and complex medical needs who use other individualized funding sources like: Family Managed Home Care, or Direct Funding: Self-Managed Attendant Services in Ontario;
- People who are receiving some pressure about going to long-term care institution instead of receiving such community supports. There are stories repeatedly circling about aging caregivers, people in hospital for complex issues, and those with no family at all!
- The increasing concern for children and young families who are going without Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding. Many have been waiting for years for some adequate funding – funding that would assist children to be part of and included in places of recreation and leisure.

Call to action for your stories! IFCO has put out a call for stories from persons with disabilities, and/or with their family and trusted other. Stories about the challenges folks are facing without enough support funding, what that has meant to their lives, and what would be needed to be supported to live an everyday ordinary life.

Windsor-Essex families: At Windsor-Essex Family Network we know that life has changed for many who use support workers - busy, stretched thin and feeling numb at times. If you are able to share even a short piece, know that our stories can personalize our situation, make it more real, and may have the power to influence change. For those who have a success story, your story can help government see the possibilities for others who are struggling without enough funding. You can remain anonymous if you wish. To read more and/or to share your story go to the IFCO Actions page. Scroll down the page to the Story Section. [Click Here for the Actions Page](#)



Bringing back memories: stories for Independent Facilitation Matters: Early in 2019, people and families from Windsor and Essex County came out to save independent facilitation across the province. Independent facilitation was getting cut in Windsor-Essex for more than 100 people and families. People and families prepared stories by writing them down with help from volunteers at two different story/letter writing events. Some chose to be videotaped to share their story. If you are considering sharing a story through IFCO and have already done something similar four years ago, you might want to take a look at what you did at that time. Perhaps it can assist you in sharing more of your story now, OR you can continue where things left off OR you can point to that story to strengthen the ask for what you need today! Having to go back at things over and over again, demonstrates the difficult journey you have been on! Written stories from Independent Facilitation Matters can be accessed at <https://ifmatters.weebly.com/stories>

Videos are available here https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXQg_jxDEnyapiVxQXGuixg/videos

\$3.00/hour wage enhancement: More actions toward an everyday ordinary life . . .

An Invitation from Family Alliance Ontario to meet with the Minister: A few months ago, the President of Family Alliance Ontario (FAO) invited a representative from Windsor-Essex Family Network as an affiliate of FAO and from the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario as a partner with FAO, to a virtual meeting with the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The reason for the meeting was the \$3.00 per hour needed as a permanent wage enhancement to meet the obligations provincially for paying support workers through Passport Funding and SSAH funding. Although, there was an understanding that this has meant fewer hours of support, and/or families paying out of pocket to meet the requirements - there was no resolution out of the meeting. Just the intention for FAO to have more meetings with the Minister and/or the Minister's staff on that issue and others; the Minister has since resigned. It is important to note one of the drawbacks with this advocacy effort: For lots of folks using Passport and SSAH, the 10% increase has met their need as they are not using the funds mainly to pay workers. However, those who rely on it mainly for support workers experienced a loss. *(Note: FAO is a family based, non-profit provincial organization dedicated to "a society where people and their families are fully supported to live a regular life" and is continuing their efforts on behalf of people and families.)* <https://family-alliance.com/>



Letters to the Minister about the need for a permanent \$3.00/hour enhancement - by People for Personalized Funding (PFPF).

PFPF have sent letters to the Minister regarding the \$3.00/hr. They also encouraged a letter writing campaign from people and families earlier this year. PFPF, formerly the Special Services at Home Passport Provincial Coalition, has provided a template for a letter on Facebook. The template could still be adapted for use today. Scroll down to February 20, 2023 on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pfpf.ca/> OR go directly to their pictures link: <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=505278455137479&set=pcb.505278921804099>



Please note: Michael Parsa is the new Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Ontario Ombudsman to Investigate Cases of People with Developmental Disabilities Being Inappropriately Housed in Hospitals

On March 21, 2023, Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé announced a new investigation into the plight of adults with developmental disabilities who are inappropriately housed in hospital due to a lack of supports and services in the community. The Ombudsman informed the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and the Ministry of Health that he will investigate whether they are taking adequate steps to ensure that these inappropriately hospitalized individuals are transitioned to appropriate community placements. "It is particularly concerning that vulnerable individuals with complex needs are in hospital – often for long periods – despite having no medical need to be there," Ombudsman Dubé said. To read the announcement/press release about the Ombudsman's Investigation: [Click Here](#)

NOTE: Many of us are also concerned for individuals with disabilities who are living in long term care institutions. Long term care facilities are not appropriate housing solutions for younger citizens living with disabilities. Let's hope that any standards and expectations for a better life that are identified by the Ombudsman, will be applied to anyone "inappropriately housed" in long term care.

