



PARENTING WITH A DISABILITY BULLETIN

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PDN UPDATE

By Nancy Barry



PDN Picnic 2012

This year's PDN Picnic will take place Saturday July 21st from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at High Park. Please see enclosed flyer and map for more details. I hope to see many of you there.

A Six-Week Prep Course for Prospective Parents With a Disability

The PDN has been in the process of planning a six-week course for people with disabilities who are considering becoming a parent. The goal of the course is to help prospective parents to prepare for parenthood, in order to avoid unnecessary future potential obstacles. It is intended to serve as another resource that prospective parents can access.

The course will take a look at the following:

- Making the decision to have a family;
- Identifying your needs as a parent with a disability;
- What to do when you find out you're expecting;
- Examining your birthing options: health care choices available;
- Preparing for the birth;
- Bringing the baby home: Negotiating your Environment; and
- Resources available.

Stay tuned for further details. Our goal is to have the course ready for Winter 2013. Please pass the word along.



PDN Family Photo Album

Over the years, the PDN has had the good fortune of meeting a lot of wonderful families; ones that have played a strong, active role in the PDN and others who have come to various family events that the PDN has hosted.

We would like to put together a photo album of PDN families with a small story about the family, and we would use this when we go out and do presentations on parenting with a disability. Your participation on the project would be completely voluntary. We realize that not everyone wants to put their lives on display, and that is not what we want the purpose of this project to be.

This project probably won't get started until some time in late fall. If you do choose to participate, please know that nothing will appear in the album that you do not consent to. We'd like you to share your story in your own words. The PDN will help you by providing you with some guideline questions that will help formulate your story. You will also be asked to sign a consent form, granting us permission to print your story and your photo.

Stay tuned for further details.

Mississauga Couple with Cerebral Palsy Advocate to Keep Their Newborn At Home

I'm sure that most of you have heard about this case, as it attracted a lot of media and public attention.

Maricyl Palisoc and Charles Wilton, a Mississauga couple with Cerebral Palsy were fighting to keep their newborn son after social workers from the hospital called CAS and who wanted to take the child away unless they received 24 hour care from an "able-bodied attendant."

It had been a very emotional three weeks before the CAS meeting. Since then, they have learned that they won't lose baby William to the Peel Children's Aid Society after all because as William's parents, Maricyl and Charles have demonstrated they can address the safety and well-being of William with a care plan that has been put into place. Maricyl and Charles can now relax a little and enjoy their new bundle of joy- because this time in a new parent's life is to be precious.

The couple met 14 years ago at Erinoak. They have been engaged for a year, and have been trying for the past three years to have a baby.

They were both so excited and very happy to hear the news that they were expecting. Through the pregnancy, the couple both felt that they were not really supported by doctors and healthcare providers, questioning their ability to be parents.

Like all prospective parents, it is important to be informed of what resources and supports are available to parents. When you have a disability, resources are harder to find and you really need to start the learning process as soon as you find out you are expecting.

Maricyl and Charles they knew they needed some accessible equipment—especially an accessible crib and their neighbor, Glenn Barnes, from the Tetra Society, made it for them. The couple's furniture and apartment are very accessible and baby-friendly.

All through this process, Maryicl has said “that being a parent you really learn as you go. No one really knows how to parent.” This is so true for all parents.

When asked about the support system they have in place, the couple said the staff and environment are very supportive and are like family to them. They are very understanding of the couple's needs and abilities and are there to help when needed.



© Permission granted by Maricyl and Charlie to print story and photos.





What is Bullying?

<http://www.bullyingcanada.ca/content/239900>

Many children have a good idea of what bullying is because they see it every day! Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending themselves. So, everyone needs to get involved to help stop it.

Bullying is wrong! It is behaviour that makes the person being bullied feel afraid or uncomfortable. There are many ways that young people bully each other, even if they don't realize it at the time. Some of these include:

- Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically
- Spreading bad rumors about people
- Keeping certain people out of a group
- Teasing people in a mean way



The four most common types of bullying are:

- **Verbal bullying** - name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumors, threatening, making negative references to one's culture, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, unwanted sexual comments.
- **Social Bullying** - mobbing, scapegoating, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti intended to put others down.
- **Physical Bullying** - hitting, poking, pinching, chasing, shoving, coercing, destroying or stealing belongings, unwanted sexual touching.
- **Cyber Bullying** - using the internet or text messaging to intimidate, put-down, spread rumors or make fun of someone.

