

RESPITE SERVICES.COM

Respiteservices.com was initiated by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in 2005. The Geneva Centre was funded to set up a system across the Province in order to assist families recruit and hire respite/support workers using their Special Services at Home or Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities funding.

The Focus Group of Developmental Service Providers agreed to support and brings this service to Hastings and Prince Edward counties. CSBD in partnership with Community Living Prince Edward are the host agencies and we contribute staff and the technical system to operate the service. The contact in our office is Patti Dionne and in CLPE it is Julia O'Neill

It is a web-based service which coordinates a network of agencies, located across the province of Ontario to provide respite services to families and individuals with disabilities. Host agencies are collaborating to develop a coherent process to ease access to services and information for both children and adults.

The objectives of respiteservices.com are:

- To develop a comprehensive respite system across Ontario
- To provide a central point for information on services and the access process for families of children and adults requiring respite options
- To facilitate the connection to respite options for individuals, which match their identified needs
- To work collaboratively with host agency providers and other service providers to enhance the respite services available.

Respiteservices.com website provides families, individuals and professional with information and links to respite service in local communities, across Ontario.

Information and links include:

- Respite service providers and respite options
- How to access respite services in local communities
- Events and training opportunities
- Funding sources
- How to connect with workers and families through the Worker bank (known as CHAP Program in some communities)

Workers undergo an application process which includes criminal and personal reference checks. These documents are screened by the host agencies prior to any individual being entered into the data base.

Families also complete an information form outlining their expectations, hours per week, rate of pay, etc.

Training sessions are also offered by the host agencies to both respite workers and families.

Families are provided information about hiring and employer responsibilities. Workers are considered self employed for the purposes of income tax as the family is the employer.

Once workers are approved and entered, families can then search the system for potential matches. Families remain the employer at all times and have sole responsibility for hiring, supervising and paying the worker.

This service is available to anyone looking for respite or personal support care workers and in some areas of the province it has extended to other community support agencies and families (i.e. personal support worker for seniors)

The Ministry funding for this service is limited and to sustain the system, communities are expected to contribute \$2,000.00 per year. To date this is being cost shared amongst the developmental service providers.

To date statistical information: 16 Families are registered 20 workers has been registered and received orientation. 22 workers are in process of receiving orientation.

Families and Workers can also be matched with assistance of the host agency staff.

Orientation sessions run monthly, interested workers must bring a hard copy of their resume, criminal reference check and three personal references. The service is described and how the web site functions.

A visit to the website is very useful.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Respite funding

The Ministry has made available respite funding for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

These dollars are allocated on a fiscal basis and families need to apply for them each year. This fiscal year the target to be served was 43. Hastings and Prince Edward provided 49 families with funding. There are three committees set up to review applications –for further information contact CSBD, Community Living Prince Edward and in the north North Hastings Community Integration Association.

A standardized application and explanation guide for the region is being developed and should be available in the near future.

Funding is limited and the committee have determined that families who are not in receipt of other respite funding will receive priority.