

# Waterloo Region Special Needs Strategy Planning Table

## Work to Date – Issue #1

January 2015



### Special Needs Strategy Vision:

A Waterloo region where children and youth with special needs get the timely and effective services they need to participate fully at home, at school, in the community, and as they prepare to achieve their goals for adulthood.

### What is Ontario's Special Needs Strategy?

Ontario's Special Needs Strategy marks the beginning of a new way of delivering services to children and youth with special needs and their families. The goal is to connect children and youth to the services they need as early as possible and improve the service experience of families in three key areas:

#### 1. Identifying kids earlier and getting them the right help sooner

Trained providers will have a new developmental screen for children in the preschool years. They will screen for potential risks to the child's development as early as possible.

#### 2. Coordinating service planning

- New service planning coordinators for children and youth with multiple or complex special needs will connect families to the right services and supports.

#### 3. Making supports and service delivery seamless

- The delivery of rehabilitation services, such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy will be integrated. Services will be easier to access and seamless from birth through the school exit.

Transforming how children and youth and their families receive services requires planning, partnership and coordination across government and with communities. Four ministries (see diagram on right) are working with parents, youth, service providers and communities to improve outcomes for children with special needs. This work will result in a system that is accessible, coordinated and centred on the needs of children, youth and their families.



## Establishment of the Waterloo Region Special Needs Strategy Planning Table



Waterloo Region is one of 34 planning areas in Ontario. Across the Region, organizations that have a passionate interest in improving service experiences have come together to submit two proposals as follows:

**Coordinated Service Planning** – As a result of the new strategy, children with multiple and/or complex special needs who need more than one community-based specialized service will be referred to a Service Planning Coordinator at an existing local agency for coordinated planning. The proposal development is being co-chaired by Tracy Elop (KidsAbility) and Laura Thies (Sunbeam Centre). The proposal is due **June 15, 2015**.

**Integrated Delivery of Rehabilitation Services** – As a result of the new strategy, children will receive seamless and efficient speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy services from birth through school exit. The proposal development is being co-chaired by Linda Kenny (KidsAbility) and Kate Reed (Waterloo Wellington CCAC). This proposal is due **October 30, 2015**.

In order to support the work of the Planning Tables, the government has provided funding to allow each of the 34 planning areas to secure the services of a Project Manager. In Waterloo Region, Valerie Lannon of Lough Barnes is providing Project Management support to our Special Needs Strategy Planning Table.

### How you Can Get Involved

An important part of our workplan involves engaging our community in the vision of a new system of services and supports. The Planning Table is working hard to make sure that we have effective ways to gather the input of children and youth with special needs and their families, as well as front line staff and community partners. Early in the new year, we will be announcing consultation opportunities. Options will include surveys, focus groups, written submissions and interviews.

For the most up-to-date information, you can also visit our dedicated webpage at <http://waterlooregionspecialneedsstrategy.weebly.com/> (currently under construction) or the Provincial webpage at <http://specialneedsstrategy.children.gov.on.ca>



#### Planning Table Members

- Carizon/Lutherwood
- Children's Planning Table
- Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud (CSDCCS)
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- ErinoakKids
- Family and Children's Services
- Kerry's Place
- KidsAbility Centre for Child Development
- KidsAbility School Authority
- KW Habilitation Services
- Region of Waterloo
- Sunbeam
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Waterloo Region Family Network
- Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre (CCAC)
- Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)

For more information on the Waterloo Region Special Needs Strategy please contact one of our Chairs or visit <http://waterlooregionspecialneedsstrategy.weebly.com/>. This document is available in alternative formats upon request and questions in French can be answered via our Chairs.

#### Coordinated Service Planning

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