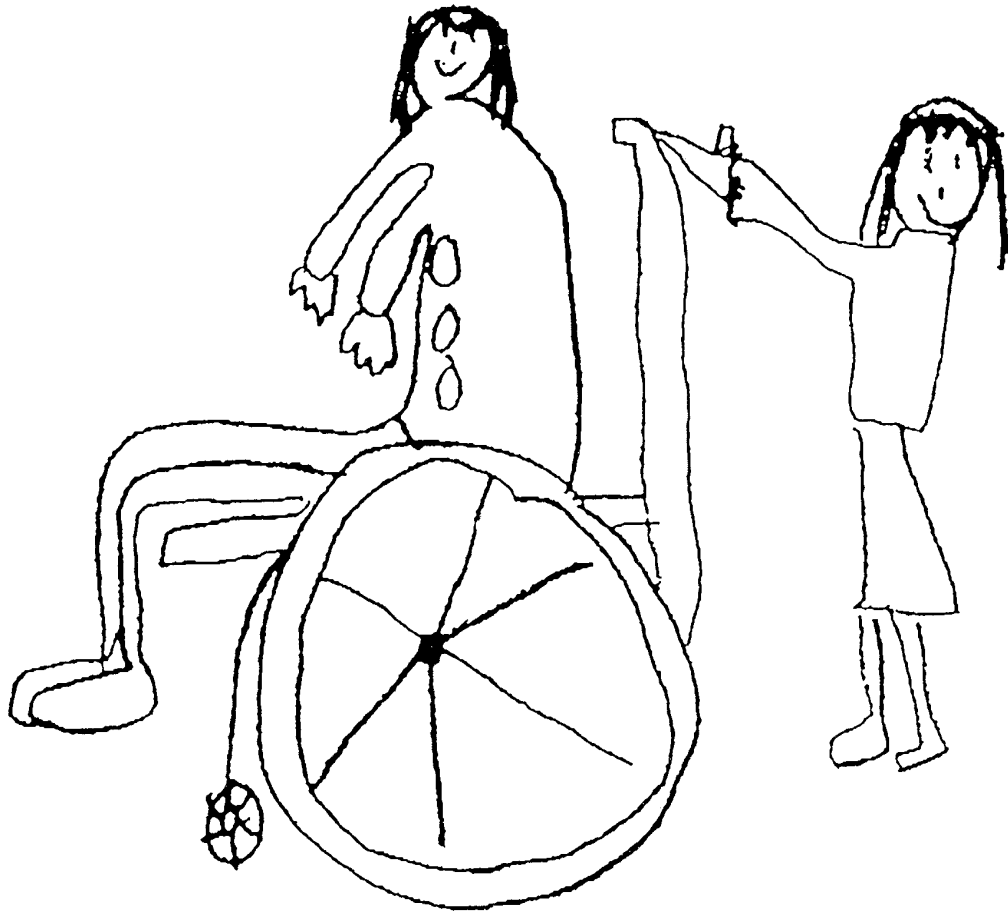
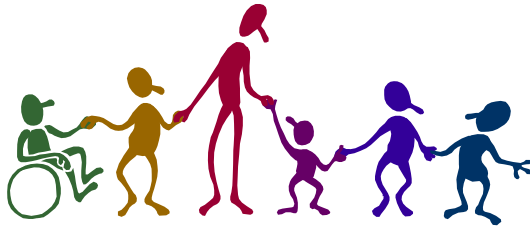


CHOOSING A CAREGIVER FOR A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



This is a workbook for families.

The workbook was developed in 1999 by members of the Community Respite Care Committee, in Victoria, British Columbia, to be used in conjunction with the course "Choosing a Caregiver for Your Child with Special Needs". It is intended as a tool to support and encourage parents who have primary responsibility for arranging safe and successful respite care for their children. We recommend that parents refer to a range of resource materials, community professionals, and agencies for additional support and practical assistance.

The Community Respite Care Committee is not responsible for the use or misuse of the information contained in this workbook.

The information in this workbook has been revised, and is accurate and up-to-date on the day of printing. We are very aware, in these rapidly changing times, that some of the specific information may no longer be current by the time you receive this workbook.

April, 2007.

