

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 146
June 2022

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What's In This Issue?

We want to preface our June issue of Family Pulse by letting you know we have some very sad news to share. We know this kind of news may bring up strong emotions for many of our readers, so we encourage you to read this issue at your own pace and perhaps come back to it at a later time.

We also share as many upcoming events, webinars, programs, support groups and opportunities on our website and social media profiles as we can. If you're having any difficulties reading this issue, please visit our website for our events calendar and for links to our social accounts.

Wishing you all the very best through the month of June, and for many the last month of school!



Support WRFN

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

In Loving Memory

Honouring the life and legacy of our co-worker and friend, Stephanie Prysnuik

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Steph Prysnuik, our co-worker and deeply-admired friend, has passed away. Steph was always a bright light and source of positivity for the team at WRFN, and we will forever miss her presence in the office.

Steph was part of WRFN from the very beginning. She got her start with us through the Work and Transition Support (WATS) program, a high school work-experience program where senior students were connected to local organizations to gain experience. Steph was WRFN's first-ever office volunteer. She volunteered one half day every week, helping Sue stay organized. After the end of her program, she stayed on with WRFN and her time increased to a full day once a week. In 2018, Steph became a part-time employee, while continuing to volunteer additional hours with us.

Steph was responsible for the team's filing, mail outs, and our whiteboard calendar. She also helped organize documents before meetings. Sometimes, she would join meetings too. Steph never shied away from being honest about how she felt about these meetings and would often express what everyone else had been thinking. During the pandemic Steph began contributing to our monthly newsletter, Family Pulse, with her writing for Steph's Corner. She had recently written some of our favourites, including an article on ideas to spread kindness during World Kindness Day.

Although Steph was a valued employee, her impact went so much further than her daily responsibilities at WRFN. She had the incredible gift of being able to uplift the team during our most difficult days. We looked forward to the days Steph would come into the office, patiently waiting for one of her infamous one liners or quick jokes. When she'd crack a smile, it was infectious. She liked to challenge us in a way that was lighthearted but direct. Steph would call you out on an outfit that was a tad too casual for the office and would always ask if you were truly ready for your meetings. She was honest, but always respectful.

When Steph was graduating from high school, WRFN was invited to a celebration at her school. It was a gift to see Steph interacting with her peers and see the respect they had for her too. It was clear that the legacy and impact Steph had with the team at WRFN extended far beyond into her other areas of life.

There are many things we could continue to say about Steph and her smile, sense of humour, and kindness, but she was also one of those people who had that 'thing' that is unique and hard to describe. Steph was Steph. She was more than a co-worker. She was a friend. Her approach to life and positive attitude will always have a profound impact on everything we do. We will miss Steph and her adventurous spirit. She will always live on in our hearts and will forever be part of the WRFN team.



SEAC Updates

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

This month's SEAC meeting began with a presentation from the Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County.

We learned that the Board is figuring out staffing for teachers, paraprofessionals, and essential staff for next year. There will be 40 half time Resource Teachers focusing on early literacy. In terms of the Right to Read inquiry, there will be a focus on evidenced-based structured reading, and learning about the science of reading and implementing strategies from the Ministry and the Ontario Human Rights commission. For the earlier grades, phonemic awareness will be worked in a certain block of time during most school days. The Board is working on making sure reading skills are covered in all grades, and making sure there are no gaps. All of the staff are coming together and learning about all possible options and strategies so that there are no gaps in the reading instruction.

There was also discussion of how relationships with parents are impacting student outcomes. It was noted that all types of relationships impact student outcomes.

The next SEAC meeting will take place June 8, 2022.

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee Update *Submitted by Sue Simpson & Karen Applebee*

The WCDSB SEAC met virtually on May 18.

Renee King, Manager of Budgets and Financial Reporting, presented the Special Education Budget estimates for the coming school year. SEAC approved to move the budget forward.

Association updates were shared.

