



## Parenting with a Disability Resources

### ASSEMBLED BY

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These resources are focused on Toronto and the GTA.

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Parenting with a Disability Network Facebook Group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ciltpdn>

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## BACKGROUND: PARENTING WITH A DISABILITY

One in eight birthing people in Ontario identifies as having a disability. Many report experiences of ableism when it comes to pregnancy, birth, and parenting.

Despite the prevalence of parents with disabilities in Ontario there are few specific resources for disabled parents. We often need to strategize around how to make supports for parents accessible or strategize how to make supports for disabled adults applicable to parenting needs.

This resource guide hopes to equip parents and service providers with a starting point for problem solving, self-advocacy, and ways to connect with relevant information and supports.

**The statistic that 1 in 8 birthing people in Ontario identifies as having a disability and more can be found here:**

### **Pregnancy and Disability in Ontario-Study at UofT**

<https://www.utoronto.ca/news/u-t-study-highlights-health-care-barriers-women-disabilities-face-during-pregnancy>

**Report:** <https://www.ices.on.ca/publications/research-reports/report-on-the-pregnancy-outcomes-and-health-care-experiences-of-people-with-disabilities/>

If there are resources you think should be included in this document please be in touch to let us know!

## RESOURCES

Studies and Fact Sheets:

### **Pregnancy and Disability in Ontario-Study at UofT**

<https://www.utoronto.ca/news/u-t-study-highlights-health-care-barriers-women-disabilities-face-during-pregnancy>

**Report:** <https://www.ices.on.ca/publications/research-reports/report-on-the-pregnancy-outcomes-and-health-care-experiences-of-people-with-disabilities/>

### **Midwifery Care and Disability in Ontario**

<https://midwiferyanddisability.wordpress.com/about/>

**DAWN Canada Inclusive Practices Toolkit** <https://dawncanada.net/ppbdp-en/inclusivepracticetoolkit/>

**DAWN Canada Fast Facts on Mothering and Disability** (included below)  
<https://dawncanada.net/ppbdp-en/fast-facts-on-mothering-and-disability-2/>

**Toronto based researcher Lesley Tarasoff's resource page:** <https://latarasoff.com/resources/>

**Fact Sheet: Disability, Pregnancy, and Maternal Mental Health**, Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance (2023) <https://22542548.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/22542548/FINAL%20-%20Pregnancy%2c%20Disability%2c%20and%20Maternal%20Mental%20Health%20Fact%20Sheet-1.pdf>

General free training related to Access and Disability (not parenting specific):

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Training** <https://aoda.ca/free-online-training/>

**Access Forward Customer Service Training** <https://accessforward.ca/customerService/intro>

**How to Train your Staff on Accessibility** <https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-train-your-staff-accessibility>

**Sighted Guide Technique Video by Signal Centres**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuGb4yge-ys>

**Free Training Module: Serve-Ability** [https://www.ocapdd.on.ca/Forms/Volunteer/SAE/HTML\\_Eng/index.html](https://www.ocapdd.on.ca/Forms/Volunteer/SAE/HTML_Eng/index.html)

## US-Based Resources

**National Research Centre for Parents with Disabilities** <https://heller.brandeis.edu/parents-with-disabilities/>

Many resources available here including:

### **Tips and Strategies from Parents with Disabilities**

<https://heller.brandeis.edu/parents-with-disabilities/data-hub/advice-for-professionals/index.html>

### **Advice for Professionals**

<https://heller.brandeis.edu/parents-with-disabilities/data-hub/advice-for-professionals/index.html>

### **Guide to Supporting Parents with Disabilities for Service Providers**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/160gEKTe786KJFnpYmlwFj\\_zQ3UudNvA/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/160gEKTe786KJFnpYmlwFj_zQ3UudNvA/view)

Created by Arizona State University School of Social Work

### **Through the Looking Glass**

<https://lookingglass.org/>

## VIDEOS

When trying to problem solve around how to safely accomplish parenting tasks there are many videos and articles by disabled parents talking about how they care for children. Search to see if there is something relevant for you.

