

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 182
July 2025

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Please Note the "*" represents new items added this month.

What's In This Issue?

In case the heatwave last week didn't make it incredibly apparent...it's officially summer vacation! And with it comes many things to celebrate. The team at WRFN is excited to celebrate Disability Pride Month this July by watching some of our favourite inclusive movies and shows and embracing all the unique qualities of our diverse team and larger community.

WRFN is also celebrating six years of participation from two of our departing board members, Karen Klink and Samantha Brewer. While we wish them well in their departure, we also welcome back another team member from her maternity leave.

As always, the new month brings a host of new programs, events, and resources to share with all the parents, caregivers, self-advocates and professionals in Waterloo Region. Be sure to check out updates on EarlyON drop ins, Kaleidoscope Kids, and information on the upcoming Canada Disability Benefit.



Support WRFN

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

SEAC Updates

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

This month at SEAC, WRDSB Staff came to give a literacy presentation. They discussed the changes that have come from the Right to Read Program, including the fact that there will be a revised language curriculum for Grade 1 to 8 and a revised Grade 9 English Curriculum. There will also be a revised Kindergarten Curriculum. All of the teaching will be relevant and inclusive of the various cultures of students. They discussed the three tiers of support. The first tier, which is believed to help 90% of students, will involve universal design and differentiated instruction for all students. Tier 2 involves specific, targeted instruction for a small group, and Tier 3 refers to intensive instructions to close gaps in student understanding.

A universal screening tool is also mandatory. The staff has learned based on SEAC's questions from our last meeting, that no student is to be exempt. In some scenarios this has led to unexpected successes, if a student was not able to interact with the tool in the prescribed way they found ways for the student to answer, for example: If the student could not write or interact with the tool a teacher/instructor would help them communicate their answer, the teacher points to something that begins with the "r" sound, the student would find something or gesture the answer.

In terms of other details about assessment and instruction, there were Early Reading Resource Teachers (ERRTs) who were there for schools who requested it. For the first three rounds of the instruction and intervention EERTs and teachers worked together to plan, assess, and teach together, as well as allowing teachers to give Tier 2 support to students so that those students can work with someone they know well. During the fourth round, the EERT's would work with Tier 2 students themselves.

In terms of shifts in practice, there are reading support teachers at every grade level as well as education and technology to support literacy instruction. One major gap in support is for students who do not have basic literacy skills, such as students with exceptionalities and English language learners. One way to help with this is for EERTs and Speech Language Pathologists to collaborate.

The budget was also brought up at this meeting. The plan is to maintain current special education staff, and in some cases there may be increases. **The next SEAC meeting will take place virtually on September 10, 2025.**

What's Happening at WRFN

WRFN programs and services are available in person. Supports are also available through phone and email connections and through other virtual formats. Please reach out and let us know how we can help you and your family.

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 or call 226-753-9090.

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. For more information, please contact Lisa Cook at lisa.cook@wrfn.info.

Family Resource Coach

Our Family Resource Coaches are available to meet in person, 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 opportunities available in our community.

Call Lisa Cook at 226-338-7274 or email lisa.cook@wrfn.info
Call Leah Bowman at 226-898-9301 or email leah.bowman@wrfn.info

Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! Coffee Club currently meets on Zoom, usually on Thursdays from 3 - 4 pm. Generally, the group just enjoys catching up and chatting, mixed with a little bit of watching YouTube. Coffee Club is meeting in-person two Mondays each month from 7 - 9 pm.

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



WRFN extends our heartfelt thanks to Board members Karen Klink (2019 – 2025) and Samantha Brewer (2019 – 2025). Please join us in celebrating Karen and Sam as they mark the end of an incredible six-year commitment to our board. Karen has been Chair of the board for the past four years. Sam took on the role of Treasurer for much of her time on the board. WRFN is grateful for their leadership and shared passion of making Waterloo Region a more inclusive and supportive place for everyone. The team shares fond memories of connecting with Karen and Sam at events like Evening of Elegance, and we look forward to their continued presence at future events.

Thank you, Karen and Sam, for your dedication to the family network and for being champions of our cause! We can't wait to see what you continue to accomplish in both your professional and personal lives. Cheers to six years!

Welcome Back!



Rachel Cave


Communications and Marketing Coordinator

Help us extend a warm welcome back to Rachel, WRFN's Communications and Marketing Coordinator, who has been away on a year-long maternity leave. Rachel is excited to bring the fresh perspective she gained as a new parent into her work!



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



 226-338-7274

 lisa.cook@wrfn.info

WRFN Drop-Ins at EarlyON

Meet with Lisa, WRFN Family Resource Coach

Lisa hosts in-person drop-in meetings at various EarlyON locations. Meetings do not require an appointment, but are on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit www.wrfn.info/events for drop-in dates and locations!



www.wrfn.info

Lisa's EarlyON Drop-Ins will be **paused for July and August**. They will resume again in the fall. Please check our upcoming September Issue of Family Pulse for an update.



July is...

Disability Pride Month





SPECTRUM ON THE SPECTRUM



THE FIRST SUNDAY
OF EACH MONTH
6:30-8:30PM

A monthly drop-in group for queer and trans people in the Autistic community in Waterloo Region (Ages 18+)

info@wrfn.info | info@ourspectrum.com

Spectrum
Event Calendar





*Parents and Caregivers
Supporting Each Other*

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.

Our **"Ask Us Anything"** feature from 9-9:30 pm is a chance for those who attend the meeting to ask questions on any topic or clarify points when the main part of the meeting is over.

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



July 8, 2025

In-Person Gathering at
Huron Conservation Area

Get to know other parents and caregivers of youth and adults with disabilities!

Join A New Chapter families on Tuesday, July 8 at 7 pm for a hike (about 40 minutes or a shorter option), or sit and enjoy the outdoors from your chair.

After the hike, we'll come together for conversation and sharing. Please bring a lawn chair, sun protection, hydration, and comfortable walking shoes.

Alternative plans will be made in the case of bad weather.