What are the effects of bullying?

Bullying makes people upset. It can make children feel lonely, unhappy and frightened. It can make them feel unsafe and think there must be something wrong with them. Children can lose confidence and may not want to go to school anymore. It may even make them sick.

Some people think bullying is just part of growing up and a way for young people to learn to stick up for themselves. But bullying can have long-term physical and psychological consequences. Some of these include:

- Withdrawal from family and school activities, wanting to be left alone.
- Shyness
- Stomachaches
- Headaches
- Panic Attacks
- Not being able to sleep
- Sleeping too much
- Being exhausted
- Nightmares

If bullying isn't stopped, it also hurts the bystanders, as well as the person who bullies others. Bystanders are afraid they could be the next victim. Even if they feel badly for the person being bullied, they avoid getting involved in order to protect themselves or because they aren't sure what to do.

Children who learn they can get away with violence and aggression continue to do so in adulthood. They have a higher chance of getting involved in dating aggression, sexual harassment and criminal behaviour later in life.

Bullying can have an effect on learning :

Stress and anxiety caused by bullying and harassment can make it more difficult for kids to learn. It can cause difficulty in concentration and decrease their ability to focus, which affects their ability to remember things they have learned.

Bullying can lead to more serious concerns.

Bullying is painful and humiliating, and kids who are bullied feel embarrassed, battered and shamed. If the pain is not relieved, bullying can even lead to consideration of suicide or violent behavior.

How common is bullying? Approximately one in 10 children have bullied others and as many as 25% of children in grades four to six have been bullied. A 2004 study published in the medical Journal of Pediatrics found that about one in seven Canadian children aged 11 to 16 are victims of bullying. Studies have found bullying occurs once every seven minutes on the playground and once every 25 minutes in the classroom. In the majority of cases, bullying stops within 10 seconds when peers intervene, or do not support the bullying behaviour.

Students are most vulnerable to bullying during transitions from elementary to junior high school, and from junior to senior high school.

There is a correlation between increased supervision and decreased bullying. Bullies stop when adults are around.

What are the myths about bullying?



Myth #1 - "Children have got to learn to stand up for themselves."

Reality - Children who get up the courage to complain about being bullied are saying they've tried and can't cope with the situation on their own. Treat their complaints as a call for help. In addition to offering support, it can be helpful to provide children with problem solving and assertiveness training to assist them in dealing with difficult situations.

Myth #2 - "Children should hit back - only harder."

Reality - This could cause serious harm. People who bully are often bigger and more powerful than their victims. This also gives children the idea that violence is a legitimate way to solve problems. Children learn how

to bully by watching adults use their power for aggression. Adults have the opportunity to set a good example by teaching children how to solve problems by using their power in appropriate ways.

Myth #3 - "It builds character."

Reality - Children who are bullied repeatedly, have low self-esteem and do not trust others. Bullying damages a person's self-concept.

Myth #4 - "Sticks and stones can break your bones but words can never hurt you."

Reality - Scars left by name-calling can last a lifetime.

Myth #5 - "That's not bullying. They're just teasing."

Reality - Vicious taunting hurts and should be stopped.

Myth #6 - "There have always been bullies and there always will be."

Reality - By working together as parents, teachers and students we have the power to change things and create a better future for our children. As a leading expert, Shelley Hymel, says,

"It takes a whole nation to change a culture". Let's work together to change attitudes about bullying. After all, bullying is not a discipline issue - it is a teaching moment.

Myth #7 - "Kids will be kids."

Reality - Bullying is a learned behaviour. Children may be imitating aggressive behaviour they have seen on television, in movies or at home. Research shows that 93% of video games reward violent behaviour. Additional findings show that 25% of boys aged 12 to 17 regularly visit gore and hate internet sites, but that media literacy classes decreased the boys' viewing of violence, as well as their acts of violence in the playground. It is important for adults to discuss violence in the media with youth, so they can learn how to keep it in context. There is a need to focus on changing attitudes toward violence.