Trustees provided an update which can be found [here](#). WCDSB Board Meeting Bulletin — April 2022 – Waterloo Catholic District School Board

The next SEAC meeting will be held in person on June 1 at the Catholic Education Centre.

What's Happening at WRFN

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



A NEW CHAPTER

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

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

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



June 7, 2022

Guest speaker: Jessie-Lynn MacDonald
 Self-Care: Beyond the Bubblebath

July 5, 2022

 In July, we are looking forward to our first in-person ANC gathering in several years! We are planning a group walk on one of the trails at Huron Natural Area in Kitchener

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

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

A New Chapter: June Meeting

Self-Care: Beyond the Bubble Bath

The A New Chapter group will host an evening with well-being coach Jessie-Lynn MacDonald on June 7 at 7:30pm. The focus will be on you, the caregiver/parent. In a kind and thoughtful approach, you will be provided with ideas to help lift you up on those difficult days. The meaningful self-care inspiration provided by Jessie-Lynn will last far longer than a bubble bath.

Jessie-Lynn is a very experienced coach, having counselled individuals (children, adolescents and adults), families, leaders, and organizations throughout Canada as well as internationally. To find out more about her approach you may google her at: jessielynnmacdonald.com.

Please RSVP to Mary Pike at maryjpike@hotmail.com to attend this zoom event. Also a reminder that we have added a new feature to our monthly meetings. This is a half hour (9-9:30pm) session called **Ask Us Anything** where you can stay on the Zoom call to ask questions pertaining to the topic of the evening or any other questions you may have.

In July, we are looking forward to our first in-person ANC gathering in several years: Tuesday, July 5 we are planning a group walk on one of the trails at Huron Natural Area in Kitchener. More details to come. Please RSVP to Mary Pike at maryjpike@hotmail.com.

What's Happening at WRFN

Ask A Self-Advocate

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

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

Parent Mentor Program

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

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

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

School-Issue Parent Support Group

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

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

WRFN's Family Resource Coach Team

During this current COVID-19 health crisis, personal support has become paramount for many families. Erin Sutherland and Sue Furey, our Family Resource Coaches, are available by phone, email, or virtual call to lend a helping hand and personal guidance to families and to connect you to updated information, resources, and virtual opportunities.

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

Call Sue at 226-898-9301 or email Sue.Furey@wrfn.info.

Coffee Club

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

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

Inclusive Summer Camps

Extend-A-Family Summer Camp

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region Summer Program offers themed weeks for individuals with disabilities ages 13+. Activities accommodate a wide range of abilities, ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to contribute. The Summer Vacation (15+) takes place at a scenic, rural camp and emphasizes time spent in nature enjoying the outdoors together. To register, please visit www.eafwr.on.ca and follow the link under "Summer Program".

Adults in Motion Camps

Adults in Motion participants enjoy friendships, music, movement, learning new skills, special events, excursions and volunteering in the community. Join Adults in Motion for some summer days or choose full weeks that work for your schedule. Approx. age 16+. Virtual and in-person options available.

<https://adultsinmotion.org/programs/>

Camp Awakening

Camp Awakening focuses on outdoor recreation for children and youth with physical disabilities (ages 8-18). Kids are given the chance to increase independence, make lasting friendships, develop confidence and accomplish things they never thought possible. There is still space in the following areas:

- Boys Session 2 (ages 14-16): Friday, July 15 – Thursday, July 28
- Girls Session 2 (ages 14-16): Sunday, July 17 – Thursday, July 28
- Girls Session 3 (ages 13-15): Monday, August 1 – Saturday, August 13

For more information, [visit https://campawakening.com/](https://campawakening.com/)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Summer Camp Directory

If you missed out on the Virtual Camp Fairs that we held in partnership with KidsAbility, not to worry! KidsAbility has been collecting everything you need on its website.