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

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



July 19 or August 16 (3:00-4:00 pm)

EarlyON | Oak Creek (80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener)

Register at www.KEYON.ca on our EarlyON | Oak Creek calendar.

For support with registration call (519) 741-8585 ext.3001

As special needs families, life is constantly changing but together we can help each other see that it remains beautiful.

Come play, connect, support and be supported as we bring our differences together.

Kaleidoscope Kids is a free pre-registered program for children under 8 years of age and their parent or caring adult. You are encouraged to bring your children with special needs, siblings or come by yourself.

If you have any questions, please reach out to info@wrfn.info.

A partnership program of:



Apply for the **Canada Disability Benefit**



What You Need to Know...

As of **June 20, 2025**, individuals can apply for the CDB **online**, by **phone**, or **in person at a Service Canada Centre**.

Persons with disabilities between the **ages of 18 to 64** can apply for the benefit if they have qualified for the **disability tax credit** and meet the benefit's other **eligibility requirements**.

If you already receive the disability tax credit...

Individuals who are potentially eligible for the benefit (those who qualify for the disability tax credit and meet most of the eligibility criteria) will **receive a letter in the mail in June**. This will include a **unique application code** to access a streamlined online application or an automated Interactive Voice Response phone application.

If you still need to apply...

If you don't receive a letter and think you may be eligible, **apply for the benefit through the standard online application** or a **paper application** available in a printable form (for submission via **mail or at a Service Canada Centre**).

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/disability/canada-disability-benefit>

Looking for assistance? For more information, please contact any of the following:

Trena Barnes at trena.barnes@eafwr.on.ca

Edward Faruzel at efaruzel@kwaccessability.ca

Sue Simpson at sue.simpson@wrfn.info

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

KW Habilitation: YEP Social – Summer 2025 Session*

KW Habilitation is offering a series of engaging YEP Social events for youth and young adults ages 13 to 25. These summer sessions provide opportunities to connect with peers while participating in fun, food-themed activities. Each event includes a hands-on experience, time to socialize, and a delicious treat. Sessions take place at KW Habilitation, with the specific location noted for each event. Registration fees apply as listed.

Build Your Own Poutine – \$50

On Tuesday, July 8 from 6 pm to 8 pm, participants will gather at Bullas Hall to prepare their own personalized poutine using a variety of toppings. The evening will conclude with baking and enjoying a s'mores dessert together.

Karaoke and Ice Cream Sundaes – \$50

This event takes place on Tuesday, July 22 from 6 pm to 8 pm at Bullas Hall. Participants will enjoy a fun evening of karaoke, singing with friends, and creating their own ice cream sundaes with a variety of toppings.

Cheesy Pizza Sliders – \$50

Scheduled for Tuesday, August 5 from 6 pm to 8 pm at Bullas Hall, this session invites participants to join in making cheesy pizza sliders. The evening includes time to eat, socialize, and enjoy the company of friends in a relaxed setting.

Summer Smoothies & Strawberry Shortcake – \$50

On Tuesday, August 19 from 6 pm to 8 pm, participants will meet at Bullas Hall to prepare fresh strawberry shortcake topped with whipped cream. They will also blend summer smoothies using a variety of fresh fruits, creating a tasty and refreshing experience.

To learn more or register for a session, [click here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community of Hearts Youth Job Skills Program*

This 12-week program empowers youth (ages 15-29) with developmental disabilities to develop essential job skills. The program includes 4 weeks of interactive workshops on resume building, interview tips, and 8 weeks of hands-on experience at Boxes of Hearts Social Enterprise, where participants gain real-world skills by making and selling products. This free program runs multiple times a year and includes online resources! Along with job experience and training, participants of this program receive a certificate of completion and can count on references for future employment endeavours. Email or call to register at 519-826-9056 or info@communityofhearts.ca.

KW Habilitation: The Hangout at Grant's Café*

Join KW Habilitation at The Hangout at Grant's Café on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 – 11 am. No purchase is necessary, but there will be coffee, tea, other drinks, and snacks to buy. The space will be inviting, comfortable and a place where everyone is welcome!

Learn more at <https://kwhab.ca/the-hangout-at-grants-cafe-opens-april-1/>

Sunbeam Community Outreach Program*

The Sunbeam Community Outreach program is a welcoming community rooted in respect and dignity, where individuals with developmental disabilities can grow their talents, build meaningful relationships, and feel supported in a safe, inclusive environment. The On-site Day Program at Kingsway Drive runs Monday to Friday, 9 am to 3 pm, year-round (excluding holidays and summer closures). This fee-for-service program accepts Passport funding. The program team will work with you to tailor an individualized activity schedule. To learn more about the program, contact Nicole Tailby, Supervisor of the Community Outreach Program at n.tailby@sunbeamcommunity.ca.

Special Olympics

Visit the Special Olympics events calendar to get additional information, resources and registration links for events coming up in Kitchener-Waterloo.

<https://www1.specialolympicsontario.com/events/calendar/>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Level Up Youth Advisory Group (YAG)*

Level Up is recruiting for their first ever Youth Advisory Group (YAG). The Level Up Youth Advisory Group (YAG) is a space for young people (ages 12–16) to shape the design of Level Up's play-based social justice and civic action programming for kids aged 9–12. As a YAG member, you'll meet with other youth semi-monthly for 16 sessions from September 2025 - May 2026 to co-create programs that empower your peers and contribute to a more just, equitable, and inclusive community. Applications are open until August 15. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Programs from Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region

Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region is excited to announce various programs to engage and support the community. Here's the list of upcoming programs:

Mindful Gardening

From May 9 until October 24, Fridays at 11:30 am for 2 hours are more than just planting seeds—it's about cultivating wellness, connection, and sustainability. In partnership with Crow Shield Lodge and Wisahkotewinowak, we empower seniors, foster intergenerational bonds, address food insecurity, and celebrate Indigenous land-based knowledge. Through mindful gardening, we're nurturing not only the earth but also the hearts of our community.