Stop a Bully

© www.stopabully.ca

Stop A Bully is a national non-profit organization and Canada-wide anti-bullying program developed by a B.C. teacher which allows any student who is a victim or witness of severe bullying to be able to safely report the details to school officials without risk of becoming a target themselves. The Stop A Bully program helps increase bullying awareness & accountability within schools to allow officials to be more proactive in preventing serious incidents of bullying. Stop A Bully provides schools with critical information to be proactive in assisting all

students who are witness, target and perpetrator of school bullying. Stop A Bully provides assistance to any student in any school in Canada.

MISSION STATEMENT: STOP A BULLY strives to promote and enhance social wellness among youth by empowering them to address bullying. STOP A BULLY is committed to providing any student, parent or educator opportunity to report bullying and cyberbullying in a safe and anonymous manner by giving them an effective online reporting system. STOP A BULLY aims to enhance and foster a schools ability to address bullying incidents in a proactive and timely manner by providing detailed reports of bullying incidents, as well as education and prevention strategies.

No student can be helped (witness, target or perpetrator) until the school has the information. Student Safety must be the TOP PRIORITY.

Stop A Bully program details:

- Provides schools/students with a safe & anonymous Bullying Reporting System
- Increases bullying awareness & accountability within the school
- Allows schools to be proactive in addressing bullying before more serious incidents occur

- Empowers students to become active participants in reducing bullying in their schools
- Provides schools with anti-bullying materials (posters, front door decal, cards & more)
- Available for any Canadian student when they need to report severe school bullying

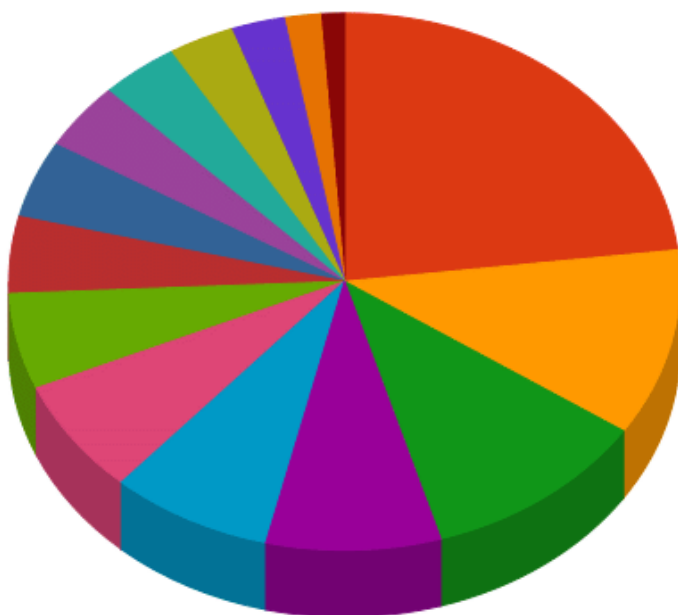
For more information and to join Stop a Bully check out <http://www.stopabully.ca/>



STOP A BULLY
SAFE & ANONYMOUS

TYPES OF BULLYING REPORTED

(StopABully School Reports from Sept 2011 - April 2012)



- Name Calling / Insults (80%)
- Shoving / Hitting (39%)
- Threats / Intimidation (38%)
- Spreading Rumours (29%)
- Cyberbullying (27%)
- Involving Friends / Peers (24%)
- Homophobic Comments (20%)
- Fighting (16%)
- Sexual Comments (16%)
- Exclusion / Leaving Out (14%)
- Cell Phone Messages (13%)
- Racist Comments (11%)
- Damaging Property (9%)
- Stealing (6%)
- Weapon Related (4%)

*Multiple types of bullying can be selected.