For recordings of the previous sessions, please see the following links:

- Watch the [2022 Overnight Camp Fair](#) video
- Watch the [2022 Day Camps Fair for Children](#) video
- Watch the [2022 Camps for Teens & Adults Fair](#) video

KidsAbility also hosted Summer Camp Planning workshops to help families plan a successful summer camp experience for children with exceptionalities.

- Watch the [2022 Cambridge Summer Camp Planning Workshop](#) video
- Watch the [2022 Kitchener Waterloo Summer Camp Planning Workshop](#) video
- Watch the [2022 Guelph-Wellington Summer Camp Planning Workshop](#) video

To search through the Camp Directory for Summer 2022, please see the links below:

- [Overnight Summer Camps Across the Province – Children to Adults](#)
- [Day Camps for Children: Inclusive Day Camps \(age 4-12\)](#)
- [Day Camps, Programs, and Getaways for Teens and Adults](#)

Beechwood Brainery

Beechwood Brainery is offering inclusive camps at both its Cambridge & Waterloo locations this summer! There are part-time & full-time options available, spaces are limited. Age groups include Critters (ages 4-6), Explorers (ages 7-10), and Leaders (ages 11-14). Camp is \$350 per week per child. Please email info@bbrainery.ca for registration information & forms.

www.bbrainery.ca

Wilmot Family Resource Centre

Summer Camp 2022 is almost here! Join Wilmot Family Resource Centre's day camp for arts and crafts, science, group games, outdoor exploration. There's something for everyone with its energetic, outgoing and inclusive team! Camps run Monday to Friday from 9-4, but extended hour options are available. Registration opens February 14.

www.wilmotfamilyresourcecentre.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Programs & Recreation

Better Days, Better Nights

Does your child aged 4-12 years with a neurodevelopmental disorder have difficulties falling asleep and staying asleep? Better Nights, Better Days for Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders is a free online program based on behavioural principles that supports parents of children aged 4-12 years old with a neurodevelopmental disorder who experience difficulties falling and staying asleep. This online program encourages positive behaviours that will help children achieve a better quality and quantity of sleep throughout the night. To see if the program is a good fit for you and your child visit the website:

www.ndd.betternightsbetterdays.ca

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

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

Sensory Workout

Sensory workout is a program that combines what we know about exercise and sensory processing to make physical activity more accessible and enjoyable for all!

The Sensory Workout trainings and demo videos are created by Aptus' Clinical Services team, with generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

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

Prolific Fitness & Wellness

Prolific Fitness & Wellness is a disability fitness program, available online or in-person. Spots are now available for Summer 2022. If you're interested, please email prolificfw@gmail.com or call 647-964-7017. For more information, please visit

www.prolificfitnessandwellness.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Fun Fearless Females

Fun Fearless females is a social group to empower women of all abilities to live happy and healthy lives. Check out their June & July events:

- DIY Lanterns
 - June 3, 6:30-8:30 pm at West End Community Centre (21 Imperial Rd. S, Guelph)
- Starbucks by the River
 - June 24, 6:30-8:30 pm at Royal City Pare beside Starbucks (40 Wellington St W, Guelph)
- Ice Cream Social
 - July 8, 6:30-8:30 pm in Lori's backyard
- DIY Flower Art
 - July 15, 6:30-8:30 pm at West End Community Centre
- Tie Dye
 - July 22, 6:30-8:30 pm in Lori's backyard

There are also a handful of special events that will be happening throughout the summer like strawberry picking, trail hiking, a visit to a salt cave, picnics and beach days. Visit www.funfearlessfemales.ca/events for more info.

Email lori@funfearlessfemales.ca to register. Spots are limited.

