

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Child and family welfare conference hosts three public workshops

Free sessions will highlight innovative research projects and alternative models in the field

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WATERLOO (Ont.) – Leading child and family welfare (CFW) organizations will outline alternate ways of reducing harm in child welfare intervention cases during three free public workshops. The presenters will share innovative research and alternative methods of providing service to children and families on June 20 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Wilfrid Laurier University.

During the two-hour workshops, presenters will address three key CFW issues. One session will explore opportunities to improve outcomes for youths involved in the child welfare system. Another will review the advantages of including family members in the child welfare decision-making process. The third session will cover the benefits of community-based service models for CFW.

“There is a need for renewed hope and new ideas in child and family welfare,” said Gary Cameron, principal investigator for the Partnerships for Children and Families Project and a professor with the faculty of social work Laurier. “The conference and workshops are intended to get us thinking and talking about possibilities for more positive ways of helping troubled children and families.”

The workshops are part of the *Positive Systems of Child and Family Welfare* international conference, hosted by the Partnerships for Children and Families Project on June 20 and 21 at Laurier. The conference will bring together CFW experts from around the world to share experiences and ideas about positive ways of working with families.

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The three workshops being offered for free to the public are:

- *A harm reduction recipe from youth in care* – Delivered by the National Youth in Care Network, the workshop will explore policies and actions to increase resiliency for young people in the child welfare system. The presentation will examine the impact of child welfare interventions in key areas such as relationships to community and peers, contact with family, and school involvement.
- *Child protection: A job that has to be done collectively* – Hosted by the Toronto Family Group Conferencing Project, this workshop will offer a different approach to the job of child protection. Rather than isolating the family and the child welfare agency circles, the family and the professionals are paired to better ensure the safety and well being of the child. This approach has its roots in New Zealand and its adaptation into international settings will be discussed with a focus on a Toronto project.
- *Community-based service models* – The Family and Children’s Services of Guelph and Wellington will partner with the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) of Brant to discuss unique community-based programs being offered. These programs bring together service providers, clients, community partners and volunteers to improve services to families. The presentation will contrast community-based models with the more traditional model of child protection, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses from the perspectives of both managers and service providers of community-based service.

There is no admission charge, but people interested in attending are asked to reserve a space in advance. Please contact the Partnerships Project at partnerships@wlu.ca or 1-866-239-1558.

For more information on the *Positive Systems of Child and Family Welfare Conference* or the Partnerships Project itself, please visit www.wlu.ca/pcfproject.