

*Where exceptional families thrive.*

Issue 132  
April 2021

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Welcome to spring!

This issue of Family Pulse is full of learning opportunities, programs and events, both within WRFN and our community.

We are excited for the return of Steph's Corner! In this issue, Steph shares a heartwarming article about Looking Back & Springing Forward.

Have a wonderful month!



**Support WRFN Today**

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

## SEAC Updates

### **Waterloo Region District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee Update**

*Submitted by Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region District School Board Representative*

Waterloo Region Family Network presented at SEAC this month. Sue Simpson presented an overview of the organization and its mandate and services. Cristina Stanger, our Self-Advocacy Liaison, spoke about her experience navigating the school system as a parent with an exceptional child. She shared that when her child began school she thought that the education system and experience was just about her child, and she was not able to ask for assistance for herself. One key question Cristina had was how she could request accommodations. She shared several examples of situations that were challenging such as navigating the process of parent teacher night. Cristina had some great suggestions about how to make things more accessible for parents, those with disabilities as well as those who find these situations challenging for other reasons. SEAC will take these suggestions and discuss them further.

There were also discussions of preparing for the next year, particularly for students who are transitioning to kindergarten or different schools. Many of the tours that usually happen are now virtual.

The Board is also creating profiles for all students. This will include all information students need to be supported including IEPs and IPRCs (but students who are not served by SPEC ED will have these as well). The goal is that students will always have these profiles “with” them as they transition between grades, schools etc.

The Board is hoping to get additional funding for summer supports, for example to close some literacy or numeracy gaps that students might have.

The next WRDSB SEAC meeting will be held virtually on April 14, 2021.

### **Waterloo Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee Update**

*Submitted by Sue Simpson and Karen Kovats, WRFN SEAC Representatives*

WCDSB SEAC met virtually on March 3.

Tee Batistella, Manager, Student Services, and Lauren McDonald, a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) with WCDSB, shared a presentation on Maximizing the Impacts of Support Staff and the Implementation of Behavioural Skills Training. Tee presented on a project - Maximizing the Impacts of Support Staff. The project is designed so that everyone has a solid knowledge and understanding of an EA, CYCW, Classroom Teacher and Special Education Teacher. The approach is inclusive to maximize impact. The three-year plan includes a logic model, working groups, targeted professional development, direct support via a collaborative team and onboarding. Multiple resources have been developed as part of this project. Lauren presented on the Implementation of Behaviour Skills Training (BST). A series of professional development resources have been developed. The approach is evidence based in applying a new skill related to four components – Instruction, Modeling, Rehearsal and Feedback. This approach is useful for staff and students. PD sessions were all virtual this year and provided an opportunity to utilize videos created for modeling and rehearsal. Parent handouts are also available.

Trustee Jeanne Gravelle shared the Trustee Update which can be found here.

**[WCDSB Board Meeting Bulletin -- February, 2021](#)**

Association updates were also shared.

The next WCDSB SEAC meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, April 7, 2021.

## Save the Date

This year, we've partnered with The Culinary Studio to offer

# *Evening of Elegance* *@ home*

This family-friendly event begins with a basket of fresh ingredients delivered to your door. You'll be able to participate in our online silent auction before joining us over Zoom, where a professional chef will lead you in preparing a 3-course meal.

*Save  
the  
Date*

May 29, 2021

**Tickets available soon!**



# What's Happening at WRFN



## A NEW CHAPTER

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

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

**APRIL 6, 2021**  
*Imagining Better –  
Creating our vision of  
home beyond the family  
home*  
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**MAY 4, 2021**  
*Housing Stories of  
Success*  
-----

**JUNE 1, 2021**  
*Art with Stepping Stones  
Expressive Arts*

**All meetings are  
virtual Zoom  
meetings from  
7:30pm-9pm**  
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RSVP to Mary at  
maryjpike@hotmail.com  
if you would like to join



## What's Happening at WRFN

**All WRFN programs will be offered in virtual format or through phone and email connections until further notice.**

**At WRFN, we're here to listen. Please reach out and let us know how we can help you and your family during these challenging times.**

### **Ask A Self-Advocate**

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

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at [Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info](mailto:Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info). To request a booking please complete the [request form](#).