We encourage you to copy this workbook and make it available to families.

We ask that no profit be made from its distribution.

CHOOSING A CAREGIVER FOR A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A. INTRODUCTION	page 4
B. WHAT IS RESPITE? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Personal Perspective• Definitions. Goals.	page 5
C. DEVELOPING A RESPITE PLAN <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarify Your Needs and Your Child's Needs• Look at Finances• Set Goals	page 7
D. RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal• Informal	page 9
E. FINDING, SCREENING AND SELECTING CAREGIVERS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finding Caregivers<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job Descriptions (requirements)• Advertising• Screening and Selecting Caregivers<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviewing - telephone/in person/home visits• Application process (Criminal Record Checks, Personal References)	page 11
F. DEVELOPING, MAINTAINING AND ENDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CAREGIVERS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing and Maintaining Relationships<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written Agreements• Training / Certification• Nurturing the Relationship• Ending the Relationship• Employer Issues	page 21
G. RESOURCES / APPENDIX	page 30

A. INTRODUCTION

- ◆ The *Community Respite Care Committee (CRCC)* was formed in 1988 by parents and representatives from agencies and government to promote development of quality respite services in Victoria. The CRCC meets monthly, and welcomes new members.
- ◆ The *Choosing a Caregiver Workshop* and workbook materials were developed in 1999 by members of the CRCC, Victoria, BC:

Gillian Bryan and Mimi Davis, *Child Care Information Service, Cridge Centre for the Family*; Connie Eligh, *Nursing Support Services, Vancouver Island Health Authority*; Susan Perkin, *Community Living Services, Ministry of Children and Family Development*; Sharie Young, *Community Options*; Irene Walker, *Para-Med Health Services*; Dawn Grunert and Pat Robertson, *Community Respite Service for Families, Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health, Vancouver Island Health Authority*.

- ◆ We are very grateful for the thoughtful and capable assistance of Sheri Eisenhuth, Parent, who joined the CRCC Committee in 2001, and whose suggestions, based on some of her experiences, have contributed to this workbook in significant ways.
- ◆ Additional suggestions have been made by:
Bev Kissinger. *Victoria Association for Community Living*;
Susan Noakes. *Ministry of Children and Family Development*.
- ◆ For the initial printing of this Handbook, we appreciate the support of:



The Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children



and The Vancouver Island Health Authority.

B. WHAT IS RESPITE?

A Personal Perspective from Sheri Eisenhuth

I remember the day it hit me. I was standing in the kitchen. I was so exhausted that I felt like a thousand hands were trying to pull me to the floor. I had been living in a state of frantic exhaustion for months. My child needed 24-hour care, and my body was no longer able to cope. Even with the help of my Mom and sister, we were losing ground. Our family needed help in order to carry on.

Thankfully, we were able to arrange respite care through Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health. We had some hope! We didn't know what the future held for our child, but we did know that we could now have regular breaks. Once a week, for two hours, my husband and I were able to get out for a date. In the beginning, we were so tired that we didn't say much. We were just so thankful to get a chance to be somewhere quiet with no interruptions. It's been nine years now, and we still live for our dates!

Respite workers give me fresh legs to handle the energy of my son and, just as importantly, fresh eyes to see him with a new perspective. I usually appreciate him so much more after a few hours of time spent doing something else. We also use respite in the summer to support him in day programs. On Saturdays, we have someone go swimming with him, allowing us to have a few precious hours alone with our daughter.

Respite is as important to us as breathing. Our lives will never be "normal". There are many things that we will never be able to do as a family. But, without ongoing respite, we couldn't have stayed a family at all.

B. WHAT IS RESPITE? Continued.

(res'-pit: a pause for rest or relief)

Relaxing, renewing, re-connecting (with family, spouse, friends) . . .

Enjoyable, energizing . . .

Supportive, strengthening . . .

Partnerships, planned . . .

Involvement, individualized . . .

Time off, teamwork . . .

Enriching, enjoyable . . .

*adapted from "When do I Get Some Time for Me?" A Parents' 'Make it Happen Handbook' for Finding and Using Respite Care Cynda Collins, Arsenault, 1995.

Some of my goals for respite:

C. DEVELOPING A RESPITE PLAN

What do **you** need as the parent or primary caregiver? Take some time to identify exactly what you need. This will help save you time in your search for the right caregiver.

