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December 2020

Durham Family Resources

FAMILYfocus

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

Our Sixth Annual Stories by The Fire Will Take Place Virtually on December 17th - Join us!

It has become a December DFR tradition to gather together early in this winter month and share stories of contribution, belonging, and connection. More than ever, we need to find ways to hold traditions firm and find ways to celebrate the wonder we find in each other.



Stories by the Fire in the Centennial Building,
Whitby in December 2019

Stories by the Fire is a time when we hear from local families, community members, and artists. Through stories we see how being and creating welcome, being present, and inviting the contribution of others grows and manifests a good and rich life, not just for one person, but for the community at large. Through our stories we discover that we are the abundance, and that is the gift that is worth unwrapping.

This is our sixth-year hosting this celebrated festive event. Although this year has strayed from our typical expectations in terms of venue and physical proximity to one another, there has been no distancing from our dedication/commitment to storytelling as an integral part of what we want to offer.

We are excited to offer this event online via Zoom. Over our own homemade treats and holiday-sparkle – we plan to toast the year that has passed, reflect the

good which has been accomplished and look to the possibilities of the year ahead.

We hope you can join us, from the comfort of your own home, on Thursday, December 17th, 2020. The evening will leave you toasty, with stories of new ventures, community stewardship, inviting connections, small gestures and big impact!

Register today to receive your Zoom invitation! If you are new to Zoom, and would like a test-run, let us know! You can also dial in by phone and listen to the evening.

Register here for your Stories by the Fire Zoom invitation!
Thursday, December 17th, 2020
7:00pm to 8:30pm

Ontario Again Giving Parents up to \$250 per Child for Education-Related Expenses

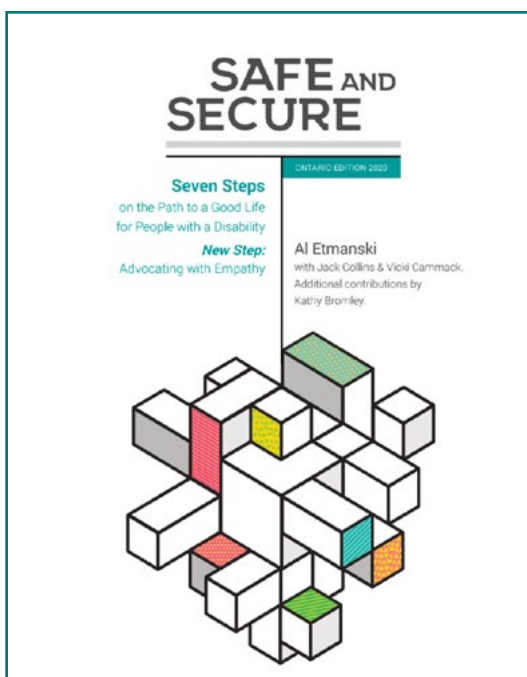
Ontario parents of children aged 12 and younger will be able to receive a one-time payment of \$200 per child, and \$250 for a child 21 or younger with special needs. This direct one-time payment is available through the new Support for Learners program to help offset additional education-related or childcare costs.

It doesn't matter if your child is enrolled in school or child care. All children are eligible based on their age. Funding is available whether children attend school in person, online, or a mix of both.

Families have until January 15, 2021 to apply. For more information about this fund, visit the [Support for Learners information page](#). To apply now, [click here!](#)



Updated Safe and Secure Resource: Seven Steps to Help Plan a Good Life for People with a Disability



Safe and Secure is a free guide created by the Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) who specialize in families helping families. The Safe and Secure book is a compilation of learning and principles - revised and updated specifically for Ontario families. Planning is at the core of our work here at DFR, and this is a long-standing resource that we have known to be helpful for families thinking through their next steps.

“As we take charge of the future — and as we nurture caring networks for people with disabilities — we are awakening the world to the importance of belonging, the importance of trust, and of reciprocity. When this happens, lives are transformed, communities are changed, and our capacity to care for one another is enhanced.” - Al Etmanski - Co-founder of PLAN

The Safe and Secure book, and its corresponding worksheets, are designed so that together with your family member, you can begin building an “everyday life” and safeguard their future. The book guides families through a seven-step process to create a safe, secure and pleasant future for their relatives with disabilities. The seven steps are as follows:

STEP ONE Clarifying your vision

STEP TWO Nurturing friendship

STEP THREE Creating a home

STEP FOUR Making sound decisions

STEP FIVE Achieving financial security

STEP SIX Advocating with empathy

STEP SEVEN Securing your plan

Visit the [Partners for Planning website to download your free electronic copy](#), or pay for shipping to receive a free hardcopy of the 2020 edition.