City of Kitchener Learn to Play Golf Program

The City of Kitchener will be starting its Learn to Play Golf program for those with disabilities ages 12 and up. No experience required and golf clubs are provided. Time will be spent on the putting and driving range and the pitch n' putt course to work on basic skills. There will be opportunity to play a few holes on the regulation size course. Registration for the program opened May 20. Classes will take place Thursday June 23 to August 11 (8 weeks) from 6 – 7 pm at Doon Valley Golf Course. The program will be \$95 and participants will need to have an [inclusion membership](#) to sign up. To learn more or to register got to [Kitchener ActiveNet](#) or call 519-741-2200 ext 7228.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Post-Pandemic Support & Resiliency Program for Children & Youth

St. James Anglican Church is running a free community program that will support vulnerable children and youth (age 5-17) in processing and healing from challenges faced during the last two years. The program will utilize a variety of therapeutic approaches; visual art, movement, yoga, social support, talking, listening and learning. Register at <https://stjamesang.ca/events/>.

Brightside ABA Services

Transition to Highschool: July 12, 2022 - Aug 25, 2022 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3 pm. For youth 13-15 years of age with a diagnosis of autism or intellectual disability. Topics include time management, working in groups, organizational skills, bullying, hygiene, and money handling. Please apply by June 21, 2022. To register contact Lauren Harris at 519-894-6156 ext. 2904 or brightside@sunbeamcommunity.ca.

Artshine Virtual Accessible Art For Kids, Teens & Adults

Social distancing doesn't need to rob you of the joy that comes from expanding your art skills! Artshine has live video lessons via Zoom for all ages. Art supplies will be mailed to you in advance of classes!

Maximum 20 participants for personalized attention.

[Click here for more information!](#)

Recreational Respite Virtual Services

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

<https://bit.ly/30TF1YF>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Bridges to Belonging

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

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

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

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

LINKS: What if it only took two days to begin enriching your life? On Monday July 11 & Tuesday July 12 from 11 am to 3 pm, you and a loved one will discover how your unique, gifts, strengths, interests, passions, social connections, and community resources can be connected for you to have a great life and enjoy BELONGING. Register here by Tuesday July 5: <https://forms.gle/wzT7BWckvLG7au>

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>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Torchlight Service: Connect Virtual Adult Programming

Torchlight's Connect Program offers a variety of fun interactive activities for a small membership fee. The Virtual Program team assists and supports participants in resolving technical issues, basic education on how to access online programs, program schedules and reminders via email.

Learn more about the Connect Membership at <https://bit.ly/3x0Sd9A>.

CNIB's Virtual Program Offerings

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

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

ConnectABILITY's Friendly Connections

Friendly Connections is focused on helping its community and individuals of all ages with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, overcome isolation.

It aims to help improve the well-being of individuals through socializing and providing entertaining resources. Friendly Connections wants to connect with individuals across Canada through phone calls, video calls, emailing, messenger chats and good old fashion mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies!

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

Province-Wide Monthly Virtual Groups for Adults with FASD

The Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at ABLE2 is happy to announce the first two Province-wide virtual groups for adults living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). They include the FASD Educational Group and the FASD Social Group.

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

For more info contact the Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at 613-761-9252 Ext. 234 or fasd@able2.org.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

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

Learn more at: goodlifekids.com/MOVE/

Virtual Sensory Storytime

Join KPL for stories, games and songs during Sensory Storytime.

Children of all ages and abilities are welcome.

Registration is required: <https://bit.ly/3odj8NZ>

Kijengle

Kijengle Inclusive Music Education & Music Therapy is an innovative, creative, family-centred organization. They will continue to offer both in-person and virtual music and music therapy programs. Learn more at: kijengle.ca.

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

Abilities Centre

Join the Abilities Centre for Virtually Together: You. Me. We. These sessions are designed for children of all ages to be physically active, socially interact with their peers, and have fun in a inclusive and supportive online environment. Virtually Together sessions run from 6-7pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Participants are welcome to join any and all sessions, or drop in as they are able! Registration is free and no diagnosis is required- siblings and friends are welcome to join!

