



## Health Nexus Bulletin

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**BEST WISHES FOR THE NEXT YEAR!**

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While we prepare for the journey to the New Year, Health Nexus would like to wish everyone "safe travels" (metaphorically speaking). There will be many challenges along the way, and many unexpected twists and turns. But at the end of the day, "we are all in this together," undivided, unconquered, always ready to give our hand to the person beside us and support our communities through these challenging times.

The Health Nexus team is grateful and happy to serve the people of Ontario, Canada, and all around the world, and wishing all of you Happy Holidays!

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**2020: SNAPSHOT**

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Knowledge for your Best Start to Lifelong Wellness  
Des connaissances pour un Meilleur départ pour le bien-être tout au long de la

2020 has been a tough year for all, bringing us new challenges that require urgent solutions.

Below is a snapshot of some Health Nexus projects that aim to address our communities' needs during these difficult times!

### **Health Nexus FASD Work:**

Health Nexus is funded by the Ministry for Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to provide Ontarians with the following initiatives related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

1. Since March 2019, Health Nexus has been offering a [one-stop website](#) for individuals with FASD, parents and caregivers supporting children, youth and adults with FASD, and service providers. The central function of the website is a searchable database listing resources, events and services. The website is updated regularly with submissions from the FASD community and the Health Nexus team. An evaluation of the site is currently underway to support some changes and improvements in the new year. A [splash page](#) was added in September to highlight events and resources for FASD awareness month. Feedback is always welcome and can be submitted to [m.gabert@healthnexus.ca](mailto:m.gabert@healthnexus.ca). An electronic network with monthly bulletins supports the information needs of 468 participants. To join the network, go to <https://list.web.net/lists/listinfo/FASD>.
  2. The FASD Support Group project is currently in its third cycle. This year brought an added challenge to traditional support groups. The pandemic halted in-person activities in most areas of Ontario. Support groups had to make a switch to virtual groups, which was done successfully by many. Provincially accessible groups for adults with FASD are starting in January
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2021. Stay tuned for information on how to access them. Funding of micro-grants for new and existing support groups is now available annually, allowing you to plan for your next [application](#) in the spring of 2021.

3. Our most exciting news for 2020 is that we have secured Ministry funding to develop virtual FASD training for all types of service providers by March 31, 2021. With the support of experts and individuals from the FASD community, training development is underway and will result in an 8-hour training using recorded presentations, slides, activities, videos, case studies, questions for reflection, and quizzes. A certificate of completion will be issued to all participants completing all four modules. The training will be ready in the spring of 2021 and available for free to all service providers in Ontario.

### **Virtual Peer-Support Groups with Life with a Baby (LWAB):**

The pandemic has highlighted and increased symptoms of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs). When face-to-face programs that supported parents experiencing mild to moderate PMAD symptoms closed their doors, the waitlists for virtual peer-support groups lengthened.

Life with a Baby (LWAB), a grassroots parent organization, switched from face-to-face to virtual groups quickly and realized that demand outweighed their capacity, showing a need for more trained peer facilitators. Partnering with Best Start by Health Nexus, both organizations adapted Best Start resources to develop peer facilitator training.

The resulting Peer Facilitator Guide and 4.5-hour online training was developed and delivered with the help of two experts in maternal/reproductive mental health. Two rounds of training have been offered so far, with peer facilitators trained from areas all across Canada. Future training will include a combination of the recorded sessions and live Q and A sessions to prepare facilitators.

The training will prepare peers to:

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- Facilitate online groups with parents experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate PMADs.
- Recognize PMAD symptoms when running general parenting groups and refer symptomatic parents to a practitioner.

The Training Guide will support peers as they run virtual PMAD Support Groups.

For more information and to register for future training, contact [info@lifewithababy.com](mailto:info@lifewithababy.com). For information about the resources, contact [beststart@healthnexus.ca](mailto:beststart@healthnexus.ca).

### **Updated Knowledge Translation Resources with COVID-19 Information for Pregnant and Chest/Breastfeeding Persons:**

In 2020, we have collaborated with provincial partners to develop and spread the information on COVID-19 to growing families in Ontario. Among the developed resources, we prepared COVID-19 bulletins, webinar resources below, infographics, and tips sheets. We have also updated some of our resources to reflect the provincial health recommendation around COVID-19 and maternal-child health.

To access our COVID-19 resources, please visit:

<https://resources.beststart.org/product-category/resources/covid-19/>

The direct links to the updated resources are available here:

1. Important Signs to Watch for if You are Pregnant. <https://resources.beststart.org/product/e08e-important-signs-if-you-are-pregnant-image/>
  2. Your Guide to Labour and Birth. <https://resources.beststart.org/product/e42e-guide-labour-and-birth-booklet/>
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3. Your Guide to Postpartum. <https://resources.beststart.org/product/your-guide-to-postpartum/>

These resources are available in English and French and are free to download from [www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org).

To access all our resources, please visit the Health Nexus home page at <http://new.healthnexus.ca>.

### **2020 Best Start Conference and Building Healthy Brains:**

On March 5th and 6th, 2020, Health Nexus hosted its annual Best Start Conference. The theme of the conference was Building Healthy Brains. The conference engaged 318 attendees, presented 5 panels, 5 keynotes, featured 18 presenters, and facilitated 44 table discussions. The scope of the conference focused on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The short and long-term effects of ACEs have been a topic of discussion in public health and social services. Getting involved with the Brain Story, part of the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative, Health Nexus, and the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), co-hosted a consultation with key stakeholders on how to move the topic forward in Ontario. The conference focused on Building Healthy Brains to achieve long-term health and mental health outcomes across the lifespan. It brought a wide range of participants from various sectors. Speakers and panelists opened the discussion, creating an interactive and participatory atmosphere. Four sessions with discussions at each table, facilitated by members of the working group, provided rich data from all participants.

