

February 2024



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Durham Family Resources

FAMILYfocus

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

Join Us As We Premiere our New Video Series Recognizing Capacity - February 12!

After a sneak preview at the recent Stories by the Fire evening, DFR will officially launch our new video collection which focuses on the experiences of families as they came to expect and notice the voices of their family members with a developmental disability.

In 2017 the Law Commission of Ontario recommended pilot projects be developed to explore alternatives to Guardianship. DFR's **Recognizing Capacity Project** has aimed to gather further evidence that people with developmental disabilities can maintain their legal capacity and be the decision maker in their own lives, even if they need significant support to do so.

Over the duration of the project, families have been invited to come together for shared learning events, to hear stories from other families, to discuss and reflect on their own experiences, and to share some of these publicly. Last summer, a small group of families were invited to share their reflections as part of Provincial submission to the Federal Government, in partnership with Community Living Ontario and Inclusion Canada.

In the fall, we had the opportunity to record a series of short videos which we will showcase on this evening. This will provide another opportunity for all families to come together and talk about this important topic.

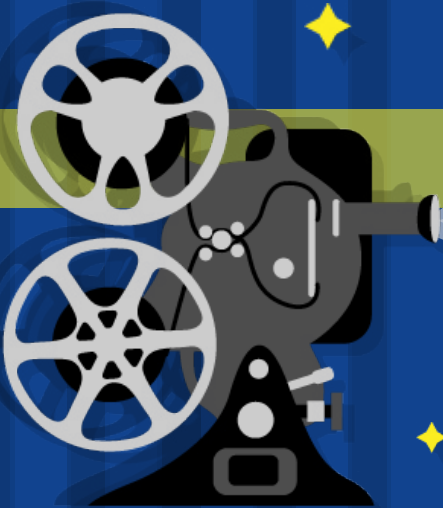
Join us for the evening of Monday February 12, in the Regal Room of the Centennial Building, downtown Whitby. Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7pm start.

Recognizing Capacity Video Launch

Monday, February 12, 2024
7:00pm - 9:00pm

The Regal Room
@The Centennial Building
416 Centre St S, Whitby

RSVP Here!



Do You Have Younger Kids? Meet With Other Parents at Our In-Person Coffee/Tea Get-Together on February 22nd!

Join us on **Thursday, February 22nd** from 10:00am to noon in the Gathering Place for Connect IRL (In Real Life) a discussion group for families with young children.

Learn, share stories, exchange experiences, and build connections with fellow parents navigating the exciting journey of raising young ones.

This month, we've been hearing from families that issues of nutrition, especially how food dyes can impact our kids' health and wellness in surprising ways, is top of mind. Secondly, families have also noted that there are many tips and strategies they've found helpful in assisting their children to find a sense of calm and relaxation that helps for bright days of learning, leisure and moments of sheer enjoyment. Of course, there is always time when we gather to catch up and enjoy being in the company of others who lead with hearts of understanding.



Connect IRL - In-Person!

Thursday, February 22, 2024

10am - 12pm

The Gathering Place - 20-850 King St. W., Oshawa, Ontario

[Register Here to Join Us!](#)

BioMedical Approaches Study Group Regroups for New Spring Learning

Last month the BioMedical group started its year of learning off with a field-trip! The group delved into Halotherapy, or salt therapy, visited the Holistic Salt Therapy and Cave in Uxbridge to dig in to what salt caves are all about! This month the group will reconvene at the Gathering Place, to discuss their thoughts and experience from that excursion, while planting seeds about new opportunities and topics to dig into this coming Spring.

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group. We usually 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 on the second Friday of each month at 10am for about an hour to an hour and a half. **RSVP to Janet** ✉️ **if you'd like to attend!**



**STUDY GROUP
INFO
FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 9, 2024
10 AM**

Thinking Through New Local Housing Initiatives - Join Imagining Home Earlier Than Its Usual Date This Month!

