

Where exceptional families thrive.

Issue 130
February 2021

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Welcome to the month of February!

This month Carmen, our Coffee Club Facilitator, has shared a beautiful article about how she's finding colour in her daily activities. As Carmen mentions, if you are having trouble seeing colour right now, you are not alone. We are here to listen and support you and your family in whatever way we can.



Support WRFN Today

Waterloo Region Family Network
www.wrfn.info
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

Dana Liebermann, Senior Manager, Research and Evidence-based Practice and David Lane, Research Strategist joined the meeting to talk about the student census. The census is being conducted in order to ensure that students are experiencing equity in our schools, and to identify how identity links to success. Students in Grades 4-12 will do the census during class time, students younger than that will get help from their parents. The information asked on the census will include:

- Indigenous status
- Racial Identity
- First language
- Nationality
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Religious affiliation
- Health/disability status
- Household characteristics
- Age
- Grade

The census is confidential and voluntary. Only WRDSB researchers (and IT staff as needed) with authorized passwords will be able to access and view individual responses. Parents and students will have access to their own information. Encouragement to complete the census will be sent to parents and teachers, as well as put out over social media. Community groups may also help endorse the census; the census will be most effective if there is a high response rate. There will be much information shared about the census and related forms including: privacy summaries and impact statements, teacher and parents questionnaire guides, and information about how the census fits into the strategic plan. Most students will complete the census online, although paper copies will be available, it should take about 15 or 20 minutes. Section 23 students will also be encouraged to take the census. The public will get anonymous general results.

In terms of reviewing the results, in Phase 1 in 2021, a full student profile will be developed for the Board and each school. Additionally the school profile will be compared to existing research. In phase 2 which will be in 2021 and beyond, there will be a detailed analysis that looks for gaps and inequities amongst students with different identities, and cross referencing different identities with existing student data such as grades, suspensions, credit accumulation, program enrolment, etc.

Return-to-school was also discussed. Students with complex needs are continuing to attend in person. Students are not wearing masks, but staff is wearing full Personal Protective Equipment.

The next WRDSB SEAC meeting will take place virtually on Wednesday, March 10, 2021.

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee Update

Submitted by Karen Kovats, Alternate Representative

On January 6, Bob Vansickle from ODEN (Ontario Disabilities Employment Network) gave a very enlightening presentation to our committee members. Bob highlighted statistics revolving around persons with disabilities in Ontario gainfully employed and the hurdles they face in acquiring and/or keeping a job. He presented ways for us as parents, guardians, and educators to give individuals with disabilities a leg up earlier in life to improve their chances of employment in the future.

WCDSB is working with ODEN to implement *jobPath* in our high school settings. This is another great step forward for our students' independence as they prepare for life after school.

Trustees provided an update which can be found at

[WCDSB Board Meeting Bulletin -- December 2020](#)

Association updates were also shared.

The next meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

Colour Can Be Everywhere

Submitted by Carmen Sutherland, Coffee Club Facilitator, WRFN

When I was deciding what to write about for this month's piece, something inside of me told me the theme should be "colour." Some might think it is odd that I would write about colour after the holidays and before spring, but I thought just now might be the perfect time. This winter may seem absent of colour, featuring nothing besides grey and white, but colour is all over: in carrot noses on snow people, in rich savory soups, in pink and red Valentines, in plants and flowers that grow inside.

Colour, or joy, can be found everywhere. For me, right now, it is coming in the form of audiobooks, eating good food, and texts from my friends. Especially in terms of audiobooks, I like to think of it as having a piece of colour/joy in my back pocket, a chance to transport myself to another world, and then pop back to the real world when it is time to continue with life. I also see it in my orchids, reminding me that spring will come again.

If you are able to see the colours in your life, I am so glad. Know that your colour might not be the same as others (my current "colour" involves romance novels, friends!). If you are having trouble seeing colour know that you are not alone. There are some minutes, hours, days where I cannot see colour either and there ARE resources to help. Wherever you are in life right now, know that someone else is there, too. You are not alone...and WRFN will help you in whatever way we can, and if we cannot help you, we will point you in the direction of those who can.

What's Happening at WRFN

Virtual Summer Camp Fair 2021

Showcasing Summer Camps
for Children, Youth and Adults with Special Needs

SAVE THE DATE

Mon, February 8th

-overnight camps-

Mon, February 22nd

-day camps for children-

Wed, February 24th

-day camps for teens and
adults-

**ALL EVENINGS
FROM 7-8:30PM
via Zoom**

This year, you can participate
from the comfort of your own
home via Zoom.

