



Family Pulse

Where exceptional families thrive.

Issue 122

June 2020

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What's in this issue?

What's Happening In This Issue

While we still deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and social/physical distancing is still recommended, the summer weather will bring the opportunity to be outside and enjoy some outdoor activities. We here at Waterloo Regional Family Network are still working hard from our homes and are always happy to hear from you.

In this month's issue of Family Pulse our exceptional contributor Steph Prysnyuk gives us some tips on how to take some good photos in Steph's Corner. You'll also find information on interesting and useful resources to help your family.



Waterloo Region Family Network - WRFN



@FamilyNetworkWR

Support WRFN Today

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/waterloo-region-family-network/>

Waterloo Region Family Network

www.wrfn.info

info@wrfn.info

Steph's Corner—All About Me

The summer is a perfect time to take photos. With Covid-19, it is also a fun and safe activity you can do on your own or with a family member. You will have some great photos to share and to keep as memories. I really like to take photos and I make notecards out of my most favourite photos that I take.

1. Always take your camera or phone when you go for a drive or a walk. You never know what you may see.
2. If you can, get out of the car to take the photo.
3. Try to get as close as you can to what you are taking a picture of. Move quietly and slowly if it is a creature like a butterfly.
4. Make sure you hold your phone or camera very steady.
5. Take lots of photos so you can choose your best ones.
6. Make sure you back up your photos.
7. Have fun taking some cool photos this summer and going around to



What is social distancing?

Social distancing means avoiding close contact with others to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and can include:



Avoiding non-essential trips in the community



Limiting, postponing or cancelling gatherings



Working from home, where possible



Conducting meetings virtually



Keeping kids away from group settings



Avoiding visits to long-term care homes and other care settings

Keep a distance of 2 metres from others when going for walks or shopping for groceries.

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Regional District School Board Update

Submitted by Carmen Sutherland

SEAC Notes May 13, 2020

Much of the meeting was spent discussing how school has looked the last few weeks and what it will look like in the future. There will be a report card distributed, based upon work from September until March Break. Currently, there is no work that is marked for elementary students, high school students have the chance to improve their marks. The Board and teachers, CERTS and EAs have been very focused on maintaining and building relationships with students (in the EAs case sometimes with students they do not usually serve), as well as focusing on whether students have the technology they need to learn, and making everything as equitable and accessible as possible. Teachers are learning to use technology in their teaching even if they have never done so before, including YouTube videos of themselves and educational content, and in some cases using Google Classroom to teach in real time. Alexia is also being used in the home. The Board will be getting iPads from Apple to distribute to families who need them. For items that are needed that are not technological like paper and markers, there is a partnership with Staples. Some families choose not to use technology, so they may have bus drivers drop off schoolwork to families.

Currently, there is discussion about summer school, which will be done through distance learning, there will also be Credit Recovery done in Google Classroom. There is also discussion of what re-entry will look like, particularly in terms of students wearing masks who have sensory issues and students with mental health issues. There was also general discussion of health precautions.

It was also noted that all the disputes with the Unions have been settled.

There was also discussion of the letter about the letter SEAC will send to MACSE volunteering to fill some of the vacancies of special interest groups.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee Update

Waterloo Catholic District School Board

Special Education Advisory Committee Update

Submitted by Sue Simpson and Karen Kovats

The WCDSB SEAC met virtually on May 20. Renee King, Budget Manager, provided a presentation on the budget process and all details to date for the upcoming budget including enrolment trends, staffing highlights and student services expenditures. As not all necessary information has yet been received by the board, a full picture of the budget cannot yet be presented. More details are expected in June.

Associations provided updates on services, activities and supports being provided during the pandemic. A variety of opportunities are being offered virtually.

Trustees Jeanne Gravelle and Tracey Weiler provided updates that can be found here.

<https://www.wcdsb.ca/wcdsb-board-meeting-bulletin-april-2020/>

For news, updates and tips on learning at home, please visit www.wrdsb.ca and www.wcdsb.ca

What's Happening at WRFN...