<https://bit.ly/3Mes536>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops & Training

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Fundamentals for Caregivers

This is a 3-part Training for caregivers supporting individuals with FASD. Learn how FASD is a brain and whole-body disorder, how it impacts behaviour with a focus on executive and adaptive functioning and identify what is needed to support those living with FASD. There will also be a focus on local resources and supports available to families. Sessions take place on June 2, 9, and 16 at 6:30 pm to 8 pm on Zoom. If you're interested, register with Michelle Hughes, FASD Coordinator at m.hughes@sunbeamcommunity.ca.

Partners for Planning (P4P)

Are you interested in learning about the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), a made-in-Canada, long-term savings vehicle designed specifically for individuals with disabilities? Then register for one of P4P's upcoming Intro to the RDSP webcasts.

- **Monday, June 13 at 3pm**

For more information about the RDSP be sure to check out the RDSP resources on the Planning Network.

P4P Planning Network's final webcast in its latest series is also coming up:

- *Early Financial Planning for Parents of a Young Child with a Disability*
 - June 7 at 7 pm
 - This is the second webcast available in the Early Planning Toolkit. Learn about the financial resources and provincial and federal tax credits that you can access to help support your child throughout their life
 - You can access all these webcasts at <https://www.planningnetwork.ca/#freeonlinewebcasts>

Kids Have Stress Too!

Our Kids Have Stress Too! and Stress Lessons programs are designed to support these professionals in working with children and youth to identify and manage stress while moving to resilience. They have all been evaluated with a demonstrated impact on a child and youth's ability to recognize stress in themselves.

- June 10th: KHST! Grades 1-6
 - **With 1-3 Guidebook**
 - **With 4-6 Guidebook**
- June 30th: Stress Lessons Grades 7-12
 - **With 7-9 Guidebook**
 - **With 9-12 Guidebook**

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Lutherwood

Lutherwood's webinar for employment, Modern Approach to interviews will take place on June 21 at 1-2 pm. Through a 1-hour virtual event, Lutherwood will provide you many great tips to prepare for interviews!

[Webinar Registration: Modern Approach to Interviews](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

The Value of an Experiential Learning Model for Family Medicine Residents

Disability and Health Journal by Selick, et al.

Members of the H-CARDD program looked at why it is important to give family medicine residents hands-on training instead of just lecture-type teaching when it comes to developmental disabilities by comparing residents' knowledge, comfort, and skills based on the type of learning received. They conclude that it is time to not only invest in more teaching about this population but also to consider how the teaching is done.

<https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S1936657422000152>

Mental Health and Well-being of Adults with IDD during COVID: A Narrative Review

Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities by Lunsky, et al.

This review article summarizes what is known internationally about the mental health of adults with intellectual disabilities during COVID-19, from multiple perspectives. It also explores various efforts to prevent or treat mental health difficulties with this group and makes some suggestions about what needs to be considered during pandemic recovery.

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

System Navigator Anti-Black Racism for WRDSB

Phyllis Peprah is the System Navigator for the Waterloo District School Board. In this role Phyllis is dedicated to building trust between African, Caribbean and Black Students and Families and WRDSB. Phyllis is seeking to engage African, Caribbean and Black families living in Cambridge who may not be well connected to resources and supports in the community. phyllis_peprah@wrdsb.ca 519 570 0003 ext. 4270.

Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities — How to Stay Safe, Well and Connected

There is lots of talk right now about COVID-19 or the Coronavirus. We may come across lots of information out there, but it is not always easy to understand and it can be confusing. This page has resources from around the world and information to support people with developmental disabilities and their families during this time.

<https://bit.ly/3hWruX8>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Family Alliance Ontario

Despite the unknowns, we can take steps. It's time to help your loved one live their best life, now, and in the future. No need to travel this road alone —especially as Covid carries on. We can share ideas, advice and support with like-minded families. What are some Covid-friendly ways that your family can connect with other families? Check out the fifth and final action guide in our Managing the New Normal series to learn more.