Only Days Left to Send Your Message About Dangers of Bill C-7

An important and consequential law is quickly proceeding in Parliament while many Canadians are focused on the myriad of other significant news and information filling our news-feed and daily conversations. Bill C-7 is a package of amendments being considered by our legislatures to the current medical assistance in dying law (MAiD). These amendments will create a separate pathway to assisted death for people who are not dying, providing they have some form of disabling medical condition. The bill is due to be passed on December 18th.

Families and staff of Durham Family Resources have long spoken about the rise of assisted death around the world and we have tracked its progress here in Canada. When the initial MAiD legislation was formed, we supported the application of the Vulnerable Person's Standard, developed by a coalition of like-minded thinkers (individuals and organizations) to protect the lives of the people made most vulnerable by Bill C-14. This standard was never fully accepted, although some of its key safeguards were taken on: to be reserved only for the very end of life, with a 10 day reflection period, and using all other options for people not at the end of life (pain control, good support, etc.).



Dr. Catherine Frazee is a Professor Emerita with the School of Disability Studies. In her compelling testimony at the Justice Committee hearings she asks why disabled individuals are being singled out for assisted suicide.

In the Fall of 2020, amid and almost lost in the turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government has tabled Bill C-7: An Amendment to MAiD. This was tabled in response to the Quebec Supreme Court's Truchon decision. Truchon was a 51 year old Québécois man with cerebral palsy who lived in a long term care home and ended his life with MAiD in April after a judge in Quebec made a decision that challenged the laws about who would qualify for MAiD. Under current MAiD law, Truchon would not qualify for assistance in death.

Bill C-7 will allow for a separate pathway to assisted death for people with disabilities, who are not dying, simply because they live with a disability or some form of disabling medical condition. This is discriminatory because those without disability would not be provided this pathway to dying in the same circumstances. A person without a disability, who

is not dying, would experience suicide prevention - intensive mental health care, social supports, and crisis intervention. Why should those with a disability have a clear path to choose death more easily and readily than other citizens? People with disabilities do not want death, they want appropriate supports in place to have a chance at a good life, to contribute, just like anyone else would expect. Until such a time that Canadian society acts in a way to support the good life for people with disabilities, they ought not be putting resources or attention into ensuring death, good or otherwise

Making disability an acceptable reason to die reinforces the devaluation we fight against everyday. The risk is that the lives of people with disabilities will be further viewed as "less than" other Canadians - with life-threatening consequence.

Inclusion Canada, Community Living Ontario, and others have active campaigns to help Canadians understand what is at risk with Bill C-7 and ways to advocate for the safety of all citizens. To learn more about Bill C-7 and what we can do about it, visit the following sites:



Easily send an email to your Member of Parliament and all Ontario Senators expressing your opposition to Bill C-7 through *Community Living Ontario's* advocacy tool.

Read *Inclusion Canada's* synopsis of the issue and its inherent risk to the disability community. Talk about the issue and your concerns with your friends and family.



Visit *Inclusion Canada's* campaign initiative site to prepare to discuss these proposed amendments with your Member of Parliament.

Thinking it Through: Families Encouraged to Give Education-Feedback

Seasons Greetings and Happy Holidays! At this time of year we look forward to spending time with family and friends, whether it's online or socially distanced.

This month there is important action families can take regarding your child's educational experience during Covid. Integration Action for Inclusion (IAI) has put together an online survey so that parents can continue to share their collective voices in creating optimal education for all- even during the pandemic. IAI is a family-led organization that has been dedicated to bringing about quality inclusive education for all for several years. The survey will only take about 15 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below. We also encourage families to [check out more about IAI here.](#)

We look forward to seeing you at Stories by the Fire. Registration and details are on the front cover!

Fill out the IAI Survey Here!

Making Development Services Better - Feedback Extended Until December 31, 2020



Ministry of
Children, Community &
Social Services

In early December some DFR families gathered to look at the DSO Reform Survey in greater detail. There is a lot to read and think about but many of us left a bit optimistic and believing that we saw budding concepts and emerging language on that survey, in the vision and principles that families have been speaking about for years- someone is listening!

We had thought the survey deadline was this week, but the good news is that there has been an extension! The survey is now due on December 31st! Just in time to kick the new year off right by putting good things in the minds of decision makers!