If your overall goal is a well-functioning family, capable and resilient, what are the gaps and challenges that require extra support?

What do you need?

Look at your schedule, when do you need support?
(Before school, weekends, summer)

I need:

What does your child need?

Look at care needs, age and stage of development, preferences, interests

My child needs:



Short Term Respite Goals

What are the immediate, achievable goals?
e.g. afternoon care
3 times per week

Long Term Respite Goals

What are you working towards?
e.g. 2 weekends
per month

Look at Finances

Your finances are a key part of your respite plan.

Some questions you might consider:

- What financial resources do I have?
 - What agencies could I approach for funding?
 - Could a family member contribute?
-
- **Contact Community Living British Columbia**, for information on your eligibility for assistance.
In Victoria : Suite 220 - 174 Wilson Street, Victoria, BC
Phone: 250-952-4203
General Enquiries: victoria@communitylivingbc.ca
Website: www.communitylivingbc.ca
 - **Revenue Canada** has information about the Disability Tax Credit and about tuition support that you can find at www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca/disability/
 - You may consider contacting the following organizations for financial help:
 - The British Columbia Lions Society for Children with Disabilities
Victoria Office 250-386-0668 E-mail: info@lionsbc.ca
Toll free in BC - 1-800-818-448 Website: www.lionsbc.ca
 - The Variety Club of British Columbia
E-mail: info@variety.bc.ca
Toll free in BC 1-800-381-2040 Website: www.variety.bc.ca
 - Some organizations/associations are able to provide some financial support to their members.
 - You may be able to do some personal fund-raising - e.g. a garage sale, etc. to generate initial funds while waiting for other assistance.

D. RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Formal Supports

Once you have a clear idea of your requirements, consider some different approaches to recruiting caregivers. You may be able to use a formal resource such as a private or government funded agency. Some agencies do the work of recruiting, screening and even selecting and training caregivers. If you choose this route, call the agencies directly to find out what their costs are, and what they are able to do for you.