## **ECourse: Caring for Pregnant and New Parents with Physical Disabilities**

<https://learninghub.phsa.ca/Courses/17969/caring-for-pregnant-and-new-parents-with-physical-disabilities#info>

**Research Snapshot - Rates of Recognized Pregnancy in Women with Disabilities in Ontario, Canada** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8ozbjvLAK&t=8s>

## **Webinar Recording: Black, Disabled, Deaf and Proud**

<https://heller.brandeis.edu/parents-with-disabilities/community/black-disabled-deaf-proud.html>

## **Midwifery and Disability Panel Discussion at TMU**

What it's like to be pregnant with a disability

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC6lLx\\_ym0&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC6lLx_ym0&t=3s)

## **Pregnant with a Spinal Cord Injury - Newborn Care Hacks**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY99q-IPTZQ>

**Ted talk by Dr. Hilary Brown**, Interdisciplinary Centre for Health and Society, UofT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVBqoXBr4Jo>

## **SUPPORT GROUPS AND DISABILITY/DIAGNOSIS SPECIFIC RESOURCES**

**Parenting with a Disability Network** <https://cilt.ca/programs-and-services/parenting-with-a-disability-network/>

**Pregnancy and Parenting with Arthritis** <https://arthritispatient.ca/pregnancy-and-parenting-with-arthritis-a-resource-for-patients-by-patients/>

**Pregnancy and Spinal Cord Injury Parenting with a Disability, Ontario**

<https://scisexualhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pregnancy-and-SCI-booklet-V7.pdf>

**Surrey Place Parenting Enhancement Program:** Training and support for parents with intellectual and developmental disabilities <https://www.surreyplace.ca/services/parenting-enhancement-program/>

**Support Groups for blind/partially sighted parents, CNIB** Group offerings vary.

Contact: Veronica Berrios, Program Lead, Peer Social and Recreation Groups at [veronica.berrios@cnib.ca](mailto:veronica.berrios@cnib.ca) or call 1-800-563-2642

**Silent Voice Parent Education Program for the Deaf Community**

<https://silentvoice.ca/pep/>

**EarlyON Centre at Rumball Centre**

<https://www2.bobrumball.org/earlyon-child-and-family-centre/>

**Mamas Facing Forward** (US based online) Resources, support, and encouragement for moms and mom-to-be living with chronic illnesses <https://www.mamasfacingforward.com/>

**Parenting After Brain Injury Publication**

<https://www.headway.org.uk/media/12011/parenting-after-brain-injury-publication.pdf>

**Being a Parent with Traumatic Brain Injury Fact Sheets**

<https://msktc.org/tbi/factsheets/being-parent-traumatic-brain-injury>

PREGNANCY, LABOUR, DELIVERY, POST-PARTUM

Resources for Public Health Nurses <https://phnprep.ca/resources/supporting-people-disabilities-pregnancy/>

<https://community.scireproject.com/topic/breastfeeding/>

Accessible Care Pregnancy Clinic

<https://sunnybrook.ca/content/?page=accessible-care-pregnancy-clinic&rr=pregnancy-accessible>

**Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre**

2075 Bayview Avenue,  
M-wing, 4th floor,  
Toronto, ON M4N 3M5

**Phone:** 416-480-5367

**Fax:** 416-480-5616

**Description:**

Sunnybrook’s accessible care pregnancy clinic is a specialized clinic that provides care for women, trans and non-binary people with physical disabilities who are pregnant or are contemplating a pregnancy. The clinic welcomes people with both visible and invisible physical disabilities and recognizes that some disabilities are episodic in nature.

Our patients may or may not use mobility devices or aids; our clinic is committed to being fully accessible for those that do. Some examples of patients we have cared for include little people, people with spinal cord injuries, severe arthritis, spina bifida, a history of traumatic physical injuries, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, a history of amputations, and myasthenia gravis.

