

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH COURSE

DELIVERED BY  
CanChild & Kids Brain Health Network

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
McMaster Continuing Education



# FER COURSE

The Family Engagement in Research (FER) Course is a fully integrated 10-week online course delivered by CanChild and Kids Brain Health Network in partnership with McMaster Continuing Education.

Coursework involves four live online group discussions, individual review of course materials, weekly group activities, and a final group project and presentation. From its inception, the course has been developed and is delivered in partnership with family leaders and researchers.

This course is designed for researchers (graduate students, research coordinators, investigators) and family members (parents, siblings, grandparents) who have an interest in neurodevelopmental disability, child health research, and family-researcher partnerships.



# COURSE GOALS

## CREATE A COHORT OF FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ARE:

- Knowledgeable about the research process and can make informed decisions with regards to partnering on a research project.
- Capable and confident to engage with researchers at various levels of the research process and recognize the impact they can have on the research community.

## CREATE A COHORT OF RESEARCHERS WHO ARE:

- Invested in conducting and knowledgeable about family engagement in research.
- Capable and confident in engaging with individuals with lived/living experience in all stages of the research process.

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

The FER Course covers principles and frameworks of family engagement in research alongside discussions of the practicalities and challenges of research partnership. The content and course design strives to create a safe space to trial and express ideas and practical working methods to help learners develop competency and confidence in both the theory and practice of family engagement in research. A unique component of the FER Course is that family partners and researchers are placed in groups to co-create a Knowledge Translation (KT) tool.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

## Week 1

- Family Engagement in Research: What do we really mean?

## Week 2

- Family Engagement in Research: Why is it important?

## Week 3

- Building an integrated research team: How can we find each other?

## Week 4

- Building an integrated research team: How can we work together?

## Week 5

- Roles and responsibilities of families and researchers

## Week 6

- Ethics of family engagement in research

## Week 7

- Barriers and facilitators to family engagement

## Week 8

- Family engagement tools & resources

## Week 9

- Evaluation of family engagement activities

## Week 10

- Next Steps: Building a community for family-researcher partnerships

# COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## UPON COMPLETION OF THIS COURSE, LEARNERS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Define and describe the benefits of family engagement in research
- Identify family/research partners and understand how to engage individuals with lived/living experience throughout each step of the research process
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of researchers and individuals with lived/living experience on integrated teams
- Understand the ethics surrounding family engagement in research as well as the rights and responsibilities of research 'participants' versus research 'partners'
- Recognize the barriers and facilitators to family engagement and identify strategies to support family engagement in research (at the individual and team levels).
- Understand and utilize tools and resources available for the implementation and evaluation of family engagement activities
- Communicate ideas related to family engagement verbally and in writing

# COURSE PROJECTS

As part of the course, learners co-develop a FER KT tool. [Access the FER KT tools online.](#)



# COURSE COMPLETION

Upon successful completion of the course, learners receive a [McMaster University certified microcredential](#).



# GRADUATE TESTIMONIALS

“ I highly recommend this course! With this course I was able to learn a lot about the research phases and how I could be engaged in research as a caregiver. The instructors and participants were fully engaged, the discussions were always respectful and the readings were right on target. An enlightening experience about Family Engagement in Research!

- Parent

“ I had zero experience regarding family engagement and research before taking this course, so it was very helpful for me to take this course. It really helped elevate my level of appreciation for family engagement in research. For anyone who is interested in family engagement in research I would definitely recommend it. It was really well designed.

- Researcher

## HISTORY OF THE FER COURSE

The Family Engagement in Research Course was developed in 2018 by Andrea Cross, Connie Putterman, Donna Thomson, Dayle McCauley, Patty Solomon, and Jan Willem Gorter at CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research at McMaster University. Course development was funded by Kids Brain Health Network.



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