

Where exceptional families thrive.

Issue 131
March 2021

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In the March issue of Family Pulse you will find information on an important meeting hosted by A New Chapter regarding a proposed federal Disability Benefit. The new benefit provides hope for a basic income for all adults with disabilities. The meeting will provide an overview of what we need to know and how we can help move this initiative forward. Learn more about this meeting on page 4, What's Happening at WRFN.

We also have exciting information to share about our 2021 Evening of Elegance fundraiser!



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

At SEAC this month there was a presentation about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Some of the key points were that FASD affects more people than Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy combined. People with FASD have many strengths including being friendly, affectionate and hard-working. Also, more than 90% of people with FASD have issues with mental health. Those with FASD can have positive outcomes if their needs are addressed early and they have access to supports throughout their lives. Some challenges that might present in children with FASD include impulsivity, not understanding behaviour and consequences, and issues with organization and planning. Another key piece of information is that only 10% of people have the facial features that are commonly associated with FASD. It is often difficult to diagnose which can lead to many issues for people with FASD including addiction and unemployment. One very important way to help children with FASD is to change the environment to suit their needs, as opposed to trying to “change the child” to suit the environment. It is important to identify the disorder as early as possible, so that an IEP can be created based on a child’s needs and the development stages that they are operating at. It is important to know that people will always need support.

FASD is caused by the child being exposed to alcohol in utero. So, every precaution must be taken to ensure this does not happen, including if there is even a possibility one might be pregnant.

In terms of the Ministry of Education update, the ACE students have been back to school for three weeks. Students can no longer move between distance and in-person learning. There was also some discussion regarding the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act-the goal is for the province to be accessible by 2025, 88% of our schools are currently accessible.

The next WRDSB SEAC meeting will be held virtually on March 10, 2021.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee Update

Submitted by Sue Simpson and Karen Kovats, WRFN SEAC Representatives

WCDSB SEAC met virtually on February 3, 2021.

Tee Battistella, Senior Manager of Special Education/Student Services, shared a presentation on PEERS (Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills). This program is designed for adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and also includes all students that could benefit. The curriculum is modified for students with more complex needs.

Laura Shoemaker, Superintendent of Learning: Msgr Doyle Family of Schools, Special Education, shared information on the High Needs Verification Process. This rubric was created for students who have an IEP and have significant needs in two or more of the seven distinct areas of functioning. The process places students on an independence scale with the intention of ensuring the highest level of independence.

Trustee Updates

Trustees Jeanne Gravelle and Tracey Weiler shared updates from the January Trustee meetings. They can be found here <https://www.wcdsb.ca/wcdsb-board-meeting-bulletin-january-2021/>

Association updates were also shared.

The next WCDSB SEAC meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

Save the Date

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

Evening of Elegance @ home

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

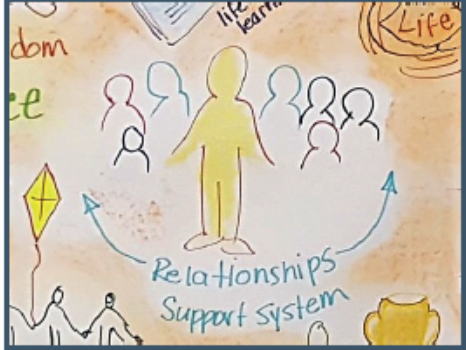
*Save
the
Date*

May 29, 2021

Tickets available soon!



What's Happening at WRFN



THIS EVENT IS HOSTED BY A NEW CHAPTER


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

**Tuesday, March 2, 2021
from 7:30-9pm
via Zoom**

***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.

RSVP to Sue at sue.simpson@wrfn.info if you would like to join us.



Hello WRFN Families,

We hope you can join us on Tuesday, March 2 at 7:30pm on Zoom to talk about the proposed federal Disability Benefit. Many thanks to the A New Chapter (ANC) Group for hosting this event.

