

Where exceptional families thrive.

Issue 135
July 2021

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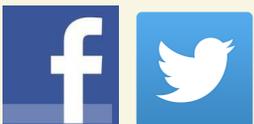
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Summer is here!

While we continue to navigate the ever-changing environment there are a variety of offerings in the community and surrounding area to meet everyone's interests and comfort levels.

We hope you have an opportunity to take some time to rest and enjoy the sunshine!



Support WRFN Today

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

Evening of Elegance @home — WRFN's Signature Event

On May 29, 86 households joined in a fun-filled online culinary experience in support of WRFN. Red Seal Chefs, Kirstie and Jody, from The Culinary Studio entertained and guided us through the preparation of a delicious meal accompanied by paired wines.

Our good friend, Mike Farwell was a terrific Master of Ceremonies. WRFN was pleased to honour and celebrate the dedicated volunteers of the A New Chapter Planning Group as this year's recipients of the Matthew MacGregor Award for Volunteerism for their commitment to this peer-led support group for parents/caregivers interested in preparing for the future of their youth/adult family member with a lifelong disability. Trish Coupal and Monique Kaptein were also introduced as last year's honourees for their dedication to WRFN as founding parents and volunteer Parent Mentors.

Many thanks to our returning sponsors, Melloul-Blamey and Coupal/Markou for their amazing ongoing support and to our silent auction donors. This event would not have been possible without you!

A great time was had by all raising significant funds for WRFN through the event, silent auction and related donations.

A BIG THANK YOU to all who participated in, and supported, this year's event!!!

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Region District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee Update

Submitted by Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region District School Board Representative

Plans for September 2021

Initiatives that may begin next year include Black and Indigenous individuals to serve as coaches for senior high school students to help them reach optimal success during that year and after they graduate.

During the summer, there will be psychologists and social workers building community hubs with agencies, for example, Lutherwood. There is also a helpline being created for parents to be able to speak to those with experience in mental health, it is not a crisis line, but someone will return a call within 48 hours.

For younger students, there will be support for reading and early literacy. There will also be mental health supports, including a social worker, psychologists, and a systems navigator to help families access services they may need.

There was also discussion about training teachers in social emotional learning. One key component is teaching them to look for strengths and assets in every child, and recognizing their talents, interests, and diversity. They are also trying to incorporate these ideas when creating IEPs. Some of this learning is based on Indigenous thought. Some of this learning is being offered to teachers, and paraprofessionals for elementary students, as well as the students themselves.

There was also discussion about the importance of a trauma-informed approach when students return to school. The ideas that were emphasized were the importance of building connection, being both predictable and flexible, delighting in your students and working alongside them to regulate their emotions.

In terms of the budget, it is a little higher than last year which means the staff the Board has hired from grant funding will remain, including the psychologists and mental health consultants. Other staff including Educational Assistants and Child and Youth Workers will also be remaining, although it was noted that this is still under representative of the needs of students. There is also more money available to purchase more technology through the Educational and Community Partnership Program.

The next WRDSB SEAC meeting will be held virtually on September 8, 2021.

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee Update *Submitted by Kovats, WRFN SEAC Representative*

To wrap up this school year's meetings of SEAC, Gerald Foran, Superintendent of Learning (Special Education) presented the plans for the 2021/2022 Professional Development (PD) for support staff.

A wide range of topics will be covered including, Universal Supports, ASD, ADHD, Mental Wellness and Assistive Technology.

Our CYCWs will also take part in more intensive and targeted training throughout the school year. Some topics will include the PEERS program, Behavioural Skills Training and Mental Health.

Our committee also took time to watch (or re-watch for long-term members) the PAAC on SEAC video Modules and discuss the material presented. These videos are a great introduction to what SEAC is and how SEAC operates. This is a great way to ensure that we are continuing to provide the best advocacy for the students we serve.

Trustees provided an update which can be found here <https://www.wcdsb.ca/wcdsb-board-meeting-bulletin-may-2021/>

Association updates were also shared.

We look forward to a safe and healthy summer and will meet again in September to kick off the 2021/2022 school year!

Of Joy and Sorrow

By Carmen Sutherland, Coffee Club Facilitator

My Coffee Club friends might be able to tell you how much I like humor and joy. I tease them often and I love when they tease me...my favourite times at Coffee Club are when we laugh. This same spirit is why I like to write what I hope are uplifting articles for this newsletter. But I do not feel uplifted today. I feel burdened by the news we are hearing about the children in the residential schools. I hurt because of all of the racism that exists everywhere. I hurt because of the devastating effects of COVID-19. That's where I am today...or at least that is one place.