Kids Summer Camp*

Registration Now Open! This August, MSSWR is offering a vibrant and engaging summer camp for children ages 6–12. Weekly sessions will run from August 5 to 29, 2025, from 9:30 am to 3 pm. Cost: \$150 per child (\$10 discount for each additional sibling). To register, visit: www.msswr.org/ourprograms For subsidy inquiries or more information, contact: info@msswr.org For more details and to register, please visit www.msswr.org/ourprograms.

Belwood Lodge and Camp: Summer 2025

Belwood Lodge and Camp offers a memorable summer experience for children, youth, and adults with developmental disabilities. Located near Guelph at 322 Third Street in Belwood, the camp provides engaging sessions throughout July and August 2025. Registration is still open for campers to enjoy a wide variety of activities, including music, dance, swimming, adaptive sports, science and nature exploration, campfires, and group games.

To register or learn more, visit belwoodlodgeandcamp.com or email office@belwoodlodgeandcamp.com.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Camp Shalom: Summer Camp Registration Now Open*

Camp Shalom is now accepting registrations for its 2025 summer camp sessions for adults with special needs. With over 30 years of experience, Camp Shalom offers meaningful and fun-filled vacations while also providing much-needed respite for caregivers. Many guests return year after year and look forward to the friendships, activities, and support offered by the camp community.

Camp sessions are open to individuals aged 18+ and begin at \$1350 (tax exempt). Camp runs from Sunday evening drop-off at 6–7 pm to Friday pick-up at 5 pm. Payment plans are available to help spread out fees, and flexible options such as mailing in a cheque or paying in full by credit card are also offered. A receipt will be provided for all payment methods and may be used for Passport Funding reimbursement.

Session Dates:

- Special Support & Special Arts: June 29–July 4, July 13–18, July 27–August 1
- Special Sports/Trek: July 6–11, July 20–25, August 3–8, August 10–15

[Click here to register or learn more.](#)

EarlyON Programming

You can now register for EarlyON programming. You and your family are invited to [drop in to an EarlyON location](#) throughout Waterloo Region and in the City of Stratford. Specialty and online programs that require pre-registration are also available. Check out the [KEyON calendars](#) for more information. To view the monthly program calendars by site, or to register for specialty programs, login to your [KEyON](#) account and select the EarlyON location of your choice.

Cambridge Family Early Years Centre

[Cambridge Family Early Years Centre](#) is offering “Young Parents Connect,” a free family program for pregnant and parenting youth, Tuesdays from 1-3 pm. Call the centre at 519-741-8585 for the next session start date. Each week the group cooks a meal to enjoy together and discuss a parenting topic/resource/service that is of interest to the group. At the end of each session, join EarlyON staff for a fun interactive circle time with the children. Cambridge Family Early Years Centre, Unit 105, 73 Water Street North, Cambridge, Ontario.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Ontario Caregiver Organization*

The Ontario Caregiving Organization has a number of [resources and e-learning opportunities](#) for caregivers, healthcare workers, volunteers, and employers available on its website. A new and improved [SCALE Program](#) will also begin Fall 2025. The SCALE (Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment) Program can provide you with skills you need to find a balance between your caregiving responsibilities and personal needs.

MoveMeant For All

Inclusive fitness training for all individuals with special needs, mental health, trauma and more. Contact Courtney Hughes at 519-503-4489 or move.meantforall@gmail.com.

Woolwich Counselling Centre: Autism and ADHD Counselling

Woolwich Counselling Centre is offering counselling for autistic individuals and those with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), both with and without hyperactivity. The two professionals running it are Kate Suffling, an Occupational Therapist, who provides individualized assessment and support. She helps clients build executive functioning skills such as time management, planning, prioritizing, and organization. The other is Jessie Quinn, a Registered Social Worker, who offers support to parents of children with ADHD or autism. She assists in emotional regulation and helps increase independence in children. For more information, visit www.woolwichcounselling.org/adhd-services/.

Region-wide tutoring information

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health provides tutoring and homework spaces that are accessible and free of cost to families and students. They are offering summer school tutoring through the month of July. For more information, visit www.caminowellbeing.ca/tutoring.

Karis & Humber College's Culinary Skills Development & Employment Program

Get hands-on kitchen training from professional chefs through in-person & virtual ETraining with Humber College's Culinary Skills Development & Employment Program. This program is open to adults 18+ with a developmental disability. Learn more and fill out an [application here](#), then email your application to torontoemployment@karis.org.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Ready. Set. READ!...

Kitchener Public Library: Ready. Set. READ!...is a program for JK, SK and Grade 1 students. Through stories, literacy games and reading in small groups with volunteers the program aims to show kids reading can be fun! Sign up online [here](#) or by phone 519-743-0271 x261.

CNIB's Virtual Program Offerings

Whether it's children and youth groups, employment, 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 [here](#).

Sunbeam

Sunbeam's Recreation & Wellness Program enhances the quality of life of program participants. With a focus on recreation, socialization, inclusion, and community, including both physical and emotional wellness, the Recreation & Wellness team provides fun and engaging programming at various community locations.

- Offered as a fee-for-service option to individuals living with a developmental disability.
- Program participation is an eligible activity for the use of Passport Funds.
- For all activities and events, participants must be accompanied by their own support person or a family member.

For more information about this program, its calendar of upcoming events, and how to register please click to visit: www.sunbeamcommunity.ca/recreation-wellness-program.

Fun Fearless Females

Fun Fearless Females offers a variety of supportive services and social events and programs that create a welcoming environment for all women to have fun, try new things (be fearless) and connect with other women. Check out the events calendar to see all the creative events happening this month!

<https://www.funfearlessfemales.ca/events>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Siblings Canada: Savvy Siblings

Siblings Canada, in partnership with PLAN, is delighted to introduce [**Savvy Siblings: Strengthening the Financial Security of Your Sibling with a Disability**](#). Funded by the Government of Canada, this free online course is for adults who want to play a role in improving the financial security of their siblings with disabilities—whether today or in the future. [**Register for Savvy Siblings today!**](#)

LCOworks

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**](mailto:support@lifecourseonline.com).