Attention Deficit Disorder - You Know Your Child Has ADD When:

© www.additudemag.com/resources

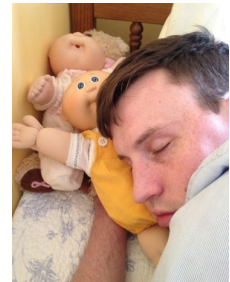
- You send him upstairs to get dressed, and 20 minutes later, he's sitting naked on the floor, **EXAMINING HIS SOCKS**.
- She can't spell unless she's **HANGING UPSIDE DOWN, BOUNCING** on a trampoline, **OR SPINNING** in an office chair.
- **"CLIMBING THE WALLS"** isn't a metaphor in your home.
- In the span of five minutes, your child **ASKS ABOUT A MILLION QUESTIONS** – all about totally different topics.
- He walks in the room and asks, "Mommy?" then stares at the ceiling, forgets what he was going to tell you, then says "I love you!" instead – 10 times a day.
- A wrapper leads to a marvellous world of unbelievable inventions and magnificent **ADVENTURES**.
- You check the lost-and-found box each Friday and leave with a bag filled with your child's belongings
- – and **SHE HAS NO IDEA ANYTHING'S MISSING**.
- While being asked not to interrupt others, your child talks for five minutes about how he will not interrupt.
- You secretly fear that a public health inspector will force you to close down your house!
- **HE SPENDS HOURS ON A HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT** (with constant encouragement/nagging) and then leaves it at home on the day it's due.
- Your 13-year-old daughter stays up studying until 3:00 a.m. – but a good deal of that time is spent decorating her note cards with different colored markers, stickers, and rhinestones.
- Your son, **UNABLE TO PAY ATTENTION** to his teacher's explanation of how to play dodgeball, flies around the gym, playing "airplane" by himself instead.
- You ask your child why she is carrying all of her textbooks in her bag and she replies, "I can never remember to take the right book for homework, so this way I won't **GET IN TROUBLE FOR MISSING ASSIGNMENTS** again."

- The “quick” walk that sounded like a good idea ends up taking all afternoon because your son stops to rescue every worm, snail, slug on the trail.
- Your daughter insists on reading a book while you’re reading her a bedtime story – and she **ABSORBS BOTH**.
- Your child tries to brush his teeth and play with a bouncy ball **AT THE SAME TIME**.
- Your daughter plans outfits to coordinate with plot changes in the movie she’s watching.
- Your child manages to get himself stuck in the washing machine – a top-loader at that!
- **YOUR KID TALKS NONSTOP** – and you never have to chime in to keep the conversation going.
- You find your daughter’s dirty underwear ... on her bookshelf.
- You think you live with Jim Carey or Robin Williams.
- **HER NAME IS MENTIONED, CALLED AND SCREAMED** 10 times as often as the others in the house.
- You go shopping, and he **SIMULTANEOUSLY** swims and flies through the aisles of the store.
- People around you smile kindly or say things like, “He sure is all boy” or “**YOU HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL.**” They have no idea!
- You realize that **YOUR CHILD WILL SUCCEED IN LIFE IN WAYS YOU HAVEN’T**, because when all you want to do is press the snooze button in the morning, she’s ready to get up and get going!

What is ‘Attachment Parenting’?

© <http://www.attachmentparenting.ca/about.html>

About 50 years ago, a British psychologist named John Bowlby, first used the term “Attachment” in describing the special bond between a baby and its parents or caregivers. He said that each new baby needs a special adult in their life to protect, nurture, and comfort them. The loving care provided by the attachment person gives the baby a sense of trust in people, that his needs will be met, and that he is valued, loved, and nurtured. He learns that the world is a safe, predictable place.



Attachment Parenting has Eight Ideals:

Attachment parenting is comprised of eight parenting components within a framework of nurturing, empathic parenting practices as outlined by Attachment Parenting International:

Prepare for Pregnancy, Birth and Parenting: Every parent needs to be informed about the issues and options available in parenting and child development as their child grows.

Feed with Love and Respect: Feeding practices need to encompass best practices in nutrition (breastfeeding) and socialization (bottle-feeding).

Respond with Sensitivity: Parents need to respond to their children's needs with love, empathy, comfort, promptness and respect.

Use Nurturing Touch: Parents need to respond with loving, non-sexual, appropriate touch daily and especially when their child is hurt, sick or upset.