### **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](mailto:carmen.sutherland@wrfn.info). I will make sure to keep you on the email list so that you receive a Zoom invite and I will also keep you aware if we ever change or add a meeting date.

### **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.

If you would like to learn more please contact Sue Simpson at [Sue.Simpson@wrfn.info](mailto:Sue.Simpson@wrfn.info).

### **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 group meets virtually on the second Tuesday of the month from 10-11:30am and the last Wednesday from 7-8:30pm. The meeting dates for this month are **April 13 and 28**.

If you're interested in participating, please contact Sue Simpson at 519-886-9150 ext. 1 or [sue.simpson@wrfn.info](mailto:sue.simpson@wrfn.info).

### **WRFN's Family Resource Coach**

During this current COVID-19 health crisis, personal support has become paramount for many families. Sue Furey, our Family Resource Coach, is available by phone or email to lend a helping hand and personal guidance to families and to connect you to updated information, resources, and virtual opportunities. We encourage you to reach out. Call Sue at 519-886-9150 ext. 4 or

email [Sue.Furey@wrfn.info](mailto:Sue.Furey@wrfn.info)

## Always Hope

*By Carmen Sutherland, Coffee Club Facilitator, WRFN*

As a Saskatchewan girl, I grew up with PILES of snow on fence posts, and roads that constantly looked like hot chocolate from snow and dirt for months, often starting in October. So, the first sign of spring ALWAYS brought me joy. I still tell myself the story of one particular March 12 during university in central Illinois – a little bit warmer than Saskatchewan to be sure – where I finished an exam, then took a leisurely stroll outside, smoothie in hand. (OK...FINE...I can't drink a smoothie and drive my wheelchair at the same time \*wink\* but you get the idea, yes?)

Last March when life changed, I was sad, but I clung to one thing: the weather would grow warm soon and we could still go outside. This year, I cling to this same joy. The very weekend I wrote this, I got to go outside, turn my face up toward the sun, breathe, and smile. Our current world may look different than we would like, but the seasons are still here: spring, then summer, where we exchange shoes for flip flops, scurry to find shade instead of warmth, get to see amazing flowers and birds, and OH YES...the sun is just setting at 7:15 PM, and the days will continue to get longer for many more weeks.

We still truck along, even when life looks different, yet the same, because I promise you some things do not change...some things are always hopeful.

# Steph's Corner

## LOOKING BACK & SPRINGING FORWARD

I am so happy to be writing an article for "Steph's Corner" again. I was not feeling well from October to December 2020. I didn't have much energy and was very tired because my heart was not working very well. I am so thankful to be feeling better now.

Looking back over the past months, I have learned some things that I want to share with you. I have some thoughts about springing ahead too.

There are two photographs that I have taken, that will help tell my story... the "Thank you Bird" and the "Sunflower."



### LOOKING BACK:

When I was going through this difficult time, it was hard to be happy. However, many friends and family lifted my spirits and showed me how much they cared about me. I needed to be brave and strong; however, I needed their help too. If you know anyone who is sick or lonely, here are some things that people did for me to let me know they cared about me and that they were cheering me on to get better.

- Make a card and send it in the mail.
- Drop off a treat ie. Chocolate milkshake
- Make a meal for them and their family.
- Send them an email or text.
- If possible, go for a socially-distanced, masked visit.
- Put together some photos and some memories of you and your friend and give it to them.
- Find out what they like to do and perhaps drop off a small gift ie. crafts, jigsaw puzzles
- Keep them in your prayers.

These acts of caring sure put a smile on my face and were so appreciated. I had a thankful heart.

### SPRINGING FORWARD:

I am happy that winter is behind me and I am feeling better. Spring is here and the "Sunflower" photograph reminds me of sunny days and warmer weather. I can look ahead with a hopeful heart to better days. Here are some things that will help me "spring" forward. Maybe they will help you feel better too.

- Be positive.
- Go for walks.
- Sit outside in the sunshine.
- Listen for the birds singing.
- Look for the flowers to come up in the ground.
- Keep connected with friends and family.
- Do something for someone else.

Hopefully this "Looking Back" and "Springing Forward" article, along with the photos, will give you some helpful ideas on how to help others feel better and to have a good day yourself.

