

Area of Interest: Community and Social Services

## Developmental Services Worker

Ontario College Diploma

Program Code: 0436A01FWO

2 Years

Ottawa Campus

### Our Program

**Support people of all ages to function better in their day-to-day lives with this truly rewarding career.**

This two-year Developmental Services Worker Ontario College Diploma program prepares you to support children, youth and adults with physical, mental and/or developmental disabilities, through their activities of daily living, behaviour support, personal care and special education. You facilitate the development of skills for people with disabilities to enjoy independence, citizenship and social living.

As a student, you learn strategies for providing support in ways that are respectful of the dignity and individuality of each person with whom you work.

The Developmental Services Worker program uses both experiential and outcome-based theory to help you prepare to work in a variety of educational, community and social service settings.

During your program of study, you apply theory and skills in various field placements, with opportunities to experience work as an Educational Assistant and Community Support/Residential Counsellor. Field placements allow you to explore concepts from a hands-on point of view and are an important learning tool to prepare you for your profession. Throughout the program, you complete a series of field placements, totaling close to 600 hours of work experience.

You may find work in a variety of roles after graduation, including:

- educational assistant
- developmental assistant
- special needs worker
- residential counsellor
- employment specialist
- life skills instructor
- vocational instructor
- family support worker
- support network facilitator

### Employment

More than 90% of graduates from this program are employed within six months of graduating.

You may find work in a variety of roles after graduation including educational assistant, developmental assistant, special needs worker, residential counsellor, employment specialist, life skills instructor, vocational instructor, family support worker and support network facilitator.

### Learning Outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

- Conduct oneself in an ethical, competent and accountable manner in all professional relationships.
- Provide person-directed supports and services that respect and promote self-determination for people with developmental disabilities.
- Provide for the safety of people with developmental disabilities, self and others in compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations and standards of practice.
- Support health and well-being of people with developmental disabilities.
- Employ and adapt formal and informal strategies to support the learning of people with developmental disabilities.
- Provide leadership in the development of inclusive communities.
- Develop professional and personal plans that enhance job performance and well-being.
- Identify and apply discipline-specific practices that contribute to the local and global community through social responsibility, economic commitment and environmental stewardship.

### Program of Study

Level: 01	Courses	Hours
ENL1813S	Communications 1	42.0
FAM0067	Promoting Health and Wellness	28.0
FAM0068	Person Centered Approach	42.0
FAM0069	Essential Supports for Persons with Developmental Disabilities	42.0
FAM1137	Paraprofessionals in Education	28.0
FAM1264	Introduction to the Field of Developmental Services	42.0
Level: 02	Courses	Hours
ENL1880F	Professional Communication for Developmental Services Workers	42.0
FAM1169	Community Field Placement	161.0
FAM1262	Current Topics in the Field of Developmental Services	42.0
FAM1265	Pharmacology I	28.0
FAM1279	Exploring Developmental Disabilities	42.0
FAM1284	Human Physiology and Health	42.0
Level: 03	Courses	Hours
FAM1182	Sexuality, Relationships and Persons with Disabilities	28.0
FAM1287	Families and Aging in Developmental Services	42.0
Select either Community Group or School Group	Courses	Hours
FAM1903	Educational Support Field Placement (School Group)	254.0
FAM1915	Mental Health and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (School Group)	42.0

GED0436	General Education Elective	42.0
FAM0070	Learning and Behaviour Support (Community Group)	42.0
FAM0089	Community and Developmental Services Skills and Placement (Community Group)	240.0
FAM1293	Pharmacology 2 (Community Group)	42.0
<b>Choose one from equivalencies: Courses</b>		<b>Hours</b>
GED0436	General Education Elective	42.0
<b>Level: 04 Courses</b>		<b>Hours</b>
FAM0071	Employment and the Field of Developmental Disabilities	42.0
FAM1190	Ethical Issues and Persons with Developmental Disabilities	28.0
<b>Select either Community Group or School Group Courses</b>		<b>Hours</b>
FAM1903	Educational Support Field Placement (School Group)	254.0
FAM1915	Mental Health and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (School Group)	42.0
FAM0070	Learning and Behaviour Support (Community Group)	42.0
FAM0089	Community and Developmental Services Skills and Placement (Community Group)	240.0
FAM1293	Pharmacology 2 (Community Group)	42.0
<b>Choose one from equivalencies: Courses</b>		<b>Hours</b>
GED0436	General Education Elective	42.0

## Fees for the 2025/2026 Academic Year

Tuition and related ancillary fees for this program can be viewed by using the Tuition and Fees Estimator tool at <https://www.algonquincollege.com/ro/pay/fee-estimator/>

Further information on fees can be found by visiting the Registrar's Office website at <https://www.algonquincollege.com/ro/>

Fees are subject to change.