As is the case with all non-essential businesses and organizations, due to the COVID-19 virus, all in-person programs and gatherings are cancelled until the health authorities deem it safe to begin again.

We will be listing online and virtual resources that we think will be helpful as you navigate social distancing. Also keep an eye on our Facebook Page and our Twitter account (@FamilyNetworkWR) for more!

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 currently available through phone, email or virtual connection 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 found on our website at wrfn.info

WRFN's Family Resource Coach

During this current COVID-19 health crisis and ensuing quarantine, personal support has become paramount for many families. Erin Sutherland, 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 Erin at 519-886-9150 ext. 4 or email her at Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info

We provide support in all life stages - NO diagnosis is needed.

School Issues 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. This group is currently meeting virtually. If you're interested in participating, please contact Sue Simpson at 519-886-9150 ext 1 or sue.simpson@wrfn.info

Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! We have been meeting on Zoom since late March, 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, and I will make sure to put you on the email list so that you receive a Zoom invite, and will also be aware if we ever change or add a meeting date.

Information, Resources, & Opportunities

Kerry's Place Autism Services has a list of resources for families with exceptional children to help deal with the current COVID-19 crisis. They can be found here: <https://www.kerrysplace.org/covid-19-resources/>

Recreational Respite has been working hard as a team to find a way that continues to promote inclusion, encourage community participation and nurture social connectivity. We understand how imperative it is to stay connected. So, we are bringing you a very unique interactive opportunity, that proves innovative and offers experiential outcomes in 1:1, mini or small group virtual settings. That's right, these programs are now available online! They can be found on their website here: <https://recrespite.com/virtual-services/>

Carizon is local non-profit that helps families thrive in their communities by strengthening their mental health and wellbeing. Like most places during the pandemic, Carizon is offering service virtually. Find out more about them and what they have to offer on their new Carizon for the Community website: <https://www.carizonforthecommunity.ca/>

Foundations in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (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 foundational level training program provides the perspective of individuals who have FASD, is evidence-based, employs a culturally sensitive approach, and is presented in a way that is responsive to the learners needs. This online basic training course will take on average two hours to complete. Level 1 training will provide knowledge and understanding of:

- an overview of FASD assessment and diagnosis in Canada
- an introduction to FASD interventions and promising approaches
- the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure on the fetus
- the impact of alcohol on brain development
- issues related to stigma and FASD
- strategies for prevention and support
- barriers to prevention and support
- the signs and symptoms of FASD across the lifespan

A certificate will be provided to each participant upon completion: estore.canfasd.ca/foundations-in-fasd

KidsAbility will be offering a free virtual workshop covering the basic principles of applied behaviour analysis (ABA) to help you understand how behaviour is affected by the environment. This includes learning behaviour, the behaviour of completing daily activities, the behaviour of interacting with others, and challenging behaviour!

We look forward to sharing this information with you to increase your and your child's success!

DATE AND TIME: Wed, June 10, 2020 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/intro-to-aba-applied-behaviour-analysis-virtual-workshop-tickets-107109714038>

KidsAbility is also offering a list of resources for parents for therapy, education, community, as well as fun activities. They can be found on [their website here](#).

Kidsability is offering a free virtual workshop on Understanding Challenging Behaviour that will cover information that will help you to understand and manage your child's challenging behaviours using the principles of applied behaviour analysis (ABA).

Registration and more information can be found here:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/understanding-challenging-behaviours-free-virtual-workshop-tickets-107265995480>

Information & Resources

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? Would you like to find out about resources that are available to help you with your transition planning?

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. During Covid-19 isolation, all appointments will be occurring through Zoom. Once KidsAbility Centres have opened up again there will be the option to meet with the Transitions Lead either face to face or through Zoom.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact your KidsAbility therapist or call Intake at 1-888-372-2259, Ext 1214

Sunbeam Centre's Brightside ABA Services specialize in supporting clients that are 9 years of age and up to support skill development in key areas such as social skills, communication skills, emotional regulation skills, building independence in activities of daily living, and to reduce challenging behaviours. Their fee for service website is now live and can be found here: <https://brightsideabaservices.com/>



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. It also offers a link to resources designed for parents through the Parenting Now website.

