

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 149
September 2022

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What's In This Issue?

Summer went by in the blink of an eye! September is here, with school right around the corner. Is your family feeling ready?

Be sure to take a look through our Family Pulse this month. There's a ton of new program and recreation offerings, workshops, events and webinars and a few new engagement opportunities. From infants to grandparents — there's something in here for everyone in the family.

And don't miss WRFN's special events coming up this fall. Join A New Chapter on September 6 and save the date for our IEP workshop at the end of September. We're looking forward to seeing your faces at some in-person options soon!



Support WRFN

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

Am I a Writer? Are you?

Carmen Sutherland, Coffee Club Coordinator

I follow a lot of writers on my personal social media because I have always loved a good story. Sometimes they will post stories about when they started to call themselves writers, when they felt brave enough, or it was “real enough” to do it. But they often give the advice: if you write, then you are a writer.

I have never really paid attention to this because being a “writer” sounded intimidating to someone who often has trouble coming up with content for this newsletter! However, I have been thinking this summer about how I might have a story inside of me. Maybe I will just write it for me, or maybe I will send it to one or two friends...we'll see.

I know fall is a busy time for a lot of you. But for families whose life gets a bit more scheduled in the fall (EVENTUALLY...I know there are always obstacles), maybe there is a secret passion or goal you can pursue. Work on it for five minutes or thirty minutes a day, show it to no one, or put it on Instagram. Do whatever makes you happy and fulfilled, whatever makes your soul sing and your mind dance... because we all deserve that, even during busy seasons.

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.

Do you have a question about community resources or child development?

WRFN Drop-Ins at EarlyON

Meet with Erin, our Family Resource Coach

Erin will be hosting in-office drop-in meetings at various EarlyON locations this fall & winter. Meetings do not require an appointment, but are on a first-come, first-served basis.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Sept 13	EarlyON Riverside 250 William St., Elmira	9:30-11 am
Sept 14	EarlyON Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	10-11 am
Sept 20	EarlyON Water St 73 Water St., N., Unit 105 Cambridge	9:30-10:30 am
Sept 21	EarlyON St. Boniface 225 Starlight Ave, Breslau	10-11 am



Contact Erin -

erin.sutherland@wrfn.info
226-808-5460

**More dates to come in
October, November &
December!**



www.wrfn.info



IEP Workshop



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

September 28, 2022
7 PM

Details to follow!



WRFN will be hosting an Individualized Education Plan workshop in collaboration with the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) this month. The meeting will take place during our regular School Issues Support Group, but all are welcome to join!

More details will be sent out in the coming weeks. Please stay tuned.



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.



September 6, 2022

DSO Information Session

Jessica Pearson, Service Navigator from Developmental Service Ontario, will join us to answer questions about eligibility for DSO, the assessment process, the role DSO plays in accessing resources and services, and any other topics related to DSO.

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 maryjpik@hotmai.com and ask to be put on our email list.

At our September meeting we will welcome Jessica Pearson, Service Navigator from Developmental Service Ontario. You may have spoken to Jessica already as she has helped many families to navigate the complexities of DSO. We look forward to hearing from her about how DSO plays a role in supporting our loved ones with developmental disabilities.

Bring your questions about eligibility for DSO, the assessment process, the role DSO plays in accessing resources and services, and any other topics related to DSO. Jessica will endeavour to answer our questions as best she can.

We remind families that contacting DSO directly may be the best way to ask questions relating to your specific needs. Jessica will help to direct you if you want to follow up in this way.

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 during the school year. The next regular meeting will take place October 26. The September 28 meeting will be offered in a workshop format focused on IEPs.

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

Family Resource Coach

During this current COVID-19 health crisis, personal support has become paramount for many families. Erin Sutherland, our Family Resource Coach, is 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.

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.

Programs & Recreation

Carizon Programs

Newcomer Mental Health Program (NMHP)

The Newcomer Mental Health Program provides services to newcomer refugee persons in the Waterloo Region with GAR, PSR or Protected Persons status.