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

Join us, and get started with
plans for YOUR happy camper.



Offered In Partnership By:



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.

FEBRUARY 2, 2021

Planning for a Safe & Secure Future With Roz and Lynne
A look at a great resource and how it can help us plan for and with our kids.

MARCH 2, 2021

The Canadian Disability Benefit With Rebecca Pauls from (PLAN)
PLAN, the group that advocated for the RDSP, is leading the way to a new national strategy for supporting Canadians with disabilities. Join us to learn more and find out how we can support this movement.

This meeting is open to the wider WRFN community, not only ANC families

APRIL 6 & MAY 4, 2021

Housing...Stay tuned for more information.

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

RSVP to Mary at maryjpik@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. 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. 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.

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 **February 9 and 24**.

If you're interested in participating, please contact Sue Simpson at 519-886-9150 ext. 1 or 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

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

Momentum

The Power of Collective Resilience

Join The Resilience Project for a virtual, interactive thought leader event. You will hear speakers from around the world and right next door share their unique perspectives on resilience. In community - the way all important work is done - you will explore these concepts, challenging ourselves to apply them to our work and our daily lives.

Thursday, February 18 & Friday, February 19

Learn more about this event and register at <https://bit.ly/2MhX9UY>.

Autism Ontario Events

Hero Party: Buzz Lightyear— Join Buzz Lightyear February 13 on Zoom for a super-hangout!

<https://bit.ly/3qlqi16>.

Nature Ninjas—Little Rays—Join March 13 via Zoom to learn about the defense mechanisms of many different animals. You will see an 8ft snake, a crocodilian, a skunk, and an assortment of reptiles and mammals. Registration opens February 15. <https://bit.ly/2Klr3RQ>.

Hero Party: Spiderman—Join Spiderman March 20 on Zoom for a super-hangout!

<https://bit.ly/3oe7YVo>.

Have a Heart Day Campaign

The First Nations, Inuit, and Métis services team at Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region is proud to actively support the Have a Heart Day Campaign.

The idea is simple. People from this part of Turtle Island (Canada) are encouraged to send Valentine's Day cards to the Prime Minister. The message is simple, too: it urges the Prime Minister to “have a heart” and provide equitable funding to Indigenous children and youth so that they have the same chance of achieving their dreams as non-Indigenous children.

To learn more about this opportunity visit <https://bit.ly/36kh4K1>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

PROGRAMS/RECREATION

LEG Up Online—February

LEG Up! provides online skill enhancement and learning experiences.

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

Skills for Success—Occurs on Monday from 1-2pm.

Skills for a different topic take place each week.

Cooking Comfort Food: Chicken Edition—Occurs on Tuesday from 11-12pm.

Learn to cook along with your LEG Up instructor.

Lets Learn—Occurs on Wednesday from 1-2pm. Learn about a different topic each week.

Interactive Thursday—Occurs on Thursday from 11-12pm. Join your LEG Up instructor for fun and interactive activities.

Arts & Crafts—Occurs Thursday from 2-3pm. Drawing lessons will be offered for the month of February.

Learn more about these programs at <https://bit.ly/3pdG8d3>.

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

Adults in Motion Virtual Programs

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

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/2KHe2la>.

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Master Minds: A Virtual Homework Hub

Join the homework hub and you will learn skills around time management, organization, motivation and problem solving. You will leave with tips and tricks for your homework and study needs.

This Foundational Family Service (FFS) training is intended to provide persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), aged 13-17, who are registered in the Ontario Autism Program (OAP).

Dates: Thursdays February 4th- February 25th, 2021 (4 sessions) | Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm

Ratio: 8 participants and 3 staff

Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2Nz7fS7>.

Kerry's Place Groups

Kerry's Place groups for January-March 2021 have been posted on their website. There are a variety of groups available for different ages and needs. Prior to participating in a social skills group, interested participants are required to complete a group pre-screening. The group pre-screenings are valid for 6 months and families will be provided recommendations of groups based on their child's and youth's strengths and needs.

For more information go to:

<https://www.kerrysplace.org/category/oapgroups/>

Community Living Ontario Student Links Program

Student Links currently has available openings in their virtual program from now until the summer. Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Student Links is an opportunity for students (ages 14 to 21) who have an intellectual disability to explore ideas for their future after high school. It matches students and mentors who naturally share a common passion or interest. The goal is to enhance their capacity to make informed decisions about their future prior to leaving school.