SPECTRUM Youth Under the Rainbow

Join SPECTRUM across the Region as they read stories, explore art and have fun together in a safe and supported environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, families and allies. Visit [**https://wrfn.info/CommunityNewsAndUpdates/Family-and-Youth-Under-the-Rainbow.htm**](https://wrfn.info/CommunityNewsAndUpdates/Family-and-Youth-Under-the-Rainbow.htm) to see a full list of upcoming events and where to register.

Cambridge Food Bank

Cook, stuff, plant, bake and play at the [**Cambridge Food Bank**](#)! To learn more about and register for programs offered at Cambridge Food Bank, please contact Vanessa Tonic at [**vtonicic@cambridgefoodbank.org**](mailto:vtonicic@cambridgefoodbank.org) at 519-622-6550 x109.

March of Dimes Paving the Path: Beginning my Journey to the World of Work

Has a disability or other barrier prevented you from imagining yourself in the workforce? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a job? Do you want to learn about the types of jobs that best suit your personality? Would you like to know how working would affect the benefits you currently receive? If you answered yes to any of the questions above, Paving the Path for Work can help. This 6-week program offered by March of Dimes Canada is for people who have had limited exposure to employment but want to learn more. Offered virtually and in person. If you have any questions about Paving the Path to Work, please contact Miriam Braithwaite at [**mbraithwaite@marchofdimes.ca**](mailto:mbraithwaite@marchofdimes.ca) or 905-687-7467 ext. 227.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Recreational Respite

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practices, goals and outcomes that promote inclusion, encourage community participation, and nurture social connectivity.

Visit the website if you are interested to learn more:

<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! Aptus' Clinical Services team created the Sensory Workout training and demo videos, with generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services.

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

Community Living Ontario's Student Links Program: Application and FAQ (Link updated and working)

Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Student Links is an opportunity for students (ages 14 to 21) who identify as having an intellectual disability to explore ideas for their future after high school. It matches students and mentors who share a common passion or interest. The goal is to enhance their capacity to make informed decisions about their future before leaving school and support the natural development of relationships and connections to their community. Student Links is tailored to meet the needs of each individual student and may include hands-on experiences, exploration of new interests, and an introduction to work, volunteer or community-based roles. Opportunities are created for students to meet with people currently engaged in or with substantial knowledge of the identified interest.

The possibilities are endless! After completing the application found at the bottom, the first step is for the student to meet with the Student Links coordinator and identify ideas, interests, passions, and roles they are interested in. [Fill out an application form here](#), and [visit here](#) to see some frequently asked questions.

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 fashioned mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies! Visit <https://connectability.ca/friendly-connections/>

City of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge has two yoga programs for youth: Adaptive Yoga for teens with disabilities (13-21 years) on Wednesdays 6 – 6:50 pm and Girls Only Yoga (10-14 years) on Wednesdays 7-7:50 pm. For the Adaptive Yoga classes, participants can bring a program assistant when using a PAL card and there will also be a Leisure Buddy to support the class. For more info, connect with Jenn at blanchardj@cambridge.ca.

KidsAbility Behaviour Support Services

Find support for your family with Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services offered at KidsAbility locations across Waterloo Region and Guelph-Wellington. The team works closely with you to address your family's needs by creating a personalized plan within carefully set up packages for you and your child with the tools to support and succeed. Explore fee-for-service options for your child by connecting with at GPS@kidsability.ca. For more information and a current list of service offerings, visit us www.kidsability.ca.

Resilience Project

The Resilience Project from FACS Waterloo has some new programming for children, youth, and caregivers. Learn more and register for programs <https://resiliencecollective.ca/programs-offered>.

Rainbow Family Drop-In

Rainbow Families drop-in runs Thursdays at EarlyON | Roger St from 3:30 - 4:30 pm. Join other 2SLGBTQIA+ children (aged 0-6), caring adults and families in play and exploration together! EarlyON Educators and a SPECTRUM Registered Early Childhood Educator are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in a play-based environment.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops/Events

Relationships and Wellbeing Workshops

Pathways to Growth is offering a workshop series running Fridays starting July 4 from 10 am – 12 pm. This workshop will address a variety of plausible connections students may encounter in their everyday lives and illustrate new techniques that will assist them in maintaining healthy connections within those bonds. The cost to participate is \$165. Learn more by contacting 905-793-5400 x221 or email Ttalbot@thelearningplace.ca. Register to [participate here](#).

DSO Lunch & Learn – Social and Affordable Rental Housing

Join DSO Housing Navigators on Tuesday, July 8 over lunch (12 – 1 pm) to discuss a new housing and independent living e-learning video (module). This session will take place in a virtual format and is open to people with a developmental disability, their family members and/or support networks, as well as professionals in Ontario. Housing Navigators will introduce this new module and explore social and affordable rental programs available in Ontario and talk about the value of considering and applying for these kinds of housing services. The presentation will be followed by Q + A.

Register at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/z3tyud9>

Real Xchange - Operational Leadership Community of Practice: Artificial Intelligence

Are you leading a team? Are you a Front-line Supervisor or Manager (Operational Leader)? Do you want to connect with peers across the province to brainstorm, learn, and grow together while tackling the challenges you face in your role? The Operational Leadership Community of Practice (CoP) Session on Artificial Intelligence, will be held on Monday, July 21, 2025, at 12 pm. [Register here](#).

