

# The Children's Link Society

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## RESPIRE

### What is it and why do I need it?

Parents often ask us, what is respite, do I really need it and what would I use it for? So, we'll start with the first question...

**What is respite?** Respite care is a service whose main function is to support the parent (family or primary caregiver) for a specific period of time while facilitating a positive and rewarding experience for the child with a disability or chronic illness. At one time, the main focus of respite care was on the parent's need for a break from their children. But, more recently, greater attention has been paid to the needs of not only the parent (or parents), but of the child and siblings as well. Specifically, it aims to:

- ◆ Meet the care needs of the child
- ◆ Offer the child opportunities to develop social, recreational and life skills
- ◆ Strengthen families by reducing stress and thereby improving long term functioning
- ◆ Maintain or enhance the quality of life for families of children with disabilities
- ◆ Increase parental feelings of well-being
- ◆ Reduce social isolation
- ◆ Improve parental ability to cope

Respite care provides an opportunity for the family to recognize and respond to the needs of **ALL** family members.

Respite services can be provided in a variety of ways and settings. You will need to assess the best options, or combination of options that best meet the needs of your family. Care options can include hourly, daytime, night time, 24 hour, several days at a time or weekly services. It can be anything from babysitting, companionship, mentoring, personal care, nursing care, social/recreational programming and/or homemaker services. Respite providers may come from a variety of backgrounds. From, homemakers, students, friends or neighbours, to persons with training in nursing, education, child care, recreation or rehabilitation.

There are two main settings for respite, in-home and out-of-home. Both have their particular advantages and can help prevent or reduce family stress. While many parents prefer in-home services, sometimes out-of-home models may be preferable for the provision of a different type of 'downtime', especially with older children.

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Some advantages of **in-home** respite support (this includes home/neighbourhood) include:

- ◆ Child and family routines and relationships are retained
- ◆ Child's surroundings are familiar
- ◆ Special equipment used by the child is not needed in more than one site
- ◆ Transportation may not be necessary
- ◆ Respite worker can often care for other children from the same family, allowing parents time away
- ◆ Worker may be able to perform some housekeeping tasks simultaneously
- ◆ Special facilities are not required, which may reduce the cost of providing services

Some advantages of **out-of-home** respite support (out-of-home could be described as a friend's home, daycare/dayhome, agency or institution, etc.) include:

- ◆ The child gets a change of routine
- ◆ The child has an opportunity to socialize and develop relationships that promote independence
- ◆ Separation between the child and family is promoted as part of life's natural cycle
- ◆ Parents can concentrate on their other children or activities
- ◆ The family does not need to leave their home which may be less expensive for them
- ◆ Respite workers may be able to care for several children at one time, which may be economical
- ◆ Respite volunteers/workers may be supervised more closely

So, now that you've determined that your family could benefit from respite care, **where do you go from here?**

The first step is to contact Calgary Rocky View Services – **Family Support for Children with Disabilities FSCD** (Formerly known as Services for Children with Special Needs - CSN, as well as Resources for Children with Disabilities - RCD) , **Intake Line (403) 297 – 6022**. A FSCD worker will help you address the respite needs of your child and family, taking into consideration each individual family's needs and strengths as well as the child's care needs, and determine your eligibility for respite funding assistance.

Next, have you determined yet what kind of respite support you and your child require? What will you do with your time? Need ideas? Well, we've come up with a list of ideas! Please see attached (**101 Things to Do With Your Respite Time**).

Now it's **Time to Hire a Respite Provider.....**

Many families chose to receive respite services from a program or agency, thus leaving the hiring and screening process to someone else. However, should you prefer to hire privately, the following will apply.