Learn more from their [brochure](#).

[Student Application](#).

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!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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>.

Art Sessions from Stepping Stones

A creative look at Hope & Resilience — a light-hearted, creative evening and learn something new about yourself. This Expressive Arts session will use images of nature to explore and celebrate your own hope and resilience. February 1st 7-9pm.

Intuitive Painting — This is a meditative, playtime where you'll tune out your thinking head and exercise your intuitive ways of knowing. Afternoon and evening sessions are available.

Begins February 4.

For more information email info@steppingstonesexpressivearts.com or call 519-404-2450.

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

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.

[VenezJouer et Chanter](#) — Venez Jouer et Chanter est un programme en français qui intégrera le chant et la danse avec une activité amusante!

[Sleep and Your New Baby](#) — A free session to help you get to know more about your baby's sleep patterns and how to respond.

[Parenting My Baby](#) — Come out with your baby and meet other families with babies for discussion around a variety of topics.

[Preparing for Parenthood](#) — A free program series that offers information about having a healthy pregnancy and becoming a parent.

[Parenting in a New Society](#) — Connect over Zoom and Facebook with other parents from different countries wanting to build relationships during this challenging period of physical distancing, and wanting to learn about life in Canada.

[Make the Connection 0-1](#) — Incorporates hands-on parent-baby activities and discussions to help parents reflect on key components of secure attachment.

[Infant Massage](#) — This program is a great way to build attachment while learning techniques for stimulating, relaxing and providing relief for your infant.

[Connection and Conversation](#) — Inviting parents/caregivers to join on Zoom for conversations with each other and a EarlyON Facilitator about parenting, child development and more.

[Baby and Me](#) — Learn, and play together with your baby while connecting with other families through music, songs, finger plays, rhyming, conversation and other activities.

Check their website earlyyearsinfo.ca for registered programs and new songs/activities every week.

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

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 to register or for more information.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Upcoming webcasts from p4p Planning Network

Intro to ODSP — Feb 4 — This webcast features expert Graeme Treeby, who will provide an overview of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

Understanding Your Legal Rights — Feb 16 — Learn how to protect the legal rights of adult children, about the state of supported care in Ontario, and the functions of adult guardianship.

Introduction to RDSP — Feb 23 OR March 25 — Learn about the RDSP, a made-in-Canada, long-term savings vehicle designed specifically for individuals who have a disability.

Designing Your Future — March 4 — Learn strategies that can help you create a secure future for your loved one with a disability.

Wills and Estate Planning — March 23 — Find out how a will and estate plan can ensure that your loved one has a secure future.

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

Inspiring Possibilities: Estate Planning Guide Webinar

Brendon Pooran will be presenting an overview of the Inspiring Possibilities: Estate Planning Guide and answering questions related to estate planning as part of a series of informative sessions geared to families. The guide covers all aspects of the tax, trust and estate planning process for people who have an intellectual disability and their families.

Tuesday, February 2, 7:00-8:30pm

To register visit <https://bit.ly/3iJf2rL>.

Parenting Essentials Webinar | PCMH and WRDSB

The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) and Parents for Children's Mental Health are proud to announce the Parenting Essentials video series, featuring recordings of webinars that took place in 2020. The first video in this series offers an overview for any parents, and caregivers interested in learning more about the complexities of parenting.

This webinar can be watched at <https://bit.ly/39aYmXg>.

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County The Disability Tax Credit and RDSP Workshop

Does your child qualify for the Disability Tax Credit? Are you wondering when to apply for the Disability Tax Credit or a Registered Disability Savings Plan?

Join LDAWC for this important presentation and informative discussion regarding both.

Wednesday, February 17 from 6:30-8:30pm

<https://bit.ly/3sVf70a>

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

Mindfulness, Adults

This 6 week course will help you discover a healthier, more relaxed and focused you.

Upcoming Session: March 25, April 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 7-8PM

CBT for Insomnia, Adults

This psycho-educational group will introduce Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), an evidence-based approach that can help you identify and replace thoughts and behaviors that cause or worsen sleep problems with habits that promote sound sleep.

Upcoming Sessions: Feb 2, 9, 16, 23, March 2 & 9 6:30-7:30pm

For more information on any of these groups go to woolwichcounselling.org or call 519-869-8651

CADDAC Upcoming Events

Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada

Webinar: Tips for Understanding the ADHD Mind and Navigating an Adult ADHD Relationship

When You Don't Have ADHD— Are you in a relationship with someone with ADHD and having difficulty understanding how and why the same issues keep arising? ADHD can be a significant factor in a variety of relationship problems, however when you understand how ADHD plays a role in the relationship misinterpreted motives and hurt feelings can be mitigated.