For this month only, Imagining Home will be held on a new date – **please join us on Wednesday February 7th (same time, same place) for our usual good conversation with a variety of home and housing topics!**

This month Whitby announced a substantial investment in the creation of new housing of over 650 homes. We'll take this as good news and as always, include a healthy dose of optimism AND critical analysis...! How might this funding add to and enhance our neighbourhoods through increased housing in the most welcoming and ordinary kinds of ways? What don't we want to see? How can we have input in the early planning stage? And how will this influence housing initiatives across other parts of the Region?

We'll anchor our discussion with some well-honed family perspective and link our own understanding of these community and political events with what it means to live in "neighbourhood", feel belonging and contribute as neighbours do. How might someone be a good neighbour from any starting place, even a current home that's not forever? One does not need to build a new neighbourhood, a perfect neighbourhood, to invite relationship and belonging through the role of neighbour.

We hope you can join us this month!

Come join the conversation! Long time and new families alike, everyone has something to gain and something to offer. Each month at Imagining Home, we engage with anything "housing, home and community" and enjoy critical discussion, sharing stories, learning and often having a good laugh among respectful and supportive people! Families bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and are ready to share and support others along their journey. All are welcome to attend and participate in Imagining Home when we meet on the second Wednesday of each month. But if you are new to the group and would like to attend Imagining Home for the first time (or returning after some time away) we'd ask that you first contact Erin at (905) 436-2500 ext. 2511 or ereilly@dafrs.com to arrange an introductory call.

IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024 • 6:30PM

IN PERSON AT THE GATHERING PLACE!

CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS (EREILLY@DAFRS.COM)



New Multigenerational Home Renovation Tax Credit

This new refundable tax credit can assist Canadians with the cost of renovating a home to create a secondary unit which will be occupied by a relative who is over 65 years of age, or over the age of 18 if they qualify for the disability tax credit.

The credit is available for renovation expenses incurred in 2023 and beyond, and can be applied to 15% of your costs, up to a maximum of \$7,500 for each eligible claim.

[For more information on eligibility, allowable expenses and how to claim the credit, visit the Government of Canada site here.](#)

Inadequate Sentencing of Brent Gabona Reinforces Dangers of Congregate Care

Late in January 2024, the former group home worker and supervisor, Brent Gabona, was sentenced to 6.5 years for sexually assaulting vulnerable adults in his care. Gabona worked at Shepherd's Villa, a group home for adults with disabilities in Hepburn, Saskatchewan, from 1992 to 2009. Gabona targeted non-verbal victims because of their inability to report his actions.

The sentence is considerably less than the Crown's 15 year recommendation. Inclusion Canada, who submitted a detailed Community Impact Statement to the court before sentencing, says the sentence "represents a failure to adequately punish egregious crimes and underscores systemic issues in protecting the rights and safety of individuals with intellectual disabilities."

"This case is a wake-up call," says Krista Carr, Executive Vice President of Inclusion Canada, "We need to shift away from congregate settings like Shepherd's Villa, which have proven time and again to be inadequate and unsafe. Our focus must be on ensuring people with intellectual disabilities can live and be included in their communities, in their own homes in safety and dignity."

[Read Inclusion Canada's full Press Release on the sentencing here.](#)

Contribute to RDSP Improvements With This Federal Survey

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is working with a national research firm gain input from Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) holders for the evaluation of the Canada Disability Savings Program (CDSP). The CDSP is comprised of the Registered Disability Savings Plan, the Canada Disability Savings Grant and Canada Disability Savings Bond.

Your thoughts and experiences matter, it will take approximately 20 minutes of your time, but the impact of your insights could be far-reaching.

Community Living Ontario recently shared some key areas to consider when approaching one of the survey's open-ended questions: "Overall, how good a job is the program doing at helping to ensure that the future financial needs of the beneficiary will be met?". This is a chance to suggest improvements, and they noted some great suggestions for families to consider:

Simplify the Application Process: Currently, only 25% of eligible Canadians access the RDSP. Let's work towards making the application process more straightforward and covering the costs of any necessary medical forms.