OCASI - The Accessibility Initiative Webinar: Claiming the Right to Housing through the National Housing Strategy Act (NHSa)

Join OCASI on July 23 from 12 – 1 pm for information about the Right to Housing under the National Housing Strategy Act (NHSa). This federal law recognizes housing as a fundamental human right in Canada. This session is designed to equip settlement practitioners with the information to navigate and engage in National Housing Strategy Act (NHSa) processes. [Register for this session here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Virtual Workshop Series for Parents and Caregivers of Children with Learning Disabilities or ADHD

Parents and caregivers of children with learning disabilities or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in Grade 7 or 8 are invited to take part in a virtual workshop series, offered by the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC). The goal of the sessions is to provide information and support to understand your child's experience and potential more fully. You will learn skills to navigate the school system; ability to provide timely and targeted support; and support to know they are not alone. There is no cost to the program, however you must commit to attending both sessions. These sessions will run Tuesday, August 12 from 9 am to 12:30 pm and Wednesday, August 13 from 9 am to 12:30 pm. Registration closes July 31, 2025. Find the [Registration Forms](#) on the Regional Assessment Resource Centre website.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Ontario: New Website

FASD Ontario is excited to introduce you to the brand-new [FASD website here!](#)

Entirely redesigned with the FASD community in mind, this platform is your go-to destination for FASD resources, tools and connections...all just one click away!

PooranLaw

PooranLaw shares valuable resources aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities and their families. With a commitment to providing expert legal guidance, PooranLaw addresses the complexities of various legal issues affecting the community. While individuals with disabilities may face barriers to decision-making at various life stages, there are often less restrictive and more accessible alternatives to guardianship. The appropriate solutions depend on the specific decisions facing each individual.

To assist families, PooranLaw provides wraparound legal services tailored to every stage of life. This includes:

- Accessing educational supports
- Advocating for fairness in the workplace
- Advising on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Navigating relationship and marriage breakdowns
- Building secure futures through complex tax, trust, and estate planning, including comprehensive domestic contracts

Explore the “Decision-Making Tree” to understand the different areas of decision-making under the current legal framework in Ontario.

For more information about the services offered, visit [PooranLaw](#).

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health New Website

Exciting news--Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health has launched its new [website!](#)

Any questions? Click on the “website” link to set up a time to connect with the intake team. In addition to calling or emailing to sign up for groups or workshops, you can now complete a form directly on the website. [Groups and Workshops · Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health](#)--Group topics range from newcomer youth wellbeing (including standing strong work female-identified youth), children's socio-emotional health (including extinguish your fire and hocus pocus focus), parenting (including a circle of security, grandparent/kin connect and strong moms safe kids), financial wellness, relationships (including building better boundaries) and so much more!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Porchlight: Quick Access Counselling

Porchlight offers single-session Quick Access counselling sessions, letting you get help sooner, when you need it. Because, sometimes, you need a little help, sooner. Call now for your appointment: 519-621-5090 or visit porchlightcnd.org

ConnectABILITY Roommate Matching Webpage

Are you looking for a roommate or want to post your own roommate ad? ConnectABILITY has got you covered! Their roommate matching webpage is a fantastic resource where you can find and post ads that accommodate your specific housing needs. Whether you need a space that's accessible, close to transit, or just a great fit for your lifestyle, ConnectAbility.ca makes it easy to connect with potential roommates in our community. Check it out today and find the perfect match for your housing needs. Visit:

<https://connectability.ca/connected-families/forum/housing/>.

Partners for planning: Update to the Special Services at Home Guidelines

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) has updated the Special Services at Home (SSAH) guidelines to align with CanChild's F-Words in Child Development. Families can now use their SSAH funding flexibly to support their child's interests and development. [Visit the MCCSS website](#) for the new guidelines. P4P has created an [SSAH Overview video and resource page](#) to help families navigate SSAH applications.

Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region: Autism Mental Health Support

Are you a parent of an autistic child or teen or an autistic adult seeking mental health support? The Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region is here to help. This collaborative includes six Community Mental Health Agencies in the region, with over 50 therapists offering professional autism-informed therapy. Locations throughout Waterloo Region include Kitchener, Cambridge, Waterloo, Elmira, and New Hamburg. Virtual and telephone appointments are also offered. The central intake can connect individuals with the CCWR agency of choice. Flexible payment options include a sliding scale based on income, insurance benefits, or OAP core funding. Eligibility for other funding may also be discussed during intake. To register for counselling, visit counsellingwr.ca or call 519-884-0000.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) Collaborative

The SNR Collaborative offers support to Licensed Child Care Programs in Waterloo Region for children up to 12 years old. KidsAbility and KW Habilitation make up the SNR Collaborative, which aims to streamline services and ensure all children can thrive in early learning environments regardless of their abilities. Early Childhood Educators, parents, and caregivers can contact the SNR Collaborative with questions about a child's needs. The Collaborative operates within a tiered services model to provide tailored assistance. Visit snrcwaterlooregion.ca for more information on programs, tips, strategies, and referrals. To contact KidsAbility, please email spotservices@kidsability.ca. For inquiries related to KW Habilitation, you can reach them at earlylearning@kwhab.ca. If you have any questions, you can call SNAP at 519-514-7627 or email snap@kwhab.ca. For inquiries regarding the SNR Collaborative, please email [Kristy](#) or [Carlyn](#).

211

Life can be hard, but finding help is easy. Contact 211 day or night to find support for all of life's challenges. Call toll free at 1-877-330-3213. 211 is free and confidential and offers support in 150+ languages.

Ask a Nurse at the Welcome Spaces

Public Health Family Nursing services are available at three Welcome Space locations, offering one-to-one, drop-in support from Public Health Nurses. This service is provided from 9 am to 4 pm on the following days:

- Waterloo: Mondays at 99 Regina St S
- Kitchener: Tuesdays at 20 Weber St E
- Cambridge: Thursdays at 150 Main St

Nurses can assist with questions on pregnancy, growth and development, feeding, child health, and local health services. For more information, e-mail Lrintche@regionofwaterloo.ca

Information, Opportunities & 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 also a resource page where you can borrow books and items and is available Canada wide. Check it out at www.aidecanada.ca.