Steph Prysnuk

## 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.*

### EVENTS

#### Recreational Respite Special Events

**Peer to Peer Event, April 12** — This event is for those 16+ to come together in a safe space to meet, interact with friends and discover new interests.

**Recreational Information Night** — This event encourages anyone interested in learning more about 1:1 or group program services.

Register by email [groups@recrespite.com](mailto:groups@recrespite.com) or by calling 1-877-855-7070.

#### Spring Break 2021 Special Events!

**Erik Traplin Virtual Concert, April 12** — This fun-filled musical show will have the whole family singing and dancing along.

**Dan the Music Man, April 13** — Get ready to participate in a musical adventure that will have you up and moving no matter where you are.

**Forest Trek with Applefun Puppetry, April 14** — Join Applefun Puppetry for interactive fun and learn how to make a paper puppet.

**Kids Comedy Magic with Five the Magician, April 15** — Prepare to be amazed by Five the Magician's fast-paced magic, juggling, and illusion.

**Ice Princess Story Time, April 16** — Dress up in your favourite costume and join for a virtual visit with your two favourite snow sisters, the Snow Queen and the Snow Princess!

Learn more at: <https://www.wellington.ca/en/discover/event-2.aspx>

#### Spectrum Works 2021: A Virtual Career Fair

Spectrum Works looks to connect job seekers with Autism to some of Canada's top employers.

Spectrum Works will be hosting national and local businesses actively looking to hire and fill positions within their organization.

April 8, 12:00-5:00pm, <https://bit.ly/3s87eUt>



# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## PROGRAMS/RECREATION

### LEG Up! Online — April

LEG Up! provides online skill enhancement and learning experiences.

You will need a computer, tablet or phone with a webcam, audio and internet connection.

**Monday, Let's Learn** — Discuss different topics each week.

**Tuesday, Cooking: Let's Make Brunch** — Make delicious meals along with your Instructor.

**Wednesday, Wellness** — Explore topics that improve your wellness.

**Interactive Thursday** — Add some fun to your week while interacting with your peers.

**Thursday, Arts & Crafts** — Welcome spring by creating art projects with bold colours and textures.

**Friday, Baking** — Learn to bake some yummy treats along with your Instructor.

Learn more about these programs at <https://bit.ly/3r699aG>.

For information about registration watch <https://youtu.be/3JLZYG3hxqA>.

### Adults in Motion

**Programs** — Adults in Motion offers a number of in-person programs and virtual activities throughout the day. Enjoy personal connections, making new friendships and participating in entertaining activities.

**Summer Camp** — Summer Camp Days are flexible and can be built around your summer schedule by choosing the specific days or weeks desired.

To learn more about Adults in Motion and what they are offering visit

<https://adultsinmotion.org/kitchener-waterloo/>.

### Recreational Respite Virtual Services

Virtual services offer unique experiences in small group, 1:1 and 'Build It' workshop sessions that aim to provide independent skill mastery for children, youth and adults with disabilities. These person-centred programs and workshops will cultivate life skills, promote self-care, encourage engagement, inclusion and social connectivity.

Check out information about their virtual services at <https://bit.ly/2KHe2Ia>.

### 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](mailto:kim.sproul@eafwr.on.ca)

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Sunbeam Community & Development Services Summer Camps**

[MFTD \(Medically Fragile Technologically Dependent\) for Children & Teens](#) — An exciting theme-based program for children and teens aged 4 to 18 years old that includes crafts, swimming, snoezelen room time, community outings, physical fitness, and games in the gym.

[Summer Fun Days](#) — For adults 18+. This program includes crafts, swimming, snoezelen room time, community outings, physical activities and games in the gym. All activities are geared toward having fun and promoting positive social interactions.

### **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://bit.ly/3906LfL>

### **BE-Connected Virtual Hangout**

Bridges to Belonging is offering a place to virtually hangout, meet new people and talk about what's happening in your world.

Wednesday from 7:00-8:00pm | Use the following Zoom link to join: <https://bit.ly/3iHFwdm>.

