

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 139
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What's In This Issue?

Welcome to November!

WRFN has many opportunities to share this month. From our Parent & Caregiver survey to special presentations, there's great value for everyone in this issue of Family Pulse.

With October behind us, we're already seeing a transition into Winter Programming in the community! It's exciting to see opportunities being offered for both in-person and virtual participation, offering flexibility for families. Have a look, there's something for everyone!



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**

Lynette Eulette, the Lead Psychologist for the Board came to present about what school psychologists do. She discussed the three tiers of support, Tier 1, which involves supporting students and families generally through giving presentations, and bringing a psychological viewpoint to education, Tier 2 where some students receive interventions such as group counselling and group workshops, as well as consulting with students, staff, and caregivers, and Tier 3 which includes involvement with individual students and staff. Lynette discussed how they also have partnerships with schools and community agencies such as Lutherwood and Homewood. There was also discussion of the positive and negative aspects of labelling students based on their needs as well as the importance of focusing on the strengths of students. She also discussed how important it is that student learning and school interactions be free from oppression and racism, be focused on culturally responsive pedagogy and assessment, as well as restorative relationships.

There was also discussion of how psych assessments are trying to focus more on strengths and gifts, as well as strength-based IEPs, and as how a strength can be reframed to meet a need. They also talked about non-clinical assessments which include observations and conversation. There are a lot of resources being shared with teachers about strength-based resources.

The Board is also doing a lot of early literacy instruction in order to not need as many interventions.

The next SEAC meeting will take place on November 10, 2021.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee Update **Submitted by Sue Simpson & Karen Kovats**

WCDSB SEAC met virtually on October 6. Our meeting included a presentation by Michael Jacques author of *Can't Read, Can't Write, Here's My Book*. Michael is a young adult working and living in the Niagara area. He has autism and an intellectual disability and wrote his book with the help of speech-to-text app on his iPad. Michael is an inspiring speaker and all who attended enjoyed his engaging presentation. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session and was open to the broader community.

During the meeting, we reviewed Sections 5 – 8 of the Special Education Plan sharing comments and suggestions. We will continue to review sections of the plan at each SEAC meeting until the full document has been reviewed.

Association updates were shared.

Trustee updates were shared by Trustee Tracey Weiler. They can be found here.

<https://www.wcdsb.ca/wcdsb-board-meeting-bulletin-september-2021/>

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

Celebrate the Small Stuff

By Cristina Stanger, Self-Advocacy Liaison, WRFN

Even before the pandemic, I've always found the future and unknowns very daunting. I can imagine a thousand different possibilities of how things can play out. I am prone to worry and catastrophizing. When it feels like everything could go wrong, or there is an imminent issue I need to address for myself or my children, or all the things I need to get done seem like too much to handle - it can be paralyzing. I'm working on keeping my worries in check.

One thing I am learning to do is to pause, and take a moment to identify something that went better than expected, or that has improved, or that I did well. In short: celebrate the small stuff. This is not yet a natural thought pattern for me, so I have to be quite intentional in my approach. Maybe I phoned a business and asked a question that I needed answered. Maybe I took the dog on a longer walk today. Maybe I reinforced a healthier new habit. Maybe it's as simple as, I remembered to move the laundry from the washer to the dryer. When I stop and congratulate myself, life feels a little more positive.

I am also experimenting with the concept of a "done list"; the opposite of a to-do list (which can feel never ending), a done list helps me reflect on my day, and notice the things I've achieved. This can be very grounding, bringing me back to the present moment without worrying about all the things that did not yet get done. A done list is, once again, an acknowledgement of the small stuff, which can add up in an uplifting way.

So please join me and take a moment to pause, and congratulate yourself on something you did today. Pat yourself on the back. Well done you. I've found these small, internal celebrations can go a long way to counteract the overwhelm and negativity I sometimes feel, and I hope, in some way, it might be helpful to you as well.

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.



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.