See Appendix II

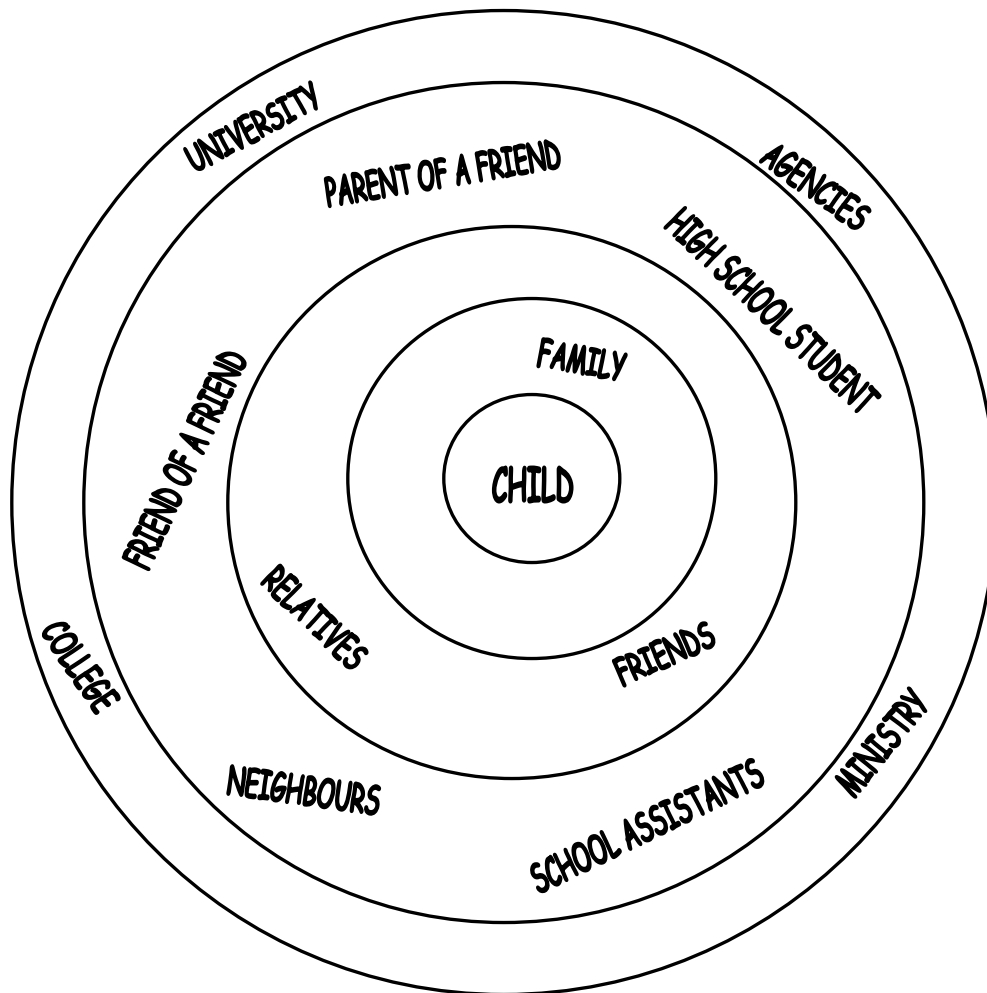
Informal Supports

- Think about the circle of people who already surround your child
 - Who does your child like to spend time with?
 - Who seems particularly responsive and interested?
- Talk to relatives, neighbours and friends
- Consider trading care with another family
- Don't limit yourself to the 'disability community'
- Network with other parents

Other ideas . . .

Resource Circle

You may already know someone close to home or in your broader community who would be a good caregiver. Start by considering the resources within your child's circle.



Possibilities:

E. FINDING, SCREENING AND SELECTING CAREGIVERS

Finding Caregivers

Describe the position: (*remember what you need, what you are looking for)

Hours and Days of Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set times • Flexible 	
Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your home • Caregiver's home • Community setting 	
Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal care • Transportation • Recreation • Assistance with learning • Life skills training 	
Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care for siblings • Household tasks • 	
Special skills/interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signing • Previous experience with children with special needs • Ability to lift • First Aid / CPR • 	
Other Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-smoker • Male/Female • 	
Range of Pay	
Length of commitment preferred	

Now that you have a picture of what you want . . .

- What is **essential**?
- What would you consider a bonus, but not essential?
- Review your notes and highlight or star items that are **non-negotiable**.

Finding Caregivers continued

Write an advertisement/Develop a poster

- Post your notice in your local community centre, recreation centre, church, college, doctor's office, clinic or university. Make use of bulletin boards in schools of nursing, child care, social work, early childhood education, leisure studies or kinesiology.
- Observe people who come in contact with your child.
- Ask a counsellor at the local high school to recommend students from child and youth care career preparation courses.
- Put up a notice at the neighbourhood store.
- Consider an ad in the community newspaper, the school or neighbourhood newsletter.
- Other ideas:

Initial Contact Notes or Application Form

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

_____ Phone _____

Briefly describe the position _____

Why are you interested in this position? _____

Please tell me about yourself. _____

What experience have you had in working with children, and with children with special needs? _____

What are your long-term goals? _____

Tell me about your education, training, certification. CPR? First Aid?

Tell me about your general health. Do you have any health problems, which might interfere with your ability to provide care? Back problems? Smoker?

How long are you likely to be available? (months?) _____

When are you available to start work? _____

References (names and phone numbers)

Note: If applicant has provided childcare in the past, ask for parent(s) as references.

Criminal Record Check _____

Qualified for personal interview: Yes ___ **date/time** _____ **No** ___

Personal Interview and Sample Interview Plan

The purpose of this interview is to help determine if your child will be safe and well cared for by the applicant, and to decide if you will be able to establish a working relationship with him or her. You may wish to have your child with you for part of the interview. [*A suggestion from an experienced parent: If possible, have another person there to take notes, so you can concentrate on observing and interacting with the applicant.*]

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

- Introduce participants
- Share something about your child and family.
- Provide a detailed description of the position/expectations in writing.
- Ask open-ended questions, using a few scenarios.
 - *My child is crying and you can't seem to console her/him. What do you do?* _____

 - *You are out for a walk with my child. He has a seizure shortly after leaving the house. What do you do?* _____

 - *My child...* _____

 - *You are...* _____

Involve your child in the interview. How does the applicant respond to him/her? Does your child like the applicant?