Additional program related expenses include:

Supplies, such as field placement documentation, class materials, computer hardware and software may cost approximately \$2,200 in the first year and \$600 in the second year.

## Admission Requirements for the 2026/2027 Academic Year

### College Eligibility

- Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent; OR
- Mature Student status (19 years of age or older and without a high school diploma at the start of the program). Eligibility may be determined by academic achievement testing, for which a fee will be charged.

### Program Eligibility

- English, Grade 12 (ENG4C or equivalent) with a grade of 65% or higher.
- Applicants with international transcripts must provide proof of the subject specific

- Applicants with international transcripts must provide proof of the subject specific requirements noted above and may be required to provide proof of language proficiency. Domestic applicants with international transcripts must be evaluated through the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) or World Education Services (WES).

- IELTS-International English Language Testing Service (Academic)  
Overall band of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each band; OR TOEFL-Internet-based (iBT)-overall 88, with a minimum of 22 in each component: Reading 22; Listening 22; Speaking 22; Writing 22; OR Duolingo English Test (DET) Overall 120, minimum of 120 in Literacy and no score below 105.

Should the number of qualified applicants exceed the number of available places, applicants will be selected on the basis of their proficiency in English.

**Health Requirements:**

The physical and emotional health of each applicant to the program must be such that he or she can successfully cope with the program of instruction including the demands of field placement (e. g. stress and time management; physical care and self-help skills of children and adults). Individuals who have concerns about their ability to meet these requirements should contact the coordinator of the program prior to submitting an application.

**Police Records Check Documentation:**

Though not an admission requirement, applicants must note important information listed below regarding Police Records Check program requirements. Students must provide the College with a current Police Records Check for Service with the Vulnerable Sector (PRCSVS) prior to the deadline identified by the department and students are responsible for any associated costs. If this documentation is not submitted on time, students may not be placed and registration in the program will be jeopardized. If you register in the program without a clear PRCSVS and as a result are unable to participate in placement, you will not be able to graduate and will be asked to withdraw.

**Field Placement Eligibility:**

To be eligible for placement, you must submit proof of Standard First Aid certification, CPR level C, Quality Assurance Measures Certification, Worker Safety Standard Certification, PRCSVS and complete immunizations through ParaMed. ParaMed services are the third-party provider who collects all field placement documentation for the Community Studies department. Students should plan for extra costs associated with these requirements. For further information concerning costs and documentation submission please go to

<https://www.algonquincollege.com/wellness-safety-community/program/developmental-services-worker/placement-forms>

**Admission Requirements for 2025/2026 Academic Year****College Eligibility**

- Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent. Applicants with an OSSD showing senior English and/or Mathematics courses at the Basic Level, or with Workplace or Open courses, will be tested to determine their eligibility for admission; OR
- Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) certificate; OR
- General Educational Development (GED) certificate; OR
- Mature Student status (19 years of age or older and without a high school diploma at the start of the program). Eligibility may be determined by academic achievement testing for which a fee will be charged.

**Program Eligibility**

- English, Grade 12 (ENG4C or equivalent) with a grade of 65% or higher.
- Applicants with international transcripts must provide proof of the subject-specific requirements noted above and may be required to provide proof of language proficiency. Domestic applicants with international transcripts must be evaluated through the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) or World Education Services (WES).
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Not sure if you meet all of the requirements? Academic Upgrading may be able to help with that: <https://www.algonquincollege.com/access/> .

Should the number of qualified applicants exceed the number of available places, applicants will be selected on the basis of their proficiency in English.

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**Application Information****DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES WORKER****Program Code 0436A01FWO**

Applications to full-time day programs must be submitted with official transcripts showing completion of the academic admission requirements through:

<https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/>

60 Corporate Court  
Guelph, Ontario  
N1G 5J3  
1-888-892-2228

Students currently enrolled in an Ontario secondary school should notify their Guidance Office prior to their online application at <https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/>

Applications for Fall Term and Winter Term admission received by February 1 will be given equal consideration. Applications received after February 1 will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis as long as places are available.