Community Resource Program (CRP)

The Community Resource Program (also known as CRP) provides services to families in the Waterloo Region with children ages 4-17 years.

Children and Parents Connecting (CAPC)

The Children and Parents Connecting program (also known as CAP-C) provides services to families in the Waterloo Region with children between the ages of 0-6.

Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)

The Canadian Prenatal Nutrition (also known as CPNP) provides services to pregnant women and their support persons in the Waterloo Region.

Financial Wellness

The Financial Wellness program provides support to individuals and families in the Waterloo Region seeking support in managing finances.

Pathways to Education

The Pathways to Education program supports like tutoring, groups, and scholarships (and more!) to youth in grades 8-12 living in the Kingsdale and Chandler-Mowat communities. [**Carizon Community Services - Current and Upcoming Free Programming**](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CAMH Mindfulness for Family Caregivers of People with a Neurodevelopmental Disability

Join caregivers of adults with a neurodevelopmental disability from across Canada in a 6-week virtual program to learn about and practice mindfulness. The program will be led by Sue Hutton, a mindfulness teacher with 30 years of experience. The program runs every Friday, from September 23 to October 28, from 1 - 2:30 pm.

[View the program flyer](#)

<https://bit.ly/3KcP6CR>

Monica Place

Monica Place is offering "The Village Drop-In": young parents who live in Waterloo Region are invited to join a weekly drop-in group at Monica Place Waterloo and Monica Place Cambridge. Bus tickets can be provided if needed. Snacks are provided along with time to chat with other young parents and playtime with other children (including music and story time). There is no cost to this group. If you have any questions, please let Judy (judyf@monicaplace.ca) or Andrea (andrear@monicaplace.ca) know.

Women's Crisis Services

The Hope 4 The Future: I AM Youth Education Program is being offered at KDCHC from September to November this fall. I AM is a fun and interactive group available for youth (grades 6-8) that focuses on building empathy to support a healthy future. This eight-week program is designed to teach youth about healthy relationships to help decrease violence in our community. It is a preventative program that uses self-esteem building activities to highlight the importance of having a positive personal self-image. I AM will be held at the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre (44 Francis Street S) on Wednesdays from September 28 – November 16 at 4 pm. Call Angela (519-741-9184 x2005) or Sasha (519-745 4404 x224) to register.

Fun Fearless Females

It was a great summer for Fun Fearless Females! Starting this month, Stretch & Unwind will take place on Mondays throughout the month. Have a look at everything coming up on the Fun Fearless Females website.

[Events — Fun Fearless Females](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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 September virtual group program calendar, for Children and Youth and Young Adults!

<https://www.recrespite.com/virtual-services/>

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!](#)

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

LCOworks is a free online program 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.

KW Habilitation LEG Up!

There are new youth activities at KW Habilitation (for ages 14-21) coming this fall. First is a [Thursday Night Youth Social](#) on Thursday Sept.15, Oct.20, Nov. 17, Dec.15 from 6-8 PM. The other is new [Fall PD Day activities](#) on Monday Oct.24 from 1-3 pm and Friday Nov. 18 from 1-3 pm. [Registration](#) for both opens on August 29.

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](#).

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://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/rec/connect>

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>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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/>

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/

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

<https://www.eafwr.on.ca/programs/community-development/open-space/>

Launch

Launch is an afterschool program offering STEAM programming. Fall dates are coming soon for STEAM League (for kids in grades 3-8) and Littles League (for kids in Kindergarten to grade 2). They are offering virtual and in-person options (run at a location on Erb St in Waterloo). Visit <https://www.launchwaterloo.ca/launch-programs> to learn more about fall programming.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops & Training

Safety For Independent Living

Safety for Independent Living is a personal safety course where people learn life skills that empower them to make safe choices and caring & respectful decisions in their everyday lives both online and offline. During this course, you will learn basic first aid, fire safety and emergency vs. non-emergency scenarios, being assertive vs. bullying, people safety, getting help, tricky people and who safe strangers are, and online safety.

Date: September 19 -23 at 1 -3 pm on Zoom. Contact Saara Zainul, Peel Passport Community Developer, at szainul@cwsds.ca.

CADDAC

Executive Functioning Support Program

This program will provide parents and caregivers with important information about executive functioning and how it impacts children and teens with ADHD. Group members will learn tools and strategies to help them support their children with the areas of executive functioning that are challenging for them, and practice applying them in their homes. September 22 - November 17 at 6:30-8 pm.

[REFOCUS: Reinforcing Executive Functioning with Optimism, Compassion, Understanding, and Support \(Eastern Canada\) - CADDAC](#)

Interactive ADHD Child Parenting Course

Parents and caregivers beginning the ADHD journey. October 6 - November 24 at 6:30-8:30 pm.

[Interactive ADHD Child Parenting Course - CADDAC](#)

VILA (Virtual Inclusive Learning Academy)

VILA is an online campus and part of DANI Toronto Day Program. VILA offers interactive online courses with focus on pre-employment and vocational training, academic development and engaging social opportunities. VILA would be a great opportunity for individuals who have just graduated from high school, for those who currently are not attending in-person programs, or those who enjoy learning from the comfort of their home.

The program is currently accepting new students for the Fall 2022 session which will begin on October 11th, 2022. Visit the website at <https://vila.dani-toronto.com/>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Bridges to Belonging

Choice, Connection, and Community: Bridges to Belonging is running another session of Choice, Connection and Community in September for seniors and older adults! This is a series of four in-person workshops supported by individualized facilitation for you to discover your gifts and strengths, connect them with your interests and passions, and create a plan for social connection and belonging in community. Join us at Chartwell Bankside Retirement Home (71 Bankside Drive, Kitchener), on Wednesdays (September 14, 21, 28 and October 5) from 2-4 pm with an optional 30-minute social at the end of the workshop. Register here: <https://forms.gle/YNiT9MUBKdjQc4Ei9> by September 5!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Events & Webinars

Inspiring Possibilities

Community Living Ontario invites you to register for the Inspiring Possibilities AGM & Conference 2022! For the first time in three years, we will be hosting this event in person at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel & Suites in Richmond Hill from September 14th–16th. [Register Here!](#)

African Family Revival Organization (AFRO)

AFRO is hosting a “Walk with Me” Intergenerational event on September 17 at Waterloo Park. Activities will include, walking, program awareness, and there will be food and entertainment. Join from 1 - 4 pm at the Cook House picnic area at the east side of the park. For more information, contact 519-576-0540 x3731 or email info@afrofamily.ca.

Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)

Employment Law for People with Disabilities: Knowing Your Rights and When to Seek Help
Join DSO Housing Navigators on September 14 at 6:30 pm, to welcome guest speaker John Done, Executive Director, Kingston Community Legal Clinic for this free virtual presentation. This free webinar will be hosted by Martha Beach, Housing Navigator, DSO South-East Region, and Alexandra Shannan, Housing Navigator, DSO Toronto Region. It is open to people with a developmental disability, their family members and/or support networks, and professionals in Ontario.

Questions about this event can be sent to: Martha Beach at mbeach@dsoser.com, or Alexandra Shannan at dsotr.hn@surreyplace.ca.

<https://conta.cc/3PEjWFu>

Save the date – October 26, 2022 9 am – 3 pm

Developmental Services Provincial Housing Strategy Forum – Strengthening Partnerships, Building Communities

In 2017, people with developmental disabilities were highlighted as a priority group in the National Housing Strategy, recognizing the need for affordable housing and appropriate supports. This forum will highlight creative stories and replicable actions being taken towards creating housing inclusivity. In partnership, we can all work together for housing solutions.

Registration links to follow.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Accessibility Standards Canada

Accessibility Standards Canada's annual public meeting is fast approaching, and you are invited! This is its second annual public meeting. The event is free and will happen virtually on September 20 at 1 pm. It will be an opportunity to:

- Learn about the progress we made in the last year;
- Gain a clear understanding of our mandate and plans for the future, toward 2040;
- Hear more about two other key players under the [Accessible Canada Act](#).

For more information, visit our [event page](#). Registration is required for this event. Space is limited. [Register here](#) – you have until September 6 to do so.

If you need help registering or have questions, please contact us by [email](#) or by calling 1-833-854-7628. Closer to the event, we will send participation details to those who are registered. Use this information on the day of the event to join us online. There will also be the option to call in and listen to the event.

Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge and North Dumfries (FCC)

To celebrate World Mental Health Day, FCC will be holding an event to honour its donors, supporters, and community, while also presenting its new agency name and branding. You won't want to miss it! Further details will be sent as we get closer to the event.

When: Tuesday, October 11 from 3 - 5 pm

Where: 1725 Beaverdale Rd., Cambridge.

CADDAC's ADHD Conference

CADDAC's 14th Annual ADHD Conference is back again on October 22 & 23. This year's focus is on lived experiences with ADHD and comorbid conditions like eating disorders, sleep disorders, ASD, anxiety, depression, PTSD, substance use disorder, OCD and more.

[Canada's 2022 ADHD Conference | Oct 22 & 23 | Register now! \(caddac.ca\)](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Aide Canada

Many of Aide Canada's resources relate to autism, but there are also plenty that apply to all disabilities. There is a parent series of "Ask a Question" where families & self-advocates can respond with their experience. There is a resource page where you can borrow books and items and is available Canada wide. Check it out at

www.aidecanada.ca.

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://bit.ly/3QSjSTZ>

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>

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

There is lots of talk right now about Covid-19. 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

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. This course will return on September 14.
- *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](#).

Resources from Inclusion Canada

Pathways to Home Ownership — The Pathways to Homeownership project demonstrated inclusive models of homeownership and created resources to help people with disabilities (and their families) purchase their own homes. Inclusion Canada is currently working on new resources to support Pathways. It will be coming soon. Learn more here: <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.

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 <https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/atech/hitech>.

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](#).

The Royal Mental Health Care & Research

The Royal Mental Health Care & Research is one of Canada’s foremost mental health care, teaching and research hospitals, located in Ottawa. The Institute of Mental Health Research, affiliated with the University of Ottawa, brings together leading mental health professionals, scientists, and technology to gain a deeper understanding of the brain, and investigate innovative approaches to preventing and treating mental illness. To learn about The Royal’s programs, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3dRvlo2>

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

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

Support Groups

Adult ADHD Summer Support Groups

Join CADDAC's new Adult ADHD Support Groups, led by CADDAC trained facilitators, who are all adults with ADHD, with their own ADHD stories. It will run Virtually on Zoom on Thursday nights from 7:30pm-9:00pm EST, according to the schedule offered. Sessions will allow you to share your story or strategies, learn new information and best of all do it with others who understand what it means to be an Adult with ADHD.

shorturl.at/IMSU9

Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH)

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 4000 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. Waterloo PCMH groups will begin meeting again this fall.

[Regular support group meetings](#) will take place Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 22, and Dec 27. The ADHD support group dates will be announced soon. Find your closest child and youth mental health centre here: <https://www.family.cmho.org/>

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/>

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 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.cpbfbpc.org/covid19>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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. 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.

South Asian Wellness Group

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 6 pm to 7:30 pm on Zoom with occasional in-person meetings. 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](#).

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). Starting this fall, meetings will be in-person on Tuesdays from 6-7:30 pm. Sessions start September 27, running until November 15. Contact capc@carizon.ca to register or for more information.

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.

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. This free program is offered Wednesdays at 5:30 - 8 pm this fall, starting September 28, running for ten weeks. Meals are provided and interpreters are available for those who do not speak English. For more information, contact: Janet DeGazon phone: 519.884.0000 x252 email: jdegazon@kwcounselling.com

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

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.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science

University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science is seeking infants aged 18-47 months for a vision study to test for a new way to measure how well babies/toddlers can see. Contact Dr. Lisa Christian lisa.christian@uwaterloo.ca for more information.

YWCA Cambridge

YWCA Cambridge “Roots of Empathy” is seeking families with infants 2-4 months in October. Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based program that has shown a significant effect on reducing levels of aggression among school children while raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. A parent visits a local school classroom with their baby and a trained Roots of Empathy instructor nine times throughout the school year, each time for about 30 minutes. (Note the program runs virtually when necessary) To learn more or sign up, visit <https://www.ywcacambridge.ca/roots-of-empathy/>

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>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CAMH Offline Course on COVID and Health

Registration ends soon for the offline family course on COVID and health. A video link will be emailed to you each week for 6 weeks that you can watch at your leisure. Learn about the My COVID Check-In Tool to improve health care communication, how to "expand the menu" by helping our loved ones with a developmental disability rebuild meaningful activities and routines, and strategies to balance taking care of one's own needs as a caregiver with caregiving demands.

To learn more, email Laura at Laura.StJohn@camh.ca or [complete this form](#).

[Expression of Interest \(camhx.ca\)](#)

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

The City of Kitchener

The City of Kitchener wants feedback from residents about its 2023-2026 strategic plan. [Engage Kitchener](#) gives residents the opportunity to submit their thoughts, participate in an online poll, sharing everything from writing to drawing to videos to express their vision for the future. The City will also host a number of conversations at local community centres.

[September 7, 6:30-8:30 pm at Williamsburg Community Centre](#)

[September 8, 6:30-8:30 pm at Victoria Hills Community Centre](#)

[September 12, 6:30-8:30 pm Centreville Chicopee Community Centre](#)

[September 13, 6:30-8:30 pm Bridgeport Community Centre](#)

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>

Infant and Child Mental Health Lab at York University

The Infant and Child Mental Health Lab at York University is inviting caregivers and their infants (aged 3 to 10 months), to participate in a 2-part online research study. The first part examines caregiver-infant interaction at times when the caregiver is busy with common, everyday tasks. The second part examines the role of caregivers' experiences as they interact with their infants. To learn more about our study, please visit our webpage: <https://bohr.lab.yorku.ca/participate-in-our-studies/> Interested participants can email us directly at yorkparentingproject@gmail.com, or sign up using the form on our webpage.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

Bridges to Belonging

Bridges to Belonging is excited to welcome two new facilitators to our community, Amina Abdulqadir and Nooruddin Hassani. Both facilitators are multilingual, and are already walking alongside individuals with disabilities and their families for whom English is not their first language. As ever, we are committed to building our capacity for people with diverse abilities and identities in our community to have every opportunity to live their BEST lives, as determined by them. With the cultural competence of our new facilitators, their multilingual abilities to speak eight languages between them, and their personal experiences and passion for equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, we can walk alongside more people as they embrace possibilities and live enriched lives as valued citizens in their communities across Waterloo Region. For more information, please email info@bridgestobelonging.ca.

Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT)

[Children and Youth Planning Table](#) has released the 3rd disaggregated [Snapshot Report](#) from the Youth Impact Survey—Gender Identity. This snapshot contains the most differences to date amongst subpopulations. Please take a moment to review.

Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)

In the Spring of 2021, the WRDSB launched its first-ever Student Census. As a part of our commitment to increase transparency and strengthen our partnerships with community partners, we are pleased to now share the results with you.

These results give us a deeper understanding of the cultural, social and demographic makeup of WRDSB students. With data representing over 30,000 WRDSB students, the WRDSB Student Census results will be used to help us better support students. With this information, we will be able to identify differences and gaps in students' experiences and outcomes based on their diverse needs, identities and experiences. You can access our summary reports and supporting documents on our Student Census website: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/about-the-wrdsb/research/student-census/>.