Ensure Safe Sleep, Physically and Emotionally: Parents need to respond with empathy, and respect to their children's nighttime parenting needs.

Provide Consistent and Loving Care:

Parental consistency of love, nurturing, empathy, warmth and firm expectations of age-appropriate behaviour produces the most favourable outcomes for children.

Practice Positive Discipline: Parents need to provide respectful, non-punitive discipline and guidance that focuses on teaching and problem-solving.

Strive for Balance in Personal and Family Life: Parents need to provide balance in their lives and self-care so that they can be the optimal parent that also respects their own needs.

What do we know about attachment? Attachment is the emotional connection that occurs between child and parent.

Parents need to respond to their children when they are sick, hurt, scared, tired, worried or upset. This response should be nurturing physical, verbal and emotional comfort.

Children who are comforted form trust with their parents and have the confidence to explore their environment. Children who grow up trusting their parents, learn to trust other people in their relationships.

When children feel secure, they are more likely to become interdependent, to face challenges, and to handle difficult situations.

Adapted from 2008-Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development,
www.excellenceearlychildhood.ca,
GRIP-Universite de Montreal.

Any nurturing parent, sibling, relative or caregiver can be an attachment person. It's easy to respond to a child when he is happy and gurgling. However, one of the best ways to build the attachment relationship is by responding to the child's distress when he is sick, upset or hurt. By picking up baby and cuddling, rocking, and soothing baby when they are sick, upset or hurt, fosters attachment and shows the baby that they have someone to meet their needs and respond to them. This helps develop their empathy and response to other people as he grows. He learns how to create loving, respectful relationships.

Therefore, the core of developing attachment is to respond to baby's needs immediately. Later, when the baby grows into a child, this immediate response, when they need it, helps continue the attachment building. The response should be the same consistent, nurturing, caring manner, most of the time. This may include the middle of the night or at times that may

seem inconvenient to the parent or caregiver, but children have no concept of adult time. It's critical for the mental and emotional health of the child to have their needs met in a timely manner. Of course, there are times that it's impossible to respond to a crying baby, such as in the car, or perhaps when parents are at the end of their patience threshold, and need a cool down period. Make a safe choice and put baby somewhere while you can get calm.

The key is to respond consistently, most of the time. Response builds attachment. Abandonment seldom leads a child to feel secure. The presence of the attachment person helps the baby feel secure and helps her grow to increasing independence. Studies show that responding within 90 seconds helps lessen babies crying overall in the first three months. Therefore, to pick up a baby whenever she is in distress, does not spoil a baby. On the contrary, it builds the parent-child attachment and is the cornerstone of a caring, trusting, mutually respectful relationship that will lead to baby becoming more confident, securely attached in her adult relationships, and more independent later in life.

As baby grows into a toddler, she will oscillate between attachment and independence behaviours. If she is securely attached to a special person, she will

be freer to explore her environment, knowing that she is safe and has a security person nearby to occasionally touch base with when she is feeling vulnerable. This allows her to grow. Since the 1950 Bowby's studies (and studies by Mary Ainsworth), research has continually, consistently, proven the validity of attachment necessary in the relationship.

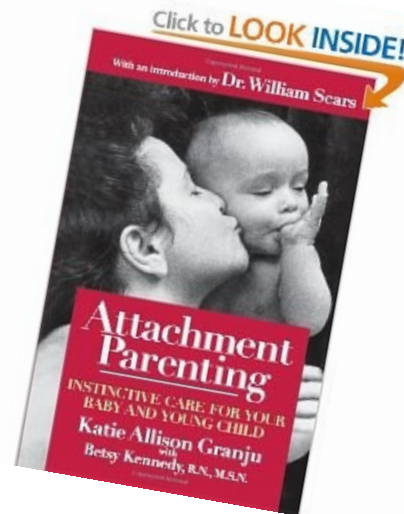
In the 1980's, a U.S. Physician named William Sears coined a term called "Attachment Parenting" that refers to a specific set of behaviours that most people associate with "attachment".

