

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH (FER) COURSE

Alberta Cohort - Winter 2024

Bringing together researchers, clinicians, and people with lived-experience related to neurodevelopmental conditions & child health research

Presented by:

CanChild, Kids Brain Health Network, and
McMaster University Continuing Education

Sponsored by:

The Azrieli Accelerator at the University of Calgary
and the One Child Every Child initiative



FER COURSE

The Family Engagement in Research Course is a 10-week online course delivered by CanChild, Kids Brain Health Network, and McMaster Continuing Education. The course is delivered in an online format, using FER's own Learning Management Platform.

This Alberta Cohort of the FER Course is being sponsored by the Azrieli Accelerator at the University of Calgary and the One Child Every Child initiative. Our aim is to build capacity for engaged research partnerships in the areas of neurodevelopmental conditions (across the lifespan) or child health and wellness.

This course is designed for people with lived/living experience and their family members, academic researchers (graduate students, research coordinators, investigators), clinicians, and health care providers who have an interest in partnering in research.



COURSE GOALS

To create a cohort of people with lived/living experience 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.

To create a cohort of researchers who are:

- Invested in championing 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 & 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.

Coursework involves 4 online group discussions, review of course materials, weekly group activities, and a final group project and presentation. A unique component of the FER Course is that people with lived/living experience and researchers are placed in groups to co-create a resource.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week # and Date		Topic
1*	February 5	What do we mean by FER?
2	February 12	Why is FER important?
3	February 19	How can we find each other?
4*	February 26	How can we work together?
5	March 4	Roles and responsibilities
6*	March 11	Ethics of family engagement in research
7	March 18	Barriers and facilitators to FER
8	March 25	Evaluation of family engagement activities
9	April 1	Family engagement tools & resources
10*	April 8	Building a community for partnership

*Online session this week.

Choice of attending Tues 12-2pm OR Wed 7-9pm MT.

You are expected to attend and participate in all 4 online sessions and connect with your assigned group outside of class time on a weekly basis, with exception for unforeseen circumstances. Multiple missed online sessions or group meetings may result in withdrawal from the course and/or not receiving the microcredential.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion, 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, learners receive a McMaster University certified microcredential.



GRADUATE TESTIMONIALS

“...I was inspired to participate in this course as the parent of a neurodivergent child. Through this course, I have made connections that have enabled my child to participate and partner in research as a family researcher. For us to see ourselves as researchers reframes our experiences and helps us to see ourselves as part of the process of understanding and supporting my child’s educational and developmental journey.”

- Participant with Living-Experience from the Winter 2023 Calgary Cohort

“...Moving our research to optimal impact invites us to think deeply and intentionally about the users of the research and specifically who can benefit from it, and how can we ensure more impactful, inclusive research. To that end, the course was terrific... I learned much, and made wonderful connections with family members and researchers alike.”

- Researcher Participant from the Winter 2023 Calgary Cohort

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.

© Cross, A., Putterman, C., Thomson, D., McCauley D., Solomon, P., Gorter, JW. (2023). Family Engagement in Research Course. CanChild, McMaster University. Hamilton, Ontario.



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ucalgary.ca/azrieli-accelerator

