



► ARCH DISABILITY  
LAW AND OTHERS PUT  
FORWARD COVID-19  
RECOMMENDATIONS ... 3



► LEARNING AT  
HOME? HEAR FROM  
A HOMESCHOOL  
MOM... 6



► MORE TO LEARN AT  
THE BIOMEDICAL STUDY  
GROUP.... 4

April 2020

*Durham Family Resources*

# FAMILYfocus

SO THAT ALL PEOPLE ENJOY A FULL AND MEANINGFUL LIFE  
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

## Keeping Good Support and Keeping Support Good in a Time of Social Distancing

These days things are changing rapidly, whether it is the news, statistics, information, or directives. One thing we know remains consistent - creating and maintaining good support requires creativity, outside-of-the-box thinking, flexibility, and at the heart of it all, remaining deeply engaged and listening to the person being supported. Although [our office is closed to the public](#), our team at DFR has been hard at work, helping families throughout Durham Region to figure out how to keep after the good things in life in them middle of these changing, anxious times.

One thing that has become clear (which we always knew to be true); there is an abundance of community available to us, wanting to embrace us for who we are, what we have to contribute, and what we may need. Amidst the uncertainty, the power and importance of relationships shines through. Despite needing to be physically apart from people, families are pivoting, adjusting, and finding new ways to maintain and bolster the friendships, networks, and roles that fill people's days. Good support is often a key component in people's schedules - and crucial to helping people achieve what they want to achieve - whether that's something routine like grocery shopping and cooking, or something intermittent like taking a special interest class or becoming a member of a club.

Situations will be different for everyone - but we have seen support workers and families work together to find creative, safe, and helpful things to do while not coming into physical contact with the person they support. If support workers are able to safely continue in their normal manner, which many are able to do, that is wonderful and encouraged. Where support workers need to create distance, for their own health or that of the person they support, we are seeing excellent ways for them to maintain hours while contributing well in various ways. Below are some creative ways we have seen families and supporters work together to provide support while limiting physical time together:

- Meal planning together via phone/video, the supporter then makes the meals at home and drops them off on the porch
- Grocery shopping online together using a screen-share - the supporter picks up the groceries and delivers to the person
- Supporter and person maintain their routine coffee dates via Zoom, same time, just virtually
- Supporter shops and delivers for items needed for a Virtual paint night (e.g. [Yaymaker](#))
- Supporter and person signed up for a physical fitness challenge - they connect daily via video and complete the fitness videos at the same time
- Setting up a Facebook group for the person's circle, setting up a schedule of Facebook calls with circle members
- Exploring audiobooks from the library - support the person to join a online bookclub
- FaceTime baking - trying no bake options which are safe to do without support

# What Else is on Offer - Keeping Active and Engaged Using Online and Virtual Resources

Practicing social distancing does not mean people need to be out of touch with one another. This is an opportunity for people to delve deeper into their roles as citizen, friend, and neighbour. There have been all kinds of opportunities popping up online and we thought we would bring together a compilation of “things-to-do” all in one place! Enjoy!