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



NOVEMBER 2, 2021

Special Guest & Parent Activist, Al Etmanski, to hear what he has to say about strengthening & boosting the voices of parents and caregivers.

DECEMBER 7, 2021

Intuitive Painting: A peaceful break from your busy life - with Rachel & Wendy from Stepping Stones Expressive Arts

JANUARY 4, 2022

Completing the Puzzle: Consider the missing pieces in your loved one's future plan.

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

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.

What's Happening at WRFN



MAKING IT WORK

A panel discussion on employment for caregivers

THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 4

7 - 9 PM

THIS FORUM
INCLUDES:

Struggling to find and keep a job due to your caregiving responsibilities?

Want to learn from parents who are "Making It Work"?
Want to know more about employment programs?
Want to know what kind of support you can ask of your employer?

- Parents will share their creative and flexible employment solutions
- Jaime Sobotka of Cambridge Career Connections will provide information on Employment Ontario programs you may be eligible for as well as employer/employee partnerships

PLEASE REGISTER AT:

info@wrfn.info

A Zoom link will be sent after registration



What's Happening at WRFN

Parent and Caregiver Survey

Thank you so much to everyone who's taken our survey so far. Your feedback is incredibly valuable to us. For those who haven't taken our survey yet, this is a reminder that there are only A FEW DAYS LEFT to participate. Your feedback will help us continue to provide personalized support to you and other families. The more voices we hear, the better!

Time to complete: 10 minutes

Survey Closes: November 5, 2021

[Take Survey.](#)

Mark Your Calendars for WRFN's Silent Auction

This month, WRFN will be hosting an online silent auction! Our wonderful auction items have been generously donated from businesses in the community. Funds raised will be used to support our many programs and events to help exceptional families and individuals thrive. More information will be provided through an email and social media later this month.

When: November 22 at 9 am - November 26 at 9 pm

What's Happening at WRFN

Ask A Self-Advocate

Do you need to look at a challenge you are facing with a new perspective? Would you like to bounce ideas off someone who's been there? Cristina was diagnosed with exceptionalities as an adult, and is passionate about sharing her lived experience. Speak with Cristina to discuss your own questions and concerns to gain new insights and ideas. This program is open to individuals with disabilities, families, or service providers. For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info.

To request a booking please complete the [request form](#).

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.

For more information, please contact [Sue.Simpson at Sue.simpson@wrfn.info](mailto:Sue.Simpson@wrfn.info).

WRFN's Family Resource Coach

During this current COVID-19 health crisis, personal support has become paramount for many families. Erin Sutherland and Sue Furey, our Family Resource Coaches, are available by phone, email, or virtual call to lend a helping hand and personal guidance to families and to connect you to updated information, resources, and virtual opportunities.

Call Erin Sutherland at 519-886-9150 ext. 4 or 226-808-5460 or email Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info.

Call Sue at 226-898-9301 or email Sue.Furey@wrfn.info.

Coffee Club

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

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

Steph's Corner

Being Thankful

When I think about the things that I am thankful for, it makes me happy and I feel better. What are you thankful for?

I am grateful for:

- Living in an apartment that is warm in the winter and cool in the summer.
- The roof that keeps the rain and snow away.
- Family and friends that love me and care about me.
- Programs that I can participate in.
- Being healthy enough to live in an apartment on my own, with support and my sister living upstairs.
- The colourful fall leaves that are so beautiful.
- The farmers who grow food for us and grow pumpkins so that we can carve them and make "Pumpkin People" at Halloween.

Tips on How to Be Thankful:

- Keep a "Thankfulness" journal where you write down three things each day that you are thankful for.
- Make sure you thank the people in your life that do things for you. Write them a card to let them know how much you appreciate them helping you out.
- Surround yourself with people that are thankful so that you can learn from them on how to be better at being thankful.

What are you thankful for today?

Steph Prysruk

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

WWDSS Evening Speaker Series Presents: Building Circles of Support and Friendship

This workshop on November 4 at 7-9 pm is designed for families who would like to learn more about the importance of Circles or networks of support for their family member. The presenter, Jan Burke-Gaffney, is the author of *Building Circle of Support and Friendship, A Guidebook For Parents*. She has two children who have Down syndrome and who have Circles that are thriving after 15 years.

