

## What is respite?

Respite programs provide short-term or longer-term breaks for families and other caregivers of children and adults. Examples of who may need respite may include birth families, foster families, or individual caregivers who are supporting a child or an adult with an intellectual or other disability. Some families who have an aging parent that they provide support for or a spouse who is caring for a partner at home may also need respite which can be provided by different agencies.

Even though many families, both birth families and caregiver families, enjoy and receive great satisfaction from providing care to their loved ones, the physical, emotional and financial toll on the family or caregiver can be overwhelming.

By providing support for the family in the form of sufficient respite, we as a community show that we value the family structure and acknowledge the stress that this caregiving can put on those who are the primary caregivers and help to support their overall health and ability to function as a loving family.



## Different types of respite support may include:

### 1. Live-in

In-home - a respite provider comes in to the family home to stay for short or long periods to provide care for the individual while the primary caregiver or family is away for a scheduled break, a holiday, medical treatment, to visit another family member or to deal with an unexpected crisis such as the death of a family member or moving an elderly parent into care.

Out-of-home - a respite provider (sometimes also called a host family) will take a person needing respite in to their own home, or perhaps in a long-term situation they may agree to take a residence together that will be shared between the respite provider and the individual needing support. In some cases in-home short-term respite may evolve into a longer term placement so that over time the respite provider becomes the primary caregiver.

### 2. Casual or Activity - based respite

Rather than an overnight or longer stay, many families find they can manage with a more casual or activity based arrangement for respite. For example, perhaps mom and dad use respite to provide care for their child or adult family member so they can schedule a 'date night' to maintain their love and connection for each other. In other families, parents may schedule respite for their child with a disability in order to spend some dedicated time alone with one or more of their other children.

Or the respite may be connected to a particular hobby or activity for the person with a disability; perhaps the respite time is used for an individual to learn a new skill such as attending a knitting class with a respite person who also enjoys knitting, or a physical activity such as skiing that the parents aren't able to take part in.

We even know of families who have used their respite funding to provide support for an individual to accept a job, to provide transportation which allows an individual to access community activities they might not be able to otherwise, or for an adult with a disability to take an extended annual holiday away from home while still having the supports they need.

Notes or questions

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## What do you need in order to become a respite provider?

At Community Living, the families we hear from are looking for a variety of skillsets and traits. For some families, your career background or credentials are important while others might like to know more about your attitude and personality.

Most families look for:

- kindness
- compassion
- respectful and frequent communication with them and their family member
- honesty, openness and transparency about what happens when they are not around (good or bad!)
- flexibility
- a sense of humour

Depending on the needs of the individual or the nature of any medical concerns, a family may prefer someone with specific training such as ABA to work with an individual on the Autism spectrum, or they may hope for something with at least some medical or emergency training if their child has seizures or a stomach feeding tube for example.

Again, most families tell us they can train the respite provider in the care that is needed but the number one thing they are concerned about is that their child or adult family member will be safe and cared for with kindness, respect, and appreciation.

In addition, you may be asked to provide:

- a current criminal record check
- a clean drivers abstract if providing transportation
- insurance coverage for your home or vehicle to cover the potential liability of having a person in your care if you are being paid for it (different from just having a friend with a disability in your home or car)
- current First Aid and CPR training

Notes or questions

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## What should you think about before agreeing to provide respite?

The relationship between a family and a respite provider is very unique to the needs, expectations and even the personalities and cultural backgrounds of both the family and the respite provider. What's right for one family might be completely wrong for another.

In general, you will want to have some conversations with the family or care provider, and may even ask to have some of this in writing, on any of these issues that seem relevant:

- What, if any, are the medical concerns, treatments or medication you will be responsible for? Perhaps you might not generally give a bed-time med that's scheduled for 10:00 pm, but what happens if the family is out later than expected? Perhaps the person rarely has a seizure, but do you know what to do if one does happen?
- Are there any triggers that are likely to cause either a physical or behavioural reaction? Sometimes seizures can be triggered by playing on a swing, or a person with Autism will become agitated if they spend too long with fluorescent lighting.
- Are there any food concerns or allergies? Even something simple like a child who normally feeds themselves with their hands can quickly turn into a contentious issue if they spend weekends with a respite family that has concerns that their own children might pick up a 'bad habit'.
- Does the family have any concerns about your home or lifestyle? Families with a teenage daughter with an intellectual disability might not be happy if your 19 year old son has buddies over for parties on weekends, or a parent of a child with asthma wouldn't like them spending time in a home with smokers or long-haired pets. Best to get issues like this out in the open as they can be deal-breakers.
- What are the hours expected? Start and stop times for a weekend for example? Who picks up and drops off?
- How will you be paid, and how often, and what paperwork, time sheets or expense claim forms do you need to submit?

Notes or questions

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## How do I get started?

There are many ways that families find respite providers. Sometimes paid caregivers are provided to children and/or adults in care through Health and Social Services Supported Independent Living Workers (SIL) or funded through Family Supports for Children with Disabilities. Their numbers and a few other options are listed below.

At YACL, we want to maintain a network of respite providers that we can offer to families so that they can hire them directly with the funding they receive from either Supports for Persons with Disabilities or Family Supports for Children with Disabilities.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact us after the workshop with the following:

- current resume
- current Criminal Record Check from the RCMP
- a valid drivers license (if driving)
- verification of insurance (if driving or taking individuals into your home)
- your general availability (ie prefer evenings and weekends)
- your general preferences if any (ie prefer children or adults or any other considerations that seem important to you)

Yukon Association for Community Living 867-667-4606 or email [yaclwhse@northwestel.net](mailto:yaclwhse@northwestel.net)

Family Supports for Children with Disabilities - 867-393-7464

Supports for People With disabilities - 867-667-5772

Thank you for coming!