

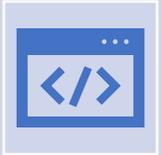
Information Night for Families of Children Requiring Special Education Supports and Services Entering Kindergarten in September 2026

Start Time: 6:30pm





Please keep yourself on mute, with your video off throughout the presentation.



Please access "Turn on Live Captions" as needed. Click on the ellipsis - three dots - on your tool bar.



Post questions in the Q & A section. Please scroll through to see if your question has already been asked and answered. Duplicated questions will not be posted.
*Please use Chrome or Edge browser to view/participate in Q & A section.



WELCOME!

Families of Students Entering Kindergarten in September 2026

HWDSB Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion and Equity, Sharon Stephanian

Special Education Advisory Committee Chair- Judy Colantino

Ron Joyce Children's Centre, School Based Rehabilitation Services, Lindsay Bray- Clinical Lead

HWDSB SEIE Consultants , Catherine Weaver, Tammy Caco, Emily O'Hagan

HWDSB SEIE Office Administrator, Shasta Rhyno

HWDSB SEIE System Principals , Julie Anderson and John Manzin

HWDSB

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board acknowledges our presence on ancestral Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Confederacy land as determined by the Dish with One Spoon treaty.

The intent of this agreement is for all nations sharing this territory to do so responsibly, respectfully and sustainably in perpetuity.

We respect the longstanding relationships with the local Indigenous communities, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River.





Superintendent of Special
Education, Inclusion and
Equity, K-12



Sharon Stephanian
ahewitt@hwdsb.on.ca
905.527.5092 ext. x 2625

Judy Colantino,
SEAC Chair

HWDSB
**SPECIAL EDUCATION,
INCLUSION & EQUITY**

SEAC meets once
per
month throughout
the school year at
the Education
Centre.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Each school board and school authority must establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). These committees are made up of elected school board trustees and representatives from local associations with an interest in special education.

This committee:

- may provide advice on special education
- may make recommendations on anything that impacts the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services
- may participate in the annual review of the board's Special Education Plan

Upcoming SEAC meeting
dates/times, and previous meeting minutes:



HWDSB

Judy Colantino,
SEAC Chair

HWDSB

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

HWDSB
SPECIAL EDUCATION,
INCLUSION & EQUITY

ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE BOARD

Trustees (voting members)

Judy Colantino	Chair
Lindsay Bray	Vice-Chair

Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair
Trustee Ward 3
mfmiller@hwdsb.on.ca

Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7
ddanko@hwdsb.on.ca

SEAC meets once
per
month throughout
the school year at
the Education
Centre.

Lindsay Bray

Clinical Leader - Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation, Community and School Based Rehabilitation Services, Recreation and Intake SmartStart Hub

braylind@hhsc.ca 905-521-2100 ext. 74469

Najwa Warraich/ Denisse Chua

Family Resource Centre Assistant

Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre, 325 Wellington St. N

905.521.2100 ext. 77243



McMaster Children's Hospital Family Resource Library:

- Resource lists
- Books for loans
- Information about local recreation
- EarlyON and other community programming
- Growing Together and Service guides
- Registration assistance to free McMaster Children's Hospital Education sessions and workshops



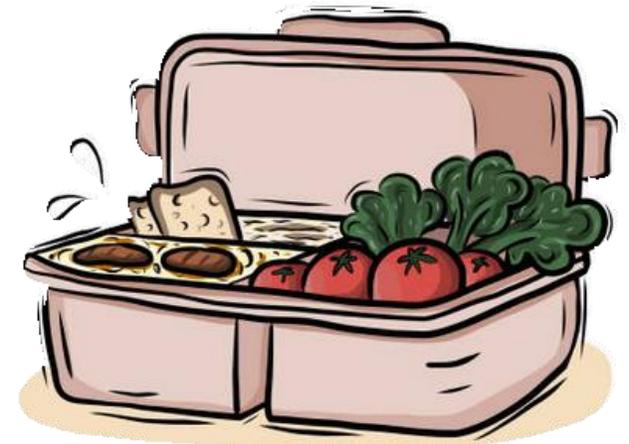
QR Code Link to
Family Resource
Library



Special Considerations as you prepare for school entry.

Trending needs:

- Dressing
 - coats, shoes/boots, fasteners
- Toileting readiness
- Self-feeding
 - utensil use, opening containers
- Fine motor
 - Pre-writing skills, scissor skills
- Physical accessibility and mobility



Our Support:

- Kindergarten Prep workshop
 - July/August - watch for it in our Growing Together Guide
- Kindergarten Readiness



BACK TO SCHOOL
Kindergarten Readiness

McMASTER CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL | RON JOYCE CHILDREN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Kindergarten Prep Workshop



Occupational Therapists (OT) will share fun and practical strategies to prepare for your child's transition to Kindergarten. We will focus on the skills that are important for school entry with ideas to practice over the summer.