Then I think of my Coffee Club friends, how even after all this time we are still "us." What a joy it was to see some Coffee Clubbers in summer clothes and sitting in their yards. A little part of me wanted to sing "School's out for the summer!" even though I will still be seeing them on Thursdays from 3-4. I think of how much I enjoy seeing the WRFN team over Zoom, too, even though it makes me ache a little for what I used to think of as "Packed-Office Wednesdays" before COVID. I think of how much I loved hearing the beautiful story of **Matthew MacGregor** and his neighbour during the Evening of Elegance and how much I wish he was here right now so that we could meet one another. I guess the point is that joy and sorrow often exist together, and we must sit in that tension. If you are sitting in that tension today, I sit with you. Those are the words I have for this month, I hope they help those of you reading to feel seen.

What's Happening at WRFN



A NEW CHAPTER

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

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

JULY 6, 2021

*Connection Time:
Come and share what's on
your mind, challenges,
successes, questions*

AUGUST 3, 2021

*Transition to the Fall:
What does Fall 2021 look
like from here?*

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

RSVP to Mary at
maryjpike@hotmail.com if
you would like to join us.



What's Happening at WRFN

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

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

Ask A Self-Advocate

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

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info. To request a booking please complete the [request form](#).

Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! We currently meet on Zoom, usually on Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 PM.

Generally, we are just catching up and chatting, mixed with a little bit of watching YouTube.

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

Parent Mentor Program

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

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

If you would like to learn more please contact Sue Simpson at Sue.Simpson@wrfn.info.

School-Issue Parent Support Group

This peer-led group provides support, advice and a safe environment for parents who have questions or concerns about school issues affecting their children with special needs.

The WRFN School Issues Support Group will not meet in July. We will meet again in August (date to be determined). We will resume our regular meeting schedule - the second Tuesday (10 - 11:30 am) and the last Wednesday (7 - 8:30 pm) - in September. In the meantime, please reach out to Sue Simpson at sue.simpson@wrfn.info or 519-886-9150 ext 1 if you are looking for school support.

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, 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. We encourage you to reach out. Call Sue at 519-886-9150 ext. 4 or email Sue.Furey@wrfn.info

Steph's Corner

My Special Sibling

Do you have a special person in your life? One of my special people is my sibling. Beth is my big sister. She is also on my Dream Team, which is my circle of support. She is the best sister ever!

Why do I have a Special Relationship with my Sibling?

- Beth treats me like a regular sister and not someone with special needs. She lets me try things and do things like everyone else.
- Beth keeps in touch with me by texting, face-timing or calling me. She knows what is going on in my life. She always knows about my medical appointments and asks how they went.
- Beth asks me to do things with her and she invites me for sleepovers at her apartment. She also asks me to spend time with her and her friends, i.e. having supper, taking her friend's baby for a walk in the stroller.
- When I stay at Beth's, we usually get to have a treat! Sometimes we have chips, diet pop or gelato.
- When I am sad, Beth cheers me up. She listens to me and we have good chats. She waits for me to get my words out.
- Beth teases me and she is fun to be around. We have lots of fun together!
- We like doing a lot of the same things and so we often do them together, i.e. shopping, baking muffins, spending time in her garden, watching TV shows, doing crafts, going for walks, riding our bikes.
- Even though I don't like hugs very much, I will sometimes give Beth a big hug! I know that she loves me.

Whether it is your sibling or someone else that you have a special relationship with, make sure you let them know how special they are to you. Here are some ideas:

- Tell them that you like spending time with them!
- Make a card and tell them how much they mean to you.
- Do something special for them, i.e. give them a photo of the two of you, have a jigsaw puzzle or a mug made with a photo of the two of you on it, organize a surprise Birthday Zoom party for them.

We all need special people in our lives and I am so happy to have my big sister, Beth.



Information, Opportunities & Resources

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

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

EVENTS

Making Space for Dialogue Conversations with Our Place

The Muslim community and the Indigenous communities in Canada are particularly under stress and the need for safe spaces for their open dialogue is essential to their healing.

Our Place has organized two separate opportunities for these communities to come together to dialogue about the stress they are experiencing. Our Place is offering a safe space for sharing and providing your family with tools and supports for stress and big feelings.

These events will have facilitators from the Muslim and Indigenous communities.

Please note the event for Muslim families was held in June.

Dialogue Space for Indigenous Families will be on Thursday, July 15 at 6:30pm

For more information or to register for the event please email: ourplace@ourplacekw.ca

Youth Summer Fun Fiesta

Small group in-person events for youth ages 12+. Events include:

- Huron Natural Area
- Photo Filter — Girls Day
- Heal and Rebuild
- My Inner Zen
- Summer Fun Beach Day

For more information visit: <https://bit.ly/3gWuem8>

PROGRAMS/RECREATION

Torchlight Service: Connect Virtual Adult Programming

Torchlight's Connect Program offers a variety of fun interactive activities for a small membership fee.