COST: Members \$5 each, Non-Members \$15 each

[Register by Tuesday November 2nd, 2021 here](#)

Advocating for Your Child with ADHD in Canadian School Systems

Advocating for your children's educational rights may be one of the most frustrating and confusing experiences you will encounter. This two-part presentation on November 9 and 16 at 7-8:30 pm will help you understand your provincial special education system, its benefits, and drawbacks while offering you tips on how to navigate that system.

[Register Here.](#)

Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region - #KidsTakeOver

It's that time of year again, #KidsTakeOver!! This opportunity for young people to take over in spaces and roles traditionally reserved for adults helps foster belonging and the idea that children and young people feel valued, heard and included.

- Use the hashtags #KidsTakeOver and #KTOWR to help get the word out.
- Tag @CYPTWR in your posts
- Encourage everyone to wear blue on November 20th
- Use your social media account to tell people how you plan to let children and youth take over and then challenge someone to do the same!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Programs & Recreation

Holiday Paint Group with Brightside ABA Services

Every Wednesday 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm November 24, 2021 - December 15, 2021

For: Anyone 18 & over

Cost: \$295 *All supplies included *Note: Passport Eligible Expense

Registration deadline: November 12, 2021

To Register Contact Lauren Harris: brightside@sunbeamcommunity.ca or

519-894-6156 ext. 2904

Interested in creating a keepsake for a family member or for yourself? Join us just in time for holiday celebrations.

Opportunities from Bridges to Belonging

BE-Connected — 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://us06web.zoom.us/j/89371647704>

BE-Friends Program — BE-Friends is a volunteer matching program that connects people with any disability 17 years or older (Friend) with a community volunteer "Buddy" (19 years or older). The pair gets together as often as they want, enjoy fun activities they choose and become part of each other's world. BE-Friends is a bridge to meaningful reciprocal relationships and lifelong friendships.

To be matched with a Community Buddy register here: <https://bit.ly/3eWlrzh>

To Volunteer as Community Buddy register here: <https://bit.ly/3i1v69G>

ConnectABILITY's Friendly Connections

Here at Friendly Connections, we are focused on helping our community, individuals of all ages with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, overcome isolation. We aim to help improve the well-being of individuals through socializing and providing entertaining resources.

We want to connect with individuals across Canada through phone calls, video calls, emailing, messenger chats and good old fashion mail. We mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies!

<https://connectability.ca/friendly-connections/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

LEG Up! Holiday 2021 Classes

LEG Up! is a skill enhancement and learning experience you can enjoy from the comfort of your home or in-person!

Self-Care for the Holidays (Virtual), 11 am-12 pm

The Holiday season can be stressful. Relieve stress so you can enjoy this time of year.

Holiday Baking (Virtual) Monday, 2-3 pm

Make and have all the best holiday treats for your celebrations.

Christmas Crafts (Virtual + in-person), Tuesday, 11 am-12 pm

Range of class options for various holiday ornament making.

More Holiday Baking (Virtual), Tuesday, 4-5 pm

There's a class for every kind of sweet craving!

Holiday Crafts (In-person), Wednesday, 11 am-12 pm

Sign up for the Holiday Crafts In-person course and create all these craft projects to use as decorations and gifts.

Holiday Music (Virtual), Wednesday, 2-3 pm

We will be ringing and singing at LEG Up! in this virtual session while exploring holiday favourites old and new.

Variety (Virtual), Thursday, 11am -12 pm

From trivia to scavenger hunts, there's something fun and new to try every week in this session.

Card Making (Virtual), Thursday, 2-3 pm

Make something special to send to someone you love this season!

Holiday Desserts, Friday 10:30-11:30 am

Add some yumminess to your week!