Topics Include:

1. Dressing
2. Toilet Learning Basics
3. Self-Feeding – utensils, opening containers
4. Fine Motor – hand grasp, colouring, scissors

DATES

- May 20 – 1:00 PM
- June 10 – 12:00 PM
- July 15 – 1:00 PM

LOCATION

Virtual – Microsoft Teams
1.5 hours duration

For details on registration please check Growing Together Guide May – August 2026



Our Support:

- Readiness in the area of "physical development"
- Parents know their children best; you will be your child's best advocate
- Your child's therapists can support you with:
 - Individualized recommendations
 - School entry reports
 - Equipment trials
 - Strategies
 - Early consultation or recommendations for referrals



Community Resources in Hamilton:

- EarlyON programs
- Recreation Programs
- Day Camps
- Growing Together Guide
- Family Resource website
- Community Living (CLH) Podcast (available on Spotify)
 - Embracing Inclusion Audio Series, episode 6 – Fostering Independence During the Transition to School



(Online only)

School Based Rehabilitation Service:

- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Motor Speech Services
- Consultation or Individual or group interventions to enable children to access the school curriculum
- Referrals are made by school teams:
 - Learning Resource Teachers
 - Special Education Resource teachers
 - Principals
 - School Board Speech Language Pathologists



SLP Hotline

Speech Pathology Support

Early Words

ASCY

SLP Hotline 905 381 2828 ext230

Ask a Professional with your child

10am-noon

Feb 20 @ Valley Park

March 20 @Niwasa



BLIND LOW VISION

The Blind Low Vision (BLV) Program supports children born blind or with low vision from birth to school entry. The program provides family-centered education and support to help parents nurture their child's development and daily skills at home and in early learning settings.

[LEARN MORE >](#)



EARLY WORDS

The Early Words (EW) Preschool Speech and Language Program provides support to Hamilton families with children from birth to school entry, helping them build strong communication skills for a successful future. Early Words is a collaboration between ASCY and Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre.

[LEARN MORE >](#)



INFANT HEARING PROGRAM

Hamilton - Brant - Haldimand-Norolk - Niagara

The Infant Hearing Program (IHP) offers hearing screenings for all newborns, in the hospital or community settings. The program identifies newborns with permanent hearing loss, monitors children at risk of developing hearing loss and provides support for their language development, ensuring they are ready to start school with confidence.

[LEARN MORE >](#)



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & RESOURCES

Hamilton, Haldimand & Norfolk

ASCY's Professional Learning & Resources team collaborates with child care educators and programs to enhance professional development. Valuable resources are provided through the resource libraries (Ham, HN), the ASCY/Lynwood Partnership and the Collaborative Studio.

[HAMILTON >](#)

[HALDIMAND NORFOLK >](#)



Free help for families

Does your child or teen have difficulty doing the things they want or need to do?

Do you have questions about what developmental services your child or family may need?

Join us at SmartStart Hub and Welcome Group

- Free to Hamilton families
- Get connected to staff and community services
- Meet other families and kids for fun



Complete the application at <https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/DPR-Family-Referral.pdf>

Contact our SmartStart HUB:
905-521-2100 ext. 77950

Are you a parent or caregiver to a child (age 0-19) who has difficulty doing the things they want or need to do?

Do you have questions about what community services your child or family may need?

We are here to help!

Smart Start HUB is:

- Free to all parents or caregivers
- Available to answer questions about services that might meet the needs of your child and/or family
- Available to people in Hamilton

Smart Start HUB will:

- Ask you questions to learn more about your child and family's strengths and any concerns you might have
- Invite you to join us for a **Welcome group**

During a Welcome Group, you and your child can:

- Meet other kids and families who have questions too
- Try new things and have fun
- Meet our staff who will listen to your concerns and share ideas with you

After Welcome Group:

- Our staff can suggest services that would be most helpful
- Help to connect your child or family to those services

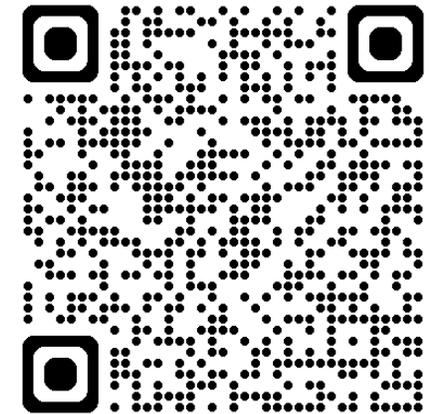
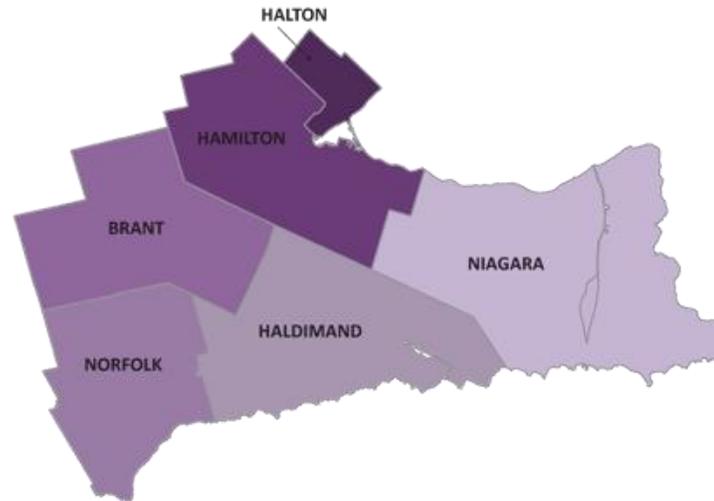
Contact our Smart Start HUB: (905) 521-2100 ext. 77950 or complete the application at <https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/DPR-Family-Referral.pdf>