Managing The New Normal Action Guide Here: [Connecting to Family Networks and Supportive Relationships](#)

DON'T FORGET TO READ:

[Action Guide One: Moving Beyond the Pandemic](#)

[Action Guide Two: Staying Healthy and Motivated](#)

[Action Guide Three: Reconnecting with Friends and Family](#)

[Action Guide Four: Opportunities to Get Involved](#)

Resources from Inclusion Canada

Pathways to Home Ownership — The Pathways to Homeownership outlines an inclusive model of homeownership and provides solutions to the problems faced by people with intellectual disabilities when buying their own house as well as resources to navigate the process.

[Learn more here: https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2.](https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2)

Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

CCRW Employment Services help job seekers with disabilities get connected with local businesses. They provide industry-specific training, workplace accommodation and adjustment planning, employer matching, and access to a hidden job market.

For more information or to register, call: Jennie Di Girolamo – Employment Facilitator (519) 571 6788 ext. 7661 | jdigirolamo@ccrw.org

<https://www.ccrw.org/>

Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)

You've applied to DSO - now what? While you're waiting for Ministry-funded services, here are some things you can do.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tveyIWXA_Y

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The Family Support Network for Employment

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

You Don't Have to Do this Alone - Parents for Children's Mental Health

If you are a parent/caregiver worried about your child, or a young person looking for help yourself – please reach out. Our network of child and youth mental health centres has 4,000 professionals ready to help children, youth and families with free counselling and treatment. We provide care in person, on the phone and virtually. No problem is too big or small.

Find your closest child and youth mental health centre here:

<https://www.family.cmho.org/>

March of Dimes Hi, Tech!

If you have a disability and are 18 years or older, you are eligible to be matched with a tech support coach. Your coach will answer your technology questions and help get you set up.

To learn more visit shorturl.at/yEGK3.

Take5

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

Visit the [Take5 website](#).

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

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>.

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>.

Fostering Information from Family & Children Services

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Ontario Caregiver Association

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

CNIB Scholarships & Awards

Every year, CNIB's scholarship program awards multiple scholarships, bursaries and other awards to people who are blind or partially sighted in recognition of their educational aspirations and achievements.

[Click here](#) to learn more about these opportunities and to apply.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Support Groups

Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society (WWDSS)

The Mothers' Connection group is a great opportunity for moms who have a child with Down syndrome (age 6 and under) to share celebrations, struggles, goals, practical information, and resources with one another. The program runs monthly, every second Wednesday at 1:30pm (currently online). WWDSS also offers a Mom's Night Out and Dad's Night Out program for parents to connect and support one another. For more information please email info@wwdss.ca.

Transgender Partners and Friends Peer Support Group

The Partners, Family and Friends of Transgender Folks Peer Support Group is a support group for non-transgender folks in the orbit of transgender folks where they can discuss their challenges and build community and solutions. Participants are welcome to share or simply listen and learn from the experiences and perspectives of others. The group meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Please request access information by emailing trans@ourspectrum.com.

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

The Waterloo Wellington Perth Chapter of PFLAG invites you to attend our support group focusing on topics of interest to parents, family and friends of LGBTQ individuals.

PFLAG Canada is Canada's only national organization that helps all Canadians with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

More info at: <https://www.facebook.com/PFLAG.WWP/>

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.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington remains available online through a private Facebook group.

They look forward to returning to the Cambridge Family Early Years Centre 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>

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support, formally known as The Black Parent & Caregiver Support Group (BPSG) was created to provide a safe space for families of African descent to come together to meet and connect, share resources, expertise and needs, inspire and support one another through our unique and often challenging and isolating journey of raising Black children or supporting a sibling, of any age, with a disability. Sawubona is a Zulu greeting. It literally means "I see you." More than words of politeness, sawubona carries the importance of recognizing the worth and dignity of each person.