To sign up, or learn more, visit: shorturl.at/iEKN7

P4P Safe & Secure Book Club

This fall P4P will be offering Safe and Secure Book Clubs. These Book Clubs are a great way to join with other families to work through the book and discuss critical planning issues. The book club will run over a six-month period beginning in November. This club will meet once a month online working through the chapters from the book.

We will be offering a P4P Family Book Club to families and individuals. The cost per participant is \$60.00. [REGISTER HERE](#) for the P4P Family Book Club.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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. Back to school tutoring is also available.

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

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>

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

Artshine Virtual Accessible Art For Kids, Teens & Adults

Social distancing doesn't need to rob you of the joy that comes from expanding your art skills!

We've got live video lessons via Zoom for all ages. Art supplies will be mailed to you in advance of classes!

Maximum 20 participants for personalized attention.

Click [here](#) for more information!

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

CNIB's Virtual Program Offerings

Whether it's children and youth groups, employment workshops, tech sessions or book clubs, CNIB's innovative programs are designed to educate, entertain and engage!

CNIB's free programs are available to Canadians who are blind or partially sighted as well as their families, friends and caregivers.

Visit their website to learn more: <https://bit.ly/38cRE1o>

KidsAbility Recreation and Social Programs Update

KidsAbility is very excited to start up Social and Recreation programs this Fall! All programs will provide safe, small-group experiences for families looking to reintegrate into recreation activities and will focus on building skills and confidence in group settings. For the first season back from COVID cancellations, all activities will be offered at our Waterloo site starting in October; with the goal of expanding to other sites in the winter session.

Programs include:

Active Start (ages 3.5-7) | FUNdamentals (ages 8-12) | Playtime Academy (ages 3-7)
Social Explorers (ages 8-12) | Eat, Cook, Mingle - Junior (grade 6,7,8)
Eat, Cook, Mingle - Highschool | Drum Club (ages 8-16)

Further details and links to registration can be found on the website:

<https://www.kidsability.ca/recreation-social-programs>

The Therapeutic Recreation Bike Clinic at KidsAbility provides information and support to help clients reach their biking goals. For more information about this clinic, helpful resources, and information about other biking supports at KidsAbility, visit

<https://kidsability.ca/tr-bike-clinic>.

Arts Abound

Arts Abound is excited to get back into the studio for fall classes. There are a variety of age groups and class types available. Please see their website for details:

artsabound.ca.

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.

Head over to <https://ourplacekw.ca/programs> for registration and information.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

EarlyON Waterloo Region

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

EarlyON Waterloo Region is offering both in-person and virtual programs.

Check their website earlyyearsinfo.ca for information about programs and new locations opening soon!

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): First, 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

Woolwich Sledge Hockey

Woolwich Sledge Hockey is open to any person with a physical disability, young or old! Learn more at: woolwichsledgehockey.com.

Kitchener Kicks Dragon Hearts

Kitchener Kicks Dragon Hearts program practices on Saturday mornings at 9am for individuals with special needs. Both virtual and in-person options are available.

New participants are welcome to try the program for free before signing up.

Visit <https://bit.ly/2XK5t5O> for more information.

DARE at Dance Adventures

DARE will be hosting in-person classes. DARE Jr. will run Thursday from 4:30-5:15pm.

The Teen/Young adult class will run Thursday from 5:15-6:00pm.

Learn more: <https://danceadventure.ca/registration/>.

Carousel Dance

Carousel Dance will be offering in-person classes this fall. Integrated and specialized dance programs are offered for children of all ages and abilities. The program focuses on adapted dance, creativity and social interaction in a fun and encouraging environment. Fall registration is closed, but Term 3 will start in February.

Learn more here: <https://bit.ly/3i0aONr>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Woolwich Adapted Aquatics

Woolwich Adapted Aquatics will run on Fridays. A parent or caregiver must participate to support their swimmer in the water. Program offers a 1:3 ratio.

Visit: <https://bit.ly/3CDA3x6>

You're invited to take a look at MOVE by GoodLife Kids!

