



Windsor-Essex Family Network

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Families Helping Families Open Doors

About Us: Who we are

We are families and friends: a network of parents, brothers, sisters and friends who believe in the inclusion and well being of children and adults who have different abilities and challenges. Our lives have been touched by 'disability'. We are families who share information and experiences with each other, provide emotional and practical support, develop briefs to tell government and others what we need and design information to help other families on their journey. We are families and friends who care.



Our Purpose, Our mission

Our mission is: to empower individuals and their families affected by disability and to enhance their quality of life through information; learning opportunities; mentoring; and community connections.

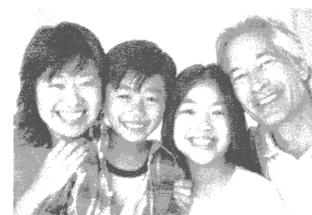
Background

Windsor Essex Family Network has been there for families throughout Windsor and Essex County since 1995 by sharing experiences and ideas, encouraging, celebrating, grieving, laughing, making friends, building awareness or just simply making a quick phone call or having a coffee.

Windsor Essex Family Network is a **not-for-profit charitable organization** that operates independently of government, agencies, services and programs. This gives the freedom to be fully supportive of families and help them negotiate access to services and supports. At the same time, the organization and its members contribute knowledge and partner as equals with government, agencies, school boards, other family organizations and the community.

What we believe

- We believe in the value of family wisdom and knowledge.
- We are committed to the full inclusion of individuals with different abilities into school and community life.
- We believe that every individual and family must be respected, valued and supported in the community.
- We believe that every person has important gifts to contribute to their community.
- We believe in the right to full citizenship.
- We value each person's individualism and their right to make choices and to direct their own lives.



What we do

- Provide family to family linking, mentoring and support.
- Provide information.
- Offer workshops and learning opportunities.
- Create innovative and practical resources for families.
- Bring families together to empower each other on issues of importance to them.
- Participate on committees, boards and working groups as volunteers giving back.
- Offer a collective autonomous family voice to educate and influence the systems.
- Work alongside partners in the community committed to strengthening and supporting families who have family members with disabilities

What families say

Families tell us that the daily work and effort involved with battling 'systems' is a huge contributor to stress levels. Families tell us that calling 'the family network' helps.

"You have given us great moral support and strength when we needed it. We wanted To let you know how much we appreciate it."

"I know my child best! - This is so true and I need to remember that when dealing with 'professionals' in education!"

"My gratitude and gratefulness will never be expressed enough. To know there are people like you (and the Network) that care so much, makes families feel there is someone to turn to . . . Continue your journey to helping families, knowing you helped us."

Families helping families just makes sense

Whether it is about the education, social service, health or community systems families from 'family network' who have 'been there before' willingly share their knowledge and experience with others. Whether it is about a pre-school, school age child or an adult, Windsor Essex Family Network families share stories, strategies and affirmations. Families helping families in partnership with other like-minded groups and agencies is another way families are strengthened – through learning events and topic specific activities/projects.

The varied family to family supports empower families to believe in their own strengths and abilities which assist them to bounce back during difficult times and carry them through their journey. Do you have experience and knowledge to share with another family? If so, we welcome you to contact us.

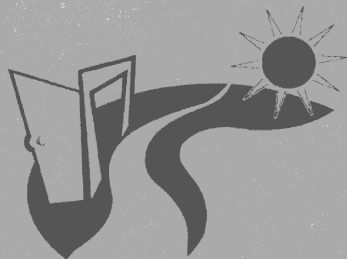


Updated November 2010



"Families Helping Families in Partnership"

A five-year strategy to strengthen families funded by the United Way of Windsor-Essex County and supported by the following collaborative partners: Citizen Advocacy, Children First, Community Living Windsor, Family Respite Services, Family Service Windsor-Essex, Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports and Youth and Family Resource Network of Essex County



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Family to Family Support

Families helping families just makes sense

Family-to-Family supporters: Strengthening one another . . .

. . . as parents, brothers, sisters, and grandparents. Did you know that Family-to-Family supporters have travelled the same road as the families they volunteer to support? Family-to-Family supporters stand beside the families they are connected with by sharing experiences and ideas, encouraging each other, celebrating, grieving, laughing, building awareness or sharing information. They believe in the gifts and contributions, needs and rights of people who have different abilities (disabilities). They are true champions for their family members.

Windsor-Essex Family Network . . .

. . . is always expanding the circle of family volunteers who might be interested in becoming a family-to-family supporter or teaming with others on projects and events! We are also interested in finding out what areas of interest families have and how we can support that! Families throughout Essex County are connecting with each other through Windsor Essex Family Network, what about you?

Have you thought about sharing your experience and knowledge with another family? OR . . .

Could you use the support of another family's experience and knowledge?

For more information contact:

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United Way/Centraide
Windsor-Essex County

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Many thanks to United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County for investing in family-to-family supports since 1995. Thanks also to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their two year investment in the expansion of the family-to-family support concept.