The accessible care pregnancy clinic accepts referrals from inside and outside of Sunnybrook, from family physicians, obstetricians, nurse practitioners, social workers, neurologists, physiatrists and midwives.

[Referral forms](#) can be faxed to our clinic at 416-480-5616.

<https://sunnybrook.ca/uploads/1/programs/women-babies/acpc-referral-form-170323.pdf>

**If you are outside of Toronto or not working with the ACPC:**

You can share resources for healthcare providers on best practices for supporting parents with disabilities. You can request appointments with lactation consultants before your delivery so



that you can ask questions and problem solve around positioning ahead of time. You can request appointments with occupational therapists to discuss positioning and any concerns, strategies or adaptive equipment recommendations for how to accomplish parenting tasks.

## Doulas

Doulas provide prenatal, labour and post-partum support. Many doula services are fee for service but there may be subsidized or sliding scale options in your area. Post-partum doula support can be particularly helpful for parents with disabilities

### **Ocama Collective**

<https://www.ocamacollective.com/>

-Subsidized doula (prenatal, labour, post partum) and lactation support for IBPOC folx  
Ocama Collective is a community-directed group of birthworkers of colour, living and working in Tkaronto (Toronto), who are dedicated to the reclamation of traditional and holistic childbearing and birthing practices, amongst IBPOC folx.

### **Birth Mark Doulas (services paused as of May 2024, check to see service status)**

<https://birthmarksupport.com/>

-Subsidized doula (prenatal, labour, post partum) and lactation support

**TORONTO** Call us at 416.479.0086

or email us at info@birthmarksupport.com

**HAMILTON** Call us at 289.799.3157

or email us at info@birthmarksupport.com

## ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT RESOURCES

**Tetra Society** who will build or source accessible equipment for low cost: <https://tetrasociety.org/>

**March of Dimes DesignAbility** who also offer custom builds and modifications for the cost of materials: 1-800-263-3463 ext. 7211 or email designability@marchofdimes.ca.

**US based group call the Disabled Parenting Project and they have some information on Adaptive Equipment:**

<https://disabledparenting.com/marketplace/links-to-adaptive-parenting-products/>

**Carriers** Toronto-based group called Carry Me Close Baby Wearers <https://carrymeclose.ca/> that has disability expertise and helps people determine which baby carriers might work best for their bodies.

## NURTURING ASSISTANCE INFORMATION

Nurturing Assistance is additional funding in Ontario for Parents with physical disabilities already receiving attendant services. Attendants provide support with daily living tasks. Nurturing Assistants provide support for parenting tasks. <https://cilt.ca/programs-and-services/parenting-with-a-disability-network/nurturing-assistance/>

**In order to access Nurturing Assistance Parents must meet all of the eligibility criteria for either the Attendant Services Application Centre or the Direct Funding Program.**

**CILT Publication-** Nurturing Assistance: A Guide to Providing Physical Assistance for Parents with Disabilities (2001)

**PDF:** [https://www.cilt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NurturingAssistance\\_Final\\_Protected-1.pdf](https://www.cilt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NurturingAssistance_Final_Protected-1.pdf)

**Download word version here:** <https://www.cilt.ca/cilt-resources/cilt-publications/>

## ATTENDANT SERVICES APPLICATION CENTRE

**Tel:** 416-599-2458 extension 225  
**TTY:** Dial 711 for Bell Relay Service  
**Fax:** 416-599-3555  
**Email:** [asac.info@cilt.ca](mailto:asac.info@cilt.ca)

**ASAC Application and Guide:** <https://www.cilt.ca/programs-and-services/asac/asac-application-and-guide/>

Nurturing Assistance referred to on page 7 and page 12

**Eligibility for Nurturing Assistance through ASAC:**

**Attendant Service Application Centre (ASAC)  
Eligibility Checklist:**

- You have a valid Ontario Health Card (OHIP)
- You are 16 years of age or older You have a permanent physical disability
- You require personal care i.e. bathing, dressing, toileting, and transferring [Except MILE Program]
- You must be able to direct your own services. This means you are able to take responsibility for yourself; understand your support service requirements; and provide instructions to an attendant on how to carry out activities or procedures which are necessary in meeting your service needs