Invite questions from the applicant. (Does the applicant ask relevant, thoughtful questions? Does he/she "get it"?)

Strengths:

Limitations:

Close the interview by reviewing any questions /concerns.

Explain what will happen next.

References:

It is important to phone references, to ensure that your perception of the applicant is accurate. It is an opportunity to follow-up on any questions you may have about the applicant's strengths and limitations.

Suggestions:

- Ask for **2 or 3 references** (at least one of which from someone who knows the applicant as a caregiver).
- Ask effective questions.
 - *How do you know the applicant?*
 - *How long have you known him or her?*
 - *What can you tell me about the applicant's reliability?*
 - *What are the applicant's strengths and limitations?*
 - *How does the applicant handle emergencies?*
 - *How would you feel if the applicant was taking care of your child?*

Other questions:

References checked? _____ **CRC checked?** _____

Driving Record checked? _____

Criminal Record Checks

A Criminal Record Check (CRC) may be used to assist you in screening applicants. Anyone who works or volunteers with children must have successfully completed a CRC. Make certain that the CRC includes a section on "working with children or vulnerable adults."

The CRC is a check of the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) data bank for any criminal records or pending charges for a person matching the name and birth date of the applicant. If the CRC indicates that there is a record, the applicant may be asked to return for finger printing to positively identify or exclude the applicant.

The CRC can be completed through any local police or RCMP department, or by the Criminal Records Review Board, Ministry of the Attorney General. There is a charge for CRCs.

1. CRCs done by the police/RCMP

The applicant must go in person to the police department in the municipality where they reside, with two pieces of ID (at least one must be picture ID with the applicant's current address on it). Call the appropriate police department for further information, including the cost of the CRC.

2. Criminal Records Review Board, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

This Board will complete CRCs for individuals if they are funded, licensed or regulated by the government (e.g. foster parents). This CRC does not identify all offences - only those considered 'relevant'. You can find up to date information about these CRC's at <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/criminal-records-review/index.htm>

Caution: DO NOT RELY SOLELY ON A CRC. Use it as one of a number of screening methods. Always trust your intuition - use your best judgement.

Note: If the caregiver will be driving your child, you may wish to see their driver's license, insurance coverage, and driving record called a Driver's Abstract. They must apply for their own Driver's Abstract at 1-800-950-1498 or 250-978-8300 in Victoria.

Home Visits

If the applicant will be providing care in their home, also arrange for a home visit.

You may decide to make more than one visit. You may also wish to meet all family members.

In a visit to a caregiver's home, look for:

- A clean safe environment
- A private dressing and changing area
- A fire extinguisher, smoke detector, escape plan
- A comfortable appropriate sleeping arrangement
- An accessible bathroom
- Safe spaces for play, outdoor activity
- A variety of toys and learning materials

You may wish to ask:

- Who is living in the home?
- Is there anyone else likely to be in the home when my child is there?
- Are there any pets?
- Are there any smokers?
- Other questions:

Selecting Effective Caregivers

In assessing individual applicants, look for people who:

- Seem to enjoy children
- Are positive and responsive
- Have a similar approach to problem solving and discipline
- Are respectful of differences
- Are open to training and direction
- Believe in promoting independence and typical family and peer experiences
- Can pursue activities that would interest your child
- Can communicate openly and clearly with you

Other important characteristics of effective caregivers:

Trust your intuition!

F. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CAREGIVERS

Developing the Relationship

Writing an Agreement

Clear communication is essential. Having a written agreement in place is an important part of that process.

Written agreements should include the following information:

- Beginning date
- Hours and days of work
- Responsibilities
- Agreement re written care plan
- Arrangements/agreement re transportation of children
- Training expectations - will they be paid for training hours?
- Rate of pay / deductions
- Date of pay
- Statutory holidays / vacation
- Sick time arrangement
- House rules
- Expenses for transportation and outings
- Notice of dismissal/resignation
- Causes for immediate dismissal

Other important issues to be addressed in the agreement:

Sample Agreement

Date: _____

This agreement is between _____

and _____ beginning _____

We agree that:

- Hours and Days of work are _____
- Payment at a rate of _____ per _____ (hour/day/week) will be paid
_____ (daily/biweekly/end of month)
- Deductions will be made for: _____
(WCB EI Income Tax CPP)
- Responsibilities are:

- Care will be provided according to the written care plan.
- Training will be provided by _____
The caregiver _____ will/will not be paid while being trained.
- The caregiver will be reimbursed for the following expenses:

- This agreement will terminate immediately if: _____

- Other issues: _____

- The agreement may be cancelled on _____ notice by
(2 weeks, one month)
either party.