During the COVID-19 crisis, many community organizations and initiatives are providing various services and supports for children, youth, adults, and families. Follow the COVID-19 response link on the Family Compass website to find information and resources that are available during this time.

Go to their website for more information: <https://www.familycompasswr.ca/en/index.aspx>

In celebration of National Accessibility Week (May 31 - June 6), the **City of Kitchener** will be hosting a "Life Made Accessible" virtual event with experts on disability and those who help shape the face of inclusion speaking June 1 -

June 5. Details can be found here: https://www.kitchener.ca/en/city-services/accessibility-and-inclusion.aspx?fbclid=IwAR37avaz-V5INm_04xPJNg-k8PE70B05YOFziV0ccjZPfJ04SLHC9kJps8c#

Wilfrid Laurier University's School of Social Work has cancelled all in-person workshops and courses for the spring and summer due to COVID-19. They have added additional sections to courses currently online in cognitive behavioural therapy and addictions. More information can be found on their website: [WLU - School of Social Work](#).

Information & Resources

The University of Waterloo will be hosting free, weekly community talks on COVID-19 topics. Each Wednesday, for the next six weeks, Waterloo researchers will share information and answer your questions. Community talks will be held online using a video link that will be provided before the talk. More information and registration can be found here:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/community/>

Mighty Hawks Laurier is a group of passionate student leaders from Wilfrid Laurier University that believes a developmental disability does not define the scope of one's abilities. This group holds weekly workshops to support each individual in development of work-relevant and financial literacy skills with one-to-one support from Mighty Hawk Facilitators. The Mighty Hawks support social enterprise businesses and offer experience to its members. See here for more information: <https://enactuslaurier.ca/project/mighty-hawks/>

KW Counseling Services will be holding two online panel discussions as they continue to celebrate their 70th Anniversary as KW's community mental health service agency.

June 4: Belonging & Safety in Waterloo Region

June 18: Ways to Mental Wellbeing

Registration is free and more information can be found on their website: [https://](https://www.kwcounseling.com/70th-anniversary-online-panel-series/)

www.kwcounseling.com/70th-anniversary-online-panel-series/

Developmental Service Ontario (DSO) will be holding a virtual workshop to cover the highlights of their Introduction to My Housing Plan Workshop Series hosted by their DSO Navigators.

Date: June 9

Time: 7:00pm-8:00pm

To register, please contact any one of the Housing Navigators:

Martha Beach: mbeach@dsoser.com

Melissa Boivin: melissab@lccctbay.org

Alex Shannan: alexandra.shannan@surreyplace.ca

For more information on their organization go to dsontario.ca

The Canadian Government recommends that essential support person(s) be included in 'essential visitor' policies. Ontario has not updated their recommendation around essential visitors since this updated guidance document was sent to all provinces and territories.

People and their families in Ontario still have to advocate at the local level on an individual basis to ensure that they have the supports necessary to access care. Granting this access to supports is at the discretion of the person in charge. It shouldn't have to be this way.

B.C. just updated their visitor policy to include essential support people. Ontario must do the same NOW!

Family Alliance Ontario needs your help get this policy changed in Ontario--it's easy just click the link below, read the open letter, sign on, then forward this email to all your family, friends, colleagues and networks.

Please Sign on Today!

[Equitable Access to Care Now! | Family Alliance Ontario](#)

Information & Resources

Are you curious about what it is like to journey into adulthood after high school? Then come join the **Transitions Network Committee of Waterloo Region** on June 15 from 7-8:30 PM for "My Next Steps" a Zoom conversation with a group of panelists that have a wide range of experiences with this transition. There will be discussions about relationships with parents, forming community, and educational experiences. Join us for a fun and informative evening supported by the Transitions Network Committee of Waterloo Region. Register on Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/my-next-steps-virtual-young-adult-panel-tickets-105241287524>