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <b>LEARN ABOUT BIRDS AND BIRDING WITH <a href="#">THESE FREE RESOURCES</a></b>            | • <b>APPLY YOUR NEW SKILLS AND COOK OR BAKE FOR A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR</b>   |
| • <b>GRAB BINOCULARS, <a href="#">DOWNLOAD THIS APP</a>, &amp; START SHARING SIGHTINGS!</b> | • <b>YOUTUBE HAS ART TUTORIALS AND <a href="#">LUNCH DOODLES WITH ARTISTS</a></b>   |
| • <b>START MAKING GIFTS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON (IT'S ONLY 270 DAYS AWAY)</b>                | • <b>BEGIN A DAILY MINDFULNESS PRACTICE - <a href="#">TRY AN APP</a> OR <a href="#">WEBSITE</a> FOR HELP</b>                              |
| • <b>SCHEDULE A <a href="#">VIDEO PE-CLASS</a> FOR THE KIDS EVERY MORNING</b>               | • <b>MAKE AND SEND FRIENDSHIP/ THINKING OF YOU CARDS</b>  |
| • <b>ASK A TORONTO ZOOKEEPER A QUESTION DURING <a href="#">THEIR DAILY LIVESTREAMS</a></b>  | • <b>MAKE GOALS FOR THE FUTURE AND CREATE A VISION BOARD</b>  |
| • <b>REGISTER FOR MCGILL UNIVERSITY'S <a href="#">FREE FINANCIAL LITERACY COURSE</a></b>    | • <b>JOIN THE IVY LEAGUE - <a href="#">TAKE A HARVARD, YALE, PRINCETON CLASS FREE</a></b>   |
| • <b>START A GRATITUDE JOURNAL</b>  | • <b>SEE A <a href="#">BROADWAY SHOW</a>, <a href="#">OPERA</a> , OR <a href="#">LIVE CONCERT</a> FROM YOUR COUCH</b>                     |
| • <b>HAVE A THEMED-MOVIE DAY - WRITE REVIEWS AND SHARE WITH OTHERS</b>                      | • <b>WORK UP A SWEAT WITH A <a href="#">FREE, ONLINE, NO EQUIPMENT EXERCISE CLASS</a></b>   |
| • <b>PLAN A SPRING GARDEN - START SOME SEEDS FOR YOURSELF AND FRIENDS</b>                   | • <b>WRITE/DRAW YOUR STORY - PHONE FAMILY/FRIENDS AND CAPTURE THEIRS</b>  |
| • <b>SPEND SOME TIME EACH DAY <a href="#">LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE</a></b>                   | • <b>START A BOOK OR VIDEO CLUB - HAVE A WEEKLY MEETING VIA VIDEO CHAT</b>  |
| • <b>BECOME A TRIVIA LEGEND - <a href="#">DOWNLOAD FREE FLASHCARDS</a> AND STUDY</b>        | • <b>TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR OF A <a href="#">MUSEUM</a>, <a href="#">AQUARIUM</a>, <a href="#">ZOO</a>, OR <a href="#">HISTORIC SITE</a></b> |
| • <b>TRY A NEW RECIPE - FREE LESSONS FOR COOKING, BAKING ON YOUTUBE</b>                     | • <b>GET YOUR <a href="#">SMARTSERVE CERTIFICATION</a> FREE</b>   |

*And the very last thing we need right now, is a mindset of mutual distancing. We actually need to be thinking in the exact opposite way:*

*Every hand that we don't shake must become a phone call that we place.*

*Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern.*

*Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise.”*

*- Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky*

# Disability Focused Organizations Team Together to Advocate for Federal Safeguarding of People with Disabilities

ARCH Disability Law, in conjunction with 33 other disability organizations across Canada, have prepared a set of recommendations for the Federal Government regarding priorities for the disability community. [The full document and its recommendations can be accessed here.](#)

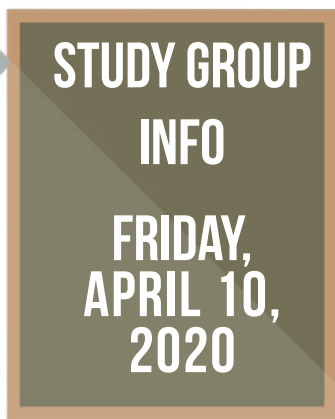
Noting the unique vulnerabilities and challenges people with disabilities, and their families and caregivers may face during this pandemic, the group is advocating for the following;