You may already know someone who, with specific training, would be willing to provide respite care. This might be a friend, relative, neighbourhood babysitter or someone you would use if your child did not have a disability or chronic illness. If you do not already have someone in mind, you may wish to consider contacting the following for referral suggestions:

- ◆ Key staff members of day-care centres, early intervention services, public health departments, elementary and high schools (teachers, principals, guidance councillors), community colleges, etc.
- ◆ Health care providers

- ◆ Family resource and community centres
- ◆ Community and civic associations
- ◆ Religious and cultural centres
- ◆ Approaching other families of children with disabilities or chronic illnesses to help identify providers e.g. friends, relatives, others they are familiar with
- ◆ Contacting respite workers/volunteers within your community

All providers hired to care for your child should have appropriate skills and sufficient information about your child to be sensitive in meeting his/her needs. Providers should be knowledgeable about child's development and age appropriate activities. Previous experience working with families of children with disabilities is important but not essential. Above all, providers should be genuinely caring and willing to learn about your child.

Some suggestions for screening workers are:

- ◆ Request at least two (2) references and contact them
- ◆ If you feel it necessary, you may have a criminal record check conducted (police departments do this)
- ◆ Request a resume or develop a simple application or check list for potential providers
- ◆ Interview potential providers and/or make a site visit if your child will be cared for outside your own home (see **Interview Questions for Potential Respite Workers**)

So, now that you've hired your respite care provider, it's time for **orientation**.

You are the most skilled and most knowledgeable person where your child is concerned. You know their likes, dislikes and special routines. You may be the only one who can understand what your child is attempting to communicate and what his/her favourite food and leisure preferences are, etc. So it's important that this information is passed on to your new respite worker. You also need to ensure you discuss all 'house rules' regarding your home, your child, any siblings and what your expectations are too. Sample items to cover in orienting a worker include:

- ◆ What is special about my child
- ◆ My child's schedule (including any special schedules)
- ◆ Likes and dislikes
- ◆ Comfortable routines
- ◆ Feeding
- ◆ Handling
- ◆ Disciplining
- ◆ Special equipment
- ◆ Teaching strategies
- ◆ Child's development strategies
- ◆ Special toys
- ◆ Play activities
- ◆ Sleep habits
- ◆ Selecting and adapting activities
- ◆ Community resources

Items to consider when discussing the family rules:

- ◆ For the worker – parking and access to the home, storage of personal belongings, meals, smoking, television/radio, telephone, visitors, selection of clothing, etc.
- ◆ For the child – routines, nap time, mealtimes and snacks, selection of clothing, discipline issues, homework, the child's chores, areas off limits to play, acceptable

outside play areas, names of friends who can visit, amount of television viewing (time limit and acceptable programs), etc.

- ◆ For any siblings – perhaps these will be the same as for the child, as well as how and when the siblings will interact with the child
- ◆ For the parents – communication with the worker, privacy, etc.
- ◆ For the home – areas that are considered off limits, pets, cleaning up after oneself and the child, etc.

In addition to orienting the provider, in the beginning you may want to use respite care for brief periods, then gradually increase the number of times your child receives respite and the length of respite time as your confidence in the provider grows and your child and provider become accustomed to each other.

And finally, **a few other considerations** that need to be touch on are:

Liability – if a worker is hired through an agency or is self-employed, he or she is responsible for obtaining adequate insurance to cover work related injuries, etc. However, if a worker is hired privately, parents accept liability. Therefore, it would be in the family's best interest to contact their insurance company to advise them of the presence of a respite worker in their home.

Income Tax Deductions – depending on the number of hours of respite you receive and the consistency of that respite, you may be responsible for deducting taxes, EI and CP from your worker. Please contact Revenue Canada at: 1-800-959-5525.

Concerns and Complaints – If you have any questions or concerns about a provider's actions or attitude, you should never be discouraged from pursuing them. All concerns should be discussed with your respite provider before taking further action. You should never receive care from a worker who is uncomfortable with your child's disability or your race or culture. Neither you nor your child should ever be treated angrily, with disrespect, or with any physical force. Respite is designed to relieve stress, not add to it.

**Should you require assistance** finding a respite provider, The Children's Link Society has put together a listing of agencies and private care providers who offer relief and respite services. Please contact our **office** at **(403) 230 – 9158** for a copy of the listing. You may also visit our web site at [www.childrenslink.ca](http://www.childrenslink.ca) for up-to-date caregiver options.