These behaviours may or may not include child led weaning from breastfeeding, co-sleeping, carrying baby most of the time, etc. However, it's important to remember that forming an attachment with baby is not necessarily associated with any one behaviour, but rather an underlying philosophy, commitment, belief, and value that the parent will meet the baby's needs for nurturing and love on the baby's schedule, not according to whatever anyone else decrees. Baby is the expert of what he needs.

Although some parents use specific "attachment parenting" behaviours to attach to their baby, mostly all parents can develop a nurturing response that is forming attachment bonds to their baby regardless of the behaviours they

or baby chooses. The core philosophy of attachment parenting is recognizing and providing what the baby needs, when they need it. With a little creative problem solving, it's also possible to meet the parents needs at the same time.

Therefore, attachment parenting doesn't end when the child stops breastfeeding, co-sleeping, and being carried. All through a child's school and teen years, attachment parenting beliefs and philosophies help build the important parent-child connection though empathic listening, support, mutually set rules, loving discipline, child-led independence, quantity of focused and unfocused time together, and most of all, mutual respect.



Backyard Games for Kids: ideas to keep your kids amused during the summer

By: Leigh Felesky

© <http://health.kaboose.com/active-kids/games.html>

We all know kids are little creative geniuses, always busy making up their own games to satisfy their roaming imaginations and busy natures. Still, they could use some ideas once in a while. Here are some backyard games you can set up this summer.

Bean Bag Toss

Make an easy Bean Bag Toss using a double layer of poster board glued together and a large box. Use the large box as a base, and attach the poster board to one side of it. Before attaching the poster board, paint a design on it, allowing for one or more holes. We never kept score, but the kids had a lot of fun throwing those bean bags. They're easy to make from fabric scraps if you sew. Get the kids to help.

Scavenger Hunt: Hide items in yard and have the kids try to find them. This can be as easy or elaborate as you chose. Rather than encouraging competitiveness, have the children work together to find all the items.

Duck, Duck, Goose

Don't forget this classic although you need at least five friends to make this game a lot of fun. Sit in a circle and have one child walk around patting each child on the head saying, "Duck, duck, duck" and finally "goose." The child deemed "goose" stands up and runs around the circle in the opposite direction from the other child. Whoever gets back to the spot and sits down first wins the spot and the other child starts again with the "Duck, duck, goose."

Simon Says

An oldie but a goodie. If your child has a favorite character, substitute "Simon" with a character from the theme. Children should listen carefully and only do what "Simon" says.

Charades: Give a child the theme or group of animals then have them act out what the animal does. You and the kids can try to guess the name of the animal.

Freeze Tag: One child is chosen as being "it." The chosen child tags the other children by catching up to them and touching them. Once tagged, the child must remain frozen until another free child goes through their legs. When all the children are frozen (except the one who was chosen as

being "it") with no one to set them free the game is over and you can start again.

Balloon Bust Relay: Purchase large balloons, stuff with a prize such as a whistle, then inflate and tie. You will need one balloon for each player. Divide children into two teams and place each team behind the start line. At the other end of the room are the balloons. On your mark a child from each team runs to the other end of the room, grabs a balloon and sits on it, bounces on it, lays on it, anything they can do to make it pop.

When the balloon pops they collect their prize and run back to their teammates. The game continues until every child has retrieved their prize. If one team falls behind parents are allowed to help. Make sure you've got the movie camera rolling; you won't want to miss the action or the expressions. If you don't have time for a relay yell, "GO" and let every child grab a balloon at the same time and try to pop it. Make sure to carefully clean up the balloon remains, as they are choke hazards for young children.

Wits and Consequences: Blow up balloons with questions, written on strips of paper, inside and place balloons in Bag "A". Let each guest reach in and pull out a balloon on their turn. If they answer correctly they stay in the game for another 'round, if they answer

incorrectly they pull a balloon out of Bag "B", pop it and have to do what it says..."Rub your tummy and pat your head at the same time", "Strut and cluck like a chicken three times". If they complete their task they can return to the game. If not they can cheer on the remaining players. When all the questions have been answered the games over.

Make sure to carefully clean up the balloon remains, as they are choke hazards for young children.