### **Petite Enfance:**

The [Petite enfance Le mieux-être des jeunes enfants francophones = adultes outillés](#) project (*Early Childhood, The well-being of young francophone children =*

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*equipped adults*) is part of a program of the [Société santé en français](#) (SSF, Health Society in French). In 2019, [Health Nexus](#) launched a needs analysis for Francophone families living in Ontario and focusing on the availability and access to mental health services for children aged 0 to 4 and the development of a Community Plan for Ontario.

For the second part of the project, [Health Nexus](#) partnered with [Aféseo](#) to create a bridge between clinical mental health and [Ontario's Early Learning Framework Principles](#). We established the importance of identifying existing resources, information and training in the area of early childhood (0-4 years old) health and well-being.

The first half of 2020 was devoted to virtual consultations with Franco-Ontarian parents and listing of preferred topics collected during virtual consultations.

We have created a [Petiteenfance.ca website](#) to showcase the project to parents, but also and above all, to bring together the evaluated resources, which we consider important to promote and share with Franco-Ontarian parents.

At the same time, we recommend a variety of resources on **Health Nexus social media, you can find us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)**. Feel free to follow us and share our posts and resources!

### **Alliance for Health Promotion (A4HP - Geneva):**

Health Nexus is a member of the Geneva-based Alliance for Health Promotion (A4HP), a coalition of Non-Governmental Organisations, academic and Civil Society actors from a health background. The A4HP is in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This year, Health Nexus has co-hosted the Canadian Conference on Global Health (CCGH2020), which also included the 10<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on Health Promotion. During the 10<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on Health Promotion, Health Nexus held a session on *Opportunities for Digital Innovation in Population Health*, including an international panel of experts. You can access the recorded session

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here: <https://youtu.be/bQYk8YFUAZQ> (in English)  
and <https://youtu.be/ODTB5x6TU40> (in French)

### **International Youth Hub Project:**

As a member of the Alliance for Health promotion (A4HP), Health Nexus partnered with A4HP and with the Education and Solidarity Network (ESN) to deliver on creating the Youth Hub Project, which focuses on two main deliverables:

- 1) The School Project – YEAH! (Youth Engagement and Action for Health); and
- 2) The Hub for Youth and Young Professionals.

Health Nexus presented on both deliverables at the A4HP *Webinar Positioning Health Promotion in Global Development to achieve SDG3 – Thinking beyond COVID-19*, in May 2020.

Our presentation is available here: <https://youtu.be/BVGvT0RjMoc> (only in English).

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**2021: THE WORK AHEAD**

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Despite all the challenges given to us this year or the ones ahead of us in 2021, Health Nexus will continue to support children, youth and families during these unrepresented times.

In addition to our ongoing work on Best Start's bilingual knowledge mobilization health promotion resources focusing on preconception, pregnancy, birth postpartum, parenting and early child development, the FASD work and other projects described above, Health Nexus will be engaging in the following initiatives:

1. Collaboration with partners on **emerging public health initiatives**. Health Nexus has vast experience in developing knowledge mobilization and knowledge translation products based on evidence-informed and community engagement science. This time, we are working hard to share our knowledge and experience with other partners to influence information delivery for the maternal-child population at the public health level.

2. **International Youth HUB project**. Together with our partners, Health Nexus will be focusing on two main deliverables:

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- The School Project – YEAH! (Youth Engagement and Action for Health); and
- The Hub for Youth and Young Professionals (HYYP).

The School Project will be mandated to deliver principally on an Annual Work Program based on the health promotion and climate action components of the Model United Nations UN Program. The YHYYP will be mandated to deliver principally on three pre-agreed deliverables:

- An Annual Work Program based on UN and WHO deliverables regarding climate action and health promotion.
- Help during the preparations of Alliance for Health promotion fora and deliver on specific themes and subjects during the fora.
- Involvement of the YHYYP with-in the drafting of the WHO Global Health/Health promotion Strategy.

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**SCIENCE TABLE: COVID-19 ADVISORY FOR ONTARIO**

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As part of our ongoing work, Health Nexus is dedicated to bring you the most up-to-date information on scientific data regarding the pandemic response.

The Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table is an independent group of scientists, hosted by the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. It includes health system leaders who evaluate and report on emerging evidence relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic, to inform Ontario's response.

The Science Table's mandate is to provide weekly summaries of relevant scientific evidence for the COVID-19 Health Command Table of the Province of Ontario, integrating information from existing scientific tables, Ontario's universities and agencies, and the best global evidence. The Science Table summarizes its findings for the Health Command Table and for the public in Science Briefs.

To learn more, please visit <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/about/>.

The latest brief dated December 19th, 2020, includes an update on COVID-19 projections, and is available here: [https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Evidence-on-COVID-19-Pandemic\\_2020.12.18-Final-1.pdf](https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Evidence-on-COVID-19-Pandemic_2020.12.18-Final-1.pdf).

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**best start  
meilleur départ**

by/par health **nexus** santé



**We have moved! Our new location is:**

**Nous avons déménagé ! Notre nouvelle adresse :**

**WeWork**

**c/o Health Nexus**

**240 Richmond Street W**

**Toronto, ON M5V 1V6**

Tel. (416) 408-2249

1-800-397-9567

Fax: (416) 408-2122

[beststart@healthnexus.ca](mailto:beststart@healthnexus.ca)

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