The Virtual Program team assists and supports participants in resolving technical issues, basic education on how to access online programs, program schedules and reminders via email.

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Adults in Motion

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

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

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

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

Recreational Respite Virtual Services

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

Check out information about their virtual services at <https://bit.ly/2KHe2la>.

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

Links: A Virtual Experience for Youth

LINKS is an initiative offered by Bridges to Belonging to empower youth supported by family and kin to build a network of meaningful, supportive relationships and community connections that reduce social isolation and build resilience to overcome barriers to inclusion.

Who can attend? Youth, aged 14-24, who must attend with 1-2 other significant people they choose.

Learn more or register at <https://bit.ly/3h67240>.

Shadow Lake Centre

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

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

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sunbeam Community & Development Services Summer Camps

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

March of Dimes Connect & Share

Wouldn't it be wonderful to visit with someone regularly who shares your interests? March of Dimes virtual Connect & Share program was designed to make that happen. You will be matched with a volunteer who shares your interests and your buddy will visit with you (as often as you like) – just for the fun of it.

You can have phone visits or you can have a video call using a platform like Zoom.

<https://bit.ly/3906Lfl>

BE-Connected Virtual Hangout

Bridges to Belonging is offering a place to virtually hangout, meet new people and talk about what's happening in your world.

Wednesday from 7:00-8:00pm | Use the following Zoom link to join: <https://bit.ly/3iHFwdm>.

Artshine Virtual Accessible Art For Kids, Teens & Adults

Social distancing need not rob you of the joy that comes from expanding your art skills! We've got live video lessons via Zoom for all ages, with art supplies mailed to you in advance!

Maximum 20 participants for personalized attention.

Click [here](#) for more information!

Be Friends

In the Be Friends program you can be a Friend to a Volunteer Buddy. You will spend quality time with your Buddy in the community and do fun activities to build a friendship together! For ages 17+.

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

Our Place KW - Family Resource and Early Years Centre

Our Place continues to offer a variety of programming opportunities.

Stork Secrets—Pregnancy and postpartum adjustment peer support. Learn more about this free virtual program [here](#).

Head over to <https://www.ourplacekw.ca/programs> for a full list of programs and registration information.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Life Lessonz Virtual Day Camp

Life Lessonz Inc. is a registered charity dedicated to providing a structured and engaging summer day program for young adults with developmental disabilities. Their focus is on encouraging our participants to make decisions, create new experiences, and communicate their feelings.

This year, thanks to grants and donations, they have developed an interactive and free virtual program to connect with individuals and celebrate all abilities.

July 12—August 6 | <https://bit.ly/35W84KM>

Province-Wide Monthly Virtual Groups for Adults with FASD

The Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at ABLE2 is happy to announce the first two Province-wide virtual groups for adults living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD):

- FASD Educational Group
- FASD Social Group

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

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

EarlyON Waterloo Region

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

You can enjoy LIVE groups Monday-Saturday on their Facebook page [@EarlyONWR](https://www.facebook.com/EarlyONWR). No registration required.

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

Check their website earlyyearsinfo.ca for registered programs and new songs/activities every week.

Steckle Heritage Farm Agriventure Summer Day Camp

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

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

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

For more information visit <https://bit.ly/3gU28rL>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

Opportunities Through Lutherwood

Become an Indeed Super-Star — Indeed is a very well known job board used by employers and job seekers: attend this webinar to build your confidence on how to use the site and gain some tips to learn strategies to help you find suitable work! <https://bit.ly/3f56j3F>

Modern Approach to Interviewing — Struggling to prepare for interviews? Not sure how to give the right answer? Attend to learn how to prepare for interviews! <https://bit.ly/3vPPm31>

Technology to Support Independence

Join DSO Housing Navigators for a virtual presentation on various types of technological assistance available today and how it might be used to support independence.

July 7, 1:30-2:30pm <https://conta.cc/3wZP21R> OR

July 21, 6:30-7:30pm <https://conta.cc/3h4Nq1r>

Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities Workshop: Getting Ready for Summer

Now that vaccinations are underway, what can we expect this summer? Dr. Yona Lunsky sat down with Dr. Ullanda Niel, Family Physician, Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities, for a conversation to answer COVID-19 questions from family caregivers on what to expect as we head into summer. This webinar recording is now available on our YouTube channel, so if you missed the live event, you can still check it out! <https://youtu.be/6-cNdJdFdGQ>

Halton Sexual Confidence Workshop

This workshop provides opportunities to discuss sexuality in an open, light hearted way using visual, tactile and interactive learning strategies. It will foster communication about sexuality and relationships between adults with a developmental disability and the people who support them, all while providing tangible skills and materials to promote healthy sexuality.