Rebecca Pauls from Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (Vancouver, BC) will provide an overview and lead a conversation sharing things we need to know and how we can support this initiative.

There is wide appeal for this subject as the possibility of the new benefit provides hope for a basic income for all adults with disabilities. We are inviting the broader WRFN community to join this important meeting in order that the information is shared as widely as possible.

If you would like to read more about the benefit, please check out this link: <https://bit.ly/3sgPKVs>.

To attend this meeting, please RSVP Sue Simpson at sue.simpson@wrfn.info The Zoom link will be sent closer to the meeting to those who register.

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
maryjpike@hotmail.com
if you would like to join



What's Happening at WRFN

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

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

Ask A Self-Advocate

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

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

Reflecting on Growth

By Cristina Stanger, Self-Advocacy Liaison, WRFN

I have worked through some trying times, in part because my exceptionality went undetected, and thus unsupported, for many years. Sometimes I look back on that period with sadness, but at other times I look back and think about how far I've come. In other words, I focus on growth. And now, once again, I find myself turning to growth as a tool to gain perspective.

It has been nearly a year since we began altering our day-to-day lives as a coordinated response to COVID-19 in our community. I have found the ongoing protocols, the ever-present challenges, and the continued uncertainty about the future, are all weighing more heavily on me lately. And as my days blur together, and the passage of time feels simultaneously slow and rapid, I started to uncover some areas of growth as I reflected on the trials of this past year. My hope is that you might be able to find growth too, if you give it some consideration.

As an individual I have grown by learning new things and reviving old skills. And to be clear, I do not mean cultivating a new hobby; a novel leisure activity may feel completely out of reach if you have found yourself or your family operating in survival mode for the past year. I suggest looking for smaller things. For me, I developed positive habits in the kitchen, minimizing food waste as I stretched out the time between grocery runs. I practiced my French while supporting my child with remote learning. I learned several digital platforms and have made use of them to connect with friends and family, both locally and abroad. I even discovered some tools that I can use in the future to help me better meet some of my special needs.

Areas of growth can extend to a family unit too. Have you and your family created any new traditions? I began Cinema Saturdays and Ice Cream Sundae Sundays as a way to distinguish weekends from weekdays. I am fairly certain that these will be long standing traditions in my house, long after this pandemic is behind us. We have also gotten creative in our virtual interactions with extended family by doing storytime, board games, crafts, and pizza parties online.

I have observed community growth as well. Organizations, such as libraries and EarlyON centres, have pivoted to provide services in new ways. There has been community building between neighbours as they share ideas and resources. I have seen renewed interest in natural areas and increased use of outdoor playgrounds and community ice rinks.

And as I muddle along as best I can on this journey, I find taking pause to seek out the positive growth helps me to see my times of struggle in a different light. As the pandemic continues to stretch us and test us, we are also growing along the way.

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

Health Nexus Virtual Caregiver Retreat

The Health Nexus Family and Caregiver support group project is pleased to offer a Caregiver Retreat that is open to all caregivers and family members from Ontario.

Family Wellness — Keeping Everyone Safe — In this session you will explore a variety of ways to help live your best life, to find community helpers if needed, with a special focus on ways to mitigate risk and keep all family members as safe as they can be.

March 8, 6:30-8:00pm (English) | March 9, 6:30-8:00pm (French)

Register at <https://bit.ly/3bp0ri3>

Autism Ontario Events

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. <https://bit.ly/2Klr3RQ>

Virtual Bird Show & Activity Kit — Join March 27 for a fun virtual field trip to Bird Kingdom and a bird adventure kit delivered right to your door. <https://bit.ly/3aA2Ebo>

Persons with Exceptionalities Conference

Are you in Grades 7-10, living with an exceptionality and interested in what careers you could have in the future?

Are you a parent, guardian, support staff or teacher interested in learning more about skilled trades and technologies?