# 101 Things To Do With Your Respite Time

(That doesn't include cleaning the house or laundry!)

1. Volunteer for an organization
2. Browse through a bookstore
3. Visit with a friend (no children)
4. Get a new hairdo
5. Exercise
6. Go for a walk
7. Try out a new restaurant
8. Visit an art gallery
9. Go to the library
10. Work on a hobby (scrapbooking, stamping, cross-stitch, sewing)
11. Look through a pet store
12. Go on a date with your significant other
13. Go out for coffee
14. Read a magazine
15. Take a bubble bath
16. Get a manicure
17. Read a book
18. Surf the net
19. Spend time with your other children
20. Try a new hobby
21. Host a party
22. Learn a new language
23. Play a musical instrument
24. Go to a museum
25. Watch the planes come and go at the airport
26. Play golf
27. Go bowling
28. Take a nap
29. Read the newspaper
30. Rearrange your furniture
31. Visit Heritage Park
32. Watch a favorite tv program
33. Go out to a movie
34. Stay in for a movie and a big bowl of popcorn
35. Have a girls night out
36. Build a puzzle
37. Research a dream vacation
38. Window shop
39. Take a course (university, college, etc.)
40. Draw or paint a picture
41. Visit the zoo
42. Go for a drive
43. Browse through a craft fair
44. Discover a new community
45. Go on a hike
46. Go for a bike ride
47. Give yourself a manicure
48. Get a facial
49. Meditate
50. Play cards
51. Write a letter
52. Go to the driving range
53. Work in the garden
54. Take a dance class
55. Visit Devonian Gardens
56. Phone a friend
57. Listen to music
58. Go to the park
59. Paint your nails
60. Get a pedicure
61. Take an art class
62. Learn to do ceramics
63. Learn a martial art
64. Wander through the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary
65. Take up yoga
66. Go for a swim
67. Sit in a hot tub
68. Go skiing
69. Take a ride to the top of the Calgary Tower
70. Go to a concert
71. Watch a hockey/football/soccer game
72. Visit a relative you haven't seen for awhile
73. Volunteer at your child's school
74. Be a chaperone
75. Go to church
76. Bake cookies
77. Get lost in the Plus 15's downtown
78. Try a new recipe
79. Take the dog for a run/walk
80. Join a gym
81. Browse through a music store
82. Put together a photo album
83. Go to a party
84. Play a game
85. Go skating
86. Write a book/poetry
87. Tour a winery
88. Visit a senior
89. Go to a play
90. Play tennis/racquet sports
91. Fly a kite
92. Join a team/club
93. Plan a home party
94. Visit a Farmer's Market
95. Walk down Steven Avenue Mall
96. Have a picnic
97. Visit the Science Centre
98. Go fishing
99. Decorate a room
100. Make a video
101. Build a playhouse/snow fort with your other children

## **Interview Questions for Potential Respite Workers ♥**

1. Please tell me about yourself.
2. Please expand on your experience working with children.
3. Why are you interested in providing respite care services?
4. Describe your strengths, and areas you are working on.
5. Why are you the right person for the job?
6. What would you do if we disagreed about something?
7. If my child cries when I leave, how will you handle the situation?
8. If my child has to be taken to the hospital for an emergency, what steps would you take?
9. What would you do if my child did not respond to your request?
10. What hours are you able to work? During the day, weekends, holidays? Are there specific times when you are unable to work?
11. What style of discipline do you use?
12. Are you willing to take my child out for activities?
13. Describe a difficult problem you have had to handle with a child. How did you handle it?
14. Do you have any special training or experience you would like me to be aware of?
15. Are you willing to have a criminal background check?
16. Do you have a valid driver's license?

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♥ “Best Practices in Respite Services for Children”, a Handbook for Parents, Canadian Association for Community Care, Ottawa, Ontario.