Breastfeeding Dashboard

Canada's "[Breastfeeding Dashboard](#)" is now available on Public Health Agency of Canada's Public Health Infobase platform. Along with this data tool, the first edition of Canada's Breastfeeding Progress Report is available. The data provides an overview of breastfeeding rates in Canada, including information on breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity, examined by various geographic and sociodemographic factors. Reasons for not breastfeeding and reasons for stopping breastfeeding before six months are also presented, as are rates of vitamin D supplementation of breastfed infants. Questions related to the new materials can be directed to: dca_public_inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca

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 or email [jdigirolamo@ccrw.org](mailto:jdigiolamo@ccrw.org)

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

March of Dimes Hi, Tech!

If you have a disability and are 18 years or older, you are eligible to be matched with a tech support coach. Your coach will answer your technology questions and help get you set up. To learn more visit <https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/atech/hitech>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Plexus

Plexus is a network of FASD support and services in Waterloo Region. The services of the Plexus team are available to children, youth, and families living with (potential) FASD up until the age of 18 or 21 and still attending school. You must reside in the Waterloo Region. A referral can be made by the individual or their legal guardian. Plexus will also accept referrals from extended family members, family physician, or any agency acting on the individual's/family's behalf if permission to do so has been provided by the individual or their guardian. Referrals can be made here: [Plexus Referral](#).

Family Support Network for Employment

FSNE is a family-led coalition advocating for employment opportunities and jobs in the open labour market for individuals with developmental disabilities who face higher employment barriers.

[Click here to find out their mission and explore resources.](#)

EarlyON Onsite Services & Mobile Services

EarlyON Centres partner with a variety of community agencies to provide onsite appointments for your child and family. [Learn more](#). EarlyON also offers mobile drop-in at various sites in the Waterloo Region. EarlyON Educators are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in our play-based environment. To learn more about mobile sites, call 519-741-8585 x3001 or visit the [Locations Page](#).

Rainbow Community Calendar

[The Rainbow Community Calendar](#) from SPECTRUM collects 2SLGBTQIA+ events from organizations across Waterloo Region (and sometimes in Guelph-Wellington). SPECTRUM's events will include the name in the title. Please read the details of each event carefully.

RecLife GMA*

RecLife GMA provides recreational and life skills services for individuals with disabilities in Mississauga. Their programs offer a variety of routine-based activities, life skills support, and social activities tailored to the needs of participants within the center. Some examples include board games, meal planning, trampoline parks, and more. Their online programs offer a variety of interactive options, including social groups, cooking classes, and life skills support, all accessible from the comfort of home. Learn more by visiting www.reclifegma.ca or emailing reclifegma@gmail.com.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Woolwich Counselling Free First Session

Wondering if counselling is for you? Try your first session at Woolwich Counselling Centre for FREE! Open to any resident of Woolwich or Wellesley Townships. Contact us to learn more: www.woolwichcounselling.org/contact-us/.

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County: Resource Page

LDAWC is excited to announce that their resource page is now live! Whether you're a student, parent, educator or caregiver, you'll find valuable information on local programming, learning disabilities, IEPs and other supportive resources in the community. The page is designed to support you with the information and connections needed to navigate learning disabilities and ADHD. Visit the [page here](#).

Access 2 Card

The Access 2 card is designed for individuals with permanent disabilities who need attendant support at participating venues. The card allows the attendant to enter for free while the cardholder pays regular admission. Eligibility extends to people of all ages and disability types. It's accepted at numerous venues across Canada, including many movie theatres and recreational sites. To obtain the card, the person with the disability fills out an application form on the Access 2 website, which requires confirmation of need from a healthcare provider. The card costs \$20 for three years or \$30 for five years, and once the application is submitted, cards are typically issued within 4 weeks. Visit here to apply [Access2 - Easter Seals Canada Access 2 Entertainment Program \(access2card.ca\)](http://Access2 - Easter Seals Canada Access 2 Entertainment Program (access2card.ca)).

Kerry's Place Brave Space

Brave Space, a collection of resources, services and supports from 2SLGBTQ+ Youth and their families, is a step to honour, empower, and support everyone who lives at the intersection of autism and the 2SLGBTQ+ spectrums with information and evidence-informed resources and services. Kerry's Place aims to support those in our community who are navigating, or supporting a loved one who is navigating, their journey of discovering their identity within the spectrums of gender and sexuality. They are collaborating with subject matter experts to help ensure that the supports developed are evidence-informed and in line with current best practices for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

<https://www.kerrysplace.org/brave-space-at-kerrys-place/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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>.

CanFASD Mental Health Resource and Practice Guide

The CanFASD Research Network released a new resource that all mental health professionals need in their toolbox. This resource is grounded in the belief that people with FASD are capable of significant change and personal growth. It is therefore imperative that, as mental health professionals, we continue to explore how we can adapt our supports so that individuals with FASD can benefit from practices suited to their unique strengths, challenges, and neurodevelopmental needs. [**Towards Healthy Outcomes for Individuals with FASD**](#)

Indigenous Relations Circle

The Indigenous Relations Circle is an initiative of Autism Alberta's Alliance and is interested in the Indigenous and autistic experience in Alberta. The newsletter is distributed four times per year and includes work that our circle is doing as well as events happening around the province that you may be interested in. We hope to increase connection and community between Indigenous Autistic communities. If you are interested, please subscribe [here](#).

Partners for Planning

Every high school graduate deserves a bright future. The Beyond Graduation Toolkit can help families think creatively, collaborate with school teams, and explore pathways that can lead to a full and meaningful life for their son or daughter once they reach the end of their high school career. Designed for parents with a child transitioning out of high school in the next few years, this new toolkit provides critical concepts and resources that can help parents prepare for this transition. It includes: [**Partners for Planning - Planning for a Good Life Beyond Graduation Toolkit - Overview \(planningnetwork.ca\)**](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Kitchener Public Library: Access to Technology Programs

Chromebook Borrowing: Community members can now borrow Chromebooks from the library for a one-week loan period, available at all five library locations.

Daisy Readers with Digital Content: The library has added Daisy reader machines with enhanced navigation, including Victor Stratus and Victor Stream devices that can play Daisy audio discs and digital content. Staff can pre-load devices with a mix of titles based on customer reading profiles.