Join Skills Ontario on Tuesday, March 30 6:30-8:30pm for the Persons with Exceptionalities Conference!

Learn more or register for this event at <https://bit.ly/3sdfvWV>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

PROGRAMS/RECREATION

LEG Up! Online—March

LEG Up! provides online skill enhancement and learning experiences.

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

Monday, Open Chat — Grab a hot beverage and join for some interesting discussion.

Tuesday, Baking: March Muffins — Learn to bake delicious muffins along with your Instructor.

Wednesday, Let's Learn: Organizational Skills — Learn organization skills to keep you on track.

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

Thursday Arts & Crafts — Let's craft together! Supply kits will be provided for each craft.

Learn more about these programs at <https://bit.ly/2NKTSOA>.

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

Adults in Motion

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

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

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

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

Recreational Respite Virtual Services

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

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

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region: Virtual Open Space

Looking to connect to folks on a weekly basis?

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sunbeam Community & Development Services Summer Camps

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

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

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!

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>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Rainbow Day Camp

Memorable day camp activities for children and youth 4+.

Leaders in training program for youth 11-14.

Fully inclusive day camp with one-to-one support available.

Learn more at www.rainbowdaycamp.com.

Camp Kodiak

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

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

Learn more about Camp Kodiak on their website at www.CampKodiak.com.

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

Steckle Heritage Farm Agriventure Summer Day Camp

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

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

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

EarlyON Waterloo Region

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

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

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

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

Camp Kennebec

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

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

<https://campkennebec.com/>

Shadow Lake Centre

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

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

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

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

Creative Connections Virtual Group for Teenagers

This group gives teenagers of similar abilities a chance to connect and build social relationships in the time of Covid-19.

Goals Include:

- Enhancing emotional self-regulation skills
- Working on visual-perceptual processing
- Improving proficiency with technology
- Providing opportunities to interact and socialize with peers.

Email info@creativeot.com or call 519-954-5026. Sessions available based on interest.

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

Free Strengths Based CBT Support Groups for Children and Teens

[Everyday Superheroes](#) — For children age 7-11. Starting March 9

[Strong Thoughts. Strong Teens](#) — For teens age 13-17. Starting March 10

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Upcoming webcasts from p4p Planning Network

Introduction to RDSP — 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>.

Workshops from Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment

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

Triple P Positive Parenting Program — Triple P is a world-acclaimed evidence-based program that gives parents skills to manage challenging behaviours and prevent problems from happening in the first place.

Learn more about Centre for Mental Health Research at <https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-research-treatment/>.

FASD Family Capacity Building Workshop

The Coordinated Service Planning Provincial (CSP) Network is hosting interactive online workshops to help caregivers across Ontario increase their knowledge and practical skills to support children and youth with FASD. Each workshop features FASD workers from one of the five Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) regions. One session is held in French.

Learn more at <https://www.surreyplace.ca/fasd-workshops/>.

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.

Mental Health for Adults with Developmental Disabilities During COVID-19

The Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre at CAMH is inviting family caregivers of adults with developmental disabilities to take part in a 6-week virtual course on mental health, developmental disabilities and COVID-19, March 17, 2021 (12:00-1:30pm EST). This interactive course is an opportunity for caregivers to learn ways to support their loved one, receive up to date information on COVID-19, and to share ideas with one another. Topics will vary week to week and include: healthcare communication, self-care, dealing with grief and loss, and more.

<https://bit.ly/3spiyv4>

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

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

Groups from Muslim Social Services

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

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

Monday, 5:00-6:00pm.

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

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

To learn about any of these programs contact:

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

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>.

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 Workshop:

Managing Challenging Behaviour | March 2

The sessions is presented by a highly qualified ABA Consultant and is offered from 10:00-11:00am.

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

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC)

Upcoming Events & Workshops

Social Media, Cyberbullying and Safe Internet Use, March 17 — Police Officer Laurie McCann shows ways to keep your children safe while they navigate the internet and the world of social media.