Ontario Health at Home

Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant

Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB serves the following regions:

- Hamilton
- Niagara
- Haldimand Norfolk
- Brant
- Burlington – in Halton



Children and Youth Support

Our Care Coordinators help **children and youth** who:

- Need extra care and support to thrive in school
This may include:
 - Public schools: nursing and dietetics
 - Home and private schools: occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech language pathology, nursing, dietetics and personal support
- Are medically fragile and need care and support to live at home safely
- Suffer from mental health and addiction challenges

Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant - hnhb

Information and Referral

310-2222

(no area code required)

Toll-free: **1-800-810-0000**
Fax: **1-866-655-6402 (for patient-related information and referrals)**
TTY: **711**
Email: **access@hccontario.ca**

▲ IMPORTANT: DO NOT send any personal health information. This email is not for patient feedback or referrals. Please call us directly at the numbers listed above. We aim to respond within 72 hours, however, this email account is not checked on weekends or statutory holidays.

Connect with Your Regional Healthline

hnhbhealthline.ca

How to pose questions:

Continue to post questions in the Q & A section. Please scroll through to see if your question has already been asked and answered. Duplicated questions may not be posted. *Please use Chrome or Edge browser to view/participate in Q & A section.



Entry to School Process

For Students Requiring
Special Education Supports and
Coordination of Services



HWDSB
Specialized Services

A few changes to the HWDSB Process

- 1) 'Students with Extensive Needs Form' formerly known as 'Tell us about your Child" form
- 2) The Entry to School Meetings will be available in person as requested by families at homeschool site.

Question	Answer
Will my child receive support from an Educational Assistant?	Educational Assistants are allocated by the Board to the school based on student needs. Educational Assistants are assigned to classrooms based on collective student needs.

Question	Answer
<p>What class supports are available for children with a prevalent medical condition such as epilepsy?</p>	<p>Parents/Guardians are responsible for informing the school Principal upon registration of the child's medical needs. A <u>Plan of Care</u> is created for each student with a medical condition. The child's physician and parents/guardians will be involved in creating this plan with board staff. School staff will be made aware of any child with a plan of care in place and support as required.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>Does my child need a diagnosis at school entry?</p>	<p>All children are welcome! Some children do not have a specific diagnosis when they enter school, however families may be discussing a possible diagnosis with their Developmental Pediatrician. Regardless of whether there is a diagnosis, families are encouraged to share reports or assessments that will help in planning for the entry to school.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>My child is connected to an occupational, physical or speech therapist through Ron Joyce's Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program (CDRP). Will this support continue when they attend school?</p>	<p>Children connected to supports through CDRP will automatically be transferred to care through School Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS). Any consent forms will be completed at the Entry to School Meeting.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>Does my child need to be able to use the washroom independently to enter school?</p>	<p>Children come to school at different stages of development. School teams will support toileting routines when your child enters school wherever they are in the learning process towards independence.</p>

✓ **Out-of-Catchment Process** Information will be updated on HWDSB website as it becomes available for the 2026-2027 school year

✓ 2026-2027 information is available for reference



2025-26 School Year

HWDSB has attendance boundaries for each of its schools. All students are directed to attend their In-Catchment School, allowing the Board to make the most effective use of its schools and staff. In some cases, families want their child to attend an Out-of-Catchment School. Students attending an Out-of-Catchment School are not eligible for transportation services. View the [School Locator](#) to see your In-catchment School.

We annually review and update the list of schools open or closed to Out-of-Catchment attendance. Schools closed to Out-of-Catchment attendance **do not** accept Out-of-Catchment Applications and **do not** generate a waitlist.

2025-26 Application Forms

- [ELEMENTARY 2025-26 Out-of-Catchment Application Form \(pdf\)](#)

Complete	Complete the Students with Extensive Needs form and email to entrytoschool@hwdsb.on.ca
Register	Register for Kindergarten at your Homeschool in February
Attend	Attend the Virtual Entry to School Meeting
Attend	Attend the In-Person Visit to your Homeschool
Attend	Attend the Kindergarten Orientation at your Homeschool
Email	Please email entrytoschool@hwdsb.on.ca with any Further Questions

HWDSB

Thank you for joining
us tonight.

Information from this
session is available on
the HWDSB website:

