



# Family Pulse

*Where exceptional families thrive.*

Issue 125  
September 2020

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## What's Happening In This Issue

Welcome to September!

The Region of Waterloo is looking to reopen schools amid the COVID-19 global pandemic. The preparations for teachers and parents has been the focus of many hours of meetings and planning throughout the summer. In addition to the many important listings for our services, as well as those in our community, be sure to read the Back to School Q&A that WRFN recently hosted.

Another important read is by our Self-Advocate liaison, Cristina Stranger, with how she has been coping with overwhelm throughout the pandemic.

September 9th is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Day. See more plans for awareness from the FASD Waterloo Region below.

Have a good month!



Waterloo Region Family Network - WRFN



@FamilyNetworkWR

## Support WRFN Today

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

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



WRFN wishes to thank The Cowan Foundation for supporting our *School Issues Support Moving Forward* initiative in collaboration with Waterloo Catholic District School Board and Waterloo Region District School Board. Acknowledging our steadfast commitment to providing support and resources to families who have children with exceptional needs and the unique challenges our families face, The Cowan Foundation has donated \$20,000 to WRFN.

The upcoming school year will be like no other. These generous funds will allow WRFN to work alongside local school boards to help ensure families have confidence in navigating these new and unique learning journeys for their children.

We are grateful to The Cowan Foundation for this generous support and to WCDSB and WRDSB for their commitment to exceptional families in our community.

With gratitude,  
Sue Simpson  
Executive Director

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## BACK TO SCHOOL

On August 18, WRFN hosted a virtual Back-to-School Q&A session as part of our monthly School Issues Support Group. We would like to thank superintendents Laura Shoemaker (WCDSB) and Scott Miller (WRDSB) for answering our many questions. The Q&A document can be found [here](#).

Please keep in mind that things are evolving. Responses have been provided with the most up-to-date knowledge at the time.

For the most up to date information, please visit [www.wrdsb.ca](http://www.wrdsb.ca) (Waterloo Region District School Board) or [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca) (Waterloo Catholic District School Board).

## Managing Overwhelm in the Big Wide World

### By Cristina Stanger, Self-Advocacy Liaison, WRFN

During the COVID-19 shutdown, day-to-day tasks, like a trip to the grocery store, became very complex very quickly. As Ontario moved into stage 3 of reopening, we started to reintroduce aspects of our lives that we had abruptly cut out in March of this year. Many things now operate in new and different ways. So for myself, as an exceptional adult, I found going back out into the world, has been much more overwhelming than the shutdown itself.

I expect individuals *without* exceptionality will also share in this sense of ramped up intensity to daily life. While we are all staying at home as much as possible, our lives have become quieter, and as a result, we have now been resensitized to hustle and bustle. Traffic, noise pollution, excess visual stimuli might catch you by surprise. Your ability to plan and organize may feel more taxed than before because you are out of practice. Whether overwhelm is a new sensation for you, or you are familiar with it already, it is important to identify it in order to find ways to cope.

Here are some of the ways I experience overwhelm when I put myself out into the big wide world. Perhaps you will recognize some that you can relate to, or maybe you have other experiences of your own? This is by no means an exhaustive list.

Possible symptoms of overwhelm:

- Decision fatigue: This involves feeling overwhelmed by choice, even small decisions seem hard, and I experience a self-generated pressure to make the “right choice” (even when there is no right or wrong outcome).
- More intense social interactions: Since I am out of practice everything feels more awkward and forced, and I second guess everything I say and do.
- Emotional confusion: At times it can be hard to know what I am feeling, especially if something unexpected happens. As a result, it can be hard to know what I need to get through a situation.
- Generalized anxiety: Thoughts of worry infiltrate my mind, and I start to question things that I had previously been sure of.

Here are some of the techniques I use to help manage my own sense of overwhelm. As always, you know yourself and your family members best, so this is not a one-size-fits-all recommendation.

Possible coping strategies:

- Build up slowly: I find I need to make a conscious effort to reintroduce only one or two new things to my life at a time, and then give myself a period of time to adjust. This approach is certainly slower, but reduces the chance of overwhelm and increases my odds of successful experiences.
- Anticipate that things may not go as planned: I actively remind myself before I leave home, that what actually plays out may be different from what I am expecting. This makes the unanticipated changes a little less jarring.
- It is okay to step back and try again later: If I find an experience is too overwhelming to handle, I give myself permission to remove myself. With the information I gain from a first attempt, I can come back later better prepared.
- Schedule downtime: Contrary to what my conscience tells me, downtime is not a guilty pleasure. This time is necessary in order to preserve my mental and physical health. By specifically planning this time, I feel less guilty and I give myself the opportunity to recover from overwhelm.
- Be mindful of self-care (eating habits, sleeping, etc.): Cognitively, I know that self-care is important, but it is easy to neglect these things when overwhelmed. However, if I work to prioritize activities of self-care, the more resilient I become during potentially overwhelming experiences in the future.
- Reflect on my experiences: When I find myself overwhelmed unexpectedly, I often write down notes about what happened leading up to that incident. This helps me reflect on what I might do differently next time, or identify triggers that I may try to avoid going forward. Sometimes I need a professional to guide me through this process.

We are all trying to find our way in the world amidst rapid societal change. Let us be kind to one another as we move forward, as everyone will respond and adapt differently; and especially, let us be kind to ourselves.

## SEAC Updates

### **Waterloo District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Update** *Submitted by Carmen Sutherland*

There were many things to discuss at the SEAC voluntary meeting. Elementary will have a full return with good health and safety measures; they will be wearing masks. Secondary school will be a hybrid. Over 12,000 students are choosing virtual school. Teachers will get multiple masks in a day (if they need more they will get more), and some will have face shields and gowns, especially if they cannot distance from students. Students will have masks for each day that they attend school. Each school will also have rooms where they can be away from others if they are ill, larger schools will have more than one isolation room, and each school will have two thermometers.

Elementary students will be there every day with masks, high school students in the hybrid model will be doing two courses at a time in different cohorts. The first semester of the year will be divided into quadrimesters. The schedule for how this will be divided between in person and online learning can be found here: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/blog/2020/08/28/update-secondary-school-quadmester-calendar-and-daily-schedule/> Students who are medically fragile will be attending every day, and much effort has been put into making sure staff and students will be cared for and safe.

In terms of community support in schools (for example, mental health addiction services, Ray of Hope) will have a combination of virtual and in-person as needed.

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

The next virtual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9 at 6 pm.

For news and updates please visit [www.wrdsb.ca](http://www.wrdsb.ca) and [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca)

## SEAC Updates

### What's Happening at WRFN...

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

**We will be listing online and virtual resources that we think will be helpful. Keep an eye on our Facebook Page and our Twitter account (@FamilyNetworkWR) for more!**

### Ask A Self-Advocate

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

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at [Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info](mailto:Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info)

To request a booking please complete the request form found on our website at [wrfn.info](http://wrfn.info)

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### 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 her at [Sue.Furey@wrfn.info](mailto:Sue.Furey@wrfn.info)

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

## What's Happening at WRFN...

### **School Issues Support Group**

This peer-led group provides support, advice and a safe environment for parents who have questions or concerns about school issues affecting their children with special needs. This group is currently meeting virtually. If you're interested in participating, please contact Sue Simpson at 519-886-9150 ext 1 or [sue.simpson@wrfn.info](mailto:sue.simpson@wrfn.info)

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### **Coffee Club**

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

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

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### **A New Chapter**

A New Chapter is a peer-led group for parents/caregivers interested in preparing for the future of their youth/adult family member. This group is currently meeting, virtually, on the first Tuesday of each month. For more information please email [maryjpike@hotmail.com](mailto:maryjpike@hotmail.com)

## Information, Resources, & Opportunities

**The Federal Government** has voted in favour of a one time tax free, non-reportable payment of \$600 to people with disabilities and their families to assist with challenges presented by COVID-19. More information can be found [here](#) (linked).

**The Federal Government** has also released information on a **Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit**.

### **From The Financial Post:**

...(T)he CRCB will provide a \$500 per week taxable benefit, for up to 26 weeks, if an individual misses work to care for a family member due to COVID-19. This benefit will also be available for one year, beginning on Sept. 27. The CRCB can be shared among household members, but only one household member can receive the benefit in any one week. If a facility is available, but an individual prefers to keep a dependent at home, they're not eligible for the CRCB. To qualify for the CRCB, you must have been unable to work for at least 60 per cent of your normally scheduled work week because you must take care of a child who is under 12 years old, or provide care to a family member with a disability or a dependent. You must be caring for the child, family member or dependent because either: their school, daycare, day program or care facility is closed (or operates under an alternative schedule) due to COVID-19; a medical professional has advised that they cannot attend the facility due to being at high risk if they contract COVID-19; or because the caregiver usually providing care is not available because of COVID-19. In addition, you must not have received paid leave or certain other benefits (including the CERB, CRB, CRSB, short term disability benefits, workers' compensation benefits, or EI benefits) for that work week.

Source/Full article [here](#).

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The **Canadian Association for Community Living** has released an article regarding the upcoming payment from the Federal Government to people with disabilities and their families. The full article can be found [here](#) (linked).

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

Additionally, **Kerry's Place Portal** offers an array of resources, including webinars and printable resources made available to persons with ASD, their families, educators, and anyone interested in learning about Autism Spectrum Disorder, and supportive strategies, across the Province of Ontario. Kerry's Place aims to provide a comprehensive overview of various topics in 15-30 minutes segments, available to view, pause, and review at ones leisure, while the one-page resources are downloadable, and printable. Link is here: <https://www.kerrysplace.org/theportal/>

## Information, Resources, & Opportunities



Help is here when families need it the most. No diagnosis needed. When a family has questions about their child's development, **KidsAbility** is often the first call that they make. We are here to answer that call and the many questions you may have from where to start to what services might be available to support you and your child. KidsAbility provides Foundational Family Services to anyone in our community—no diagnosis needed.

Funded through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Foundational Family Services provided by KidsAbility through the Ontario Autism Program break down barriers so that anyone in our community with questions or who may be concerned that their child is facing challenges can access services and support when they need it the most. Our dedicated, professional staff will work with you to find workshops, resources, groups, support and more to help you be successful. We are here for you regardless of where you are on your journey or simply if you are supporting someone on their own journey. You do not need to be a KidsAbility family to access these services. **Help is here.**

**Learn more:** [kidsability.ca/foundational-services](https://kidsability.ca/foundational-services)

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**Transition to Adulthood Clinic (for KidsAbility clients 15+)** Have you started to think about your life after high school? Do you have questions about services for adults with disabilities in the community? Would you like to find out about resources that are available to help you with your transition planning? The Transition to Adulthood Clinic is an opportunity to meet with the Transitions Lead who will help to guide you in the right direction with planning for your future. During Covid-19 isolation, all appointments will be occurring through Zoom. Once KidsAbility Centres have opened up again there will be the option to meet with the Transitions Lead either face-to-face or through Zoom.

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




## Information & Resources

**Recreational Respite** continues to promote inclusion, encourage community participation and nurture social connectivity. We understand how imperative it is to stay connected. They bring you unique, interactive opportunities, that provide innovative and experiential outcomes in 1:1, mini or small group virtual settings. That's right, these programs are now available online! With school returning Recreational Respite is also providing 1:1 tutoring support from a qualified EA/Recreation Therapist. This can be done in person or virtually as well at the rate of \$29.50/hour+tax

They can be found on their website here: <https://recrespite.com/services/>

## National Service Updates





**1:1 Respite Support (in home/community)**  
 Our recreation therapists work 1:1 with children, youth and adults with disabilities in their homes, direct community or virtual space. Our service is for those who typically face barriers to inclusive participation or struggle with social relationships, self-regulation and coping strategies. Respite services can be short or long term and are goal directed with each individual's needs, abilities, strengths and interests as our primary focus. These supports can also be available specifically focused on personalized classroom and homework support. We'll develop strategies for diverse learners that consider each student's unique learning needs and supports.

**Hourly \$29.50**



**Build It Workshops**

These unique workshops are for those ages 12-17 and 18+. They aim to provide independent skill mastery for children, youth and adults who want to acquire new skills with productive outcomes. These person centered workshops will cultivate life skills and promote self-care.

**1.5 hour workshop \$24.50**  
**2 hour workshop \$39.50**



**Virtual Group Programs**

Virtual sessions offer unique small group experiences that promote engagement, inclusion and social connectivity and are attached to experiential outcomes. The sessions are developed by our recreation therapists. Spaces are limited.

**Cost: \$15.00 per program**

For more information 1-877-855-7070  
[info@recrespite.com](mailto:info@recrespite.com) and [recrespite.com/services/](https://recrespite.com/services/)

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

Find a full list of what they have to offer on their new Carizon for the Community website: <https://www.carizonforthecommunity.ca/>

## Information & Resources

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) - Waterloo Region** would like remind you that **Wednesday, September 9** is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Awareness Day. Click on their website below for information about this disorder and how you can help raise awareness:

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

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**Foundations in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)** is a basic training course intended for everyone that will come into contact with individuals with FASD including all sectors of work, families, individuals with FASD, spouses, and the general public. This foundational level training program provides the perspective of individuals who have FASD, is evidence-based, employs a culturally sensitive approach, and is presented in a way that is responsive to the learners needs. This online basic training course will take on average two hours to complete. Level 1 training will provide knowledge and understanding of:

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

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

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**Sunbeam Centre's Brightside ABA Services** specialize in supporting clients that are 9 years of age and up to support skill development in key areas such as social skills, communication skills, emotional regulation skills, building independence in activities of daily living, and to reduce challenging behaviours.

They are also taking registration for upcoming programming for Fall 2020. More information can be found here: <https://brightsideabaservices.com/>

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**Family Compass Waterloo Region** is a central website to guide families to services for children, youth, and families in our community.

The website offers the option to find information about general services for children and youth as well as specialized services that can help to address developmental concerns. It also offers a link to resources designed for parents through the Parenting Now website.

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

## Information & Resources

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

<https://enactuslaurier.ca/project/mighty-hawks/>

**Lutherwood** is available to help people find employment during the pandemic. All of their programs are still operating and can be accessed at: [www.beemployed.ca](http://www.beemployed.ca)

**We are still here to help you find employment.**

Although times are challenging right now due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **Lutherwood Employment Services** is still here to help you find work. Contact us today to access our **free** services.

**BeEmployed.ca**

Cambridge 519-623-9380  
Kitchener 519-743-2460  
Guelph 519-822-4141




**HEY CAMBRIDGE!  
NEED A JOB?**

**WE'VE GONE VIRTUAL!**

While Lutherwood's **Preston Idea Exchange** and **Langs** visits have been temporarily cancelled due to COVID-19, we are still offering our services via telephone or video chat.

**Contact Melissa to set up a virtual appointment**

Melissa Small, Employment Advisor  
519-497-2839  
msmall@lutherwood.ca

[lutherwood.ca/employment](http://lutherwood.ca/employment)





## Information & Resources

**Community Living Ontario** announces Student Links! Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Student Links is an opportunity for students (ages 14 to 21) with exceptionalities 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.

For more information go to their website: <https://communitylivingontario.ca/en/student-links/>

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**The University of Toronto School of Medicine** is hosting a series of webinars titled: Dialogues in Diversity: Explorations of the EDI Implications of COVID-19. The series of seven webinars consists of ninety-minute expert-led, moderated panel discussions focused on five broad thematic areas in relation to the pandemic.

For more information and to register, please go to: [www.cpd.utoronto.ca/covid-19/webinars/](http://www.cpd.utoronto.ca/covid-19/webinars/)

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Families can choose to have **Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region** administer their Ontario Autism Program (OAP) funds. Funding applications are registered through MCCSS.

OAP is a funding resource available to children and youth under the age of 18 who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Eligibility and approvals are determined by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS).

Families can choose to have **Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region** administer their OAP funds. Funding applications are registered through MCCSS.

For information on how EAFWR can assist, please email [oap@eafwr.on.ca](mailto:oap@eafwr.on.ca)



Looking to connect to folks on a weekly basis?

Join one of our virtual Open Spaces on Monday evenings! Both begin at 630pm.

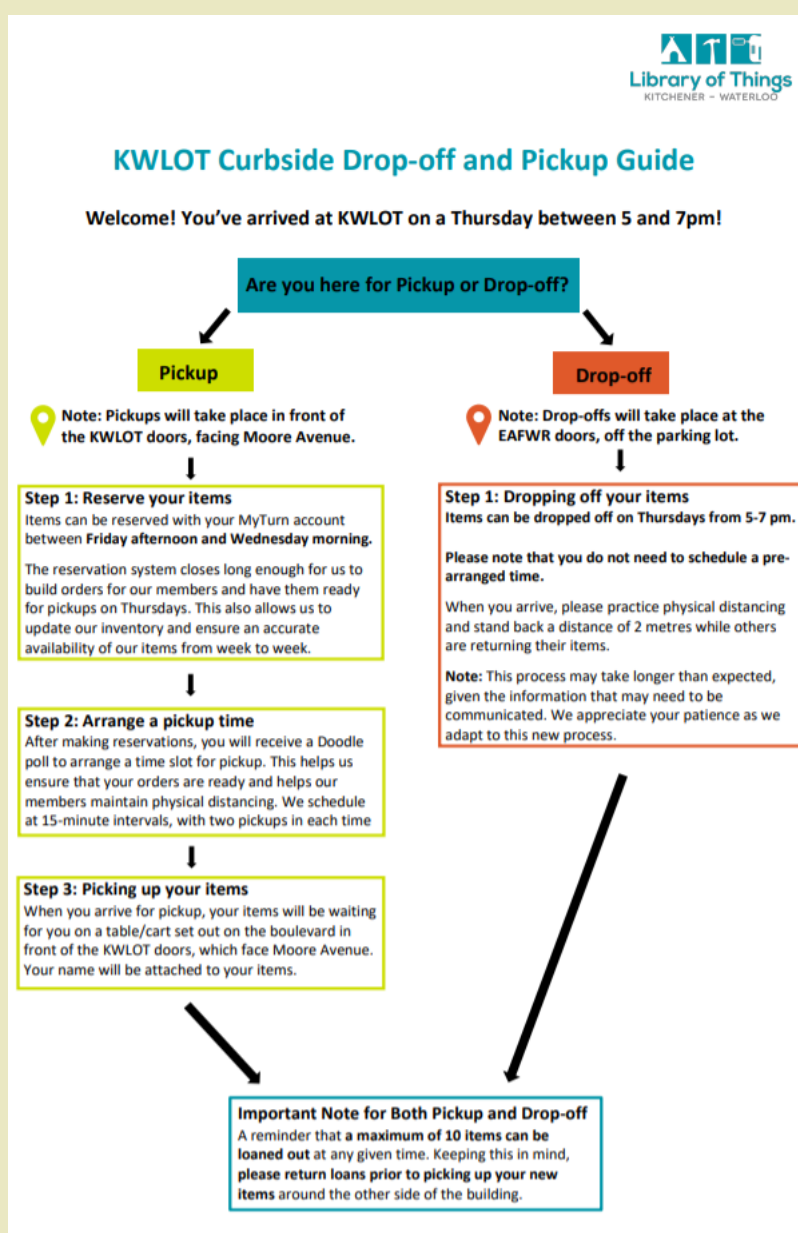
Email Kim Sproul for more details!

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

## Information & Resources

Working on a garden? Getting to that long-overdue DIY? Learning new cooking/baking skills? Moving? **Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region's *K-W Library of Things*** is up and running with curbside pickups and dropoffs of our extensive inventory of kitchen, camping, gardening and DIY tools. Hop over into our inventory to see if we have what you need! <https://kwlibraryofthings.myturn.com/library/inventory/browse>

The K-W Library of Things has established a process for safe pick-up and return of items. See image below.



## Information & Resources

**Extend-A-Family (Toronto)** is offering a FREE Two-Part Online Series with JOHN LORD on the power of social networks/relationships and how we can develop and maintain a Support Circle with people with disabilities and their families.

Part 1: September 29

Part 2: October 6

Time: 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

RSVP to [info@extendafamily.ca](mailto:info@extendafamily.ca)

If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Carhart at 647-292-5175

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**Bridges to Belonging** hosts a virtual hang-out on Facebook:

Are you looking for a way to meet new people, build relationships and be part of some great conversations? You can Get-Connected and Stay-Connected at our weekly virtual hangout where you will meet new people, build relationships and be part of some great conversations.

In the private group, you can access trusted COVID-19 information, resources and local services - tools and resources on a variety of topics for you to create the life you want and have a community where you belong.

[Click here to join the Facebook Group](#) to get all the details about this weekly Zoom call meet up.

## Information & Resources

**Bridges to Belonging** is also pleased to announce the launch LINKS - "for youth by youth." This is a new initiative for youth experiencing social isolation and barriers to inclusion who self identify as living with a disability or dual diagnosis.

Phase 1 is a series of five virtual workshops held weekly for a period of five weeks. Together with their supporters, youth will embark on a journey of self-discovery, personal growth, and community connection leading to the creation of a network of supportive relationships over ZOOM. Two Blocks of workshops are available.

See poster or go to Eventbrite for more information: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/links-virtual-experience-for-youth-create-a-network-of-supportive-relations-tickets-113270392794>

If you have any questions or need more information please email, [info@bridgestobelonging.ca](mailto:info@bridgestobelonging.ca) or feel free to call 519-603-0998 ext 211.



Learning - Identity - Networks - Konnection - Strengths

**LINKS**  
FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH

**Creating a Network of Supportive Relationships**  
5 Week Virtual Experience  
of learning, discovery and creating **LINKS** for youth experiencing social isolation and barriers to inclusion

*Registration Information*  
Choose from one of two sessions being offered  
**Block A:** Sept 22-Oct 20 (Tuesday 6:45pm to 8:45pm)  
**Block B:** Oct 24-Nov 21 (Saturday 11:00am-1:00pm)

**Visit *Eventbrite* to Learn More and Register**  
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/113270392794>

*Sessions are limited to 5 participants (age 14-24) plus two people they have a trusted relationship with (parent, guardian, relative or close friend)*  
Please email [info@bridgestobelonging.ca](mailto:info@bridgestobelonging.ca) with any questions.

**A Resilience Partner Project offered by Bridges to Belonging** #bounceforward  
[www.bounceforward.ca](http://www.bounceforward.ca)

Logos for partner organizations including: City of Hamilton, Ontario Ministry of Children, Youth and Families, Hope, KidsAbility, Hamilton Community Foundation, and others.



## Information & Resources

The University of Waterloo has a research opportunity for parents of a child, 6-12 years old with physical special needs. See poster below for more information and/or see the sign-up form with the newsletter/blog post. The password to access the form is SIRRL2020:  
[https://uwaterloo.ca/1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_72QNTGBIZNThQDr](https://uwaterloo.ca/1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_72QNTGBIZNThQDr)

University of Waterloo

### User-focused study of robot interaction methods

If you have a child who is 6-12 years old with physical special needs, especially upper-body gross and fine motor special needs, you and your child may be eligible to participate in a robot design focus group

#### The Social and Intelligent Robotics Research Laboratory (SIRRL) needs your help!

We are conducting an online study regarding a robot that facilitates play between children regardless of special physical needs.

We need children accompanied by their guardians (siblings and caretakers are welcome as well) to call us at the SIRRL lab at the university of Waterloo in order to give feedback regarding a new state-of-the-art robot prototype and suggest improvements on it. Please note that your call will be recorded for research review only. The call will be either a phone call or virtual meeting on a conferencing software.

Participants' input and opinion will be invaluable in the final touches leading up to trials with the robot.



We hope this will be an exciting activity for participating children and will result in a more accessible play activities that account for their needs.

Participants will receive:


- A \$20 Tim Horton's or Walmart gift card of choice
- A tour of the SIRRL lab showcasing new and advanced social robots once the university re-opens for public

**Are you eligible?**

- Have a child age between 6-12 with an upper limb fine or gross motor challenges
- Willing to spend about 30 minutes – 1 hour of your time

If you're interested email a member of the study team:  
[hmahdi@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:hmahdi@uwaterloo.ca)



This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee



## Information & Resources

### **Better Nights, Better Days for Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders (BNBD-NDD)**

An Online Behavioural Treatment for Pediatric Sleep Issues in Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Up to 90% of Canadian children with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD) experience insomnia symptoms including trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, and/or waking too early. Insomnia can have a significant impact on children's daytime functioning. Poor sleep can lead to increased challenges with learning, attention, and can contribute to increased symptom presentation in children with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Evidence supports the effectiveness of behavioural treatments for insomnia. However, these interventions are not often available to families of children with NDDs. Developed by Dr. Penny Corkum (Dalhousie University; IWK Health Centre), Dr. Shelly Weiss (University of Toronto; SickKids), and their colleagues at institutions across Canada, the online sleep intervention program, *[Better Nights, Better Days for Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders \(BNBD-NDD\)](#)*, offers a potential solution to address this barrier to care. BNBD-NDD is an evidence-based, transdiagnostic online program for parents with children ages 4-12 years old with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Cerebral Palsy (CP), and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) that experience insomnia.

After summer vacation and a long break from schedules and routine, as families prepare their children for the new school year this fall, a good night's sleep is especially important. The *BNBD-NDD* program can help parents help their children to sleep better so that they can achieve the best academic outcomes.

Dr. Corkum, Dr. Weiss, and the *BNBD-NDD* research team are currently looking for 15 more families of children with ADHD, ASD, CP and/or FASD from across Canada to participate in this entirely online research study to evaluate the effectiveness of *BNBD-NDD*. Interested participants can get started at the following link: <http://ndd.betternightsbetterdays.ca/>

## Information & Resources

Get Set Learn is accepting registrations and referrals for the Get Set Learn fall 2020 session. Please see the attached poster for dates and registration info.

Keeping families safe is our priority during COVID 19 pandemic. All our fall programs will be offered online.

Get Set Learn is a family literacy program for parents who have children under the age of 6 and receive Ontario Works or ODSP. The Region of Waterloo funds this program to offer to the families at no cost.

Get Set Learn provides opportunities for the families to get their children ready for school, practice essential skills, build connections, and learn about community resources.



# Get your family ready for school

## Fun, free program!

Are you a parent receiving OW or ODSP with children at home or school?

- Free books
- Parent time included
- Have fun with books and songs
- Learn activities to help your child in school

### Fall 2020

Keeping families safe during the Covid-19 pandemic is our priority. All programs for Fall 2020 will be online.

**Online Class # 1**  
Tuesday & Thursday  
10:30 am – 11:30 am  
Starts October 6

**Online Class # 2**  
Wednesday & Friday  
10:30 am – 11:30 am  
Starts October 7

**New!** Parents of school-age children welcome (up to age 6)

Free program for parents receiving Ontario Works or ODSP with children birth to 6 years old

"I made new friends and had fun learning new things."

**To Sign Up:**  
Email—[info@projectread.ca](mailto:info@projectread.ca)  
Phone—(519) 570-3054

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




## Information & Resources

**CADDAC - Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada** would like to share some upcoming Webinars as well as a reminder of their 12th Annual Conference which will be held entirely virtual this year! See below for links and more information.



### ADDitude Live Webinars - September 1

Topic: “My Child’s Handwriting Is So Messy!” Strategies for Improving Dysgraphia in Children with ADHD

### Sick Kids CCMH Live Webinars - September 2020 - February 2021

Topic - Certificate Program in Children's Grief and Bereavement

Module 1: Children at the Bedside.

Module 2: When Death Darkens the Door.

Module 3: When Grief Gets More Complicated.

Module 4: Using Mindfulness and Compassion to Support Grieving Children/Families.

Module 5: Dancing in the Darkness.

### CADDAC 12th Annual ADHD Convergence - October 17

Early bird before September 20: \$40+HST

General admission after September 20: \$50+HST



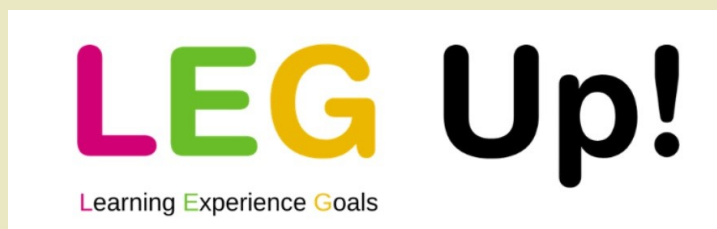
Premie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington remains available online through our private Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/premiepowwr>.

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

Visit: <https://www.cpbfbfpc.org/covid19>

## Information & Resources



Sign up for September Classes Today!

(September 8-October 2, 2020)

**[Register online at MyCommunityHub.ca Click here!](https://mycommunityhub.ca)**

Once you have completed our registration, a LEG Up! Instructor will contact you with the Zoom link, supplies/supply lists, detailed recipes and other important information for each class.

To view the September courses **[click here](#)**

 The flyer is titled "ACCESSIBLE ART VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS VIA ZOOM for KIDS, TEENS & ADULTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES". It features a colorful background with abstract shapes. Key information includes:
 

- EASY-TO-FOLLOW LESSONS**: max 20 participants, Personalized attention catering to all skill levels.
- SUPPLIES PRE-SHIPPED**: to your group home or to each participant's home.
- EXCITING NEW MEDIUMS EVERY MONTH!**
- \$75 FOR A 4-WORKSHOP PACKAGE** (+ HST and shipping)
- Contact: Email us directly at [manager@artshine.ca](mailto:manager@artshine.ca) or visit: [artshine.ca](https://artshine.ca)
- Logo: ARTSHINE.CA LET YOUR ART SHINE

Artshine Virtual Accessible Art For Kids, Teens & Adults living with disabilities.

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!

Max 20 participants for personalized attention.

Supplies are pre-shipped to your group home or to each participant's home, with exciting new mediums every month.

Click the picture below or **[here](#)** for more information!

## Information & Resources

COMMUNITYOFHEARTS.CA | 519 826 9056 | INFO@COMMUNITYOFHEARTS.CA

# WE ARE RE-OPENING!



Dear COH participants, caregivers and community partners:

In light of Guelph entering Phase 3, Community of Hearts is reopening for the Fall session of the (in person) Learning Day Program as of Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at our Lifelong Learning Centre.

As a result we will not be offering online programming as of Monday, August 24.

The flow of the learning experience will feel a little different as staff and participants take time to clean and sanitize throughout the day.

Participants and caregivers are encouraged to schedule a 'welcome back' appointment to see the Lifelong Learning Centre and get a sense of the changes made to the space. Please contact [info@communityofhearts.ca](mailto:info@communityofhearts.ca) to book a visit on Monday, August 31 or Tuesday, September 1 2020.

As health and safety of participants, staff and volunteers is Community of Hearts' top priority, all policies and procedures will be re-evaluated daily based on Public Health Guidelines. This may require a rollback of in-person programming. All participants and caregivers will be notified of any changes based on COVID-19 impact in Guelph. We appreciate your understanding and support throughout this process.

Email [info@communityofhearts.ca](mailto:info@communityofhearts.ca) to hold your spot in Community of Hearts' Learning Day Program.

Please stay tuned for an FAQ and COVID-19 specific protocols coming soon to Community of Hearts' website.

We look forward to connecting in person!

Warmly,  
The Community of Hearts' Board of Directors

**Community of Hearts, Lifelong Learning Centre**, is scheduled to re-open to the public on Tuesday, September 8! See image below for the announcement and click [here](#) for FAQ about the reopening.

## Information & Resources

### Strong Moms, Safe Kids



**A Group Program for Mothers and Children Healing From Domestic Violence**



**A FREE program, offered virtually this fall, starting September 23, 2020 and running for 10 weeks**

This program is for:

- Mothers who have experienced abuse in intimate relationships.
- Their children, ages 6 to 18, who have witnessed abuse in their homes.
- Mothers and children living apart from the person who abused them.

Multicultural facilitators are there to meet the needs of those from diverse ethno-cultural groups. Interpreters are available for women and children who do not speak English. Transportation is provided for families without the use of a vehicle.