July 8 to July 13, 6:30-7:30pm

To register or for more information contact Kelsey at 905-510-3852 or kgillian@cwdsds.ca

Workshops: Creative Interventions for Children with ADHD

While there are many different approaches to treating children with ADHD, engaging interventions will motivate children to learn skills to help them address deficits such as short attention span, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn new and innovative approaches to help get children motivated, focused, organized, and performing closer to their true potential.

July 15, 9am—12pm | <https://bit.ly/35QRko6>

The Ontario Caregiver Organization

Online Webinar - Everyday Resilience in Times of Uncertainty: How to Protect Your Core

July 29; 12 - 1 pm

Everyday resilience is one way to support the caregiver as they support others, making the hard parts of caregiving more doable. Learn more about this webinar [here](#).
Learn more about other Resources & Education Opportunities [here](#).

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 skills and strategies to bond with your children. Learn about teaching your children important topics such as emotions, health and communication.

When: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30pm Where: Zoom

Contact Sarah 226-339-5616 or capc@carizon.ca to register or for more information.

How to Be a Good Roommate Workshops

Interactive virtual sessions with activities, discussions and videos.

Upcoming Workshops:

Basic Workshops (Free 1hr) - Morning Options 10-11am: Aug 24, Sept. 28, Oct. 26

Evening Option 7-8pm: Nov 30

Full Workshops (\$150: Four Sessions) 1st option: Sept. 8, 15, 22 & 29, 1-2:30pm

2nd option: Oct. 13, 20, 27 & Nov. 3, 1-2:30pm

For more information contact Liana Arnold, larnold@christian-horizons.org or 647-354-5034.

Positive Parenting “Snap Shot” Series

This series of one-hour positive parenting “snap shots” will get you thinking about your choices as a parent and help you develop strategies. Each session stands alone. You can attend just one or all of them. They are presented on Zoom and registration is required.

Connection or Correction How do they Work Together: August 17, 8-9pm

Encouragement or Praise What is the Difference: July 14, 7-8pm OR July 29, 7-8pm

To register or get more information, email: parenting@kwcounselling.com.

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC)

Upcoming Events & Workshops

SOAR (Some Assembly Required) Transition Planning Program — For children in grades 7-9 with a LD or ADHD looking to prepare for the changes of high school. This program starts July 5.

Executive Skills Program — The aim of this program is to help children with learning disabilities and ADHD with skills associated with executive functioning. This program starts July 6.

Social Skills Program — This program assists in the development of social skills and social problem-solving strategies, while also promoting self-esteem and self-advocacy.

This program starts July 6.

Typing Program — Keyboarding is one of the most important skills for students to learn. This program is an effective way to learn & improve on typing skills. This program starts Aug. 3.

LDA Parent Conference — A virtual conference held August 4.

To learn more about any of these programs visit <https://ldawc.ca/events.html>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Oh! The Places You'll Go!!

Virtual Transition Planning Presentation for Waterloo Region

Intended for caregivers and/or students (aged 15-21). This presentation discusses the school transition plan, making the transition from school to adult life, how and when to connect to adult developmental services, Passport funding (community participation funding allocated to eligible individuals), Ontario Disability Support Program, and Service Coordination.

Watch the presentation at: https://youtu.be/arOW_HE9IZE.

Groups from Muslim Social Services

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

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

Monday, 5:00-6:00pm.

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

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

To learn about any of these programs contact:

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

Safety for Independent Living

Passport Community Developers are hosting a number of virtual Safety for Independent Living sessions. This is a personal safety course where people learn lifeskills that empower them to make safe choices and caring and respectful decisions in their everyday lives both online and offline.

September 21-24, 6:00-8:00pm

October 18-22, 1:00-3:00pm

November 8-12, 3:00-5:00pm

December 6-10, 10:00-12:00pm

Location: Virtually (Zoom) Cost: \$55 — Passport funding admissible

Contact Amanda Paradis, Waterloo Passport Community Developer to register aparadis@cwsds.ca.