Rainy Day Game

If the kids are inside, have them still get into the summer spirit with Chef Toss, where they get to grill everyone a BBQ burger or steak.



IN THE NEWS...

Crusading for 24/7 Access

© Council of Canadians With Disabilities;
May 31, 2012

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), a national organization that works for an accessible and inclusive Canada, applauds the efforts of Donna Jodhan, who has waged a long, and often frustrating, legal battle against the Federal Government to convince it to make its web sites accessible to Canadians with vision impairments.

Government web sites provide Canadians with constant access to critical government information. Like other people, Canadians with disabilities seek to use Federal government web sites to pursue employment opportunities, interact with Employment Insurance, track their status with the Canada Pension Plan and other activities. Canadians who are prevented from using web sites due to barriers must rely on less convenient alternative methods of acquiring information: the mail, telephone, and visits to government offices. An example of a barrier is poor web site design which makes a web site unreadable by a screen reader used by a person with vision impairment. Such a barrier is a form of discrimination and discrimination against people with disabilities is

prohibited by the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Unfortunately, the Government of Canada has waged a legal battle in retaliation to Ms. Jodhan's case, instead of getting down to business and making its web sites accessible to people with disabilities.

"When Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the nation made a commitment to eliminate barriers, such as inaccessible web sites. We are disappointed that it has been necessary for an individual with a disability to go to court, in a David and Goliath type struggle, to secure access to what is now a necessary service, something other Canadians take for granted," stated Tony Dolan, CCD Chairperson. "We expect more from the Government of Canada than legal manoeuvring to avoid its legal obligations to people with disabilities," said Dolan.

"We should not have to resort to the courts to ensure the Federal Government fulfills its obligations to people with disabilities," stated John Rae, CCD Vice Chair. Yesterday, the Federal Court of Appeal released its decision in the Jodhan case. The Federal Court of Appeal recognized that Ms. Jodhan "has been denied equal access to, and benefit from, government information and services provided

online to the public ... and this constitutes discrimination against her on the basis of her physical disability, namely, that she is blind.” The Court also stated that, “Treasury Board has a constitutional obligation to bring the government departments and agencies under its control into compliance with the *Charter* within a reasonable time period, such as 15 months;”.

For More Information Contact:

CCD Chairperson **Tony Dolan**
Tel: 902-569-2817

CCD Vice Chairperson **John Rae**,
Tel: 416-941-1547

CCD National Coordinator **Laurie Beachell**, Tel: 204-947-0303



Federal Budget Provides Interim Solution to Registered Disability Savings Plan Access, Signals Commitment to Labour Market Inclusion for People With Disabilities

© Canadian Association for Community Living; May 29, 2012

The 2012 Federal Budget announced changes to the Registered Disability Savings Plan that will finally make it possible for adults with intellectual disabilities to open an RDSP without being forced to give up their legal capacity. These changes have been called for by the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and others in the disability community.

Laurie Larson, CACL President, stated: “We are very pleased to see that the Government of Canada heard the message of people with disabilities and their families across the country. These changes mean that people will no longer be pushed to undergo guardianship in order to access this plan.”

While CACL was hopeful for a solution that would allow individuals to open a plan in their own name, these temporary measures allow time to make the longer term changes that are necessary at the provincial and territorial level. This action by the Minister

of Finance sends a strong message to provincial and territorial governments on the legislative changes that are necessary. CACL is eager to work together with both levels of government to enact these longer term solutions.

The changes to the RDSP go some way toward addressing the poverty faced by Canadians with intellectual and other disabilities by providing incentives and grants to save for future income security. Yet this alone will not close the poverty gap for working age adults with intellectual disabilities who have an overall employment rate of only 30%.

Working-age persons with intellectual disabilities are almost three times more likely than working-age Canadians without disabilities to be living in poverty. The average income for working-age persons with an intellectual disability who are employed is less than half of that of Canadians without a disability.

CACL is concerned that changes announced in the 2012 budget for old age security will exacerbate this trend. Given that almost 50% of people with disabilities rely on social assistance as their sole source of income and people with intellectual disabilities are hugely over represented on welfare rolls, the planned increase in age of eligibility for OAS will mean yet more poverty

for seniors with intellectual disabilities. CACL joins others in the disability community urging the Government of Canada to ensure that people with disabilities—already so marginalized by poverty—do not carry a disproportionate burden of the cost for this policy change.