### **Artshine Virtual Accessible Art For Kids, Teens & Adults**

Social distancing need not rob you of the joy that comes from expanding your art skills! We've got live video lessons via Zoom for all ages, with art supplies mailed to you in advance! Maximum 20 participants for personalized attention. Click [here](#) for more information!

### **Rainbow Day Camp**

Memorable day camp activities for children and youth 4+.  
Leaders in training program for youth 11-14.  
Fully inclusive day camp with one-to-one support available.  
Learn more at [www.rainbowdaycamp.com](http://www.rainbowdaycamp.com).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Camp Kodiak

A unique, integrated, non-competitive summer program for children and teens with and without ADHD, LD and high functioning ASD.

Camp Kodiak nurtures campers' personal, athletic and social success to ensure they feel valued and celebrated. Find more information about their summer program [here](#).

Learn more about Camp Kodiak on their website at [www.CampKodiak.com](http://www.CampKodiak.com).

### Our Place KW - Family Resource and Early Years Centre

**Our Place** continues to offer a variety of programming opportunities.

**Stork Secrets**—Pregnancy and postpartum adjustment peer support. Learn more about this free virtual program [here](#).

Head over to <https://www.ourplacekw.ca/programs> for a full list of programs and registration information.

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

The Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at ABLE2 is happy to announce the first two Province-wide virtual groups for adults living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD):

- FASD Educational Group
- FASD Social Group

Both groups will be held monthly. You can participate at your comfort level from the comfort of your home.

For more info contact the Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at 613-761-9252 Ext. 234 or [fasd@able2.org](mailto:fasd@able2.org)

### Steckle Heritage Farm Agriventure Summer Day Camp

**Agriventure Day Camps (5 to 12 year old's)** - Campers will be divided into groups based on their age and younger groups will have more support staff. Summer day camp includes outdoor education, a variety of activities, self-guided play time and more!

**Leaders In Training Camps (LIT's)** - Leadership camp for children entering Grade 7 & 8. This program allows campers to develop their leadership skills and take on more responsibility while participating in all of our camp activities!

**Junior Leaders Program** - A great opportunity for students entering Grade 9 to earn volunteer hours, further develop their leadership skills and gain a reference for future job applications.

For more information visit <https://bit.ly/3boa9kX>.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### EarlyON Waterloo Region

EarlyON provides a variety of developmentally appropriate, fun, and interactive learning opportunities for you and your child to explore together.

You can enjoy LIVE groups Monday-Saturday on their Facebook page [@EarlyONWR](#). No registration required.

You can also find a variety of programs that require registration.

Check their website [earlyyearsinfo.ca](#) for registered programs and new songs/activities every week.

### Camp Kennebec

For children, teens, and young adults with special needs and developmental delays including Autism, Asperger's, ADHD, OCD, learning disabilities, anxiety and social skill challenges.

[Camp Kennebec Brochure](#) | [Why Camp Kennebec?](#)

<https://campkennebec.com/>

### Shadow Lake Centre

Since 1965, Shadow Lake Centre has been offering a summer camp program for children, youth and adults with an intellectual disability.

The summer camp experience at Shadow Lake is self-directed, meaning guests can spend their time doing things they truly enjoy!

<https://www.shadowlakecentre.ca/>

[Shadow Lake Centre Camp Brochure](#) | [Shadow Lake News](#)

## WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

### DSO : Creating Your Individualized Housing and Support Plan

Creating Your Individualized Housing and Support Plan is a free virtual workshop series.

9:30am—12pm — April 1, April 8 & April 15 — Attendance is required for all three dates.

<https://bit.ly/2OV3tTU>

### CADDAC Webinar

Females, Hormones and ADHD — This webinar will discuss how ADHD presents in females along with common comorbidities. It will review the literature on hormones and ADHD throughout the lifespan and consider treatment strategies in ADHD during pregnancy and postpartum, as well as discuss the hormonal impact of menopause on cognition.

April 20 at 8:00pm | <https://bit.ly/3d1sViy>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Upcoming webcasts from p4p Planning Network

**Creating Financial Security, April 6** — Get started on creating a financial plan that mitigates uncertainty while securing the best possible outcome for your loved one.

**My Life, My Choice, My Community, April 20** — Explore ways individuals can actively participate in and contribute to their community.