Yoto Mini Collection: The library has a collection of 13 Yoto Mini audio players, which use colorful plastic-coated cards to play audiobooks for children from birth to 12 years old.

Additionally, the library's Visiting Library Service provides monthly delivery of library materials to Kitchener residents who cannot visit the library in person.

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

Imagine Canada

Imagine Canada has a ton of great resources and information on non-profit and charity sector-related policy in their newsletter which is called 360. You can sign up here: <https://imaginecanada.ca/en/360>.

Guelph Wellington Family Network

A group of family members and unpaid caregivers supporting an adult with a developmental disability. The Network is peer-based and led by families. The Guelph Wellington Family Network helps build connections and friendships, supports members through networking, education, and socializing and connects members to opportunities, supports, and information.

familynetworkGW@gmail.com

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Indwell

Indwell is a Christian charity creating affordable housing communities to support people seeking health, wellness & belonging. They are one of the fastest-growing developers of new supportive affordable housing in Ontario. Looking for housing? Visit <https://indwell.ca>.

Qualia Counselling Services

Qualia Counselling Services is accepting new clients at all six locations with no waitlist. Qualia Counselling Services offers counselling sessions, in person and by telehealth, with skilled clinicians. They offer services for children (5+), adults, families and couples. Qualia Counselling Services provides the most evidence-based interventions to help individuals of all ages become their best self. In addition to therapeutic services, Qualia offers a robust selection of professional development courses, workshops, lunch & learns, bootcamps and CBT supervision to professionals. Follow the link provided for further details.

<https://qualiacounselling.com/training/>

Pearson Airport

Pearson Airport has partnered with Autism Ontario and Magnusmode (creator of the Magnus Cards app) to create an activity book to help prepare for travel. The airport also has sunflower lanyards that can be requested to signify the presence of an invisible disability. There are 20 different Magnus Card decks (on phone app) to help navigate aspects of travel. For more Pearson Airport neurodiversity support options, please visit: [Travel tools for autism and other diverse needs | Pearson Airport \(torontopearson.com\)](#).

Early Learning and Child Care Navigators

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Navigators seek opportunities to assist families in accessing Child Care, EarlyON programming, and other services that support the healthy development of children aged 0 – 6. They focus on supporting families who experience barriers accessing these services.

- [Send an online request to meet with an Early Learning & Child Care Navigator Request](#)
- [Email an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator](#)
- For more info please visit [ELCC Navigators Landing page](#)

Call 519-741-8585 ext. 3008 and ask to speak with an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Support Groups

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/>

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 7:15 pm. Go to apsgo.ca for more information.

Province-Wide Monthly Virtual Groups for Adults with FASD

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

Qualia Counselling Services – New Moms Experiencing Postpartum Anxiety and Depression

Qualia Counselling Services is extremely excited to announce the launch of a brand-new support group for new moms! The support group has an 8-week program designed for New Moms Experiencing Postpartum Anxiety and Depression. This specialty group is for new moms looking for a welcoming space to learn, share, and practice skills and techniques to manage their emotions and thought patterns as they lead a balanced life through their postpartum. For more information, please contact our administration team at info@qualiacounselling.com or [visit our website](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support 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 second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 7 – 8:30 pm via Zoom. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees. Contact: For more details or to register, please contact bpsgroup2020@gmail.com.

South Asian Wellness Group

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 6 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. 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.

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!

Virtual Peer Support for Newly-Diagnosed Autistic Women

Researchers are evaluating the impact of participating in a [virtual peer support program](#) on the well-being of newly-diagnosed autistic women. Who can participate? Adults 18 years or older who identify as a woman, have received a formal diagnosis of autism in the last 8 months, and live in Ontario. [See flyer for additional details](#). Questions? Contact Princess Owusu at AWPeerSupport@camh.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CIA - Connecting, Interests and Activities

CIA is a 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 on the second Thursday of each month. This is a drop-in group, so folks are welcome to join anytime between 5 and 7 pm.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Groh at 519-731-3923 or grohtech@xplornet.com.

Virtual Support Group for Adolescents with FASD

The return of the Virtual Support Group for Teens with FASD. This group meets every Wednesday night at 7 – 8:30 pm. Contact Rob for more information at rmacdonald@starlingcs.ca.

Street Therapy

Street Therapy is a fee-for-service psychotherapy clinic located at 177 Victoria St. N in Kitchener. Street Therapy will offer a monthly ADHD support group. The group will take place virtually on the first Saturday of every month throughout the year. Their goal is to help provide the local ADHD community a safe space to connect with like-minded individuals and encourage access to a neuro-inclusive community. Please have a look at the following link for details.

<https://www.streettherapy.ca/groups/>

Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society Support Group

Mothers Connection is a group supporting Moms with young children with Down syndrome with childcare provided. Go to WWDSS.ca or email info@wwdss.ca for more information.

Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) Past Webinar Presentations

Are you interested in accessing the recordings of CADDAC's seminars from the live presentations at the 15th Annual ADHD Conference? Please click the link below!

<https://caddac.ca/past-premium-conferences-workshops/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sunbeam Development Resource Centre: Monthly Fathers' Support Group

If you are a father in Waterloo Region who has a child (of any age) with an intellectual disability and/or autism. The group meets monthly. It is a great opportunity for dads to discuss a wide range of topics related to parenting a child with an intellectual disability and/or autism. Fathers learn from guest speakers as well as from each other, sharing wisdom, understanding and a chance to talk to other dads who “get it.” Some of the topics discussed in the past year were: mindfulness, sharing the diagnosis and advocating for your child. The Fathers Support Group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 8:00 pm. Please call 519-741-1121 for more information about how to join.

Sunbeam Development Resource Centre: Mothers' Support Group

The Mothers' Support Group monthly groups are offered at two different times including a daytime and evening timeslot. Daytime sessions take place the last Friday of the month from 10 am to 11:30 am. The Evening time is on the last Tuesday of the month from 7 to 8:30 pm. The purpose of the group is to connect with other mothers, share ideas, learn more about community resources and get support. Speakers are often invited to share information on topics of interest to group members. Some of the topics discussed in the past year were anxiety, school issues and grief.