Each group session will include:

- A shared meal
- Interactive large group activities and family activities
- Smaller group activities for mothers and children
- A different topic weekly about healing from abuse

For more information, contact:  
 Elizabeth Hachborn  
 phone: 519.884.0000 x240  
 email: ehachborn@kwcounselling.com





Funded By  
 Ministry of  
 Children, Community &  
 Social Services

**KW Counselling Services** is starting their Strong Moms, Safe Kids program virtually. The group will start on September 23 and the plan is to begin around 6 p.m. and run for 10 weeks. An interview/intake is required prior to attending.

This group is offered at *no cost* to moms who have experienced domestic violence and to their children ages 6 to 18. It is a program funded through MCCSS and *focuses primarily on the immediate and long-term effects on children of witnessing domestic abuse* of any kind (abuse comes in many forms – physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, sexual, financial, etc.). It *offers support to mothers in helping their children deal with the direct and indirect impact* of what they have witnessed/experienced. It also *offers education and support to kids and moms* as they heal from abuse and move forward with their lives.

See the flyer or click [here](#) for more information.

**EarlyON | Waterloo Region** provides a variety of developmentally appropriate, fun, and interactive learning opportunities for you and your child to explore together. Join us to sing, dance, explore, discover and be active Monday-Saturday LIVE on our Facebook page [@EarlyONWR](#). We look forward to you joining us! We also encourage you to visit our website [earlyyearsinfo.ca](#) regularly for new songs, and activities every week.

As we receive more information from the Region of Waterloo, our local Public Health and the Ministry of Education, we will continue to update you with any changes or new information around the reopening of our physical locations as it becomes available. Please continue to check <http://earlyyearsinfo.ca/reopening/> often, and look out for messages through our [Email Newsletter](#) or social media pages on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



## Information & Resources

**Our Place KW - Family Resource and Early Years Centre** continues to offer great programming this fall. Head over to <https://www.ourplacekw.ca/programs> for registration and more information

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**March of Dimes Canada** is holding several Caregiver Webinars throughout the month of September. Click [here](#) for a full listing of topics, dates, and registration information.

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[Parents for Children's Mental Health](#) is excited to announce that their Self Help and Peer Support's virtual calendar for September is [here](#)! Throughout September we are continuing to provide virtual services due to the unusual times we are facing.

Virtual one-to-one peer support is available by calling one of our three sites and group information is available by emailing [selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca](mailto:selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca) The attached calendar has all contact information included.

We have some new groups that they would like to highlight for September:

**Atomic Habits** – Do you have a habit you are wanting to change or stop? Join us as we go through the book Atomic Habits by James Clear, and explore our behaviours that may be causing us frustration and discomfort.

**Just Breathe** – Develop greater confidence using techniques from Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Mindfulness.

**Watercolor for Relaxation: Simple Projects to Help You Unwind** – With the help of Skillshare, we will be watching and participating together in a relaxing watercolor class by Sharone Stevens, Illustrator and Watercolour Artist.

**freEDom** - Is a peer run group where folks struggling with disordered eating, body image issues or an eating disorder (diagnosed or undiagnosed) address struggles and celebrate triumphs occurring along their journey with a focus on skill-building and building motivation.

**Meditation** – Join us as we practice meditations from some of the most trusted teachers in the field. We will also explore some history and research to help understand the origins and benefits of meditation. All levels of mediation experience welcome.

**Mindfulness** – What is mindfulness? How can it help us manage stressful situations? Learn practical techniques for being emotionally and mentally present in the now - less caught up in the worry about tomorrow and in disappointments about the past.

**Speakers Training** - Beautiful Minds encourages youth (18-35) in the community to become involved in our mental wellness program by becoming a volunteer speaker for our classroom presentations. Speakers are volunteers who have experienced a mental health issue and want to share their story with students. A two-part training is provided and focuses on the classroom presentation dealing with mental health, mental wellness, and stigma. During our training, volunteers learn more about general mental health, learn how to write their personal stories, and develop their public speaking skills.

## Information & Resources

[Parents for Children's Mental Health](#) cont.'d

**Families with Missing Loved Ones (Missing Persons) - Dealing with Ambiguous Loss** - This group is for families and friends that are impacted by a missing loved one and those who have had a loved one found, alive or deceased. Know that it's the situation that is abnormal, not you.

**Please note: Groups run bi-weekly (September 2, 16, 30).**

**Peers for Safer Living** – Peer Support group for Skills for Safer Living participants to continue to develop and practice the skills gained in the 20-week Skills for Safer Living Group.

**For referral or more information:** 519-821-8089 ext:4063 or 1 844 437 3247 (HERE 24/7)