**Introduction to the RDSP, April 29 or June 17** — Learn about the RDSP, a made-in-Canada, long-term savings vehicle designed specifically for individuals who have a disability.

**Nurturing Supportive Relationships, May 4** — See how building nurturing and supportive relationships is an important step toward personal autonomy for your loved one.

**Creative Options for Home, May 18** — Learn more about innovative housing options that could support you and your loved one in taking the next step toward “home.”

To learn more about these events or to register visit <https://bit.ly/3a1XTFN>.

### Workshops from Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment

**Facing Fears Together** — Facing Fears Together group treatment program, focus on treatment of anxiety in adolescents ages 15-18 years.

Learn more about Centre for Mental Health Research at

<https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-research-treatment/>.

### Upcoming Workshops from Sunbeam Developmental Resource Centre

**Applying for and Understanding ODSP** — Speaker’s Panel, April 13 — Learn about the various aspects of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and how to apply for it.

**Introduction to ABA and Assessment, April 22** — Introduction to ABA and Assessment provides a general outline of Applied Behaviour Analysis

**Antecedent Strategies, April 29** — Antecedent Strategies will focus on the environment’s effect on behaviour.

**Tips for Parents of Individuals with Autism, April 29** — This workshop will review parenting styles, discuss challenging behaviours and the possible causes behind these behaviours.

Learn more or register for these workshops at: <https://bit.ly/3tFOPIk>.

### Super Dads Super Kids

This is an online group for dads with children ages 0-6. Join the group to talk about what you think it means to be a dad. Learn skills and strategies to bond with your children. Learn about teaching your children important topics such as emotions, health and communication.

When: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30pm Where: Zoom

Contact Sarah 226-339-5616 or [capc@carizon.ca](mailto:capc@carizon.ca) to register or for more information.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Workshops and Groups from Woolwich Counselling Centre

#### No Need to Fret, Ages 8-11

Successful strategies are provided to help anxious children cope with fears and worries.

Upcoming Session: March 30, April 6, 13, 20 & 27 5-6 P.M.

#### Conquering Teen Anxiety, Ages 12-14

This group will assist teens to learn effective ways to cope with teenage pressures and stress.

Upcoming Session: March 30, April 6, 13, 20 & 27 7-8PM

#### Stand Tall, Ages 7-9

This group promotes confidence and assertiveness enabling children to protect and express themselves.

Upcoming Session: May 5, 12, 19, 26 & June 2 5-6PM

For more information on any of these groups go to [woolwichcounselling.org](http://woolwichcounselling.org) or call 519-869-8651

### Groups from Muslim Social Services

**Ladies Virtual Tea Time** — Have a relaxing time together via Zoom. Thursday, 4:30-5:30pm.

**Positive Parenting** — A weekly program for parents to learn how to deal with parenting challenges during COVID-19 related isolation, homeschooling and changed family routines.

Monday, 5:00-6:00pm.

**Resilient Girls** — Building young girls' resilience, self-esteem, networking skills and know how about family dynamics during COVID-19 related uncertain times. Ages 13-18.

**Seniors Zoom Group** — Weekly program for seniors to stay connected and learn about community resources. Friday, 4:00-5:00pm.

To learn about any of these programs contact:

[counsellor@muslimsocialserviceskw.org](mailto:counsellor@muslimsocialserviceskw.org) or call 519-772-4399 x 2707.

### Health & Wellness at Home Free Virtual Workshops

**Walk Well Into Spring, 2 Part Series, April 9 & 16** — Attend this two part workshop to better understand and explore walking through simple, intentional exercises.

**Shoulder Pain: Anatomy, Interventions and Exercise, April 19** — Learn about shoulder issues and the types of exercises and interventions that are appropriate for such conditions.

**Posture, April 26** — Attend this workshop to gain insight into what posture is, how it affects us and take away some practical tips, tricks and exercises to support beneficial postural positions.