1. Issue an explicit national values statement affirming the equal rights of people with disabilities to available medical treatment and care including in circumstances of pandemic triage, and - more broadly - reaffirming Canada's commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities to equality and inclusion, as enshrined in the Charter, provincial/federal/territorial human rights law, and in Canada's international obligations under the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
2. Ensure that all announcements made by the Prime Minister and the Public Health Agency are fully accessible and in plain language, and that all networks publicly broadcasting these announcements are mandated to capture these accessibility features.
3. Release guidelines for service providers and people with disabilities who must continue to interact with service providers, to keep everyone safe and to ensure that necessary support continues. Provide protective equipment such as gloves and masks and prioritize the screening of support staff and personal caregivers in private homes and care centers. Encourage the provinces and territories to recognize caregivers and disability support staff as essential service providers.
4. Establish a Citizen Task Force inclusive of people with disabilities, their families, and relevant civil society organizations to monitor evolving needs and advise on remedial strategies in real time, as adverse policy impacts affecting the provision of essential disability related care and support become apparent. Long term, following the COVID-19 pandemic, this group could help to inform a disability inclusive Federal emergency response plan for pandemics and other nation-wide emergency situations.
5. Protect the income of people with disabilities and their families. Support businesses who have hired people with disabilities by offering them education in how best to provide accommodations and accessible work-from-home measures for their employees. Extend EI Caregiver Benefits to those who are stepping into a caregiver role due to illness or isolation from COVID-19.
6. Connect with individual Indigenous communities across Canada to assess the current state of their operations and identify the critical health and disability related needs of their members with a disability and the best way to meet those needs. Implement a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that Indigenous communities and their members are receiving information in a timely and accessible manner.
7. Transfer funds to the provinces and territories that are marked for the health and support needs of people with a disability. Work with the provinces and territories to encourage considered approaches to disability inclusion throughout the country.

“People with disabilities are among the world's most marginalized and stigmatized even under normal circumstances. Without swift action by governments to include people with disabilities in their response to COVID-19, they will remain at serious risk of infection and death as the pandemic spreads.” [Jane Buchanan, deputy disability rights director at Human Rights Watch.](#)

The risks are high for every Canadian during this pandemic - but people with disabilities may face a disproportionate number of threats and barriers to quality healthcare and essential support. Whether it is limiting accompaniment to a hospital, concerns about interruptions to support in one's home, lack of accessible material in new online school curriculum, or difficulty in enacting social distancing due to support needs - there are many issues which need to be addressed in a thoughtful way, and by including people with disabilities and their advocates. We look forward to a Federal response to these timely recommendations.

# To Mask or Not to Mask - BioMedical Approaches Study Group to Discuss Thoughts on Safety at March Online Meeting



April at Bio Medical Approaches Study Group is a chance to review and discuss information surrounding personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks. Information surrounding what to do, and not to do, has been both overwhelming and at times, contradictory. This will be a great chance to shared credible information and insights amongst families.

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group when we meet on the second Friday morning of each month. We will be meeting via Zoom video or audio conferencing this Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 10 am for an hour or so. **Your RSVP to Janet below will ensure that you receive the Zoom invite details.**

We engage with anything “Bio – Medical” and so families talk about all of the approaches, alternatives, strategies that we have found, are being pushed into, have discovered online and more! We have a wide circle of families who are ready to share their vast experience and together we sometimes are able to help each member make better sense of the options and choices that surround them.

The group meets monthly and is open and welcoming to new and past participants! We usually meet at The Gathering Place (20-850 King St. W, Oshawa), on the second Friday of each month at 10am - this month, our office is closed, so we will be meeting online via Zoom meetings. Please RSVP for this month’s meeting to [jklees@dafrs.com](mailto:jklees@dafrs.com) to get the online meeting details!

## Imagining Home Takes its Monthly Meeting Online! Email Erin for Details!

If we’ve learned anything this past month, it’s that technology can be an invaluable “connector”, especially in times of physical distancing! We’re finding ways to connect with families and continuing to learn from each other as we plan forward (as we’ve always done!).

This month’s Imagining Home meeting will be held via Zoom Video. We’ll be continuing our exploration of the different ways to think about support that will enable a person to live safely and well within their own home or their family home. This could include natural and paid supports, hourly waged and stipend supports, technology, environmental and building configurations and more. At our upcoming meeting, we’ll be joined by Bram van Bommel, who will share his experience of being a supportive roommate, his perspective into what worked well and what posed challenges, and some considerations for other families thinking about supportive roommates. We’ll also talk about thinking through creative support plans in the current environment. And perhaps more than anything, we really just want to take the opportunity that technology offers us, to see each other again and share what we’re feeling, learning and putting into action along this uncertain journey.