Less Restrictive Rules: Advocate for less restrictive rules associated with accessing funds in the RDSP. This includes simplifying the withdrawal process, and increasing the withdrawal limit without penalties. The rules and penalties around RDSP withdrawal could be easier to understand and less punitive.

Increase Grants and Bonds: As the cost of living rises, propose increasing the amounts of grants and bonds. This can make a significant difference in supporting the future financial needs of beneficiaries.

Access the RDSP Survey Here!



Mark Your Calendars for Family Stories: Navigating the Future Path - A Learning Series for the Next Generation

A 3-part series designed **specifically for and with** family members and friends who will be the next generation to plan for and support the good lives of their loved ones. Come hear from today's 'next generation' who are well into their journey of taking on new roles and responsibilities, post legacy planning.

We welcome you to a space with peers, who are walking a path you see ahead for yourself. This series is your exclusive window into the future, featuring real-life stories and practical advice from those who are walking that path. From unraveling financial complexities to navigating the intricate dance of role transitions, to hearing what people have learned from their experiences to what they wish they had known earlier from their parents.

Stay tuned for dates and registration details – you won't want to miss this unique opportunity to connect, learn, and shape the future alongside like-minded individuals. By the way, even those of "this generation" welcome to attend and feel inspired for the future.



Family Stories:

Navigating the Future Path

Save the date for this **NEW learning series!**

Thursday, March 14th

Thursday, March 28th

Thursday, April 11th

Webcast Spotlights Why Siblings Matter - Join with Other "Next Gen" Folks as They Meet Monthly



Next Generation is always keeping abreast of the ways in which we think about the future. As such, we are encouraging others to watch this brief and engaging webcast that provides the results of surveys completed by Siblings Canada, in collaboration with the Centre for Mental Health and Addictions (CAMH) and Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR). The webcast reveals insights into the priorities for sisters and brothers as they age, and a few strategies that arose from the results.

Watch the webcast here: [Understanding the Experiences of Siblings of People with Disabilities \(siblingscanada.ca\)](https://www.siblingscanada.ca/understanding-the-experiences-of-siblings-of-people-with-disabilities)

After you watch the video, [siblings are encouraged to answer a few follow-up questions here.](#)

DFR's NextGen group is a casual get together of those who identify as the "next generation" in the care and support of a loved one with a developmental disability. Whether you are a sibling, nibling, cousin or friend - come together with others to connect, share, and learn from one another!

The get together is typically held once a month, both via Zoom and occasionally in-person. [Contact Rosanne for more details!](#)

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

The Making the Most Study Group is a fantastic opportunity for those who have completed the series to continue their learning and take some next steps in developing valued roles and relationships with a loved one.

Each month graduates of past Making the Most learning series are invited to come together and think more deeply about crafting and sharing a vision, designing and planning days full of contributions and possibilities, focusing on roles rather than activities, seeking and developing good support, making positive introductions, and finding strength, comfort, and energy through building circles of support, and connecting with other families.

The meeting is open to anyone who has attended the 6-part Making The Most learning series or a MTM Weekend Retreat and wishes to join the conversation. Contact Laura Ipowell@dafrs.com for more information.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone again on Monday February 26, at 6:30pm via Zoom.



MAKING THE MOST STUDY GROUP

FEBRUARY 26, 2024
6:30PM TO 7:30PM

respiteservices.com



RespiteServices.com 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!

Important Dates At-A-Glance!

Imagining Home

February 7@6:30pm

Bio Medical Study Group

February 9@10am

Recognizing Capacity Video Launch

February 12@7pm

Springing into Possibilities

February 7, 2024

February 21, 2024

Making the Most Study Group

February 26@6:30pm

Connect IRL

February 22@10am

For more information,
please visit our website at

www.dafrs.com

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

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