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

Contact: For more details or to register, please contact us at bpsgroup2020@gmail.com.

The A-Team of Waterloo Region

The A-Team of Waterloo Region is primarily run by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, with some assistance from Bridges to Belonging. Their goal is to create a safe and welcoming environment to meet fellow adults (age 18+) with Asperger's Syndrome (ASD – level 1), discuss topics of interest, share experiences, and embrace their neurological diversity.

Please go to <https://ateamwaterlooregion.wordpress.com/about/> for more information on how to register and attend the upcoming virtual meetings!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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 ways to connect with your child.

Participate in fun activities with your child(ren). Started: January 13, 2021 When: Thursdays, 7:30-8:30 pm or Saturdays 9:30-10:30 am. Where: Zoom

Contact Roberto at capc@carizon.ca to register or for more information.

Groups from Muslim Social Services

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.

Contact counsellor@muslimsocialserviceskw.org or call 519-772-4399 x 2707.

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.

Strong Moms, Safe Kids

Strong Moms, Safe Kids is a program from KW Counselling for mothers who may have experienced abuse in intimate relationships. Interpreters can be provided for those not comfortable communicating in English. The group provides time for families to learn about the impact of abuse together, and also provides smaller groups for mothers, youth and younger children. If you are interested in talking about whether the Strong Moms, Safe Kids program is right for your family, please call 519-884-0000 and ask for the Strong Moms, Safe Kids Coordinator.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

South Asian Wellness Group

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 3 pm to 4:30 pm. With a South Asian Peer Facilitator fluent in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, this group will focus on coping, recovery, and fostering hope from a South Asian lens. This group is intended for folks who identify as South Asian to connect and build community with one another. ALL Self Help & Peer Support groups are open to adults living in Waterloo Wellington communities who identify as living with mental health or/and substance use issues. To join this group or if you have questions about it, please send us an email: selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca. To view this information in Punjabi, [please click here](#).

CIA - Connecting, Interests and Activities

There's an all-new group in Waterloo Region for adults (18+) with Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) level 1. The purpose of the group is to create a safe and supportive space for people to have fun, meet and connect with others, and take part in activities. Join if you're looking for a positive place of belonging!

Meetings take place at the Downtown Community Centre (35 B Weber Street West), in the Multi-Purpose Room. This is a drop-in group, so folks are welcome to join anytime between 5 and 7 pm. Parking passes are available at the front desk. Just mention you are joining the group in the Multi-Purpose Room. In the case that the community centre doors are locked, please use the white button on the wall next to the left of the door labelled 'Main Office Buzzer' or call Kelly at the number below.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Groh at 519-731-3923. The next meeting is Thursday, June 9.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

McMaster University Research on Postpartum Depression Treatment

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

State of employment for individuals with a developmental disability in Ontario

Since 2018, the Family Support Network for Employment (FSNE) has been working to discover possibilities and advocate for needed transformations in the developmental services and employment system. FSNE is currently taking a survey on the state of employment for individuals with a disability in Ontario to fill the current gaps in knowledge on this topic. To participate, visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TS7ZJBJ>

Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (HCARDD)

Research Study: Health for Adults with Developmental Disabilities during COVID-19: A Virtual Course

This new research study is now recruiting participants. It is looking for adults 18+ with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD), their families, and service providers from across Canada to help evaluate the impact of a 6-week online program exploring the physical and mental health needs of adults with IDD and strategies to address them. [Read about the study here](#). Interested? Fill out the [Expression of Interest and Collaboration Form](#), email hcardd@camh.ca or call 437-328-6761.

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](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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 or 416-535-8501x30127

- *Survey on Accessible Information for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

If you are an adult 18+ with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD) or a caregiver of an adult with IDD, we want to hear from you. We want to understand how to make information from the Government more accessible and understandable.

Fill out the survey and you can enter a raffle for a prize. [Click here to find out more](#), email AIIDD@camh.ca or call 437-328-6761.

