

September 25, 2023

Dear Principals, Resource Teachers and Classroom Teachers.

September brings many of our children back to the familiarity of their school communities, and their friends. As a support for our children who have epilepsy, we want to ensure that all school boards and schoolteachers are aware of the resource that Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario can be in the quality education that you provide.

In partnership with you, we offer the following programs:

1. A Grade 5 program called **Thinking About Epilepsy** which is a FREE 45-minute classroom presentation. A PhD evaluation of this presentation has proven that this presentation not only increases knowledge about seizures and epilepsy but also significantly decreases epilepsy related stigma. Additionally, this presentation meets the specific expectations of the Grade 5 Ontario Curriculum and ties into Ontario Science Curriculum focusing on the Human Body and the Nervous System. The facilitator uses props, EEG materials, the Famous People Game, video clips and an interactive demonstration to reinforce specific expectations to ensure that students can recognize different seizure types and perform seizure first aid. The presentation is age appropriate for split classes and extra time can be allotted for questions.
2. Upon request, **Epilepsy Classroom Presentations** are also offered to other grades. These presentations typically occur because there is a child in the classroom that has been identified as having epilepsy, and the parents/guardians have suggested a presentation in their child's classroom. These presentations are tailored versions of the Grade 5 presentation to ensure age appropriateness. The facilitator may use props, a storybook and video clips to reinforce information. To respect confidentiality, the facilitator does not disclose the child who is living with seizures.
3. Assistance with supporting the child living with epilepsy in the school setting is offered on an individualized basis. We are available as a resource to the school to help create **safety plans** for children with seizures including what to do if the child has a seizure, when to call EMS and when a neurologist protocol is required. We are also available to assist in the development of IEPs or IPRCs. Many schools have also invited Epilepsy Educators to the table if there are **behavioural issues** that may stem from the child's epilepsy or the medication. We are also available to provide **Rescue Medication training** to ensure that all your staff are comfortable administering the rescue medication as needed.
4. 25-60-minute **Teacher Training** is offered to help teachers identify and recognize seizures (through videos showing common seizure types), learn appropriate seizure first aid, learn about

rescue medication and administration procedures, understand common associated challenges (learning, emotional, behavioral) and comorbidities (mental health, ADHD). The facilitator also discusses learning strategies to help the child with epilepsy do well in the classroom and provides the school with supporting materials and strategy sheets.

- 5. March Epilepsy Awareness Month** is a dedicated opportunity to allow all children in the school to participate in a non-profit program to promote epilepsy in the larger community. Many schools have used activities to promote students' sense of community, volunteering, and leadership. In past years we have held **Purple Door Campaigns** to allow the school to show those with epilepsy that they do not fight alone.

My hope is that you would partner with Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario to educate students about epilepsy and collaborate to support children living with seizures in the school system.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Michelle Franklin

Michelle Franklin
Chief Executive Officer

To book a presentation, please visit www.epilepsyswo.ca/studentsupport.

Contact your Local Epilepsy Educator at info@epilepsyswo.ca for more information about the programs.