To begin to address the poverty and labour force participation gap for people with disabilities, Budget 2012 makes some promising announcements. An additional \$30 million will be invested over three years in the Opportunities Fund to support the labour market inclusion of people with disabilities and to ensure that employers understand the value of hiring people with disabilities. This is a welcome measure. On its own however, it is not sufficient to address the staggering levels of labour market inequality experienced by people with disabilities.

However, measures promised in the budget to appoint a high level panel reporting to both the Minister of Finance and Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development are an important and long awaited step toward development of a robust labour market strategy for people with disabilities.

Michael Bach, CACL Executive Vice-President, says the appointment of this panel is a welcome step toward a

targeted labour market strategy for people with disabilities. “We are very encouraged by the time frame for reporting for this panel and view this as a signal of the commitment by both Minister Flaherty and Minister Finley to moving forward quickly on this agenda.”

CACL is optimistic that measures in this budget, while not sufficient on their own, will mark the beginning of a longer term strategy. Budget 2012 sends some positive signals toward an enhanced labour market strategy for people with disabilities.

For more information contact Michael Bach, CACL Executive Vice President, 416-209-7942; mbach@cacl.ca

International Day for People With Disabilities 2012

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1561>

Theme: Removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all.

Over one billion people, or approximately 15 per cent of the world’s population, live with some form of disability.

Persons with disabilities, “the world’s largest minority”, often face barriers to participation in all aspects of society.

Barriers can take a variety of forms, including those relating to the physical environment or to information and communications technology (ICT), or those resulting from legislation or policy, or from societal attitudes or discrimination. The result is that persons with disabilities do not have equal access to society or services, including education, employment, health care, transportation, political participation or justice.

Evidence and experience shows that when barriers to their inclusion are removed and persons with disabilities are empowered to participate fully in societal life, their entire community benefits. Barriers faced by persons with disabilities are, therefore, a detriment to society as a whole, and accessibility is necessary to achieve progress and development for all.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognizes that the existence of barriers constitutes a central component of disability. Under the Convention, disability is an evolving concept that “results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities are fundamental rights

recognized by the CRPD and are not only objectives, but also pre-requisites for the enjoyment of other rights. The CRPD (Article 9, accessibility) seeks to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life and development. It calls upon States Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to all aspects of society, on an equal basis with others, as well as to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility.

In spite of this, in many parts of the world today, lack of awareness and understanding of accessibility as a cross-cutting development issue remains an obstacle to the achievement of progress and development through the Millennium Development Goals, as well as other internationally agreed outcomes for all.

The commemoration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 provides an opportunity to address this exclusion by focusing on promoting accessibility and removing all types of barriers in society.

COME CELEBRATE INCLUSIVENESS TOGETHER

**Monday, December 3, 2012
4:30 – 6:30pm**

City Hall – Main Floor of the Rotunda

Celebrate the rights, independence and achievements of people with disabilities both locally and globally as part of the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Share your stories!

Bring your stories of celebration that highlight the importance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Please keep your stories 2-3 minutes in length and submit them in advance to idpwd@screenreview.org.



RESOURCES

ACCOMMABILITY: Professional consulting services for children and parents with disabilities

Sheila Jennings, L.L.B., M.A. (Critical Disability Studies), provides professional consulting services for children and parents with disabilities in the setting of separation and divorce, and at all levels of school, including college and university.

How Sheila can help:

- Assisting family lawyers, social workers, financial planners and parents with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities with their separation agreements, including with respects to economic issues.
- Advising family lawyers where parties with disabilities need consultation on better ways to place accommodations into parenting plans, separation agreements and court orders on consent.
- Consulting with social workers undertaking custody and access evaluations with disability-related matters.
- Providing valuable resource information.

- Psychologists and mediators may consult Sheila as to issues concerning accommodation, accessibility, as well as regarding provincial supports and services for adults and children with disabilities.

You can find Sheila at
Accommability.ca



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