Each month at Imagining Home, we share housing updates and discuss timely topics of interest for families. If you are new to Imagining Home and would like to attend a meeting to see if it’s for you, we welcome you to contact Erin O’Reilly prior to attending your first meeting, at (905) 436-2500 ext. 2511 or [eoreilly@dafrs.com](mailto:eoreilly@dafrs.com). Our next Imagining Home meeting is on Wednesday, April 8 at 6:30pm via Zoom meeting. Please contact Erin to RSVP or for more information about connecting to the Zoom call at 905-436-2500 ext. 2511 or [eoreilly@dafrs.com](mailto:eoreilly@dafrs.com). Looking forward to our time together!

**IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2020 • 6:30PM  
ONLINE, VIA ZOOM!**

**CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS ([EOREILLY@DAFRS.COM](mailto:eoreilly@dafrs.com))**





# New Measures in Place to Support Families Throughout the Region of Durham

The Government of Canada has announced its [Economic Response Plan](#) which outlines what supports are available for individuals, families, seniors, and businesses. This includes the [Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#). Community Living Ontario has [summarized its interpretation of what's on offer financially](#) for people because of COVID-19.

The provincial government has also taken several steps to protect vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis including:

- [Temporary suspension of eviction orders](#);
- [New funding for mental health support](#), including online resources for children, youth and adults;
- Near the end of March, [all Time-of-Use Rates for hydro in the province are suspended](#) and electricity will only be charged at off-peak rates for 45 days;
- The provincial government has [announced that a discretionary payment may be issued to existing ODSP recipients](#) to help with some of the costs people may experience as a result of preparing for or living with COVID-19 - ODSP recipients should call their case worker to discuss the details of this benefit.
- The Province of Ontario also has a call-out for innovation and resources - [see how you might help](#)

The Region of Durham has [compiled a list of supports available to its residents](#). If you, or someone you know is vulnerable at this time, there may be some helpful resources available. The GAP Committee, in collaboration with Durham Housing Advisory Network, has created another [compilation of resources focused in Durham Region](#). This list includes places to access supports as well as services and supports accepting donations.

## Support DFR and our Work Through Membership with our Organization



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**2020 AGM  
(TENTATIVE)  
MONDAY,  
JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>,  
2020**

Becoming a member of Durham Association for Family Resources and Support is about to get even easier! You can find the membership application on our website at anytime - if you are renewing your membership or interested in becoming a new member it is a simple process!

Becoming a member not only shows your support for the Mission and Values of Durham Family Resources, but also allows for your family to vote at our Annual General Meeting. Make this support public to show that you think our work is important and beneficial to our community.

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!**

**Fill out a membership form today!**

# Notes from a Homeschool Mom - Learning to Learn at Home

My homeschooling days are far behind me, but I think of them often as I listen to the astounding news about school closures for the next weeks and possibly months. I have also been listening to the concerns and questions of parents thinking about their kids learning from a home base – trying to set up each day as a school day, downloading curriculum and learning how to teach math skills, demanding start times and staying on task regimes – and I hear their worries and their exhaustion before even starting.

I would so like to collectively give them all a warm (but physically distanced) hug, tell them to breathe and share with them my learning from our homeschooling decade:

This is not school and you are not a teacher. Don't try to replicate that which you cannot and do not want to be. Your kids don't want this either. Right now, they need a Mom and a Dad or a supportive Auntie or Nonna.

Families can be good at holding and calm, and being a rock in a rocky world. Focus first on creating that space. Start with yourself, and hold it for them.

Do what school simply cannot do. Follow your child and their evolving interests – individually, supportively and without judgment.

When something really connects with your child, let them explore it fully, passionately and for hours and days on end. Believe me, they will be learning. They will be learning content, and focus, and mastery, and planning. Do not stop for math class or reading time. They will let you know when they are done.

Don't neglect your child in the throes of passionate learning. Follow what they are doing (don't interfere, pick your moments). Ask questions that encourage them to tell you what they know. Don't become the expert and begin to give lectures and find materials for your child. Leave something around – let them be the Explorer, the Discoverer, the Sharer of new information, the Teacher. Nothing kills enthusiasm more than Mom or Dad showing that they already know more. Nothing feeds learning like showing awe at someone's growing abilities. Cheer, but let them lead.