MOVE is designed exclusively to get youth with special needs active, and is offered FREE to families. Registered participants get access to three live online small-group sessions each week led by one of MOVE's passionate coaches.

Learn more at: goodlifekids.com/MOVE/

Virtual Sensory Storytime

Join KPL for stories, games and songs during Sensory Storytime. Children of all ages and abilities are welcome.

Registration is required: <https://bit.ly/3odj8NZ>

Kijengle

Kijengle Inclusive Music Education & Music Therapy is an innovative, creative, family-centred organization. They will continue to offer both in-person and virtual music and music therapy programs. Learn more at: kijengle.ca.

Adults in Motion Life Skills Workshop

An intensive life skills focused day. Four week sessions.

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.

To learn more, visit the Adults in Motion [website](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops & Training

J.O.E. Job Training

Have fun, make friends and gain job skills!

Learn about staying safe at work, food handling, and customer service.

This training program is 7-week sessions offered via Zoom. The cost is \$145 for seven sessions.

Session Options:

Monday Sessions, 10-11am, November 1 - December 13

Tuesday Sessions, 1:30-2:30pm, November 2 - December 14

[Learn more or register here.](#)

SCALE Program

The SCALE Program (Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment) offers weekly psychoeducational webinars (divided into two 4-week sessions) focused on various topics such as stress, anxiety, mindfulness etc., strategies and tools to better cope with difficult caregiving emotions and free online and/or individual counselling.

The next 4-week session begins on November 4 and focuses on Strategies for Caregiver Mental Health & Well-being.

[Learn more about the program and how to register here.](#)

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.

Upcoming Dates:

Thursdays: November 4 to December 9, 2021; 6:30 — 7:30pm

Tuesdays: January 11 to February 15, 2022; 2:30 — 3:30pm

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Opportunities at SDRC

Autism and Social Communication Skills — November 1, 6:30pm

Discussion Puberty and Sexuality with Your Child — November 24, 1pm

Helping Individuals with Autism Navigate the Social World — November 23, 1pm

Virtual Parent Coaching Workshops — Every Tuesday October 5 to November 9

Learn more or register for any of these programs at: <https://bit.ly/3AXgRd2Ontario>

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 life skills that empower them to make safe choices and caring and respectful decisions in their everyday lives both online and offline.

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.

LDAWC Speaker Series-Getting an IEP that Works

On November 15, Join Carol McMullen as she presents a workshop to help parents get the most from their child's IEP. She welcomes participants to bring their current IEPs. Bring your questions for this wonderful opportunity to receive one-on-one assistance.

[Register today!](#)

Family Knowledge Shares from Family Alliance

Path to Supporting Families on their Journey to Employment, Speakers Ines Escallon & Nancy Ceci — During this presentation you will learn who the Family Support Network for Employment is and how they're building a better employment system in Ontario. November 24 at 7 pm. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2XDtGKF>.

Disability Employment Network Free Webinars

On November 9, Disability Employment Network will host *Raising Expectations: What does your child want to do when they grow up?* <https://bit.ly/3hVjJQo>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Strong Minds Strong Kids

Kids Have Stress Too! is a program to teach you, parents and caregivers, how to support your loved one in identifying and managing their stress, while working toward a resilient future. And because children experience different stressors at different points in their lives, sessions are divided by age groups.

Learn more and register to our upcoming trainings here <https://conta.cc/39tQAag>

Technology to Support Independence

Join DSO Housing Navigators on November 25 from 2-3 pm for a virtual presentation on various types of technological assistance available today and how it might be used to support independence.

Creating a person-centered housing plan and housing support plan is a key process in helping people live the life they want to live. Supports to live independently are often the largest barrier faced by families helping their loved ones to create a sustainable housing plan. While technology can never replace human connection, it can certainly help to increase independence thus decreasing the need (and expense) for human “just in case” supports.

[Register here](#)

Down Syndrome Research Foundation Educator Series

Please join DSRF speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and teachers for a webinar series designed to maximize successful participation in the classroom and community for learners with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

For more information, please email eleanor@DSRF.org.