Financial Literacy Pet Shop for 8-11 year olds, March 24 — This workshop is designed to provide financial concepts in a way that is easy for kids to understand and owning (or wanting to own) a pet is something many can relate to.

Financial Literacy Budgeting and Expenses for 11-14 year olds, March 31 — This workshop is designed to provide financial concepts in a way that is easy for teens to understand. The group will work through budgeting and purchasing for a party!

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

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@clgw.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

Carizon Family and Community Services

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

Managing the Day to Day, Social Emotional Skills — This workshop focuses on strategies for having conversations and building positive connections that ease the day-to-day stress.

Mon. March 1, 7-8pm | Wed. March 3, 1-2pm | Sat. March 6, 10-11am

Self-Care — This workshop will talk about self-care strategies that are easy to implement into a busy day and help bring balance and re-charge your engine.

Mon. March 8, 7-8pm | Wed. March 10, 1-2pm | Sat. March 13, 10-11am

Raising Children in an Anxious World — This workshop will provide strategies for calming and reducing anxiety by building resilience and coping skills.

Mon. March 15, 7-8pm | Wed. March 17, 1-2pm | Sat. March 20, 10-11am

To register for these workshops call 519-743-6333 x 2383

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

RESOURCES

Summer Camp Information

The KidsAbility website shares important information about summer camps.

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

You can also find a Summer Camp Directory on the KidsAbility website. The information is provided to assist families with identifying camps that offer specialized programming for children and youth with disabilities, or inclusive camps that are welcoming to all abilities and may provide additional supports to those with special needs. You can find this information at: <https://www.kidsability.ca/camp-directory-summer>.

The Vulnerable Persons Registry

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

www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

KidsAbility Resources

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

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

ConnectAbility.ca COVID-19 Resources

Supporting individuals, families and caregivers

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

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

Family Compass Waterloo Region

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

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario (APSGO) is for parents struggling with the behavior of a child, youth or young adult.

APSGO support groups help parents/guardians develop effective strategies, set limits and boundaries, and build better relationships with their children.

The group currently meets via Zoom on Wednesday at 7:15pm.

Contact Steve Keczem at 519-888-1053 or go to apsgo.ca for more information.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

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

They look forward to returning to the Cambridge Family Early Years Centre and Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre as soon as it is deemed safe to do so.

In the meantime, they suggest you review the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation's website to see the supports and resources available to you during this pandemic.

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

Ontario-Wide Virtual Support Group for Black parents and caregivers

Support, isolation, funding, resources, friends....These are the things that many families who care for someone with special needs think and worry about. For many of these families, their circle of support is quite small. This is often the case for racialized communities who have a child with special needs. The Black Parents of Children and Adults with a Disability Support Group (BPSG) was created to provide a safe space for families of African descent to come together to meet and connect, share resources, expertise and needs, inspire and support one another through our unique and often challenging and isolating journey of raising Black children or supporting a sibling, of any age, with a disability.

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

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

Chronic Pain Monthly Support Group

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

Contact intaketeam@carizon.ca 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

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.

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County Virtual Peer Support Network

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

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

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

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

The A-Team of Waterloo Region

The A-Team of Waterloo Region is primarily run by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, with some assistance from Bridges to Belonging.

Their goal is to create a safe and welcoming environment to meet fellow adults (age 18+) with Asperger's Syndrome

(ASD – level 1), discuss topics of interest, share experiences, and embrace their neurological diversity.

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

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Family Alliance Ontario Survey

Family Alliance Ontario is asking for your participation in a survey intended to learn more about how students with disabilities are being serviced by public school boards at this time. This survey will give

Integration Action for Inclusion an idea of whether COVID-19 is changing what placement options families would normally opt for as well as whether your placement options have been influenced by resource allocations or other decisions that school boards make.

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Research Opportunity: Do you Provide Care?

Looking for primary informal caregivers located 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>.