International applicants please visit this link for application process information:

<https://algonquincollege.my.site.com/myac360/s/self-registration-page>

For further information on the admissions process, contact:

Registrar's Office  
Algonquin College  
1385 Woodroffe Ave

Ottawa, ON K2G 1V8  
Telephone: 613-727-0002  
Toll-free: 1-800-565-4723  
TTY: 613-727-7766  
Fax: 613-727-7632  
<https://www.algonquincollege.com/ro/>

## **Additional Information**

The Developmental Services Worker program consists of courses that are delivered in a variety of formats including face-to-face, hybrid (combination of classroom and online learning), and fully online. Students participate in all three types of learning. Students also participate in laboratory and field placement learning activities. Mandatory field placements may be scheduled outside of regular class hours. Class schedules vary from term to term and courses may be scheduled between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday and Fridays between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Some field placements require the student to be available for evening or weekend shifts.

Although part-time study is not available, customized delivery of program components may be arranged.

Students may apply for transfer of academic credits from Algonquin College (internal transfer) or from other institutions (external transfer). College Policies AA09 and AA10 apply to transfer of credits. For more information visit: [www.algonquincollege.com/directives](http://www.algonquincollege.com/directives). Students may apply for credit by challenging courses using Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). College Policy AA06 applies to PLAR. Students pay a fee for each course they wish to be exempt from. Through either a portfolio or challenge examination, a PLAR may lead to the acceptance of work and life experience in lieu of taking certain courses. For more information visit: [www.algonquincollege.com/plar](http://www.algonquincollege.com/plar)

Being a Developmental Services Worker is a physically demanding profession. Students entering this program must be able to lift and transfer children and adults in and out of wheelchairs and/or beds. As well, students must be able to move quickly between areas within indoor and outdoor environments in order to ensure individual's safety. Students should be able to make accurate observations of behaviour, abilities and skills to provide optimal support of individuals supported. Entering the program without these abilities may result in unsuccessful field placements, and students who fail to successfully complete field placements are not eligible to graduate from the program.

## **ACADEMIC PROBATION**

Students who have two or more F grades in a given term or whose term grade point average falls below 1.7 are considered to be on academic probation (Policy AA14 Grading System). This requires the student to meet with their academic advisor or program coordinator to sign a learning contract which identifies the conditions which must be met in order to continue in the program. Students who do not meet the terms of their learning contract are withdrawn from the program.

## **Contact Information**

### **Program Coordinator(s)**

- Jennifer Liberty, <mailto:libertj1@algonquincollege.com> , 613-727-4723, ext. 6193

## **Course Descriptions**

### **ENL1813S Communications 1**

Communication remains an essential skill sought by employers, regardless of discipline or field of study. Using a practical, vocation-oriented approach, students focus on meeting the requirements of effective communication. Through a combination of lectures, exercises, and independent learning, students practise writing, speaking, reading, listening, locating and documenting information and using technology to communicate professionally. Students develop and strengthen communication skills that contribute to success in both educational and workplace environments.

Prerequisite(s): none  
Corerequisite(s): none



**ENL1880F Professional Communication for Developmental Services Workers**

Developmental Service Workers complete documentation such as incident reports and daily logs, which have a permanent place in an individual's files. Students learn the skills they need to be effective observers and report writers. In addition, students learn and practice both verbal and written advocacy skills in the form of meetings and proposals. Students further develop and demonstrate grammar and critical-thinking skills to respond to communication situations in a professional manner.

Prerequisite(s): ENL1813S

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM0067 Promoting Health and Wellness**

With good health, people have the freedom to work, learn and engage actively with friends, families and the community. Students develop an understanding of the determinants of health and the importance of health for all individuals. Students gain valuable knowledge and skills in how to facilitate and promote healthy lifestyles and achieve optimal wellness for themselves and for persons with disabilities.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM0068 Person Centered Approach**

A person-centered approach puts persons with developmental disabilities at the center of all decision making. This course combines theory and its practical application through lectures, videos and group work. Students develop a person-centered and strength-based approach, and examine the role of environmental conditions in shaping the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their impact on achieving life goals and dreams. Students master skills that promote empowerment, choice-making and self-determination, to enrich the lives of persons with developmental disabilities.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM0069 Essential Supports for Persons with Developmental Disabilities**

Persons with developmental disabilities require a wide range of supports. Students are introduced to the basic principles surrounding the development of communication skills, fine and gross motor skills, as well as how to provide leisure and recreational supports when working with persons with developmental disabilities. Using lectures, hands on labs and online assessments, students are introduced to basic care requirements and communication supports to enhance the quality of life of the individuals that students support.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM0070 Learning and Behaviour Support (Community Group)**

Positive behaviour support is a person-centered approach to supporting people to develop skills that enhance their quality of life. Students learn the basic principles of learning theory, with an emphasis on classical and operant conditioning. Students practise collecting and analyzing behavioural data in the context of environmental antecedents and consequences. Through lectures, team work and practical activities, students learn to select and implement the least restrictive strategies to be effective in assisting an individual to achieve their behavioural change goals.