Nov. 16 Write This Down! Written Expression and Down Syndrome

Nov. 18 Money Math Makes Cents!

Nov. 23 Reading Comprehension + Fluency: A Novel Idea

Nov. 25 Developing and Maintaining Healthy Boundaries and Relationships

Nov. 30 Setting Events: Influences on Behaviour and Success in the Classroom

Dec. 2 Visual-Motor Integration Skills: Impacts on Hand Writing and Reading Skills

Dec. 7 Sensory Processing: Impacts on School Routines

Dec. 9 Down to Sign in the Classroom: Impacts of Hearing and Audiology

[Click here to register now!](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Family Alliance Ontario

There are things families can do right now to be proactive and start living more intentionally. Taking a few small steps to connect, engage and try activities that bring you joy are good ways to move forward even though things are still evolving. Our new action guides will be available every two weeks and will provide suggestions and practical tips for families who are thinking ahead.

Managing The New Normal Action Guides

[**Action Guide 1. Moving Beyond the Pandemic**](#)

Resources from Inclusion Canada

Pathways to Home Ownership — The Pathways to Homeownership outlines an inclusive model of homeownership and provides solutions to the problems faced by people with intellectual disabilities when buying their own house as well as resources to navigate the process.

[**Learn more here: https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2.**](https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2)

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.

Ontario Further Extending Temporary Wage Increase for Personal Support Workers

The Ontario government is investing an additional \$373 million to extend the temporary wage enhancement for personal support workers and direct support workers. This increase will continue until March 31, 2022 and will help attract and retain workers in these critical sectors to protect Ontario's progress while continuing to take a cautious and careful approach to reopening. This latest temporary wage increase builds on the government's previous wage enhancement extension on August 23, 2021, which was set to expire on October 31, 2021.

For more information, visit [**http://ow.ly/Pnky50GEIcM**](http://ow.ly/Pnky50GEIcM)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Safe Voluntary Isolation Site

A safe place for you to stay to help you rest and recover, and to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within your home and in the community. There are no costs to you.

To learn more visit: regionofwaterloo.ca/IsolationSite

Email: safeisolation@regionofwaterloo.ca

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.

Take5

Take5 is an online space for children and youth in foster care, in group homes, or living away from their parents in Ontario. On Take5 you can find information for your age on things like: coping with stress, stuff about your identity and culture, relationships, and who to ask for help. You can also find activities, podcasts, videos and online events. Take5 is for children 6 to 12 and youth 13 and above.

Visit the [Take5 website](#).

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The Vulnerable Persons Registry

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

www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca

KidsAbility Resources

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

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

ConnectAbility.ca COVID-19 Resources

Supporting individuals, families and caregivers

Find answers to your COVID-19 questions, share experiences and discover events to stay active and connected. Visit <https://connectability.ca/covid-19/>

Family Compass Waterloo Region

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

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The FASD Ontario Website Has a New Look!

Key features of the new FASD Ontario website include:

- Enhanced design
- Improved navigation
- Upgraded search functionality

www.FASDON.ca

The Ontario Caregiver Organization

Resources and Education Opportunities to Help Caregivers When They Need it Most.

[Learn more here](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Support Groups

Transgender Partners and Friends Peer Support Group

The Partners, Family and Friends of Transgender Folks Peer Support Group is a support group for non-transgender folks in the orbit of transgender folks where they can discuss their challenges and build community and solutions. Participants are welcome to share or simply listen and learn from the experiences and perspectives of others. The group meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Please request access information by emailing trans@ourspectrum.com.

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/>

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 on their [website](#).

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario (APSGO) is for parents struggling with the behavior of a child, youth or young adult. APSGO support groups help parents/guardians develop effective strategies, set limits and boundaries, and build better relationships with their children. The group currently meets via Zoom on Wednesday at 7:15pm. Contact Steve Keczem at 519-888-1053 or go to apsgo.ca for more information.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington

Preemie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington remains available online through a private Facebook group.