Signed

Signed

Training the Caregiver

Developing a Training Plan

You are responsible for insuring that your respite caregivers are well prepared to provide care.

- Review your priorities, expectations and job description.
- What should the training and orientation include?
- How can you be most effective?
 - Show by example. Act as a role model showing the language and approach you expect of the caregiver.
 - Emphasize positives. Show what your child enjoys and what she can do, then show what she needs support to do.
 - Explain / demonstrate / do together / observe and provide feedback until both of you are comfortable.
 - Value the learner. Make good use of the skills the caregiver brings.
 - Provide a rationale or explanation, not just direction.
 - Promote open dialogue - encourage questions.
 - Provide written reports and/or other material to read beforehand.
 - Be honest. Don't withhold important information.

Other key points:

Training the Caregiver, continued.

Training Ideas

- Use a daily diary for recording information. Encourage caregivers to write in it too.
- Use a written care plan.
- Provide opportunities for hands on practice under supervision.
- Use others to assist you. Pair one caregiver with another knowledgeable caregiver, school assistant, or family member.
- Invite a professional (Physiotherapist/Occupational Therapist/Speech Language Pathologist) to assist you.
- Make use of existing resources - a video, picture albums.
- Use role playing.
- Provide opportunities to practice in the typical setting.
- Involve your child as is appropriate.

Other Ideas:

Training the Caregiver, continued.

Training Checklist

1. Philosophy and values

- Does the caregiver understand your general approach, values, priorities?

2. Emergencies

- Does the caregiver have the following information:
 - Names and phone numbers of family members
 - Name and phone number of alternate emergency contact (e.g. neighbour)
 - Physician's name and phone number

3. Home

- Does the caregiver know the location of the fire extinguisher, first aid supplies and the emergency escape plan?
- Does the caregiver know the boundaries (which areas are off limits)?

4. General Expectations

- Does the caregiver know the house rules? (smoking, visitors, night time safety, use of the phone/television)
- Is the caregiver familiar with household routines?

Training the Caregiver, continued.

Training Checklist, continued.

5. Child

- Have you provided a written care plan?
 - Is the important information accessible and up to date?
 - Have you talked about the child's likes and interests?
 - Is the caregiver trained to meet your child's specific needs? (understand communication, follow a behaviour plan, give medications, provide personal care, manage seizures...)
 - Is the caregiver aware of allergies/emergency protocols?
 - Is the caregiver familiar with the child's positioning, mealtime, bathroom and bedtime routines?
 - Is the caregiver familiar with the child's personal equipment? (wheelchair, toys, foods, friends etc.)
 - Do you feel comfortable with the caregiver's attitude towards your child?
-
-
-
-

6. Inclusion In Community Programs

If your child will be included in community activities while being supported by a respite provider, you will need to develop a plan for this, and discuss this with your respite worker. All parties must know and be clear about their areas of responsibility. Effective, on-going communication is essential.

Some questions you might ask:

- What is the role of the respite worker in this situation? What are the responsibilities of the respite worker?
- How will decisions about the role and responsibilities be decided?
- To whom will the respite worker report? To whom is the respite worker responsible?

Ending the Relationship

Happy Endings

Your needs and circumstances, and those of your child, will change. Sometimes there is a 'natural' ending. If the caregiver has become an important person in your child's life, ask him if he might be interested in keeping in touch as a friend or occasional sitter. Would he be willing to act as a resource person / training assistant for the next caregiver?

If possible, set up a "good-bye/farewell" event.

Other ideas: _____

Not So Happy Endings

You may have identified problems with your caregiver, but would like to invest some time and energy in working to resolve them.