Tuesday, February 9, 7:30pm | <https://bit.ly/2YcJ0ex>

Interactive ADHD Child Parenting Course— This five-part interactive course has been designed for parents starting the ADHD journey with their child and for those striving to understand their child's impairments and needs.

Begins Wednesday, February 17, 6:30pm | <https://bit.ly/3ogf7EF>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Brightside ABA Services

Virtual Parent Coaching Workshops

As part of the Ontario Autism Program's Foundational Supports, Brightside ABA is offering the following virtual Parent Coaching Workshops:

Introduction to ABA and Assessment | February 2

Antecedent Strategies | February 9

Motivation and Reinforcement | February 16

Prompting Procedures | February 23

Managing Challenging Behaviour | March 2

All sessions are presented by a highly qualified ABA Consultant and are offered from 10:00-11:00am on the date specified.

To register contact Rehana at 519-741-1121 x 2201 OR r.khanam@dscwr.com.

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>.

Safety for Independent Living

A personal safety course where people learn life skills that empower them to make safe choices and caring and respectful decisions in their everyday lives both online and offline.

March 2-5, 6:00-7:00pm and March 9-12, 6:00-7:00pm

The program takes place on Zoom.

For more information or to register contact Karenda Carpenter at

226-314-1126 or kcarpenter@clqw.ca.

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.

Conscious Listening and Speaking— March 24 & 31

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

Summer Camp Planning Virtual Workshop

Want to learn about what camps would be the right fit for your child? Are there supports and funding that you can access to help make your child's experience a success? Do you have questions about attending camp during COVID?

In this workshop you will learn about:

- City of Kitchener and Waterloo summer camps OR City of Cambridge summer camps (dependent on the location you register for)
 - How to find inclusive and specialized camps in your community
 - How to access one-to-one supports such as volunteers or trained workers
 - Funding for camp fees and specialized supports
 - How to share information about your child to promote their success

Kitchener/Waterloo—February 2, 7-8:30pm. Register at <https://bit.ly/39ftq8g>.

Cambridge—February 3, 7-8:30pm. Register at <https://bit.ly/3qTXsEG>.

Virtual Speaker's Panel on Your Tax Questions Answered Hosted By SDRC

Learn more about completing taxes when you have dependents of any age with a disability and/or mental health diagnoses.

A speaker from Canada Revenue Agency will be presenting in this online session.

February 2, 6:30-8:00pm OR February 4, 11:30-1pm

Email r.khanam@sunbeamcommunity.ca or call 519-741-1121 x 2201 to register or if you have any questions.

Carizon Family and Community Services

Carizon is local non-profit that helps families thrive in their communities by strengthening their mental health and wellbeing.

Visit <https://www.carizonforthecommunity.ca/> for more information about Carizon.

RESOURCES

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>.

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/>

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 for more information.

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.cpbfbfpc.org/covid19>

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.

Feb 10, 24, March 10, 24, April 7, 21 from 4-5pm

Please call 519-669-8651 or email info@woolwichcounselling.org for more information or to register.

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 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. You can find also find them on Facebook @ BPSG: Black Parents of Children and Adults with a Disability Support Group.

Chronic Pain Monthly Support Group

This groups 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 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.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Learning Disabilities of 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 WRFN. 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>.

Research Opportunity: User-focused Study of Robot Interaction Methods

The University of Waterloo is conducting an online study regarding a robot that facilitates play between children regardless of special physical needs. This study is for children 6-12.

For more information, [click here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Research Opportunity: Do you Provide Care?

Looking for primary informal caregivers location in Ontario who are responsible for individuals with a developmental disability ages 4-25.

This study examines the lived experiences of those caring for someone with a developmental disability in Ontario. Disability and Caregiver policy will also be explored.

Learn more at <https://wrfn.info/blog/Research-Project.htm>

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.

Research Opportunity: Adapting Anxiety Intervention for Youth with Autism for Rapid Response to COVID19:

A Research Project to Provide and Evaluate Virtual Mental Health Care

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital is currently studying whether a group therapy program called Facing Your Fears (FYF), will help to reduce anxiety in children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Learn more <https://bit.ly/3oe0v8V>.