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.cpbfbpc.org/covid19>

Ontario-Wide Virtual Support Group for Black parents and caregivers

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 and 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. via ZOOM. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees.

Contact: For more details or to register, please contact us at bpsgroup2020@gmail.com. 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!

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

Come join our Parent Support Group and meet other parents on a similar journey to yours. LDAWC parent support group's goal is to provide an informal setting to share experiences, challenges, successes and resources. Living, learning and/or working with a LD, or supporting a family member with LD, has its ups and downs. Come learn from others.

Benefits are:

- Learning about relevant resources, supports and strategies
- Insights into what has and hasn't worked for parents and families
- Learning you and your student aren't alone through shared ideas and experiences
- Reduced stigma and stress

Register for Free.

Super Dads Super Kids

This is an online group for dads with children ages 0-6. Join the group to talk about what you think it means to be a dad. Learn ways to connect with your child.

Participate in fun activities with your child(ren)

Starts: Sept. 21, 2021 When: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30pm Where: Zoom

Contact Roberto at capc@carizon.ca to register or for more information.

Groups from Muslim Social Services

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.

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

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

Respect Survey

Very little information is known on the treatment of pregnant people while receiving care in Canada. Therefore, The Canadian Institute of Health with the Birth Place Lab at UBC created the Respect Survey. The survey is anonymous and open to anyone who was pregnant in Canada in the last 10 years. It is also available in eight languages. The study's goal is to use the findings to improve childbearing care across the country. Results will be shared with families, care providers, educators, and health policy leaders.

For more information on the RESPCCT Survey, the researchers, and to take the survey, please visit: <https://www.respcct.ca/>

COVID-19 and Down syndrome: Vaccine Response Survey

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society needs your help! More needs to be learned about COVID-19 and the related vaccine among people with Down syndrome. The Trisomy 21 Research Society (T21RS) has organized an international online survey to collect this information.

You are invited to complete this survey if you are a caregiver of a person with Down syndrome who has received the COVID-19 vaccine or who is eligible but does not plan to receive the vaccine.

<https://bit.ly/388FxmC>

Women with ADHD - CADDAC wants to hear from you!

CADDAC is very interested in learning more about the experiences of girls and women with ADHD in Canada. They will be publishing a policy paper on the topic this fall and would like to include some Canadian survey data, as well as personal comments, to the existing research data. Comments will be anonymous, but will help to add depth to the paper.

Take the survey [here](#).

Students with ADHD Need You!

An advisory committee, the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee was assigned to develop recommendations on what the Education Accessibility Standard should include. Currently ADHD is not recognized as a significant learning risk, which is one of the reasons why your feedback is critical! Learn more at the [CADDAC website](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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.

Better Nights, Better Days

Better Nights, Better Days are recruiting 1,000 families of children who experience sleeping problems to test the program during COVID-19 program across Canada. There is no cost for families to participate. Study recruitment will continue until December 2021. The study has been approved by the IWK Research Ethics Board. If you would like more information, please visit our website <https://betternightsbetterdays.ca/> or email us at bnbd@dal.ca.

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

Advocacy Kit for Increasing Special Services at Home

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

[Bulletin from PFPP 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>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

Significant Victory for Individuals with Exceptionalities in Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Court of Appeal has begun to address the human rights of Nova Scotians with disabilities who live in institutions or in community without support. This ruling sent a powerful message that there are fundamental systemic barriers in Nova Scotia that deny equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities.

Learn More [here](#).

Rally4ODSP

Rally4ODSP was a great success with media, great weather and speakers very enjoyable! Kevin Head from People First Toronto and Anthony Frisina were excellent speakers and represented Rally4ODSP well.

To learn more about the event, please see the following articles that covered the event:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/odsp-clients-call-for-increase-in-income-support-1.6192475>

<https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2021/09/28/calls-for-ford-government-to-increase-odsp-benefits/>

Toronto Family Network

For the latest updates from the Toronto Family Network, please [click here](#).