- Meet with the caregiver privately.
- Clearly describe the issues, in concrete observable terms
- Refer back to the original written expectations or agreement
- Ensure that the caregiver understands the issues and is prepared to change his behaviour
- Set a time frame for the change to be accomplished and reviewed
- Use a third party to assist you if necessary

If the caregiver is unable or unwilling to make the requested changes, give notice and move on. (Give as much notice as possible.)

If you observe or learn of dangerous or seriously inappropriate behaviour by the caregiver, suspend the caregiver immediately. In cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, you also have a responsibility to notify the Ministry of Children and Family Development about the incident.

Notes: _____

Parents as Employers

If you are purchasing care directly from an individual you may have responsibilities as an employer. Contact the following government agencies for further information. Make a note of the date and name of the staff person who assists you. When possible ask for a written opinion.

Employment Insurance

Phone 363-8222

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ae-ei/employment_insurance.shtml

Employment Standards Branch, Ministry of Labour

2nd Floor - 880 Douglas Street, Victoria BC

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 9570

STN Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9K1

Phone 952-0469 or 1 800 663-3316

www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb

Revenue Canada

1415 Vancouver St.

Victoria, BC V8V 3W4

Phone 1 800 959 5525 ask for a 'rulings officer'

www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca/

Work Safe BC

4514 Chatterton Way

Victoria, BC

Phone: 1 888 922-2768

www.worksafebc.com

Contact your insurance agent to discuss appropriate insurance coverage.

Keep records of all payments you make. You may wish to design a form, and have the caregiver sign each time that they are paid. (See a Sample Form in Appendix I)

RESOURCES

Choosing With Care The Canadian Parent's Practical Guide to Quality Child Care for Infants and Toddlers Brenda L Sissons and Heather McDowell Black, Addison-Wesley Publications Ltd. 1992

Minding the Kids A Practical Guide to Employing Nannies, Caregivers, Babysitters and Au Pairs Ruth S. Elliot with Jim Savage, Prentice Hall Press, 1990

When Do I Get Some Time for Me? A Parents' "Make it Happen Handbook" for Finding and Using Respite Care Cynda Collins, Arsenault, 1995

Best Practices in Respite Services for Children
Canadian Association for Community Care

Fact Pac

Personal Care Protocol

These personal care plan outlines are valuable tools for families and are available at a nominal charge from:

Community Options
830 C Pembroke St
Victoria BC, V8T 1H9
250-380-6363

APPENDIX II

Resources in Greater Victoria

Updated November 2009

For information about possible respite services, phone or email:

- **Ministry for Children and Families at 250-952-4707** (general information only)- ask for the Child and Youth Special Needs (CYSN) duty worker that is in your geographic area.
- **Camosun College** - to ask how to connect with students who are in the School of Health and Human Services courses (Licensed Practical Nursing and/or Community Support Worker) contact hhsinfo@camosun.bc.ca or Patti Odyanski- email: odynskip@camosun.bc.ca or 250-370-3223 for the Community Support and Education Assistant Program
- **Community Options 250 380-6363** syoung@communityoptions.bc.ca
- **Community Respite Service for Families 250 519-6710** crsf@viha.ca
In addition to the regular CRSF services, families are welcome to contact the CRSF Coordinators who can forward 'Help Wanted Ads/Notices' by email to their list of registered respite workers.
- **Family Advocate, Child Youth and Maternal Health, Vancouver Island Health Authority 250 519-6748** cheryl.thorpe@viha.ca
- **The Cridge Respite Resource Service 250 995-6412** mdavis@cridge.org
This Service provides information about Respite Caregivers Database, The Cridge Respite Service, and community resources.
- **Community Living Victoria. Contact Bev Kissinger 250 477-7231 ext. 36** bkissinger@clvic.bc.ca
- University of Victoria School of Nursing 250 721-7954
- You can also look in the yellow pages under Home Support Services

Student Employment Offices can be a good way to connect with caregivers:

- **Camosun College Student Employment 250 370-4181** employ@camosun.bc.ca
- **University of Victoria 250-721-8421** careers@uvic.ca
This site is for Uvic's students and graduates. You can advertise for free. Click on the "Employer" bar and follow the prompts for the Casual Work Registry.

