

For Immediate Release

Waterloo Region

October 10, 2017

www.parentingnow.ca to launch in Waterloo Region.

Parenting—and caring for the children in our lives—is perhaps the single most important activity for any of us. Our children, from before they are born and throughout their lives, bring us our greatest joys and our greatest challenges.

On October 21, 2017 KW Counselling Services will launch an exciting new resource for the parents and caring adults of Waterloo Region. *Parenting Now* is the culmination of a two-year design study, [Exploring the Future of Parenting Education](#), and represents the amazing insights gained from talking with the parents and caring adults of Waterloo Region.

One parent in the study stated, “It’s good to know everyone struggles.” Parenting Now, including www.parentingnow.ca, grew from comments such as this one. It will be a space, both online and in the community, for parents and caring adults to connect with each other, share the joys and challenges of parenting, learn new parenting tips and strategies and find support through local agencies and services. A little over two years ago, KW Counselling Services began to ask, “How will the parents of tomorrow want to learn their parenting skills and knowledge?” Leslie Josling, Executive Director of KW Counselling Services reflected, “I have three teen/young adult kids and they are very connected to their worlds through their phones. People, information and resources are available in a heartbeat. I know that a formal parenting course will not be what grabs their interest when it’s their time to learn. They will turn to those most directly connected in their lives—via their phones and immediate relationships. If we are going to be relevant to them

in the future, we need to learn from them now.” Diane McGregor, Coordinator of the Parenting Now Project says, “KW Counselling Services has been offering parenting education workshops to the citizens of Waterloo region for more than 50 years but we began to wonder, is this how parents will continue to seek parenting information?”

McGregor explains, “In order to truly transform our current parenting education approach, we knew that we had to think outside the box, ask a different set of questions, adopt an attitude of curiosity and openness, and explore this issue through the experience of parenting. So, we embarked on a design study and engaged over 1000 parents, caring adults and community partners in conversations about ‘how they learn to be the parents they want to be.’ From their feedback we developed a number of prototypes for parenting education. We tested the prototypes with parents and subsequently landed on three that form our new *Parenting Now: Today, Tomorrow, Together* project.”

On October 21st the project will launch, including a dynamic, highly interactive website, www.parentingnow.ca. The website includes the capacity to chat online with a team of trained “Experienced Parents” as well as many, many other features. During our design phase of this project, we heard that parents want to connect with someone “who has been there”. As one parent put it, “I am not necessarily looking for a proven strategy—I’m looking for someone who has had a similar experience, what they did and why it worked. Then I can try to replicate it.”

This six-year project has been supported by the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation at a cost of \$2 million.

The entire project launches on October 21 with a Celebration of Parenting. The website will go live at this event. In addition, the event will be attended by the local agencies and organizations who provide support and education for parents. There will be a Parenting Resource Fair which will allow parents to wander from table to table, learning about the range of parenting resources in our community as well as having the opportunity to provide feedback on the development of future parenting resources. Child-friendly activities will occur throughout the

event, including a large art room where children can spend time creating art while their parents explore the resources. Experienced Parents will be on hand, ready to engage in conversations about parenting.

McGregor says, “This project has been a labour of love. We have very much enjoyed engaging with parents and caring adults in the community and developing *Parenting Now, Today, Tomorrow, Together* and we are excited to share the results with the community on October 21st.”

No registration is required to attend the event which will take place at the Family Centre 65 Hanson Avenue Kitchener, ON N2C 2H6 from 2-4pm.

A poster, with the details of the event, follows.

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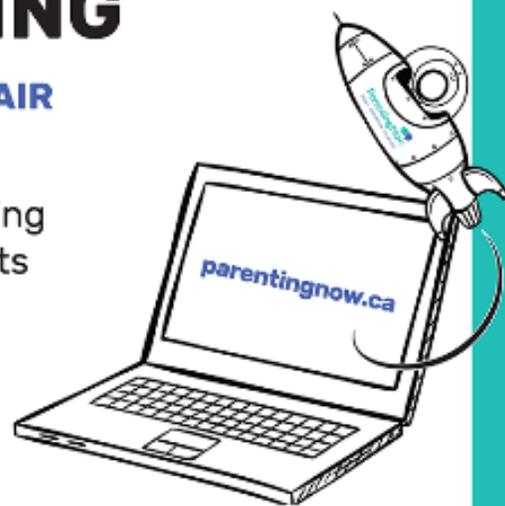
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A CELEBRATION OF PARENTING

PARENTING RESOURCE FAIR

Join us as we **LAUNCH**
parentingnow.ca an exciting
new resource for the parents
of Waterloo Region.



Saturday, October 21, 2 - 4pm

The Family Centre
65 Hanson Ave. Kitchener

- Connect with other parents.
- Find parenting tips and strategies.
- Discover the many positive parenting resources in our Region.
- Enjoy child friendly activities and tasty treats, as well!

Visit **parentingnow.ca** for more information.