From the families gathered, there was a lot of consensus on the kinds of ideas they want to include in their responses. Considering the lifestyles families are trying to arrange, and the support they need to do so, some of the important comments families are using in their surveys include:

- The Vision is pretty good and strong – we need to ask that all funding decision need to be made in the context of “will that lead to that vision of belonging in real community or will it lead someplace else?”
- Include the word “individualized” in the Vision, Principles and Language throughout. Person-centered does not necessarily mean one person at a time, individualized does;
- Families need and want choice, control and portability BUT also reliable and sustained supports so they do not have to do all the work alone. Family-focused organizations that do not provide services need to be available around the province
- Supports throughout the lifespan are important
- Supports should not be quick and unconnected but available as needed
- Support and funding should focus on and prioritize natural and typical pathways in community at all ages
- It is very important that there are many and ongoing ways for families to see what is possible; service options should not be the main option on any agenda
- Don't over professionalize supporters
- Another way of looking at service quality needs to be designed for and with families – not QAM
- Invest in partnerships with families early and ongoing if you want families not to choose services
- Families are the natural place where the voice of the person with disability learns to be heard and can be safeguarded and augmented. Support this natural pathways first and well.

Access the Full Survey Here

Access the Plain Language Survey Here

Final Imagining Home Meeting of 2020 will Reflect on the Year Past and Plan for the Year Ahead!

Last month at Imagining Home we had yet another evening full of connection, contemplation and possibility filled conversations -

- We continued conversations sparked by construction and plans for more large scale congregated developments and reflected themes that will inform a principled statement on what families and communities require for real home.
- With the second wave of Covid upon us and the winter months ahead, we delved into Meaningful Support and the ways in which families can and are using support to ensure their loved ones have connected and contributing lives in these times.
- Families were also invited to provide feedback to be shared at an Engagement Session on Developmental Services Reform.

At our upcoming (and final Imagining Home meeting of the year!), we'll share updates on these initiatives and more. We will also take a look back on the year past and plan for the one ahead. Looking forward to our time together!

At Imagining Home each month, families explore timely housing topics and issues through an analytical lens and the shared principle of creating home, one person at a time. 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 prior to attending your first meeting, at (905) 436-2500 ext. 2511 or eoreilly@dafers.com. Our next Imagining Home meeting is on Wednesday, December 9th at 6:30pm via Zoom meeting. Please contact Erin to RSVP or for more information about connecting to the Zoom call.

IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020 • 6:30PM

ONLINE, VIA ZOOM! CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS ([EOREILLY@DAFRS.COM](mailto:eoreilly@dafers.com))




Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group Meets December 18th with Guest Dr. Michelle Blake from Louisiana

December's meeting moves to the second Friday and the group will meet this month on December 18th. This month the group has the opportunity to chat with Dr. Michelle Blake, a doctor and Co-Director of Medicine at St. Francis Medical Center in Louisiana. She also happens to be the sister of our own Selena Blake! Come and hear what she has to say about the virus, the illness, treating the symptoms, and what we have learned and need to know right now!

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 on **Friday, December 18th, at 10 am**. 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! Please RSVP for this month's meeting to jklees@dafers.com to get the online meeting details!



**STUDY GROUP
INFO
FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 18
10AM**

Keeping Community Strong - Shop Local this Holiday Season

We are stronger together. This holiday season, we have an opportunity to support our neighbourhoods by looking local when crossing off our holiday shopping lists. Durham Region is full of talented small businesses, and it will soon be even easier to see what abundance is on offer in our own locale through the launch of online marketplace, [Shop Durham Region](https://shopdurhamregion.ca), created for Durham-based retailers and vendors only.



Shop Durham Region offers shoppers a place to buy products from multiple stores safely - vendors offer curbside and/or in-store pickup and shipping options. Funded by Regional Economic Development and led by the Whitby BIA, the marketplace is available only to businesses across Durham. By using the Shop Durham Region platform, you can ensure your holiday spending is directly supporting your local economy.

This initiative aims to increase the digital presence of local businesses, and raise the profile of locally-offered products. Local vendors are able to join - whether they currently have an online store or not. Bricks-and-mortar and home-based businesses are also encouraged to participate. Free support is available to help get businesses online - and interested businesses will be provided with set-up assistance, product photography style guides and training videos. If you know of a local vendor who could benefit from this offer - visit ShopDurhamRegion.ca or contact the [Downtown Whitby BIA](#)! This project is part of the Durham Economic Task Force's economic support and recovery plan.

Looking for more local love? [Check out the Durham Region tourism site](#) for a spotlight on what's happening in our own backyard!



RespiteServices.com is continues connecting families to supporters! Contact Sandy for details!

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. Contact Sandy at (905)436-3404 or sciarlariello@dafrs.com. New supporters are continuing to be added. Contact Sandy 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

or contact Heather by phone or email:

(905)436-2500
ext.2314

hminors@dafrs.com

For more information, please visit our website, www.dafrs.com, and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

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