DIRECT FUNDING

**Tel:** 416-599-2458 extension 227

**TTY:** Dial 711 for Bell Relay Service

**Fax:** 416-599-3555

Extension 227 or Email [dfinfo@cilt.ca](mailto:dfinfo@cilt.ca) Direct Funding Hotline: 1-800-354-9950

<https://www.dfontario.ca/>

**DF Application and Guide:** <https://www.dfontario.ca/application/application-and-guide.html>

**Find your local IL Centre outside of Toronto** <https://www.ilc-vac.ca/il-centres.html>

**Eligibility for Nurturing Assistance through Direct Funding:**

**Direct Funding Eligibility Checklist**

- you are age 16 or over
- you are a resident of Ontario
- you require attendant services due to a permanent physical disability

- you are able to complete the written application on your own initiative and in your own words (you may receive physical assistance to complete the form; however, submissions may not be made by professionals, family members or others on your behalf)
- you are able to meet with a Selection Panel to discuss your needs and determine your eligibility for the program
- you are able to schedule attendants;
- you are able to hire (and fire, if necessary), train and supervise one or more attendant workers
- you are able to meet all the legal requirements associated with being an employer (these will be clearly explained during the interview process)
- you are capable of managing and accounting for your funding, according to DF program guidelines

## PARENTING SUPPORT AND EARLY LEARNING

Get to know free drop-in supports nearby like EarlyON centres, community centres, libraries and community health programs. These programs can be useful, for example if a parent is having a high fatigue day if they can get themselves and their child to a drop-in centre they may be able to rest while staff is supervising and supporting child.

Find your local EarlyON centre

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>

EarlyON centres are free community programs for families with children newborn to 6 years old. They run early learning programs as well as parenting programs. They exist in every community across Ontario and can be a great community resource for parents with disabilities.

Parent Relief and Emergency Childcare

Some EarlyON centres offer free or low-cost “Parent Relief” childcare for short periods of time. Call your local EarlyON centre and find out if they offer this support.

**For example** in Mississauga:

<https://lampchc.org/programs-services/community-health-programs/earlyon-child-and-family-services/services/>

Parent Relief is a program provided solely to clients of the Home Visiting/Family Support program in the LAMP catchment area whose children are not enrolled in daycare or nursery school.

In South Etobicoke:

<https://www.ebfc.ca/parent-relief>

One day per week of childcare for families with children 18 months to 6 years who are eligible and live south of Bloor Street between the Humber River and Etobicoke Creek.

**There may also be culturally specific supports in your community. Your local EarlyON Centre is a good resource for referrals.**

**For example:** Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services (formerly South Asian Family Support Services) <https://safss.org/> Provides children and family programming.

### **Parent Relief in Home:**

There are very few options for in-home childcare support. Please let me know if you know of others that aren't on this list!

### **VHA Home Healthcare**

<https://www.vha.ca/services/community-support-programs/#:~:text=Child%20%26%20Family%20to%20Support%20for,emergency%20and%20For%20crisis%20situation>

***Parent Relief Program*** – Parent Relief and Connect is a program that addresses severe stress and impaired parent-child bonds through in-home childcare, emotional support, teaching parenting skills and connecting parents to broader community supports. The program targets vulnerable, low-income families where poverty, mental health illness and isolation put parents and their children at risk.

***Child & Family to Support for Family in Crisis*** – The program provides short-term in-home support to families with children (birth to 4) who require “hands-on” care while parent(s) are recovering from medical emergency and/or crisis situation. The programs allows parent(s) timely recovery from illness/urgent situation and promotes access to community resources to provide ongoing support to families.