[Consent Form \(camhx.ca\)](#)

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>.

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

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

Interested individuals can email: PLANLab@uoguelph.ca or call 519-824-4120 ext. 53622.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Inclusion Canada

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

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

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

Accessibility Standards Canada

Accessibility Standards Canada has opened another public review of a third accessibility standard. In collaboration with CSA Group and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the draft updates for the draft standard ASC/CSA B652, Accessible Residential Homes has been finished.

This standard will assist:

- those who design, build, or modify homes for accessibility, and
- those who are seeking to provide affordable and adaptable homes for people with disabilities.

Public review of the draft standard is open until June 13, 2022. You can access the draft on the [CSA Group Public Review site](#). Select your preferred language from the menu in the top right.

A one-time registration is required. You are invited to comment directly online. For additional information or questions, please

French Message:

En collaboration avec le Groupe CSA et la Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement (SCHL), nous avons terminé l'ébauche de la norme ASC/CSA B652, Maisons résidentielles accessibles. Nous voulons maintenant connaître votre opinion.

Cette norme aidera :

- ceux qui conçoivent, construisent ou modifient des logements pour les rendre accessibles, et
- ceux qui cherchent à fournir des logements abordables et adaptables aux personnes en situation de handicap.

L'examen public du projet de norme aura lieu jusqu'au 13 juin 2022.

Vous pouvez accéder à l'ébauche sur [le site internet du Groupe CSA](#). Sélectionnez la langue de votre choix à partir du menu en haut à droite.

Une inscription unique est requise. Vous êtes invités à commenter directement en ligne. Nous sommes fiers de collaborer avec le Groupe CSA et SCHL pour contribuer à un Canada plus inclusif et sans obstacle.

Pour toute information ou question supplémentaire, veuillez contacter le Groupe CSA.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

Inclusion Canada – Budget 2022 Disability Inclusion Roundup

Disability inclusion made an appearance in Canada's budget released in early April. Inclusion Canada is pleased to see a financial commitment for a coordinated national employment strategy for persons with disabilities, for which our federation has been advocating for a long time. Some of the areas include employment, healthcare, and housing. The budget included a \$20 million commitment to continuing and expanding Inclusion Canada and the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance's Reading Willing and Able employment initiative.

Ontario teachers get new tool to promote disability inclusion

[Project Inclusion](#) is a learning resource for Ontario educators that's built around the voices and experiences of students with disabilities, their families, and school board staff. The website offers five learning modules on disability, accessibility and inclusion for staff working with students in kindergarten to Grade 12. It was created by Holland Bloorview and funded by the [Ontario Ministry of Education](#). Over 300 students, parents and Ontario school board educators helped develop the content by taking part in interviews and a survey, and reviewing material. Two teachers from Bloorview School Authority narrated the modules and teams from Holland Bloorview worked together to craft and produce them.

[Ontario teachers get new tool to promote disability inclusion | Holland Bloorview](#)

[Project Inclusion | Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital](#)

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region

Extend-A-Family is in urgent need of homes for its FamilyHome program which places people with exceptionalities in need of housing with a family sponsor. Providing a caring, stable home environment that promotes acceptance, a focus on dignity, and helping to create belonging are the foundations of FamilyHome.

<https://www.eafwr.on.ca/programs/familyhome/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CanFASD

In 2017, CanFASD developed a document intended to encourage consistency in how we talk and write about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Our Common Messages Guidelines have now been around for five years, and we regularly update them to reflect new research and information.

The revised 2022 Guidelines were just released. They include additions and updates related to:

- FASD and mental health statistics;
- Strengths-based language and healthy outcomes;
- Language around diagnosis;
- Using “may have FASD” instead of “suspected FASD”
- Reframing conversations around “won’t” vs “can’t” to focus more on how we can best provide supports; and
- Gender inclusive language

Read the [Full Document here](#)