Long Term Care Facilities

Are Long Term Care facilities replacing the ‘old institutions’ we used to talk about? Is Long Term Care the ‘new’ answer for younger citizens living with disabilities, as well as elders who want to stay in their own home, neighbourhoods and communities? Why the shift in values and philosophies in Ontario? Have we already forgotten about the people with disabilities who lived in the ‘large’ institutions that closed by the year 2009 and the damage done? Many of these folks are living in fear now about going back into institutional living. Other citizens are questioning the future seeing no support alternatives being invested in and seeing lives in jeopardy. Many of us believe there are better ways to support fellow citizens who happen to have some extra challenges in life – whether a disability or lives that are changing as we age! Please read on.

Here is a pdf of an editorial by Seniors for Social Action Ontario that says it all:
[But Don't We Need Some Institutions? SSAO Responds](#)



Check out: [Seniors for Social Action Ontario \(SSAO\)](#) for more information about this organization and the work they have been doing

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) - Concerns continue being raised by people living with disabilities and their advocates

In June 2016, the Parliament of Canada passed federal legislation that allows adult Canadians to request medical assistance in dying if their death was in the near future. In 2020, Parliament amended the law and now people can request MAiD even when their death is not in the near future. Human Rights advocates have been warning us all that MAiD regulations do not keep people with disabilities safe and they devalue the lives of disabled people. In situations like that of [Sophia](#), [Alan Nichols](#) and [Sean Tagert](#) the resources and supports they needed to be able to live an ordinary, everyday life were not available and they chose death over their suffering that was due to the lack of necessary supports.

People are choosing to die because they cannot live without badly needed services and supports. Just 2 weeks ago, a young man from Kitchener Waterloo area had an appointment with MAiD because he did not have funding to pay supporters to assist him following his mother's death. Thankfully after some advocacy, government agencies are now looking at developing a plan to support this man's life so he can continue to live, work and contribute in his community.

In a [CBC article](#) of November 10, 2020 Krista Carr, Executive Vice President of Inclusion Canada warned “the lives of people with disabilities are as necessary to the integrity of the human family as any other dimension of humanity, and this threat to the lives of people with disabilities is a threat to us all”. More eye-opening reading for those interested:

How Poverty, Not Pain is Driving People with Disabilities to Consider Medically Assisted Death
<https://globalnews.ca/news/9176485/poverty-canadians-disabilities-medically-assisted-death/>

'Disturbing': Experts troubled by Canada's euthanasia laws
<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-toronto-7c631558a457188d2bd2b5cfd360a867>

MAiD Infographic, Inclusion Canada
<https://inclusioncanada.ca/2022/08/26/maid-infographic/>