Registration is required: <http://bit.ly/YMCAAPRIL2021WORKSHOPS>

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Opportunities Through Lutherwood

**Become an Indeed Super-Star** — Indeed is a very well known job board used by employers and job seekers: attend this webinar to build your confidence on how to use the site and gain some tips to learn strategies to help you find suitable work! <https://bit.ly/3f56j3F>

**Planning Your Next Career Adventure** — Learn about important factors to consider when switching careers. <https://bit.ly/3cdh4yl>

**Job Search Techniques** — Learn how to successfully navigate the hidden job market, and use the most effective job search tools to date. <https://bit.ly/3f4XxT3>

**Modern Approach to Interviewing** — Struggling to prepare for interviews? Not sure how to give the right answer? Attend to learn how to prepare for interviews! <https://bit.ly/3vPPm31>

**Convincing Employers to Hire You** — Learn how to develop a resume and cover letter that will help you stand out from the rest! <https://bit.ly/3shGfG8>

**Youth Job Connection** — Youth Job Connection (YJC) supports young people in developing essential workplace skills, establishing important job search strategies, using job search tools and building a career plan. Participants will have opportunities to connect with employers, get valuable work experience and job-related skills for their résumé and secure paid employment based on their interests and abilities. April 12-16, contact 519-623-9380.

### Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC)

#### Upcoming Events & Workshops

**Overcoming Challenges to Become Your Best Self with Colby Sharma, April 10** — Colby will share his journey of being formally diagnosed as a teenager with a learning disability and how he had learned to turn adversity into abundant opportunity.

**Care for the Caregiver, April 21** — Join this presentation to learn about some common caregiver experiences, such as empathic strain and burnout. Learn strategies for practicing self-care, coping, and setting boundaries. Resources will be provided.

Visit <https://ldawc.ca/events.html> to learn more about any of these workshops.

### Building Capacity in Independent Facilitation OIFN Shared Learning Events

For people living with disabilities, family members and/or loved ones, and aspiring and experienced independent facilitators.

Courses will be held virtually using Zoom.

Deepening Mindful Practices—May 17 & 31

Fostering Conversations about What Matters—June 17 & 24

Space is limited. Register at <https://www.oifn.ca/events-calendar/>.

# Information, Opportunities & Resources

## Foundations in FASD

Foundations in FASD is a basic training course intended for everyone that will come into contact with individuals with FASD including all sectors of work, families, individuals with FASD, spouses, and the general public. This online basic training course will take on average two hours to complete. Learn more about this opportunity at <https://bit.ly/3qFNerg>.

## RESOURCES

### Shared Connections Inclusive and Accessible Tech Support

Shared Connections can help you get connected, finding & adapting technologies to meet your unique needs. Shared Connections is a non-profit committed to inclusion for people with multiple disabilities.

[www.sharedconnections.ca](http://www.sharedconnections.ca)

### The Vulnerable Persons Registry

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

[www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca](http://www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca)

### Summer Camp Information

The KidsAbility website shares important information about summer camps. If you are looking for information for camps for your child, KidsAbility offers a number of camps and works with community-based camp programming. You can find information about planning, fee assistance and supports at: <https://www.kidsability.ca/camp-info>.

You can also find a Summer Camp Directory on the KidsAbility website or the WRFN Blog.

The information is provided to assist families with identifying camps that offer specialized programming for children and youth with disabilities, or inclusive camps that are welcoming to all abilities and may provide additional supports to those with special needs. You can find this information at: <https://www.kidsability.ca/camp-directory-summer> OR <https://bit.ly/3rdSKRO>.



## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### KidsAbility Resources

**Foundational Family Supports** — KidsAbility provides Foundational Family Services to anyone in the community — no diagnosis needed. Staff will work with you to find workshops, resources, groups, support and more to help you be successful. You do not need to be a KidsAbility family to access these services. Learn more about this support at <https://kidsability.ca/foundational-services>.

**Transition to Adulthood Clinic (for KidsAbility clients 15+)** — Have you started to think about your life after high school? Do you have questions about services for adults with disabilities in the community? The Transition to Adulthood Clinic is an opportunity to meet with the Transitions Lead who will help to guide you in the right direction with planning for your future. Find information about the Transition to Adulthood Clinic at <https://kidsability.ca/transition-adulthood-clinic>.

### ConnectAbility.ca COVID-19 Resources

#### Supporting individuals, families and caregivers

Find answers to your COVID-19 questions, share experiences and discover events to stay active and connected.

