

# INcare

... inclusive practices in child care

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## Valley Infant-Parent Program

On Nov. 14, 2005, the Region of Peel opened its doors to a brand new and unique program offered in partnership with Peel Children's Centre and called it the Valley Infant-Parent Program (VIPP). This one-of-a-kind program offers the services of two agencies, working together to provide an intensive, therapeutic program that supports the development of a healthy attachment between parents and their infants.

Two Resource Teachers (RTs) employed by the Region of Peel with infant-mental health education, knowledge and experience, partner with a team of Child and Family Clinicians (CFCs) from Peel Children's Centre. Together they assess the caregiver/infant needs and work with the parent to design and implement individual goals.

The VIPP is located within The Valley Learn.Play.Care. Child Care Centre at the Mississauga Valley Community Centre and is offered for children under 36 months of age. Families attend parent-child playgroups and participate in regular individual sessions with a CFC either in the home, on-site or wherever is most convenient for the family. The referral can be made by a community service provider or directly by parents by contacting Child Care SNAP-Peel. There is no charge for this service.

The VIPP was developed to support a wide range of caregivers who are struggling to develop a healthy relationship with their infant or toddler for a variety of reasons. It might be parents with anxiety, depression or post-partum mood disorders, parents who have difficulty learning parenting skills through traditional parenting programs, families who have recently adopted an infant or toddler,



families who have children who are difficult to parent because of their particular temperament or because of a medical or developmental challenge.

VIPP has provided service to mothers, fathers, grandparents and a variety of caregivers over the past six years. Here are some of their comments.

"Excellent program. My child and I learned and grew a lot through the program. The clinician provided excellent advice, help, understanding and was very supportive. The other staff were my life lines."

"You have played an important role in helping me become a more confident and better mom to my daughter. You truly make a difference in the life of not just my child, but many children. We are very grateful."

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## A Parent's Story

Dec. 15, 2008 was the day of diagnosis of our Son Bryden, and a day that would forever change our lives. That was the day the Neurologist told us that our (then nine month old) son had a stroke and the suspicions of Cerebral Palsy were true. Bryden was officially diagnosed with Right Hemiplegia due to In Utero Stroke, Cerebral Palsy and Seizure Disorder.



The doctors were not able to tell us when Bryden was diagnosed if he would have a "normal life" or the severity of his Cerebral Palsy; they told us "only time will tell." Since Bryden's diagnosis, life has had some challenging days, but a lot of amazing days too! Bryden's seizures are now controlled by anti-seizure medication. Our worry if he would ever walk, is now a dream come true and I am happy to say that he is trying to run. Bryden is talking, counting, singing and dancing and doing all the things that any child his age can do, he just needs a little extra help.

There are so many people in Bryden's life that we are thankful for: his daycare staff have been an amazing support to him (and our family). Howden L.P.C. staff has been with Bryden since he was 18 months old and they have had the joy of experiencing many firsts in his life. We also have the support of ErinoakKids where Bryden receives physio, occupational and speech therapy sessions, and of course the wonderful doctors at Sick Kids.

In the words of my husband who told me "this has happened and we can't change it"; I wouldn't change a thing on this amazing journey I am on with my son. He amazes me every day with his strength and determination and his smile and hug, which make the days that are difficult, become just that much easier to get through.

– Julie

## Playgrounds that make challenges invisible



Zonta Accessible Playground  
Mississauga, Ontario

As you walk or drive in any neighbourhood in the city you will pass by a parkette, a park or a playground nestled amongst homes and buildings. Some of those might have small barrier-free areas set apart from the rest of activities for children with special needs. There are however, a handful of playgrounds that provide complete access as well as a range of play structures, ground-level activities and

swings for children of all abilities to play and learn together. These playgrounds came to exist because parents of children with mobility challenges or professionals who work with them, identified the lack of play facilities where all kids can just be kids.

An ambitious idea turned into a community event that involved local clubs, businesses and city councillors working together to create unique environments where children of all abilities can exercise their right to childhood activities, with peers. These playgrounds offer a wide range of access ramps, special swings, soft slides and fully inclusive sensory islands. To some, a playground is what the name entails but to parents of children with special needs, these playgrounds are the perfect settings to change attitudes and reflect the diversity of true community.

Inclusion: one vision, endless possibilities

If you would like more information on these playgrounds and their locations, visit the links below.

[zontamississauga.org/zap-location.htm](http://zontamississauga.org/zap-location.htm)  
[accessibleplayground.net/?page\\_id=103](http://accessibleplayground.net/?page_id=103)

**Zonta Meadows Park – 410 Rathburn Rd. W., Mississauga**

**Harrison Park – 75 2nd Ave. E., Owen Sound**

**Harvey Curry park “Every Kids Park” - Between Town Line  
and Lawrence Avenue, Orangeville**

**Rotary Children's Playground, Georgetown**

# Spotlight on Family Day Care Services: St Francis Xavier Child Care Centre

St. Francis Xavier, operated by Family Day Care Services, supports the diverse needs of Peel; they partner with community agencies and have an open door policy with families. This centre is unique in a special way. In addition to offering an inclusive child care setting, the centre has a partnership with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, which provides a specialized program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Children at the centre fully participate in all aspects of daily activities and throughout the day they receive specialized support services. Diana Massey, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing integrates herself and participates in the children's daily activities and schedules as well as implements specific speech, language and auditory goals on an individual basis. Diana and the families work together to develop program goals and parents have an opportunity to observe and participate with their child in the child care centre. This specialized support is a win-win as it benefits both the children, teachers and families and demonstrates inclusive practices.

St. Francis Xavier's Centre Supervisor, Ina Fortuna embraces the partnership with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Boards Hearing Impaired Program. "The program is amazing and seamless in every aspect. It is so wonderful to see the success of the children."



To receive more information about the Hearing Impaired Program with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, contact the Special Education Department at 905-890-0708, ext. 24331.



## Child Care Special Needs Access Point-Peel ... SNAP

Child Care Special Needs Access Point-Peel, known in the community as SNAP, is a single point of access for referrals to special needs resourcing agencies. SNAP makes it easier for families, child care centres and other professionals to connect with resource agencies that support children with special needs.

Families and professionals call SNAP regarding various concerns about their child's behaviour or development. The SNAP specialist completes a referral and based on the information provided, determines which special needs resourcing agency would best be able to support the child's individual needs.

SNAP referrals are directed to the special needs resource agency and the family is contacted directly by that agency to discuss service options. Service is then provided by the special needs agency working in partnership with licensed child care centres in Peel.

Partner agencies include Brampton Caledon Community Living, Community Living Mississauga, ErinoakKids, Peel Children's Centre, Ontario Foundation for Visually Impaired Children and Region of Peel Children's Services.

To contact SNAP please call 905-791-7800, ext. SNAP (7627) or for more information visit [peelregion.ca/children/programs/special-needs/snap.htm](http://peelregion.ca/children/programs/special-needs/snap.htm)

# Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this new legislation, the Government of Ontario will develop mandatory accessibility standards that will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in areas of daily living. The standards will apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. Standards will be developed in stages and milestones must be reached in five year increments or less, so that Ontario is accessible for people with disabilities by 2025.

The AODA is built on the principle that persons with disabilities should have the same opportunities to access goods and services in Ontario. The intent of AODA is to make Ontario barrier free by developing accessibility standards in five key areas; Customer Service, Employment, Transportation, Information and Communications and Built Environment. Accessible Customer Service Standards and Integrated Accessibility Standards are now in effect in Ontario.

The AODA uses the same definition of "disability" as the Ontario Human Rights Code, which includes both visible and non-visible disabilities.

The *Ontarians with Disability Act, 2011* (ODA) requires all municipalities to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and advise Council on the removal of existing barriers and prevention of new barriers within Regional programs, services, policies, by-laws and facilities. The Region of Peel has established an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) that includes members of the community and Peel Regional Council. It has also established an Accessibility Planning Program that assists the AAC and Regional staff to meet their legislative obligations as set by the AODA and ODA.

By removing one barrier at a time we can make sure the Province of Ontario continues to be more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

For more information about the AODA, AAC or the Accessibility Planning Program, visit [peelregion.ca/corpserv/makingway](http://peelregion.ca/corpserv/makingway) or [mcss.gov.on.ca](http://mcss.gov.on.ca)

## Today's technology

Technology has become a valuable asset in today's educational world for students. It is opening educational doors for the most challenged students, including children with special needs.

Specialized equipment, devices and programs along with iPods and iPads have provided children with special needs with a new way of learning and opportunities for success.

Technology and children are constantly growing and changing.

## American Sign Language with all children

In the last few years sign language with babies and children has grown. All children can benefit from the use of sign language especially when it is incorporated in fun ways! Children retain what they learn through play and when they are having fun. Families can learn to incorporate many signs naturally within their daily routines by signing simple words or signing words in simple songs. Just remember to have fun!



**Rain** - Fingertips represent droplets from the sky



**Love** - Cross both hands over your heart



**Friend** - Hold out both of your index fingers hooked in a C-shape. Holding one hand with your C facing up, hook the second C into the first.

Then reverse the position for the hands and do it again. It is like your fingers are best friends and giving each other a hug.

Here are some websites for you and your child to explore:

[www.provincialautismcentre.ca/uploads/assets/ASD%20iTouch%20apps%](http://www.provincialautismcentre.ca/uploads/assets/ASD%20iTouch%20apps%20)

[www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/autism-apps](http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/autism-apps)

[www.scribd.com/doc/24470331/iPhone-iPad-and-iPod-touch-Apps-for-Special-Education](http://www.scribd.com/doc/24470331/iPhone-iPad-and-iPod-touch-Apps-for-Special-Education)

iPhone, iPad & iPod touch Apps for (Special) Education - Scribd

[www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.com](http://www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.com)

[www.momswithapps.com](http://www.momswithapps.com)

We want to hear from you! If you have ideas, stories or questions, we'd love to hear them.  
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