RESOURCES

Information from Family Alliance Ontario

The following information has been shared from Family Alliance Ontario:

[DANEO Newsletter](#)

[FAO response letter re: Reform](#)

[ODC and FAO letter re: Family Managed Home Care & Guardianship](#)

[Recording from May FKS — Michael Bach: Supported Decision Making](#), Password: 3tVPb3g#

[ODSP My Benefit Link](#)

[Consultation on National Disability Plan Survey](#)

[JFCY - Enhancing Access to Special Education Project \(EASE\)](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Shared Connections

Inclusive and Accessible Tech Support

Shared Connections can help you get connected, finding & adapting technologies to meet your unique needs. Shared Connections is a non-profit committed to inclusion for people with multiple disabilities.

www.sharedconnections.ca

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

Summer Camp Information

The KidsAbility website shares important information about summer camps.

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

You can also find a Summer Camp Directory on the KidsAbility website or the WRFN Blog.

The information is provided to assist families with identifying camps that offer specialized programming for children and youth with disabilities, or inclusive camps that are welcoming to all abilities and may provide additional supports to those with special needs. You can find this information at: <https://www.kidsability.ca/camp-directory-summer> OR <https://bit.ly/3rdSKRO>.

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>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

KidsAbility Resources

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

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

ConnectAbility.ca COVID-19 Resources

Supporting individuals, families and caregivers

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

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

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

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

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

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 get you set up.

To learn more visit shorturl.at/yEGK3.

CNIB Scholarships & Awards

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

Click here to learn more about these opportunities and to apply: <https://bit.ly/3wZ6jYN>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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.

<http://www.ontarioyouthcan.org/>

SUPPORT GROUPS

Ontario-Wide Virtual Support Group for Black parents and caregivers

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

Location/Meetings: This is a volunteer run group that meets on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. via ZOOM. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees. **PLEASE NOTE: The group is taking a break for July and August and will resume their twice monthly meetings in September.**

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

Chronic Pain Monthly Support Group

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

Contact intaketeam@carizon.ca for more information or to register.

Parents for Children's Mental Health Virtual Peer Support Group

Family/Caregiver Support Group — The fourth Tuesday of each month from 7-8:30pm

ADHD Caregiver Support Group — The third Wednesday of each month from 7-9pm

Group information is available by emailing waterloo@pcmh.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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!

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

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

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

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

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

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County Virtual Peer Support Network

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

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

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

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

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario

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

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

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Family Alliance Ontario Survey

Family Alliance Ontario is asking for your participation in a survey intended to learn more about how students with disabilities are being serviced by public school boards at this time. This survey will give Integration Action for Inclusion an idea of whether COVID-19 is changing what placement options families would normally opt for as well as whether your placement options have been influenced by resource allocations or other decisions that school boards make.

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

Advocacy Kit for Increasing Special Services at Home

People for Personalized Funding (PFPF) has created an advocacy kit for increasing Special Services at Home.

[Bulletin from PFPF about Special Services at Home](#)
[How to Take Action](#)

Survey: Use of Services for 0-6 Children by Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMHP) at the Hospital for Sick Children, in collaboration with the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (The Centre), Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN) and Children First would like to hear your thoughts about how our child and youth mental health system can improve the quality of services for children under 6 throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/39fKVFe>.

CAMH Virtual Healthcare Study for Patients with Developmental Disabilities

During COVID-19 there has been a huge increase in the delivery of virtual primary care. CAMH is conducting interviews (online or by phone) to learn what is working well and what needs to be improved to support high quality care for patients with developmental disabilities.

Interested or want to learn more?

Contact Avra Selick at avra.selick@camh.ca or 416-535-8501x30127

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The Sibling Collaborative Survey

The Sibling Collaborative is doing a survey of siblings to discover what kinds of information they would like to receive as to help their role in planning.

Take the survey at: <https://bit.ly/3dd4VtZ>.

Consultation: Initial recommendations for the development of proposed Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) Education Accessibility Standards

Submit your feedback on the recommendations for proposed standards to help make K-12 education more accessible for students with disabilities. Closing September 2, 2021.

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

Participate in Online Emotion Research

This online study is looking at the emotional life of adolescents 12-18 with ASD, ADHD, or neurotypical controls. Participants and their caregiver will complete a few questionnaires and will receive a \$20 and a \$10 Amazon gift card for their time.

If you are interested contact asd@queensu.ca.

Do You Have a Child with Cerebral Palsy Between the Ages of 8 & 18?

Investigating physiological risk factors and mental health in children with CP.

Looking for kids with CP and one of their parents to participate in a new research study.

Learn more about the study [here](#).

Research Volunteers Needed: Young Black Women with Mental Health Concerns

Are you a Young Black Woman aged 18-25 years living in Toronto? Do you sometimes feel depressed, anxious, experience mood variance, or feel overwhelmed by daily life demands?

Learn more [here](#).