

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 153
January 2023

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What's In This Issue?

Happy New Year to you all! We hope everyone had a restful holiday full of time with loved ones. It's hard to believe another year has come and gone. We are so grateful for the year we had in 2022, and all the support we received from our amazing community. We're looking forward to another year of connecting with families.

And we're getting 2023 started with a few different opportunities to connect with our team! First, Erin's EarlyON drop-ins will be continuing into the new year. Kaleidoscope Kids is also back in the new year, and we're bringing back our Virtual Camp Flyers (because summer will be here before we know it, we promise).

As always, this issue of Family Pulse is full of great opportunities from WRFN and the community. Check it out to see all the fun things coming up.



Support WRFN

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

SEAC Updates

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

The first item that was discussed at the SEAC meeting was the new policy review process and the Policy Working Group that oversees this at the Board. One of the topics covered was the process that policies go through when reviewed by staff. The first revision process includes legislative updates if there are any, making sure there is consultation with the public, changes to procedures and process if necessary, making sure that the policy advances Indigenous, equity and Human Rights principals by filling out the Human Rights and Equity review guide.

After formatting and ensuring that the policy will have a positive impact on students, the policy will go to various groups that advance equity, such as SEAC. When SEAC or other groups decide to review certain policies, there is a form they can fill out to communicate their feedback. Once this review happens, it is then sent back to staff where they will comment on the input and why or why not it will be included in the policy, and then update it as necessary.

In terms of transportation update, the Board is getting monthly reports about any ongoing issues. Many issues are resolved, and people are working hard to resolve any ongoing ones.

As for the Support for Students database, most of the needed access is back when teachers are in school, but there is currently no access when teachers are outside of school because of a firewall that has been put in place for extra security.

There was also a discussion about off-campus trips. The main point is that it is key to consider from the earliest planning stages whether a trip is accessible for all students and will be beneficial for them.

The next SEAC meeting will take place on **January 11, 2023**.

SEAC Updates

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

The WCDSB SEAC met at the School Education Centre (with some members virtual) and was presented an overview and Q & A of the Board's Mental Health related supports from Andrea Snyder, Mental Health Lead.

John Murphy and Jeanne Gravelle provided a presentation on Special Education and Sacraments. Resources for parents, priests, and catechists for preparing children with special needs for Sacraments were shared with the committee. It was recommended by members for the resources to be shared widely within schools and the community.

Ministry, Agency, and Association updates were provided including welcoming new members and organizations to the committee; Erin Sutherland - WRFN and Daina Colburne – Centre for ADHD Awareness. Trustee updates were also provided, please see here for details: <https://www.wcdsb.ca/wcdsb-board-meeting-bulletin-november-2022/>.

The next meeting is scheduled for **January 11, 2023**.

"Fall in Love" in 2023

By Carmen Sutherland, Coffee Club Coordinator

I was listening to a couple of podcasts this morning, and two ideas stood out to me. One was the concept of "falling in love with your life." I love the idea of "falling in love" - an experience that is often associated with joy - with the reality where we already find ourselves. Of course, I know for people going through hard situations this is impossible. But maybe you could fall in love with BITS of your life; The way the light comes through your window, the antics of your pet, the way that your child laughs every time they see a bird?

This ties into the second idea I was introduced to this morning...the idea of making lists of good things even if you don't share them with anyone. Keep track of all the books you read this coming year, or your favourite moments (I LOVE this one). It can be a list just for you, or perhaps you can share it with a few friends. Whatever buoys your spirits, whatever feels right, DO IT! Maybe it will help you see growth over the year, maybe it will show you moments when people show up for you...who knows? I think whatever can help you feel peace in 2023 is what you should do. I know I am going to try to do the same.

What's Happening at WRFN

At this time, most WRFN programs are being offered through a virtual format or through phone and email connections. We are slowly transitioning into some programs and services being available in person. However, we understand that these remain to be challenging times for many. Please reach out and let us know how we can help you and your family.