## Safe Families Canada

<https://safefamiliescanada.com/get-help/>

Safe Families is a network of families who volunteer to care for your children for as long as you need. Their goal is to keep your family intact.

### "Request a Family Friend"

Many parents need help and support but don't need their children to stay with a Host Family. Our Family Coaches and Family Friends can provide you with support and guidance, such as helping you to find work or secure an apartment.

[Healthy Babies Healthy Children](#)

May be a useful referral for some families.

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/pregnancy-and-parenting/pregnancy/during-pregnancy/prenatal-programs/healthy-babies-healthy-children/>

Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) is a free home-visiting program that supports you and your family with:

- having a healthy pregnancy
- developing a positive relationship with your child
- promoting your child's growth and development
- connecting you to resources and programs within your community
- working together to give your child the best start in life

The HBHC program is free, voluntary and you do not need an OHIP card in order to receive service.

If you live outside the Toronto area and are interested in the HBHC program please contact your [Local Public Health Unit](#)

## CHILDCARE

Find Childcare and Access Subsidies

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-and-pay-child-care>

### Financial Support for Childcare:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-subsidies>

**Childcare fee Subsidy calculator:** <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/employment-social-support/child-family-support/child-care-support/child-care-fee-subsidy-calculator/>

**Toronto Childcare Finder:**

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/children-programs-activities/licensed-child-care/child-care-locator/#location=&lat=&lng=>

**Questions to ask when interviewing childcare providers:**

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/questions-ask-child-care-provider>

Nanny's and Babysitters

Get in touch with your local EarlyON centre to ask if they have a caregiver/babysitter registry or if they could make a connection for you with someone local who might be able to do the kind of childcare support you are looking for. You may also want to reach out to other parents in your child's class to see if they can make a referral or connection to someone specific.

**Service: Canadian Nanny** where people post jobs and profiles

<https://canadiannanny.ca/nannies/toronto,ontario>

You can post exactly what kind of support you are looking for and also see what rates people charge. Based on people's experience/credentials rates may be higher but \$20-\$30 an hour is typical.

**Nanny/Babysitter Interview Checklist:** <https://canadiannanny.ca/blogs/how-to-create-the-best-nanny-interview-checklist>

**How to Check References:** <https://canadiannanny.ca/blogs/how-to-check-nanny-references?id=how-to-check-nanny-references&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fcanadiannanny.ca%2Fhow-to-check-nanny-references>

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS THAT MAY BE RELEVANT FOR PARENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Ontario Health atHome (formerly Home and Community Care)

If your support needs have changed during pregnancy or post-partum you may be able to access services quickly.

Tel: 416-506-9888

Toll free: 1-866-243-0061

For message relay service, call 711

<https://ontariohealthathome.ca/getting-started/>

Referrals can be made by an individual, a health-care professional, a family member or friend by calling 416-506-9888

Once you are referred and become a patient, you will be assigned a Care Coordinator who will call you to meet with you in your home and help you determine what services and supports you may need.

**Some of the care and services:**

- Care Coordination
- Nursing
- Personal support such as bathing and getting dressed
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech-language therapy
- Social work
- Nutritional counseling
- Medical supplies and equipment
- Information about and referral to additional health and social services in your community.
- Meal delivery and dining programs
- Homemaking and home help
- Transportation services
- Community dining
- Friendly visits

Homemakers and Nurses Services

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/seniors-services/seniors-health-services/homemakers-and-nurses-services/>



[The Homemakers and Nurses Services Program \(HMNS\)](#) is a community-based service operated by the City of Toronto. It provides homemaking services through community agency contracts to individuals who require assistance with household activities and who have limited financial resources.

Services include:

- light housekeeping
- laundry
- shopping
- meal preparation

A financial assessment completed by a program caseworker will determine your eligibility for service.

## INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY (CAS)

Parents with disabilities can be over-represented with Children's Aid Society involvement. This is a concern for many disabled parents. Having resources about what to do if CAS becomes involved in your life can be a helpful way to feel knowledgeable prepared.