Prerequisite(s): FAM0068

Corerequisite(s):FAM0089

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Prerequisite(s): FAM0068

Corerequisite(s): FAM0089

### **FAM0071 Employment and the Field of Developmental Disabilities**

Supporting persons with developmental disabilities in their transition from school to workplace requires a specific set of skills. This course combines theory and its practical application, where students learn how to support the successful transition to work, both for themselves and for persons with developmental disabilities. Students develop an understanding of adult vocational and non-vocational services, with a focus on supported employment. Students develop skills including cover letter and resume writing, and interview preparation. Students can apply these skills to their own situation, and to persons they support in their quest to find meaningful work.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s): none

### **FAM0089 Community and Developmental Services Skills and Placement (Community Group)**

Field placements are critical in order to prepare for a future career in developmental services. Students are provided with the opportunity to practice observational skills, assessments and hands on supports in a laboratory setting, focusing on compassionate care aligned with the Dignity, Independence, Preferences, Privacy and Safety (DIPPS) Model. Students will take those skills out into an assigned community-based placement where they will apply the skills acquired through the lab classes to gain hands on experience, providing daily supports to people with developmental, physical, and mental health disabilities. Students will gain knowledge pertaining to the professional attitudes and practices of the developmental services field.

Prerequisite(s): FAM1169

Corerequisite(s): FAM0070

### **FAM0089 Community and Developmental Services Skills and Placement (Community Group)**

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Prerequisite(s): FAM1169

Corerequisite(s): FAM0070

### **FAM1137 Paraprofessionals in Education**

Paraprofessionals are an essential component of successful education for students with exceptionalities. Students are introduced to the exceptionalities that they may encounter within the school system, and how those exceptionalities impact the individual's ability to be effective learners. Ontario's special education policies, curriculum, and the history of Ontario's special education system are examined. Students acquire skills to assist them to successfully become paraprofessionals in today's changing school populations.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s): none



**FAM1169 Community Field Placement**

Field placement experiences are critical when entering human services, as they allow students to explore concepts, such as inclusion, empowerment and service provision, from a hands-on perspective. Students achieve experiential education by participating in two field placements. Students participate in an educational setting, such as a school or educational treatment centre under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. Students also explore areas of developmental services, such as group homes, day programs and vocational settings. Students are introduced to working in the field of developmental services.

Prerequisite(s): FAM0068 and FAM0069 and FAM1137 and FAM1264  
Corerequisite(s): FAM1262

**FAM1182 Sexuality, Relationships and Persons with Disabilities**

Understanding and expressing human sexuality and relationships are essential for growth and reaching of full potential for persons with developmental disabilities. Students review basic facts regarding human sexuality and reproduction, while exploring the elements involved in teaching persons with disabilities to develop and maintain healthy sexual self-esteem and relationships. Students increase their comfort level in addressing sexual issues with persons with disabilities and their families, by investigating a variety of sexuality resources and creating teaching sessions for persons with disabilities who have varying degrees of abilities.

Prerequisite(s): FAM1284  
Corerequisite(s): none

**FAM1190 Ethical Issues and Persons with Developmental Disabilities**

Developmental Services Workers encounter ethical issues when providing support to people with developmental disabilities. Students consider the philosophical problem of human nature and discuss how our assumptions about human nature influence our interactions with people with developmental disabilities. Students develop a basic understanding of several theories of ethical conduct. Through discussion, written exercises, and debate students practise using ethical theories to guide their consideration of contemporary ethical issues in the field of developmental services.

Prerequisite(s): none  
Corerequisite(s): none

**FAM1262 Current Topics in the Field of Developmental Services**

The field of developmental services is complex and dynamic, and offers many challenges for those working in the profession. Students examine current topics as they pertain to the Developmental Services Worker working in special education and the developmental services field. The framework and policies of community services are explored in the context of how services are provided to support people with disabilities. International and local approaches with empowerment, inclusion, professionalism and ongoing changes in the delivery model of developmental services are discussed, as well as how agencies operate with regards to human resources and organizational sustainability. Students complete a research project to familiarize themselves with agencies in the community and future employment and/or placement opportunities.

