



# **Empowering Neurodiverse Youth Through Life Skills**

Reach Toronto  
20 Emily Carr Cres  
Bolton, Ontario  
L7E2L1  
[www.reachtoronto.ca](http://www.reachtoronto.ca)  
[mary@reachtoronto.ca](mailto:mary@reachtoronto.ca)  
[bo@reachtoronto.ca](mailto:bo@reachtoronto.ca)  
416-929-1670



## Who We Are

For over 12 years, Reach Toronto's team of experienced life skills specialists has been supporting neurodiverse youth in developing the confidence, independence, and practical skills they need to thrive. Through both in-person programs at the Life Skills Centre and flexible remote learning options, participants engage in hands-on experiences that prepare them for real-life challenges while fostering self-esteem and resilience.

## Tailored Programs for Individual Growth

Reach Toronto's programs are designed to meet the unique strengths, learning styles, and goals of each participant. Whether focusing on life skills, cooking, money management, or social confidence, the organization ensures that every program is adaptable and relevant, helping youth gain skills that are immediately applicable to everyday life.



## Partnerships and Community Impact

Over the years, Reach Toronto has collaborated with schools, organizations, families, and individuals to provide expert guidance and support. Through these partnerships, the organization extends its reach and impact, ensuring that neurodiverse youth have access to the tools and encouragement they need to succeed.

## A Commitment to Lifelong Skills

At Reach Toronto, every program is built with the goal of equipping participants with practical skills and social understanding—the building blocks for independence and lifelong success. By integrating hands-on learning with social skill development, Reach Toronto helps neurodiverse youth thrive both now and in the future.



## Building Blocks for Success: Integrating Social Skills Across All Neurodiverse Programs

At Reach Toronto, we recognize that learning is most effective when it is holistic. For neurodiverse youth and adults, mastering life skills such as financial literacy, cooking, or independent living is essential—but equally important is the development of social skills. These interpersonal abilities form the foundation for confidence, autonomy, and meaningful engagement in everyday life.

### Why Social Skills Matter Across All Programs

Social skills are not just an optional add-on—they are the connective tissue that makes learning practical and lasting. Whether it's collaborating on a cooking project, discussing budgeting choices in our financial literacy sessions, or navigating post-secondary environments, social skills empower participants to:

- Communicate effectively and assertively
- Build and maintain relationships
- Manage conflict and problem-solve
- Understand and respond to social cues
- Work collaboratively toward shared goals

## The “Building Blocks” Approach

At Reach Toronto, we embed social skill development into every program, treating it as one of the core “building blocks” of all instruction. This approach ensures that participants are not only gaining technical knowledge but also the interpersonal tools they need to apply those skills in real-world settings. By intertwining social learning with practical instruction, we foster a balance of competence and confidence that supports lifelong independence.

## Outcomes We Promote

- Greater self-esteem and self-advocacy
- Enhanced independence in daily living
- Stronger community and peer connections
- Improved resilience in challenging situations
- Increased confidence in communication and social interaction
- Improved collaboration and teamwork in group setting
- Improved emotional awareness and coping techniques
- Development of structured routines and self-regulation strategies



# RESIDENTIAL SKILLS

## ABOUT

Learning residential life skills equips neurodiverse youth and adults to live confidently and independently in their own space.

From cooking and cleaning to budgeting and home safety, these practical skills build self-esteem, personal responsibility, and a sense of autonomy.

By mastering everyday routines, participants create safe, organized, and supportive living environments, while also enhancing social connections, mental well-being, and readiness for independent or shared living.

This hands-on program takes place at our Greenwin Independent Living Centre in Toronto, using a fully equipped mock apartment to provide real-life experience in a supportive setting.

## TOPICS COVERED

- **Basic Life Skills:** Cooking basics, meal planning, grocery shopping, and simple recipe preparation
- **Cleaning and Housekeeping:** Learning to set cleaning and laundry schedules, safe use of cleaning products and organization tips
- **Budgeting Essentials & Money Management:** Understanding income, expenses, savings, bill payment and creating a personal budget
- **Home Maintenance:** Basic home repairs and maintenance
- **Safety Measures:** Fire safety, home security, and emergency preparedness
- **Being a Good Neighbor:** Respecting shared spaces and resources and creating a sense of trust and belonging
- **Urban Transportation:** Exploring subway and public transit systems
- **Time Management and Organization:** Time management techniques: Prioritization, scheduling, and goal setting
- **Education and Support Centres:** Tours of Post-Secondary Institutions



# FOOD FOR LIFE

## ABOUT

Our Food for Life program is designed to empower neurodiverse individuals with essential cooking skills while encouraging creativity, confidence, and the joy of preparing wholesome, nutritious, and budget-friendly meals.

This program goes beyond cooking—it promotes independence, supports health and wellness, and builds self-esteem through hands-on learning.

By equipping neurodiverse youth and adults with practical culinary skills, Food for Life fosters autonomy, resilience, and pride, helping participants thrive in their daily lives and future endeavors.

## Program Goals

- Learn to cook healthy, affordable meals with confidence and creativity.
- Gain independence and life skills through hands-on kitchen experience.
- Boost well-being and self-esteem while building resilience and pride.