# Family Support for Children with Disabilities

## LOCATION OF OFFICE

**Marlborough Park** #150, 1440 52 St. NE  
Calgary, AB T2A 4T8

**Rocky View** Airdrie, AB T4B 2T9 (COS9)

For the location of other offices near you  
call 297- 6188

## CONTACTING US

Family Support for Children with Disabilities  
(FSCD) Intake Line - **403-297-6022**

FSCD

9<sup>th</sup> Floor, TGS Place 1520 - 4 St SW

Calgary, AB T2R 1H5 297- 6188

**Website for Calgary Rocky View:**

[http:// www.crv.gov.ab.ca](http://www.crv.gov.ab.ca)

Child at Risk/ SSRT: Phone 403-297- 2995

Community Coordinating Council can be  
contacted at 403-297- 6359 and a council  
member will return messages.

For more information about Children's  
Services call a Regional Authority Office in  
your area toll- free using the RITE line  
**(310- 0000)**

**Diamond Willow:**

Red Deer/Ponoka 403 - 340-5478

**Hearthstone:**

Drumheller/Hanna 403 - 823-1767

**Ma' Mowe:**

Edmonton 780- 422- 3355

**Southeast Alberta:**

Medicine Hat, Brooks, Bow Island, and Oyen  
403 - 529-3657

**Sun Country:**

Lethbridge, Fort McLeod, Pincher Creek,  
Cardston, Taber and Blairmore 403 - 382-4275

**Windsong:**

High River/ Bow Corridor 403- 652- 8360

**To obtain information on community  
resources in the Calgary region contact:**

The Children's Link Society

(403) 230- 9158 [child@nucleus.com](mailto:child@nucleus.com)

[www.childrenslink.ca](http://www.childrenslink.ca)

## OUTSIDE OF CALGARY:

March 2004 FSCD ACT

### Family Support for Children with Disabilities

Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program, encompasses three areas:

- ◆ Funding for families
- ◆ Regional Services funding for agencies
- ◆ Support for the Community Coordinating Council for Children with Special Needs (CCC)

The overall goals of FSCD are to:

- ◆ Sustain the child within the family
- ◆ Facilitate the child's developmental growth and participation in community life
- ◆ Retain family involvement if a child requires out-of-home support Services for Alberta families who have children with disabilities have been available since 1974.

RCD provides support to assist families with some of the extraordinary demands resulting directly from their child's disability. This support may include specific financial benefits, information and referral, as well as assistance to parents in obtaining and coordinating required services.

The Community Coordinating Council (CCC) for Children with Special Needs is a group of parents and service providers who address the unique needs of children with special needs and their families. Their mission is to influence policy and regulations in children's services, health and education, to ensure that all children with special needs and their families have fair and equitable access to needed supports.

### Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services...

Provides services for children and families at nine locations throughout the Calgary and Rocky View regions. Child protective services are our core responsibilities. These services encompass adoption, foster care, kinship care, quality childcare services, and childcare subsidy in addition to services for children with special needs. Authority to offer CSN benefits to families is contained in The Child Welfare Act of Alberta.

## HOW DOES FUNDING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS WORK?

To receive supports every family must sign a Handicapped Children's Services Agreement. The Agreement outlines the nature of services to be provided, the length of time (maximum is one year and the Agreement may be renewed) as well as the family's contribution, financial or otherwise. The Agreement can be changed if different services are required. A family may only receive financial benefits to help pay for extraordinary costs incurred because of their child's disability.

## WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

- ◆ Family support services, in and out of home
- ◆ Travel, meal and lodging expenses when sending a child for necessary treatment or specialized services within Alberta
- ◆ Extraordinary health expenses (i.e. dental/orthodontic treatment, prescription drugs, ambulance services, special prescribed diets and psychological services)
- ◆ Other exceptional costs.

## HOW IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE?

To qualify for financial benefits a family must meet **all** of the eligibility criteria, which are:

1. The child must have been assessed by a medical/health professional as being a handicapped child.
2. The child must be under 18 years of age.
3. The child and the legal guardian must be residents of Alberta.
4. The legal guardian must maintain full guardianship responsibilities for the child.
5. The effects of the child's handicapping condition must:
  - ◆ Be a chronic and/or organic disability or result from a traumatic injury, and have a significant impact on the development of the child.
  - ◆ Impair the child's ability to function in society.
  - ◆ Be experienced by a small minority of the childhood population.
  - ◆ Incur extraordinary cost.

\* Children with medical conditions that are not chronic in nature, but significantly impact their development may be eligible under special consideration.

A family who meets all of the program's eligibility criteria can contact a FSCD Assessment Worker with Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services at **403-297-6022** to start an application for services.

An Assessment worker will be available to discuss eligibility issues with families, or professionals in the community.

## Family Responsibilities: March 2002

The family of a special needs child is responsible for the following:

- ◆ Asking for help from FSCD as soon as a diagnosis of disability is made, in order to determine your child's eligibility for services as soon as possible.
- ◆ Paying all costs normally associated with providing and caring for a child.
- ◆ Accessing all available family and community resources.
- ◆ Providing Alberta Health Care, Blue Cross (or equivalent) or Alberta Child Health Benefit insurance coverage.
- ◆ Applying for any benefits or coverage available through an employee insurance plan or other private or public plan.
- ◆ Hiring and supervising service providers who are working in the home and complying with all relevant employment and taxation standards.

\*There are many unique individual situations. Contact Canada Customs and Revenue Agency regarding your specific taxation situation or Alberta Human Resources and Employment regarding current Employment Standards regarding your potential status as an employer.

- ◆ Contributing to the cost of providing FSCD services.

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## HOME CARE / RESPITE / RELIEF SERVICES

The following is a list in alphabetical - *not preferential* - order of some of the home care and respite/relief services in the Calgary Rocky View Region. For more options check the Yellow Pages under Homemakers Service, Nannies and/or Nurses.

1. **Bayshore Home Health** - Tyla Jones Area Director - (403) 229-3929. Calgary and Red Deer area.  
Email - [tjones@bayshore.ca](mailto:tjones@bayshore.ca)  
Website - [www.bayshore.ca](http://www.bayshore.ca)
  
2. **Calgary Health Region** -
  - Community Care Access - Home Care Services - (403) 943-1920
  - Hospice Calgary Society (Day Services) - (403) 263-4525
  - Salvation Army Agape Hospice (Residential Services) - (403) 282-6588
  - Rosedale Hospice (Residential Services) - (403) 284-5195
  - Palliative Care Team at the Peter Lougheed Hospital - (403) 291-8950Website: [www.calgaryhealthregion.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca)
  
3. **Calgary Home Support Services Ltd** - (403) 232-8770, Fax (403) 266-6887.  
Childcare including special needs in your home or in Certified foster/ Respite Homes. Staff are screened, bonded and have Police Security Checks. Elder care for aging relatives. Staff supervision by professionals - BSW, RN, LPN. Covering Calgary and area for 30 years.  
Email: [calgaryhomesupport@shaw.ca](mailto:calgaryhomesupport@shaw.ca)
  
4. **Calgary Integrated Support Services** - Jill Winters - (403) 283-4405. Serves the adult population, though will serve children who have developmental disabilities if they also have a parent with some disabilities. Calgary and rural areas.
  
5. **Central Health Services** - Pat Evens, Branch Manager - (403) 252-1099.
  
6. **Comcare (Canada) Ltd.** - Contact Karen Smart (403) 228-3877 or Toll Free at 1-877-228-3877.
  
7. **Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary - Community Respite Network** -  
Jacki - Central Intake Coordinator - (403) 240-7331. Primarily developmental disabilities but also other special needs. Serves Calgary and surrounding area. Offers an In-Home Support Program. Community Respite Network - this program helps match families with private respite providers. Email - [jackip@ddrcc.com](mailto:jackip@ddrcc.com) Website - [www.ddrcc.com](http://www.ddrcc.com)
  
8. **Just 4 U Family Services.** Provides respite care for families with special needs and typical children. Call Corinne or Kathy at (403) 590-2122 or visit their website at [www.just4ufamilyservices.com](http://www.just4ufamilyservices.com)  
Email: [Info@just4ufamilyservices.com](mailto:Info@just4ufamilyservices.com)