Visit <https://connectability.ca/covid-19/>

### 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>.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

### 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.

Contact Steve Keczem at 519-888-1053 or go to [apsgo.ca](https://apsgo.ca) for more information.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington remains available online through a private Facebook group: <https://bit.ly/3iJL9rx>.

They look forward to returning to the Cambridge Family Early Years Centre and Our Place Family Resource and 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>

### Ontario-Wide Virtual Support Group for Black parents and caregivers

Support, isolation, funding, resources, friends....These are the things that many families who care for someone with special needs think and worry about. For many of these families, their circle of support is quite small. This is often the case for racialized communities who have a child with special needs. The Black Parents of Children and Adults with a Disability 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.

Location/Meetings: This is a volunteer run group that meets on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. via ZOOM. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees.

**Contact:** For more details or to register, please contact us at [bpsgroup2020@gmail.com](mailto:bpsgroup2020@gmail.com). You can also find them on Facebook @ BPSG: Black Parents of Children and Adults with a Disability Support Group.

### Chronic Pain Monthly Support Group

This group is focused on discussing chronic pain coping strategies and how you can apply them in your life. Short mindfulness exercises will be included. Led by a facilitator who has experience with chronic pain. People can register anytime.

Contact [intaketeam@carizon.ca](mailto:intaketeam@carizon.ca) for more information or to register.

### Parents for Children's Mental Health Virtual Peer Support Group

Family/Caregiver Support Group—The fourth Tuesday of each month from 7-8:30pm

ADHD Caregiver Support Group—The third Wednesday of each month from 7-9pm

Group information is available by emailing [waterloo@pcmh.ca](mailto:waterloo@pcmh.ca).

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### Be You!

Bi-Weekly virtual support group for LGBTQ+ Youth (Ages 12-16). No Cost.

This facilitated group provides a safe, fun and respectful environment to connect and seek support.

April 7, 21 from 4-5pm

Please call 519-669-8651 or email [info@woolwichcounselling.org](mailto:info@woolwichcounselling.org) for more information or to register.

### Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County Virtual Peer Support Network

Are your kids staying engaged with online learning? Are you looking for ideas to keep them (and yourself) motivated?

Join the Peer Support Network and meet other parents on a similar journey to yours. LDAWC peer support network's goal is to provide an informal setting to share experiences, challenges, successes and resources.

This group takes place the second Monday of the month from 7:00-8:30pm

Learn more at <https://ldawc.ca/events.html>.

### 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!

## ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Family Alliance Ontario Survey

Family Alliance Ontario is asking for your participation in a survey intended to learn more about how students with disabilities are being serviced by public school boards at this time. This survey will give Integration Action for Inclusion an idea of whether COVID-19 is changing what placement options families would normally opt for as well as whether your placement options have been influenced by resource allocations or other decisions that school boards make.

To participate in the survey, go to <https://bit.ly/3qRc9rl>.

## Information, Opportunities & Resources

### **Advocacy Kit for Increasing Special Services at Home**

People for Personalized Funding (PFPF) has created an advocacy kit for increasing Special Services at Home.

[Bulletin from PFPF about Special Services at Home](#)  
[How to Take Action](#)

### **Survey: Use of Services for 0-6 Children by Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMHP) at the Hospital for Sick Children, in collaboration with the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (The Centre), Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN) and Children First would like to hear your thoughts about how our child and youth mental health system can improve the quality of services for children under 6 throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/39fKVFe>.

### **Research Opportunity: Caregivers and Challenges with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges faced by people providing the frontline care for children with these special educational needs (SENs). This includes parents, educators, occupational, speech and language therapists, social workers, doctors, and behavioral clinicians. The research seeks to find the common pinch points faced by these frontline caregivers especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Find more information about this study [here](#) or contact May Alonge at [malonge@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:malonge@uwaterloo.ca).

### **CAMH Virtual Healthcare Study for Patients with Developmental Disabilities**

During COVID-19 there has been a huge increase in the delivery of virtual primary care. CAMH is conducting interviews (online or by phone) to learn what is working well and what needs to be improved to support high quality care for patients with developmental disabilities.

Interested or want to learn more?

Contact Avra Selick at [avra.selick@camh.ca](mailto:avra.selick@camh.ca) or 416-535-8501x30127