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

WRFN Drop-Ins at EarlyON

Meet with Erin, our Family Resource Coach

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

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Jan 10	Early ON Oak Creek 80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener	10-11 am
Jan 11	EarlyON Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	10-11 am
Jan 13	EarlyON Riverside 250 William St., Elmira	10-11:30 am
Jan 17	EarlyON Water St 73 Water St., N., Unit 105 Cambridge	10-11 am
Jan 18	EarlyON St. Boniface 225 Starlight Ave, Breslau	10-11 am



Contact Erin -

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

More dates to come in February!



www.wrfn.info



Meet Our New Family Resource Coaches

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



LEAH BOWMAN
FAMILY RESOURCE COACH



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



MARLA PENDER
FAMILY RESOURCE COACH



In October, WRFN was able to bring TWO new Family Resource Coaches onto the team to help Erin support families in the region. The first Family Resource Coach is someone you may recognize from the WRFN team. Leah, WRFN's previous Administrative Assistant, brings 23 years of experience with non-profit organizations in various social service settings the majority of which has been in the Developmental Services sector. Leah finds great joy in supporting individuals and families to find the supports they need to create lives they find meaningful and fulfilling. She understands that each individual and family has unique needs & strengths and uses that as a guide to find community connections that are a good fit.

Joining Leah is Marla Pender who will be working 10 hours a week as an FRC with us. Marla has been working for non-profit and government organizations for over 25 years in the areas of youth engagement, accessibility and volunteer engagement. Marla holds a degree in Community Psychology and is working toward completing a Master of Counselling Psychology. She is looking forward to collaborating with you and discussing your interests and goals.

Both Leah and Marla bring many talents, gifts and experience to their new roles. They will both be supporting families with youth 16 years and older and self-advocates.

Contact:

Leah - leah.bowman@wrfn.info - 226-898-9301

Marla - marla.pender@wrfn.info - 226-338-7274



Are you looking for the right summer camp program for your loved one? This year KidsAbility, Waterloo Region Family Network and Supporting Kids In Camp (SKIC) are partnering to host a series of virtual camp fairs. Join us via Teams to learn about camp options and have your questions answered by the camp directors themselves! Registrants will receive a Teams link via email the morning of the event.

Focus: Overnight Camps and Getaways, All Regions

Date: Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Time: 7 – 8:30pm

[Click Here for Registration](#)

Focus: Day Camps - Guelph Wellington for campers ages 4-12

Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Time: 7 – 9 pm

[Click Here for Registration](#)

Focus: Day Camps – Waterloo Region for campers ages 4-12

Date: Wednesday, January 16, 2023

Time: 7 – 9 pm

[Click Here for Registration](#)

Focus: Day Camp programs for teens and young adults - Waterloo Region and Guelph Wellington

Date: Monday, February 13, 2023

Time: 7 – 8:30pm

[Click Here for Registration](#)

Cost: Free

Who: Everyone is welcome

Registration Deadline: 9 am morning of the workshop

Questions? Contact: Meg Shirley 519-886-8886 x 1302 or mshirley@kidsability.ca



Thursdays from 3 – 5 pm
KidsAbility, Waterloo
(500 Hallmark Drive, Waterloo)

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

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

Kaleidoscope Kids is a free drop-in program. There is no age limit, and you are encouraged to bring your children with special needs, siblings or come by yourself.

No registration required.

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

A partnership program of:



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



A NEW CHAPTER

This group is for family members & caregivers interested in preparing for the future of their youth/adult family member with a lifelong disability.

We have a new feature to our meetings called "Ask Us Anything" from 9-9:30pm. This is a chance for those who attend the meeting to ask questions or clarify points when the main part of the meeting is over.

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



January 3, 2023

Christina Hall, Housing Navigator with Developmental Services Ontario will join us to talk about various options and considerations for helping your loved one establish their next home.

We'll hear about Christina's role and about resources that are available locally. As always, we'll have a discussion after her presentation.

All meetings are virtual Zoom meetings from 7:30pm-9:00pm

If you would like to receive emails about our monthly meetings (always the first Tuesday of the month), please email Mary at maryjpjike@hotmail.com and ask to be put on our email list.

Please join us on Tuesday, January 3rd at 7:30pm on Zoom for our A New Chapter meeting about Housing.

Christina Hall, Housing Navigator with Developmental Services Ontario will join us to talk about various options and considerations for helping your loved one establish their next home. We'll hear about Christina's role and about resources that are available locally. As always, we'll have a discussion after her presentation. This will be a helpful introduction to the topic of housing for families with younger members. It will also be a chance for families who are "getting serious" about next steps for housing to ask questions.