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9. **OPTIONS (Optional Rehabilitation Services Inc.)** - (403) 271 - 4260. Currently has 3 homes for children/adolescents who are dependently handicapped.
10. **Para-Med Health Services** - Contact Nancy - (403) 229-2888 / Alberta Region (403) 482-3370.
11. **Post-Natal Helpers** - Lynn Gilmore: (403) 640-0844. Serves Calgary (and surrounding area when staff available).
12. **Rehoboth Christian Ministries Relief Services Program** - (403) 250-7333.  
Email: [calgary@rehoboth.ab.ca](mailto:calgary@rehoboth.ab.ca)  
Website: [www.rehoboth.ab.ca](http://www.rehoboth.ab.ca)
13. **Renfrew Education Services** - contact Sherry Dow (403) 225-2144 ext 1615.  
"Stepping Out on Saturday" (SOS) A Saturday Respite Day Camp for Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.  
Email: [renfrew@renfreweducation.org](mailto:renfrew@renfreweducation.org) Website: [www.renfreweducation.org](http://www.renfreweducation.org)
14. **The Respite Care Connection** - Enviros Program - (403) 508-0452. Out of home respite service for children with challenging behaviours ages birth to 17. Calgary and Rocky View areas. Families must have Calgary Rocky View Child & Family Services involvement and no other respite resources. Respite includes supervised community activities and/or overnight care in trained and supervised homes.  
Email: Carlie Burnett at [cburnett@enviros.org](mailto:cburnett@enviros.org)  
Website: [www.enviros.org](http://www.enviros.org)
15. **Victorian Order of Nurses Calgary Branch** - (403) 640-4765. Calgary and surrounding rural areas. Email: [staff@voncalgary.com](mailto:staff@voncalgary.com) Website: [www.voncalgary.com](http://www.voncalgary.com)
16. **We Care Home Health Services** - North: (403) 297-9744 / South: (403) 225-1222. Calgary and surrounding rural areas.
17. **Supported Lifestyles** - (403) 207 - 5115. Providing respite to families with children with developmental disabilities and emotional/behavioural challenges **who have been unable to access other respite services available.**  
Website: [www.supportedlifestyles.com](http://www.supportedlifestyles.com)
18. **Calgary Family Service Bureau** - Emergency childcare **only**, based on availability of childcare provider, sliding scale - (403 ) 269-9888.  
\* Focus on service to children (and adults) with special needs.  
Website: [www.calgaryfamilyservices.org](http://www.calgaryfamilyservices.org)

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You may also want to consider . . .

- **Residential Aide Placement Service Calgary (RAPS)** - Offers support for both the employer (families) and employees (Respite provider). This includes, recruitment Services, Follow ups and advocacy, Employer training, Monthly payroll provision and payroll education. Also provides education to employees. Call(403) 245-3110 or visit their website at [www.rapsedm.org](http://www.rapsedm.org)
- **HIRING IN-HOME SUPPORT FOR YOUR CHILD** - A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents/Caregivers of Persons with Disabilities or Special Needs. This manual may be purchased for \$15 from the Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre - (403) 240-3111.
- **COCHRANE CHILD CARE REGISTRY** - If you live in the Cochrane area and are looking for a local respite child care/respite provider, the Family and Community Resource Centre has a child care registry you may access. Call (403) 932 - 3400 for more information.
- [www.canadiansitter.ca](http://www.canadiansitter.ca) - **Canadian Sitter** is an online connection for parents to find baby sitters in their area. All sitters are current university or college students, many in child-related fields (nursing, education, etc.). Many wish to work with special needs children as respite providers. There is a registration fee for service and you must be able to access the internet to take advantage of their babysitting registry. Please visit their website at <http://www.canadiansitter.ca>
- **Opti-mum Childcare and Nannies Inc** - [info@opti-mum.com](mailto:info@opti-mum.com). This website provides services both to employers and nannies by matching them up based in several criteria and offering valuable links, helpful forms and guidelines on questions families may have.

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