Prerequisite(s): none  
Corerequisite(s): FAM1169

**FAM1264 Introduction to the Field of Developmental Services**

A career as a Developmental Services Worker can be a rewarding profession with many job opportunities working to support individuals with disabilities. Students examine this career as it pertains to provincial and international standards of the Code of Ethics and professionalism. Career options, opportunities for work and organizational sustainability practices are presented, along with details regarding the expectations, evaluations, and elements of performance involved in DSW field placements. By exploring the use of software applications students also focus on practical research and digital literacy skills currently applied in the field.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM1265 Pharmacology I**

Developmental Services Workers are responsible for ensuring safe administration of medication. Students gain important knowledge of principles of pharmacology, drug legislation in Canada and the role and responsibilities of a DSW as a member of an inter-professional team. Students practice medication administration using safe practices with emphasis placed on providing care that contributes to the drug effectiveness and health of people with disabilities.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM1279 Exploring Developmental Disabilities**

The field of developmental services is in constant change. Understanding its history is critical to working as a Developmental Services Worker. This theory course examines the historical perspective of the field, through the study of trends and definitions related to developmental disabilities, and how the field has evolved. Using a combination of lectures, discussions and learning activities, students examine causes and contributing factors related to specific developmental disabilities and syndromes. Students also explore the different supports and services available to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM1284 Human Physiology and Health**

Understanding how the human body functions is essential when supporting the health and well-being of persons with disabilities. Students develop knowledge of the structure and function of human body systems in health and disease. Students apply knowledge of human physiology to create strategies that optimize health.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM1287 Families and Aging in Developmental Services**

An empathetic approach when working with families with children and adults with developmental disabilities, and or aging individuals, is foundational to building respectful effective and supportive relationships. Students are encouraged to consider psychological, social and cultural factors affecting families and persons with developmental disabilities. An overview of the physiological, psychosocial and behavioural changes that occur as a result of the aging process is presented. The impact of this process on older persons with disabilities and those with dementia is emphasized. Strategies to assist individuals and families to access services, and participate fully in their community are explored.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM1293 Pharmacology 2 (Community Group)**

Safe administration of medication requires an understanding of safe practices, as well as how drugs work and affect the human body. Students integrate knowledge of the actions of major drug groups with the practical aspects of administering drugs. Students practise calculation of correct dosages and safe medication administration.

Prerequisite(s): FAM1265

Corerequisite(s):none

**FAM1293 Pharmacology 2 (Community Group)**

Safe administration of medication requires an understanding of safe practices, as well as how drugs work and affect the human body. Students integrate knowledge of the actions of major drug groups with the practical aspects of administering drugs. Students practise calculation of correct dosages and safe medication administration.

Prerequisite(s): FAM1265

Corerequisite(s):none

### **FAM1903 Educational Support Field Placement (School Group)**

Field placement allows students to demonstrate the integration of theory and practice. Building upon previous field placement experiences, students continue to develop their clinical, organizational and personal skills. Students are placed in a variety of educational settings that provide support in areas of special education school programs and/or adult education programs.

Prerequisite(s): FAM1169

Corerequisite(s):none

### **FAM1903 Educational Support Field Placement (School Group)**

Field placement allows students to demonstrate the integration of theory and practice. Building upon previous field placement experiences, students continue to develop their clinical, organizational and personal skills. Students are placed in a variety of educational settings that provide support in areas of special education school programs and/or adult education programs.

Prerequisite(s): FAM1169

Corerequisite(s):none

### **FAM1915 Mental Health and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (School Group)**

People are considered to have a dual diagnosis when they experience both a developmental disability and a mental illness. Developmental Services Workers play a key role in providing day-to-day support to people who have a dual diagnosis. Students become familiar with the history and theory of dual diagnosis and the importance of developing a coordinated system of support for people who are dually diagnosed. Students learn the clinical characteristics of common mental illnesses and how such characteristics are manifested by people who have developmental disabilities. Students focus on the role of the Developmental Services Worker within a multidisciplinary team providing support to individuals who are dually diagnosed.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

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Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

### **GED0436 General Education Elective**

Students choose one course, from a group of general education electives, which meets one of the following five theme requirements: Arts in Society, Civic Life, Social and Cultural Understanding, Personal Understanding, and Science & Technology.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

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Students choose one course, from a group of general education electives, which meets one of the following five theme requirements: Arts in Society, Civic Life, Social and Cultural Understanding, Personal Understanding, and Science & Technology.

Prerequisite(s): none

Corerequisite(s):none

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Corerequisite(s):none