Please call 519-741-1121 for more information about how to join either.

CADDAC Support Groups

ADHD Support Groups - Adult ADHD and Parent Support Groups

CADDAC is excited to announce that our ADHD Support groups for both Adults and Parents are now back in session! In addition, we are excited to introduce a new Western Time zone Parent Support Group. You do not need to join the group of the time zone you're in. You can join whichever regional meeting that fits in your schedule. [Learn more and register!](#)

ADHD and Substance Use Disorder Peer-led Support Group

Through these virtual group sessions, participants will receive emotional support and mentorship, critical education about ADHD, and strategies on how to manage some of the core symptoms that have led to substance use. These groups will be offered in different time zones across Canada and will be peer-led by trained Peer Support Facilitators.

<https://caddac.ca/programs-and-events/#support-groups>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

P4P Planning and Facilitation Collaborative

The Planning and Facilitation Collaborative (PFC) is live! This space allows professionals and aspiring professionals to share knowledge, experiences, and develop skills through online courses on planning and facilitation. We invite planners and facilitators to join the PFC and help spread the word. For more information, visit this [link](#).

Help Shape the Future of FASD Support in Ontario

Have you used the [FASDinfoTSAF.ca](https://fasdinfoTSAF.ca) website, attended FASD training for service providers, or participated in FASD support groups? Health Nexus is seeking your feedback on our FASD programs to help improve support for individuals and families across Ontario. Share your thoughts in our anonymous survey [here](#) and help shape the future of FASD support in the province. Your input makes a difference.

Laurier University: Shared Reading Research Study

A research team led by Dr. Gottardo and Dr. Wood at Wilfrid Laurier University is conducting a 14-week study focused on shared reading strategies with children. Families will attend five in-person sessions featuring fun literacy games and activities (about one hour each). At home, participants will read picture books provided by the research team and complete a brief diary entry each week for nine weeks. Caregivers will receive \$15 via e-transfer after each in-person session (totalling \$75), with bus fare compensation available upon request. Participants can keep all at-home materials, including books and reading strategy resources. This study has been approved by the Laurier Research Ethics Board (REB #8508). To learn more or participate, fill out [your information here](#) or email Katie at reid4150@mylaurier.ca.

Inclusion Canada: Invitation to participate in future research projects

Inclusion Canada often asks people with lived experience to participate in research projects. This typically involves participating in online focus groups or national surveys. Research opportunities are usually available in English and French. They include a variety of topics that impact people with an intellectual disability and their families. Inclusion Canada has compensation guidelines for participating in research. They are building a contact list of people interested in participating in research projects. If you would like to be invited to participate in future research projects, [please sign up here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Opportunity to Provide Feedback on an Accessible Fitness App

Lee-Anne from Sekond Skin Society is in the process of designing an innovative fitness app that aims to make fitness classes more accessible for individuals with varying abilities and limitations. The app includes a range of accessibility features, allowing people to participate in fitness classes both online and in person.

Lee-Anne is looking for feedback from individuals with diverse disabilities to help improve the app—especially for those who use assistive technology. She is offering a free trial to anyone interested in trying it out.

If you or someone you know would like to access the app or provide feedback, please reach out to Lee-Anne at lee-anne@sekondskinsociety.com.

To learn more, check out the short demo video: <https://youtu.be/V1s3ON-2u9I?si=vFoG2mLemeAmbe0g>.

Building Brighter Futures Fund

Building Brighter Futures Fund will be open for applications online in July 2025. Successful applicants will be chosen in August by lottery. BBFF provides financial assistance directly to autistic adults in Ontario through reimbursement of funds spent to access greater participation in their local communities. Program fees for recreation or skill development, respite, professional support, tuition, or other creative solutions connected to building life plans for autistic adults will be considered for reimbursement.

<https://www.autismontario.com/BBFF>

CYPT Youth Impact Project

The Youth Impact Project is back! The Children and Youth Planning Table and Smart Waterloo Region have \$50,000 to give out to youth ideas for positive change in our community! Young people living in Waterloo Region can submit their project pitch online for up to \$5,000 in funding. The Youth Decision Making Team will be evaluating applications until November 9 – or until the money runs out!

<https://childrenandyouthplanningtable.ca/yip/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

PhD Research Study Participant Recruitment

A PhD student at York University is recruiting participants for a research study titled "Exploring the Mental Well-being of Black Women Living in Poverty and At Risk of Intimate Partner Violence: A Grounded Theory Study." This study has been reviewed and approved by the York University Research Ethics Board. The goal of this study is to understand how intimate partner violence and poverty jointly impact the mental well-being of Black Canadian women. The research seeks to inform better supports by identifying urgent needs, barriers, and facilitators to accessing services. You might qualify if you reside in an emergency/crisis women's shelter within Ontario; Are experiencing poverty; Are over the age of 16 years old; Can speak, read, and write in English. To participate, please contact: Danielle, PhD Candidate York University, School of Nursing Email: dfw@yorku.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources



Muslim Social Services
Waterloo Region

MSSWR SAFER FAMILIES PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE – REGISTER BY ONLINE: WWW.MSSWR.ORG/SAFERFAMILIESREGISTRATION

Professional Development Training

Join us for a full-day workshop on building culturally and spiritually sensitive approaches to addressing domestic violence.

Fees:

\$300 per person

\$250 for more than two people from the same organization

Professional development certification will be provided along with light working lunch.



WITH THE SUCCESS AND DEMAND OF OUR PREVIOUS WORKSHOP WE ARE HOSTING THE TRAINING ONCE AGAIN! REGISTER TO SECURE YOUR SPOT



WHEN?

JULY 4TH, 2025

@9:30 – 3:30PM

400 QUEEN STREET SOUTH (CAMINO), SEHL ROOM

REGISTER BY ONLINE:

WWW.MSSWR.ORG/SAFERFAMILIESREGISTRATION