Afterwards, you can stay on the Zoom call to ask questions on any topic during our Ask Us Anything segment from 9-9:30pm. Please rsvp to maryjpjike@hotmail.com to let us know if you are able to attend. A zoom link will be sent out the day prior.

What's Happening at WRFN

Ask A Self-Advocate

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

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info.

Parent Mentor Program

Through our Parent Mentor Program, we provide a means for parents to connect with each other, as well as guide, support and help empower each other to work through the highs and lows that make up their journeys.

Our Parent Mentors provide information and emotional support; share ideas and strategies; and connect their mentees with community resources.

Learn more about our Parent Mentor Program [here](#).

School-Issue Parent Support Group

This peer-led group provides support, advice and a safe environment for parents who have questions or concerns about school issues affecting their children with special needs. The WRFN School Issues Support Group meets on the last Wednesday of each month during the school year. The next regular meeting will take place November 30.

For more information, please contact Sue Simpson at Sue.simpson@wrfn.info.

Family Resource Coach

Our Family Resource Coaches are available to meet in person, by phone, email, or virtual call to lend a helping hand and personal guidance to families and to connect you to updated information, resources, and opportunities available in our community.

Call Erin Sutherland at 226-808-5460 or email Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info.

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

Call Marla Pender at 226-338-7274 or email Marla.Pender@wrfn.info.

Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! We currently meet on Zoom, usually on Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 PM. Generally, we are just catching up and chatting, mixed with a little bit of watching YouTube.

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

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

Programs & Recreation

Cambridge Family Early Years Centre

Cambridge Family Early Years Centre is offering "Young Parents Connect," a free family program for pregnant and parenting youth, Tuesdays from 1-3 pm. Call the centre for the next session start date. Each week the group cooks a meal to enjoy together and discuss a parenting topic/resource/service that is of interest to the group. At the end of each session, join EarlyON staff for a fun interactive circle time with the children. Cambridge Family Early Years Centre, Unit 105, 73 Water Street North, Cambridge, Ontario.

Monica Place

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

Infant Massage

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Monarch House Waterloo

Monarch House Waterloo has a new in-person group service in January 2023. Monarch House will be implementing an Intermediate Level Sexual Health Group taking place Wednesday evenings from 5-7pm for 12 weeks. There will be a children's group (ages approx. 7-11 years old) learning about various sexual health related topics. Running alongside the children's group, caregivers will participate in group and individual sessions. These will be facilitated by a Psychotherapist to provide support and guidance surrounding the sexual health content and foster skills to engage and communicate with their child on the topics of the group. For more information, contact info@moarchhouse.ca or call 519-514-5770.

Rainbow Drop In

How Does Learning Happen? Through Play! Join other 2SLGBTQIA+ children (aged 0-6), caring adults, and families in play and exploration together. EarlyON facilitators are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in a play-based environment. Rainbow drop-in takes place at EarlyON | Roger Street (YMCA Early Years) 161 Roger St, Waterloo. Upcoming dates:

- Saturday January 28, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday February 25, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday March 25, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday April 29, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday May 27, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday June 24, 2023 9 -11 am

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

Fun Fearless Females

Fun Fearless Females will be launching the new January Ladies Night calendar on Thursday, January 5 with its first event back on Friday, January 13. Check out the events calendar on January 5 to see what's new here: [Events — Fun Fearless Females](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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!**

KW Habilitation

There's a ton of great KW Habilitation activities available in the new year. ArtShine, Glee with Katie, Drumming with Sam, Creative Music with Len, Music with Katie, and other KW Hab activities will be coming up in January. To see a full calendar of events, visit <https://shop.kwhab.ca/calendar/>. To register, please visit <https://shop.kwhab.ca/>.

Cambridge Career Connections - Youth Job Connection

The Youth Job Connection program serves youth who experience barriers to employment by providing supports beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities. Program features include:

- Participants receive minimum wage for 60-90 hours of employment-related workshop
- Assistance securing employment from a skilled Job Developer
- Financial placement supports for participants and hiring incentives for employers
- Ongoing support provided through coaching and mentoring

<https://cambridgecareerconnections.com/for-job-seekers/youth-job-connection/>

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region: Virtual Open Space

Looking to connect to folks on a weekly basis?