[Understanding what happens and what to do when CAS is involved](#)

Steps to Justice has resources on what do when CAS is involved:

<https://stepstojustice.ca/questions/family-law/what-if-cas-takes-my-child/>

Ontario Women's Justice Network also has a resource on CAS involvement:

<https://owjn.org/2017/03/29/child-protection-and-the-childrens-aid-society-cas/>

If you don't have a lawyer you should access one immediately to help support navigating the legal aspects of the CAS process. All of the resources above say "**If your child is removed by CAS, get legal advice right away.**" Make sure you find a lawyer who has experience in child protection law.

[Subsidized Disability Law in Toronto](#)

Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic provides family law through a disability lens. They have both legal and mental health support

<https://www.schliferclinic.com/>

ARCH disability law may be able to give advice but they don't specify working with family law related to CAS involvement <https://archdisabilitylaw.ca/services/legal-services/>

Family Law Resources (not disability specific)

Family Law Education for Women

<https://onefamilylaw.ca>

<https://onefamilylaw.ca/find-legal-help/find-legal-help/>

Legal Aid Ontario

<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/services/family-legal-issues/>

Justice Net

<https://www.justicenet.ca/>

Toronto Family Mediation Services

<https://www.mediate393.ca/>

Mental Health Support

CAS involvement can be very stressful. If you need mental health support reach out to your local IL centre or call 211 for referrals.

The Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic provides both legal and mental health counselling.

Family Services Toronto for subsidized/low-cost options <https://familyservicetoronto.org/our-services/programs-and-services/options/>

## DISABILITY SPECIFIC FUNDING

Individuals may be able to access funding from organizations or foundations connected to their disability. For example, the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy Funding offers funding that could be used for parenting related supports:

<https://ofcp.ca/programs/funding>

In order to access funding, you must become a member of OFCP. Parents have used funding to support costs related to parenting.

## CONNECTING PARENTS ON FACEBOOK

### **Toronto Facebook Groups:**

CILT's Parenting with a Disability Network

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1351851451648661/>

Crippling Parenthood (GTA)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2054698004851738>

Single Parents with Disabilities

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/spwdc>

### **US Based Groups:**

Disabled Parenting Project

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/disabledparenting>

Parenting with a Chronic Illness

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/454044261309872>

### **UK Based Page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/Enabled2Parent>

## **Australia Based Group:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/disabledmums>

## PARENT RECOMMENDED CHILDREN'S BOOKS

-*Some Days: A tale of Love, Ice Cream, and my Mom's Chronic Illness* by Julie A. Stamm, Illustrated by Chamisa Kellogg

-*We Move Together* by Kelly Fritsch and Anne McGuire, Illustrated by Eduardo Trejos  
Educational resources: <https://wemovetogether.ca/>

-*Come Over to My House* by Eliza Hull and Sally Rippin, Illustrated by Daniel Gray-Barnett

## PARENT RECOMMENDED BOOKS

-*Maternity Rolls: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Disability* by Heather Kuttai

-*We've Got This: Stories by Disabled Parents (Australia)* Edited by Eliza Hull

-*We've Got this: Essays by Disabled Parents (International)* Edited by Eliza Hull

## PARENT RECOMMENDED MEDIA

### **Podcast: Parenting Done Differently**

In this podcast series, Marjorie Aunos hosts conversations exploring how parenting can be done differently and how professionals can best support parents with disabilities.

<https://cascw.umn.edu/portfolio-items/introduction-to-parenting-done-differently-parents-with-disabilities/>

### **Podcast: Scratch That: Parenting and Reparenting Off Script with Rebekah Taussig and Caitlin Metz**

A weekly podcast with queer illustrator Caitlin Metz and disabled storyteller Rebekah Taussig

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1Wbz3KgFzjN9F0ngY20wmz?si=b97ec3714d674c8c>