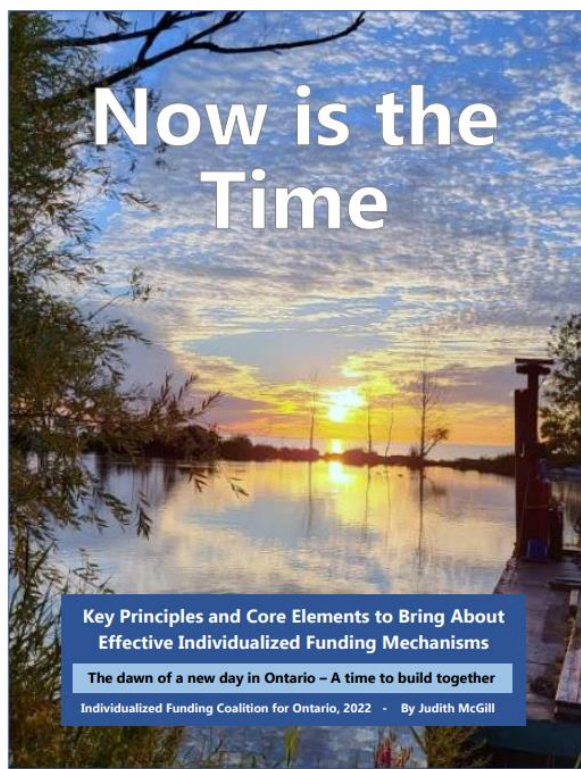
Important News

Now is the Time

The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO) launched a comprehensive report called: *Now is the Time, Key Principles and Core Elements to Bring About Effective Individualized Funding Mechanisms in Ontario late 2022*.

More recently the coalition hosted a virtual event called Now is the Time. More than 70 people, families, friends, independent facilitators, allies and partners participated. A good crowd of folks attended from Windsor-Essex. IFCO is planning to hold similar events, including an event to support people to write their stories on May 1, 2023.

This paper is a synthesis of many of the writings produced by IFCO, as well as some provincial, national and international research reports and information, and direct input from people, families and others. It is about individualized funding, third party assistance like independent facilitation and planning, and more. All leading to an effective individualized approach for living an everyday, ordinary life of inclusion and social connections. [Click here for the pdf *Now is the Time*](#).



MCCSS Pushes Back Implementation of Direct Funding Legislation

Taken from Community Living Ontario's Update Friday News, April 7, 2023

The legislation governing developmental services in Ontario, *the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act*, includes several items related to direct funding that were scheduled to come into force in July 2023. On April 3rd, the provincial government introduced changes that will allow these items to come into force at a later date. The changes will also allow the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to implement the changes gradually.

It is our understanding that MCCSS continues to work with KPMG to fully understand the cost of the various services and supports utilized by people who have developmental disabilities. This work will inform a new funding model for the sector. We expect that, once this work is complete, MCCSS staff will present their findings to people, families, and developmental service agencies.

You can find the government's proposed changes [here](#).

To read Community Living Ontario's recommendations for direct funding in Ontario, you can read our [Building a Full Life](#) report. For our thoughts on KPMG's role in system transformation, you can read our recent [blog post](#).

Windsor-Essex Family Network -- Membership Form for the 2023 Year

Name _____

(Please Print)

Street Address or Box _____

City/Town _____ Postal Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Cell Phone _____

I would like to be an individual voting member for the year 2023 (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023).

- I am:*** a family member (parent, brother, sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc.)
 a person who has a disability
 a friend, interested individual

Enclosed with this form is my membership fee of: **\$15.00** cash cheque # _____
OR

I could use the financial support of a bursary for my membership this year: Bursary

I would also like to make a donation in the amount of \$ _____ (Tax receipt will be issued.)

Please consider filling out the following information to assist us with providing family-to-family support, sending out helpful information and providing specific learning opportunities:

a) the disabilities/challenges you are experiencing: _____

b) birth-date or general age of your loved one/focus person: _____

c) your loved one's stage of life: early childhood ___ elementary age ___ teen/young adult ___ adulthood ___ later life ___

Describe the topics you would like to learn more about through: events ___ info packages ___ email ___

Would you like to participate in any volunteering? For example: at events ___ in the office ___

from your home ___ sharing your story ___ other ideas: _____

Personal Information Consent: By signing below I am giving consent for the name, address, telephone, fax or email information provided here to be used for updating me on activities of WEFN including programs, services, events, funding needs, government changes and opportunities to volunteer through periodic notices and contacts. My personal information will not be shared with any other organization or business. If I no longer want to receive notices, I will contact the WEFN office at 7025 Enterprise Way, Windsor, ON, N8T 3N6. By signing below, I also acknowledge that I am giving consent to receive electronic correspondence/email from WEFN. If I no longer want to receive emails, I am aware that I can unsubscribe by email at any time.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Mail with payment to: Windsor-Essex Family Network, 7025 Enterprise Way, Windsor, Ontario N8T 3N6

OFFICE USE ONLY Date Received: _____ Membership 2023 Comments:

Charitable Receipt #: _____ Main Database