If your child appears to have no evolving interests, gently leave things around for them to discover, set up little projects together, let them know where you think they are skilled, let them generate a list of things they like. Feed any flicker of a flame.

Almost all kids will like cooking (because of the eating) especially if they get a real role, music (playing, gathering, creating playlists, name that tune), gardening and getting hands dirty, photo projects (taking a daily photo of a favourite item (I recently saw one with those Lindt Easter bunnies) in a favourite or unusual location).

Ask your kids to get ready to teach the family something – anything – at the end of the week. Make this a celebration, add in popcorn and take photos.

Keep an expectation of some helping every day – at home, for a neighbour, for a friend, for the community.

Many kids do well with a welcome to the day note. In an exercise book created for each child, write a note with some daily ideas, some pre-planned reminders, but keep it entertaining and soft. I would clip a magazine article (yes, I am old), or set an almost completed chess game with three moves left on top of the book, or a riddle or a simple puzzle.

Allow kids to hit that boredom wall. Don't rescue them – just make sure there is evidence of things to do around...not screens that entertain, but books, paper, baking supplies, simple science equipment, stuff for experimenting, and more. Keep an eye on them but let them figure it out. When they do, don't make a big deal of it but tuck your smile inside. Learning, important learning is happening.

Keep your own daily reflective journal of daily evidence of learning. This is profound. You will notice yourself beginning to see all kinds of things from a learning perspective and this will help you to relax greatly. As they hit that boredom wall, observe, write, plan, but do not rescue. Add this journal to the morning message books above and you have significant evidence of learning. This is gold.

In the end, mostly kids cannot *not* learn. They will learn. They may learn anxiety, to hate school work, to hate being taught by Dad, to hate the rigour they never like at school to be at home. Or they may learn to begin to structure their own day, to find out what they do when they hit that boredom wall, or discover their own lifelong passions and interest in learning.

PS These ideas work equally well for all of us adult learners of all ages and abilities!!

What are your ideas?

Share them with us! (email to [hminors@dafers.com](mailto:hminors@dafers.com))



# Have You Attended Making the Most Family Series? Come Together to Discuss and Continue Learning!

While we all try and stay safe and well at home, this month our April Making the Most Study Group will take place online via Zoom – graduates should look out for joining instructions that will be sent by email in advance. There will also be a phone-in option for anyone who does not have easy internet access.

This month's theme will be "Social roles in the time of Physical distancing", how can we continue to make valuable contributions in our neighbourhoods and circles of family and friends? Lets come together to share ideas and brainstorm ways we can support each other to get through this challenging time and stay connected.

We will start at 6.30pm on Monday April 27<sup>th</sup>.

**News flash: Please note, the next *Making the Most* learning series has been postponed and new dates will be announced as soon as they are available. If you would like to attend or find out more about it, please contact Laura a call on 905 436 2500 x2312 or email [lpowell@dafrs.com](mailto:lpowell@dafrs.com)**



## MAKING THE MOST STUDY GROUP

MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2020  
6:30 PM

Online via Zoom Meetings

{ [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com) }

**CHAP**  
COMMUNITY HELPERS  
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

[RespiteServices.com](http://RespiteServices.com) is up and running connecting families  
to supporters!

Respiteservices.com is continuing to operate remotely to connect families and support workers. We know people continue to need good support during this time and are working diligently to continue to provide this service to residents of Durham Region.

To be matched with support workers, you must be registered with [respiteservices.com/durham](http://respiteservices.com/durham). Contact Jeanne at (905)436-3404 or [jgodfrey@dafrs.com](mailto:jgodfrey@dafrs.com). New supporters are continuing to be added. Contact Jeanne for more information!

Want more  
information?

Durham  
Association for  
Family Resources  
and Support

For more  
information on our  
organization or any  
of our events, please  
visit our website at  
**[www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com)**  
or contact Heather  
by phone or email:  
**(905)436-2500  
ext.2314**  
**[hminors@dafrs.com](mailto:hminors@dafrs.com)**

For more information, please visit our website, [www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com),  
and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

Durham Association For Family Resources and Support  
850 King St. W, Unit 20, Oshawa, Ontario L1J 8N5  
(905)436-2500 [www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com)