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

Email Kim Sproul for more details at kim.sproul@eafwr.on.ca

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Artshine Virtual Accessible Art For Kids, Teens & Adults

Social distancing doesn't need to rob you of the joy that comes from expanding your art skills! Artshine has live video lessons via Zoom for all ages. Art supplies will be mailed to you in advance of classes! Maximum 20 participants for personalized attention. [Click here](#) for more information!

Recreational Respite Virtual Services

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practice, goals and outcomes that promote inclusion, encourage community participation and nurture social connectivity. Visit the website for the January virtual group program calendar for Children and Youth and Young Adults!

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

Sensory Workout

Sensory workout is a program that combines what we know about exercise and sensory processing to make physical activity more accessible and enjoyable for all! The Sensory Workout trainings and demo videos are created by Aptus' Clinical Services team, with generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

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

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

LCOworks is a free online program that supports positive employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities, a traditionally underrepresented and at-risk population in the labour market. Any Ontario resident with a developmental disability is eligible to participate in LCOworks. Email to apply or learn more at support@lifecourseonline.com.

Return of the Dragon

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Bridges to Belonging

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

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

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

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

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

March of Dimes Connect & Share

Wouldn't it be wonderful to visit with someone regularly who shares your interests? March of Dimes virtual Connect & Share program was designed to make that happen. You will be matched with a volunteer who shares your interests and your buddy will visit with you (as often as you like) – just for the fun of it.

You can have phone visits or you can have a video call using a platform like Zoom.

<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/rec/connect>

CNIB's Virtual Program Offerings

Whether it's children and youth groups, employment workshops, tech sessions or book clubs, CNIB's innovative programs are designed to educate, entertain and engage! CNIB's free programs are available to Canadians who are blind or partially sighted as well as their families, friends and caregivers.

Visit their website to learn more: <https://bit.ly/38cRE1o>

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 fashion mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies!

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

You're invited to take a look at MOVE by GoodLife Kids!

MOVE is designed exclusively to get youth with special needs active, and is offered FREE to families. Registered participants get access to three live online small-group sessions each week led by one of MOVE's passionate coaches.

[Learn more at: goodlifekids.com/MOVE/](http://goodlifekids.com/MOVE/)

Carizon

[Carizon's](#) Winter group programs and workshops are here. [Click here](#) to view the flyer. This list includes all groups and workshops available across Carizon in both Community Services and Clinical departments. To register for any groups or workshops, email groups@carizon.ca or call 519-743-6333 ext. 3250.

I AM!

[Women's Crisis Services](#) will be back to [KDCHC](#) this February to facilitate their [I AM program](#) at KDCHC! This eight-week program is designed to teach youth about healthy relationships to help decrease violence in our community. It is a preventative program that uses self-esteem building activities to highlight the importance of having a positive personal self-image. To register, call Angela at 519-741-9184 x2005 or email Angela.Stahlbaum@wcsvr.org.

Y Mind

[YMCA of Three Rivers](#) is offering a free 7-week mental wellness program for people ages 13-18 (Teens) and 18-30 (Youth) . ["Y Mind"](#) is delivered by the YMCA of Three Rivers and community partners. The next session begins January 8.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops & Training

Lutherwood Work Access and Safety Training

Are you or do you know of someone looking to start a job, but they are lacking a certificate to get started? Lutherwood, in partnership with CLAC-Ontario, is offering training support for individuals looking for work. Lutherwood will assist eligible individuals in funding their safety training, with courses including: First Aid and CPR; Working at Heights; WHMIS 2015; Forklift Operator; Joint Health and Safety Committee; And many other certificates. To find out if you are eligible, contact the closest Lutherwood office in either Cambridge (519-623-9380), Kitchener (519-743-2460), or Guelph (519-822-4141) to complete an assessment.