## TOPICS COVERED

- **Food Preparation and Cooking Techniques:** Learning basic cooking techniques such as chopping, sautéing, boiling, baking, grilling and knife skills. Use of herbs, spices and flavorings
- **Nutrition and Health Education:** Gain valuable skills in reading and interpreting nutritional labels. Dive into the essentials of different food groups, recommended daily nutrient intake, and the critical role of balanced meals in promoting overall health and well-being.
- **Transferable Life Skills:** Teach practical life skills that will benefit youth and family members beyond the kitchen, such as budgeting for groceries, meal planning, and time management
- **Safety in the Kitchen:** Teach food safety skills, storage, reheating, hygiene and safe use of appliances



# POST-SECONDARY PREPAREDNESS

## ABOUT

This program is designed to help neurodiverse high school students successfully transition to post-secondary education by exploring career interests, navigating colleges/universities, accessing accommodations, and developing essential study skills.

The program combines interactive workshops, one-on-one coaching, and practical activities to build confidence, independence, and self-advocacy. Program is run with the help of a York University professor and autism advocate

## Program Goals

- Navigate post-secondary options with confidence and independence.
- Build essential skills for studying, self-advocacy, and accessing accommodations.
- Explore future pathways by identifying career and academic interests.

## TOPICS COVERED

- **Exploring Interests & Career Options:** Help students identify potential career paths and post-secondary programs
- **Navigating Post-Secondary Systems:** Teach students how to research colleges/universities, apply for programs, and understand course requirements
- **Accessing Accommodations:** Guide students in requesting and using academic accommodations effectively
- **Education and Support Centres:** Tours of Post-Secondary Institutions and Trades
- **Developing Study & Life Skills:** Build study habits, time management, and self-advocacy skills to succeed academically





# YOUTH AND MONEY

## ABOUT

Our Youth and Money program is designed to equip neurodiverse youths with practical financial literacy skills that support independence, confidence, and inclusion.

Through interactive, hands-on learning, participants explore key financial topics such as budgeting, saving, spending wisely, understanding credit, and planning for the future — all presented in accessible, strengths-based ways that celebrate different learning styles.

## Program Goals

- Empower neurodiverse youth to understand and manage their personal finances with confidence.
- Promote independence and self-advocacy by teaching practical money management strategies.
- Encourage inclusion and equity by ensuring all learners can access financial education in ways that meet their sensory, communication, and cognitive needs.

## TOPICS COVERED

- **Money Basics:** Understanding what money is and its purpose, recognizing different denominations of coins and bills
- **Budgeting and Planning:** Learning to budget by tracking expenses and income effectively
- **Fixed and Variable Expense:** Understanding the difference and finding savings and hidden costs in your budget
- **Savings:** Understanding the importance of setting aside money for short and long term goals
- **Needs vs Wants:** Understanding the difference and making responsible choices
- **Credit and Debt Management:** Using credit responsibly and avoiding unnecessary debt
- **Financial Goal Setting:** Identifying and planning for personal and professional financial aspirations
- **Understanding Financial Tools:** Familiarity with bank accounts, online banking, digital payment systems, and other financial resources



# THE YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR

## ABOUT

Our program is dedicated to empowering neurodiverse youth to start, manage, and grow thriving businesses within their communities. Encouraging young entrepreneurship is essential for sparking innovation, driving economic growth, and shaping the future of industries while strengthening local economic development.

By embracing entrepreneurship early, young individuals bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and a boldness to take risks, often leading to transformative ideas and solutions that contribute to sustainable economic development. Moreover, they inspire their peers and communities, creating a ripple effect that encourages ambitious thinking, and drives meaningful change.

## Program Goals

- Equip youth to launch and grow businesses in their communities.
- Inspire creative, bold ideas that drive economic growth.
- Encourage youth to lead and make a positive impact locally.

## TOPICS COVERED

- **Introduction to Entrepreneurship:** Definition, importance and impact of Indigenous entrepreneurship
- **Fresh Perspectives and Creativity:** Exploring how young entrepreneurs often introduce groundbreaking ideas and innovative solutions by thinking outside the box
- **Skill Development:** Gaining essential skills like problem-solving, and leadership
- **Business Planning and Management:** Importance of a business plan, it's components, and management principles
- **Business Financial Management:** Key principles and practices to effectively manage company finances
- **Community Inspiration:** Exploring how Youth-led businesses inspire peers and communities, encouraging ambition and a mindset of possibility
- **Funding Opportunities and Resources:** Overview of funding options, start-up funds and networks



# LIFESKILLS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH FASD

## ABOUT

Life skills are the foundation of independence, confidence, and resilience. For youth and adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), these skills are not just beneficial—they are essential for navigating the complexities of daily life.

By prioritizing life skills education, we are not just teaching people how to survive—we are empowering them to thrive, and in doing so, we honor the resilience, strength, and potential of every individual and every community.

## Program Goals

- **Build Independence:** Strengthen daily living and decision-making skills for greater self-reliance.
- **Boost Confidence:** Develop resilience, social connections, and a positive sense of self.
- **Foster Belonging:** Encourage community participation and celebrate individual strengths.

## TOPICS COVERED

### **Understanding Myself & My Strengths:**

- Emotional regulation strategies (Calming tools, self-care routines)
- Building a daily routine (Visual schedules, checklists, timers)

### **Healthy Living & Self Care:**

- Easy meal prep, grocery shopping skills
- Cooking on a budget
- Personal Hygiene and self care habits
- Household skills (cleaning/organization)

### **Money & Shopping Skills:**

- Understanding money (Visual money guides, role-playing transactions)
- Budgeting basics (Needs vs. wants and making responsible financial choices)
- Smart shopping (make a list, compare costs)

### **Communication & Relationships:**

- Expressing needs & emotions
- Healthy relationships (recognizing safe & unsafe people)

### **Moving Forward:**

- Reflection & sharing circle (What I learned, my strengths, my goals)