Woolwich Counselling

This winter, Woolwich Counselling Centre has many great small group therapy sessions and workshops for children, youth, adults, and seniors. See the link below to learn what's new this month! To register, please call 519-669-8651 or email info@woolwichcounselling.org. Here are a few of the workshops and support groups coming up:

- Understanding Me: Interpersonal Violence Support Group - Tuesdays at 10 am
- Effective Problem Solving with our Children & Teens - Thursday, Jan 12 at 7 pm
- Breathing and Connecting Together: Child & Caregiver Yoga and Mindfulness Group (5-9 years old) - Mondays at 5 pm

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

Bridges to Belonging

Join Bridges to Belonging and other Waterloo Region families for our next Future Planning workshop on Thursday, January 26 from 6:30-8:30 pm. This Future Planning Workshop will feature David Amy from Amy, Appleby, and Brennan. David will discuss Wills, Executors & Trustees, Power of Attorney, Trusts, and the Henson Trust. Learn more and register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/2022-2023-future-planning-webinar-series-tickets-411455122347>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

DSO - Technology to Support Independence

Join DSO Housing Navigators on January 12 at 10 am for a virtual presentation on various types of technological assistance available today and how it might be used to support independence. While technology can never replace human connection, it can certainly help to increase independence thus decreasing the need (and expense) for human “just in case” supports.

[January 12th, 2023 - Technology to Support Independence](#)

Triple P: Positive Parenting Program

[Centre for Mental Health Treatment and Research](#), University of Waterloo: The next virtual Positive Parenting Program (PPP) group for parents of younger children is being offered this winter. The virtual group will run on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 7:30 pm via MS Teams, beginning January 24, 2023 and finishing March 21, 2023. Interested parents are invited to complete the [PPP Intake Information Form](#). The CMHRT Director will then contact the parent to schedule a short telephone intake screen to discuss the program and determine whether it is a good fit for their family.

Please Note: The Centre for Mental Health Treatment and Research are also accepting referrals for individual, parenting, and family therapy for children, youth and adults. All services currently have a waitlist. For more information about the CMHRT, please visit <https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-research-treatment//>.

Parenting Now Winter Schedule

Parenting Now has released its [Winter Schedule of Parenting Supports](#). This series of one-hour positive parenting “snap shots” will get you thinking about your choices as a parent and help you develop strategies for a more connected and cooperative household. Each session stands alone. You can attend just one or all of them. To register for programs or to get more information, email: parenting@kwcounselling.com

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Aide Canada

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

Breastfeeding Dashboard

Canada's "[Breastfeeding Dashboard](#)" is now available on PHAC's Public Health Infobase platform. Along with this data tool, the first edition of Canada's Breastfeeding Progress Report is available. The data provides an overview of breastfeeding rates in Canada, including information on breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity, examined by various geographic and sociodemographic factors. Reasons for not breastfeeding and reasons for stopping breastfeeding before 6 months are also presented, as are rates of vitamin D supplementation of breastfed infants. Questions related to the new materials can be directed to: dca_public_inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca

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/>

March of Dimes Hi, Tech!

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Plexus

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

Referrals can be made here: [Plexus Referral](#)

National Advisory Council on Poverty

National Advisory Council on Poverty's 2022 report on the progress of Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. The council interviewed 1000 people across the country about the underlying and overlapping causes and impacts of poverty and hosted 8 small group sessions where people with lived expertise of poverty could share their personal stories. They heard about the struggle, resilience, frustration, and perseverance that is poverty in Canada. Those conversations and the insights that the participants shared are the foundation of this report.

<https://bit.ly/3D15p2m>

Positive Behaviour Supports Corporation (PBS Corp.)

PBS provides high quality Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy to children and adults diagnosed with Autism or other qualifying diagnoses. Services are provided in the home, school, and community settings. PBS will conduct an assessment in the home environment to determine the goals with the family which often include addressing challenging behaviours and increasing skills in a variety of areas that are targeted. ABA is implemented in real world situations with the parents being an integral part of ABA therapy.

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Ontario Caregiver Association

- *SCALE Program: Caregiver Needs and Well-being*: [SCALE \(Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment\)](#) focuses on topics relevant to new or experienced caregivers, including caregiver stress, managing feelings of anxiety or guilt, and self-care for the caregiver. SCALE will return February 7, 2023.
- *Caregiver 101*: Learn about caregiving roles, conflicts in caregiving, caregiver burnout, what to expect, developing resilience, and what supports are available. Access the online course [here](#).
- *Young Caregivers Connect*: Young Caregivers Connect is a website to help young caregivers aged 15-25. The website was designed in collaboration with, and for, young caregivers and offers information and resources and a way to connect that address their unique needs. Visit the website [here](#).
- *Time to Talk Podcast*: Join Host Michelle Jobin along with experts and caregivers, to discuss things that matter most to caregivers. Access the podcast [here](#).

Family Compass Waterloo Region

Family Compass Waterloo Region is a central website to guide families to services for children, youth, and families in our community. The website offers the option to find information about general services for children and youth as well as specialized services that can help to address developmental concerns.

Family Compass has added a page specifically pertaining Covid-19 resources for children, youth, and families. It can be reached at <https://bit.ly/3t0lkar>.

Fostering Information from Family & Children Services

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

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 \(planningnetwork.ca\)](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The Family Support Network for Employment

FSNE is proud to announce the launch of the “Learning Path to Employment,” an online course designed for families of individuals with a developmental disability. The goal of the course is to provide individuals and their families with the knowledge and tools they need to advocate for, and secure, meaningful paid employment. The course can be found here: <https://fsne.ca/courses/learning-path-to-employment/>. The course can be accessed 24/7, is free, and there is no time limit in which you must complete it.

Take5

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

The Royal Mental Health Care & Research

The Royal Mental Health Care & Research is one of Canada’s foremost mental health care, teaching and research hospitals, located in Ottawa. The Institute of Mental Health Research, affiliated with the University of Ottawa, brings together leading mental health professionals, scientists, and technology to gain a deeper understanding of the brain, and investigate innovative approaches to preventing and treating mental illness. To learn about The Royal’s programs, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3dRvIo2>

The Vulnerable Persons Registry

The Vulnerable Persons Registry promotes communication between vulnerable persons, the people who support them and the police. This information will assist officers when responding to an emergency involving the vulnerable individual. The registry provides quick access to critical information about a registered person, such as who to call in an emergency, a detailed physical description, and any particular sensitivities that the person may experience.

www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Inclusion Canada

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

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

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

Pathways to Home Ownership

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

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

Breakaway Passport Services

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

Ontario Caregiving Association: Caregiving Communities

The Ontario Caregiver Organization has created CaregivingCommunities; a new portal that provides an easy way for people to search for organizations in their community that can help with: Grocery pick up and delivery, delivery of prepared meals, medication pick-up, social support – friendly phone calls, accessing communication devices like a tablet, mental health support, spiritual support, providing things to do like books, games and crosswords.

www.ontariocaregiver.ca/caregivingcommunities

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Support Groups

Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH)

If you are a parent/caregiver worried about your child, or a young person looking for help yourself – please reach out. Our network of child and youth mental health centres has 4000 professionals ready to help children, youth and families with free counselling and treatment. We provide care in person, on the phone and virtually. No problem is too big or small. Waterloo PCMH [regular support group meetings](#) dates will come soon. The next [ADHD support group](#) will take place Jan. 18. Find your closest child and youth mental health centre here: <https://www.family.cmho.org/>

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

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

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

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

Visit: <https://www.cpbf-fbpc.org/covid19>

Province-Wide Monthly Virtual Groups for Adults with FASD

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

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

South Asian Wellness Group

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 6 pm to 7:30 pm on Zoom with occasional in-person meetings. With a South Asian Peer Facilitator fluent in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, this group will focus on coping, recovery, and fostering hope from a South Asian lens. This group is intended for folks who identify as South Asian to connect and build community with one another. ALL Self Help & Peer Support groups are open to adults living in Waterloo Wellington communities who identify as living with mental health or/and substance use issues. To join this group or if you have questions about it, please send us an email: selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca. To view this information in Punjabi, please [click here](#).

The A-Team of Waterloo Region

The A-Team of Waterloo Region is primarily run by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, with some assistance from Bridges to Belonging. Their goal is to create a safe and welcoming environment to meet fellow adults (age 18+) with Asperger's Syndrome (ASD – level 1), discuss topics of interest, share experiences, and embrace their neurological diversity. Please go to <https://ateamwaterlooregion.wordpress.com/about/> for more information on how to register and attend the upcoming virtual meetings!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CIA - Connecting, Interests and Activities

CIA is a group in Waterloo Region for adults (18+) with Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) level 1. The purpose of the group is to create a safe and supportive space for people to have fun, meet and connect with others, and take part in activities. Join if you're looking for a positive place of belonging! Meetings take place at the Downtown Community Centre (35 B Weber Street West), in the Multi-Purpose Room. This is a drop-in group, so folks are welcome to join anytime between 5 and 7 pm. The next meeting will be taking place January 12. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Groh at 519-731-3923.

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario

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

Strong Moms, Safe Kids

The Strong Moms, Safe Kids group is now accepting referrals for the winter session! Winter session will take place weekly on Wednesdays from 5:30-8 pm starting January 4, 2023 and concluding on March 8, 2023. This program is for mothers who have experienced any type of abuse in an intimate relationships and their children, ages 5-18, who have witnessed abuse in their homes. Families of all cultures are welcomed. Those not comfortable with English can have an interpreter provided for them. An intake call is required to participate, please contact Janet De Gazon to make a referral or for more information, at jdegazon@kwcounselling.com or 519-884-0000 x252.
<https://www.kwcounselling.com/counselling/group-supports/>

Virtual Support Group for Adolescents with FASD

The return of the Virtual Support Group for Teens with FASD. This group meets every Wednesday night at 7 – 8:30 pm.
Contact Rob for more information rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca.

CADDAC Support Groups

CADDAC's virtual support groups are a safe space for you to share your experiences with others who understand what it means to have ADHD or parent a child with ADHD. Sign up for our last meetings of 2022! [Programs and Events - CADDAC](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

Queens University Research

Participate in Online Emotional Research

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

McMaster University Research on Postpartum Depression Treatment

McMaster University is conducting a research study to determine if women who receive an online peer-delivered CBT-Informed support for postpartum depression improve more than women who receive standard healthcare. You may be eligible if you are living in Southern Ontario, 18 yrs+ and have a baby under 12 months. For more information please email: peercbt@mcmaster.ca

University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science

University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science is seeking infants aged 18-47 months for a vision study to test for a new way to measure how well babies/toddlers can see. Contact Dr. Lisa Christian lisa.christian@uwaterloo.ca for more information.

University of Calgary

Exploring the Mental Health Benefits of Participating in Physical Activity Study

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Infant and Child Mental Health Lab at York University

The Infant and Child Mental Health Lab at York University is inviting caregivers and their infants (aged 3 - 10 months), to participate in a 2-part online research study. The first part examines caregiver-infant interaction at times when the caregiver is busy with common, everyday tasks. The second part examines the role of caregivers' experiences as they interact with their infants. To learn more about our study, please visit our webpage: <https://bohr.lab.yorku.ca/participate-in-our-studies/> Interested participants can email us directly at yorkparentingproject@gmail.com, or sign up using the form on our webpage.

York Parenting Project Study

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

York University

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

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

Time Poverty Study

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Empowered Kids Ontario & McMaster University

In partnership with Empowered Kids Ontario, researchers at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University are completing an evaluation of virtual care services offered to children across Ontario. If your child currently receives virtual care in Ontario (or has received virtual care in the past), and you are interested in learning more about participating in this research, please contact us at ekoeval@mcmaster.ca or call 905-525-9140 ext. 21263.

Siblings: Citizens with a Cause Is Recruiting!

Siblings: Citizens with a Cause is a group of sibling advocates with a vision for a more inclusive Canada. Our team of siblings have important advocacy roles at Community Living Ontario, as they ensure that siblings of those who have disabilities are heard and represented in all settings. Their daily interactions with their siblings allow them to see first-hand the exclusion their siblings face, which is their motivation to advocate for a more inclusive Canada. This supportive network of youth shares personal stories, resources, and are a helping hand to anyone who would like it through advocacy initiatives such as their Siblings meetups. At these monthly webinars, youth and allies come together to discuss navigating life in Canada. If you have questions or wish to apply, contact: Agnes Palaganas, CLO's Youth and Community Engagement Coordinator, at apalaganas@communitylivingontario.ca or Payal Khazanchi, Director of Inclusion Initiatives at pkhazanchi@communitylivingontario.ca.

Join the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)!

The Re:Action4Inclusion Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is a provincial movement of youth from across Ontario that has steadily advocated for social change for over a decade. This movement is driven and empowered by youth leaders, with and without a disability, who see the importance of the basic human need to belong. This provincial network of youth is committed to overcoming the feelings of isolation and exclusion youth feel by embracing a culture of equity and inclusion. Interested in getting involved with the Youth Advisory Committee? Want to work with a team of like-minded people to make a difference? [Apply here!](#) Want to learn more? [Click here.](#)

And if you still have questions, contact: Agnes Palaganas, CLO's Youth and Community Engagement Coordinator, at apalaganas@communitylivingontario.ca or Nicole Canzoneri, Chair of YAC 2021–2022, at nicolecanzoneri@gmail.com.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

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

Partners 4 Planning

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

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

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

SickKids – Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Accessibility Standards Canada

You are invited to a [**public review of a new accessibility standard!**](#)

This public review will be your first opportunity to provide feedback on Accessibility Standards Canada's draft model standard for the built environment - accessibility. A second opportunity will be provided later before the standard is published.

As part of this public review, the technical committee welcomes your initial feedback. Input from Canadians is vital to the development of accessibility standards that remove and prevent barriers.

There are common areas where people with disabilities may encounter barriers in the built environment. This standard differs in many ways from other standards. It focusses on equity-based requirements that go beyond minimum technical requirements.

The built environment has many elements. To ensure a fulsome document, Accessibility Standards Canada has made the decision to draft it in two phases. **The first phase of the public review will run until Saturday, January 7, 2023 at 23:59.**

This public review of the draft standard covers the following topics: exterior and interior paths of travel, building entrances and access to storeys, ramps and curb ramps, elevators, stairs, doorways and doors including power door operators, controls, passenger loading zones and access aisles, washrooms and universal washrooms including showers, signs and wayfinding, illumination, assistive listening systems, emergency notification systems, and fire protection and refuge.

You can consult the [**draft standard on this website.**](#)

You are invited to provide your feedback on the draft standard using one of the following means:

- By [**completing the online form**](#) and submitting your feedback directly through its website
- By downloading the fillable form in a PDF or Word format and sending it to ASC by email, along with any related files
- By submitting your comments in text, audio, or video format

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Accessibility Standards Canada continued...

All the necessary instructions on how to send us your feedback can be found on ASC's website. The Standards Team contact information is also provided should you need any assistance with this public review process or have any questions.

Please know that in the future second version of the standard, the technical committee will aim to make sure it serves as many persons with disabilities as possible.

During that second public review, the technical committee intends to:

- update and expand existing requirements
- examine the needs of persons from more disability communities, including persons who are neurodiverse and persons with environmental sensitivities
- develop parking requirements
- add diagrams
- include information to help readers understand how the Standard removes and prevents barriers in the built environment for everyone, including persons with disabilities

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

CYPT Impact Survey Snapshots

You can now review the newest Child and Youth Planning Table Youth Impact Survey snapshot: *Experiences of Those Not Born in Canada* snapshot.

The Youth Impact Survey (YIS) is our community's opportunity to hear directly from young people about their own well-being. To center equity, social inclusion, and anti-discrimination, the CYPT has broken the results into various demographic and identity-based dimensions.

[CYPT-YIS-NBIC-1.pdf \(childrenandyouthplanningtable.ca\)](#)

Cambridge Food Bank

Cambridge Food Bank has released a [2022 Impact Report](#). Read all about the incredible ways the [Cambridge Food Bank](#) impacts the community.

Bill C-22 Update From Inclusion Canada

Bill C-22 was formally reported back to the House of Commons on Wednesday, December 14, by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA). This is the next step we needed to see in the legislative process to get this bill passed into law. Unfortunately, the House of Commons and all MPs agreed to adjourn that same day, two days earlier than planned, for their holiday break.

We are very disappointed they would not consider C-22 at Third Reading and pass it before the break, which was to occur on Friday as scheduled in the parliamentary calendar. Unfortunately, disability poverty will not take a break while we wait.

We will now focus on advocating that C-22 be the first order of business when Members of Parliament resume their House of Commons duties on January 30, 2023.

Thank you to all who took the time to contact your MP. We will need to do it all again in January. Stay tuned for more developments early in the new year.