



# Information for Parents and Caregivers



# COMMUNITY LIVING WALLACEBURG

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Part of: [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com)

## Purpose and Acknowledgement

The purpose of this information package is to act as a resource guide for families and/or individuals who wish to access Special Services at Home, the Support Worker Database to contract their own support workers, or for general information.

## The Support Worker Databank

The Support Worker Databank is a registry of people who are willing to work with individuals with a developmental disability including autism and/or a physical disability. This work may take place in the family home or in the community. All Support Workers have submitted an application outlining their experience, interests and availability and a resume which are reviewed during an activation meeting. Each worker also has a Police Reference Check conducted including a **Vulnerable Persons Screening**. We also request a minimum two (2) references. CLW does not conduct reference verification checks however references can be provided to families and verified at their discretion.

When a request is made for a worker through CLW, information is taken about the individual and the nature of the request, i.e. worker duties, and times needed. Following this, a number of profiles will be sent to the caregiver making the request. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/caregiver to review the profiles sent, select, call and interview any or all Support Workers at their discretion.

The registry is made up of a changing list of workers. Many are students or recent graduates who join to gain valuable experience. Support Workers vary in skills and availability, and **should not** be considered trained therapists. They are often suitable for part-time parent relief, one to one work in the community and carrying out programming designed and monitored by the parent or another service provider.

There is **no charge** for the use of the Support Worker Registry. We **cannot** guarantee that we can always make an appropriate connection of a Support Worker to an individual needing support. However, we will do our best to support you in any way. We strongly encourage caregivers to also recruit their own workers through community organizations, schools, churches, libraries and centres.

### **Important Notes about the Support Worker Database:**

1. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/caregiver who wishes to obtain a worker for their son/daughter to call, interview, hire, pay and supervise the Support Worker. **Community Living Wallaceburg (CLW) does not provide supervision for the workers.**
2. **Support Workers are not CLW employees.** Payment is made directly by the family who contracts the worker. CLW **will not** assume any responsibility for disagreements over fees/payments/services provided. Any problems in this regard must be resolved between the Worker and the family that contracts the worker.
3. COMMUNITY LIVING WALLACEBURG will add new workers to the registry as they become available. **Parents are strongly encouraged to recruit workers from their own community.**

## respiteservices.com

**respiteservices.com** is comprised of agencies funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Child and Youth Services and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. We are collaborating to develop a more dynamic respite network for both children and adults in Chatham-Kent. As well, participants include representation from the Lambton-Kent District School Board, St. Clair Catholic District School Board, Walpole Island First Nation and Chatham-Kent Children Services.

The goals of respiteservices.com are:

1. To develop a comprehensive respite system.
2. To develop a coherent access process for families of children and adults requiring respite options.
3. To develop a means of matching respite needs with respite options.
4. To work closely with all parts of the system to advocate for appropriate service options to meet the needs identified.

## **Funding Programs Available to Families**

### **1. ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES (ACSD)** *(Previously called Handicapped Children's Benefit (HCB))*

This is an allowance program associated with the Ministry of Child and Youth Services to help some families meet the extra costs resulting from having a child with a disability. This benefit is income slated, which means that eligibility for funding is based on total family income, at or below a specified level. Up to \$150.00/month may be provided for respite care expenses to families with limited resources.

### **2. SPECIAL SERVICES AT HOME (SSAH)**

This is a program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services to assist families in providing for family members (children, youth or adult) who have a disability within their own homes and communities.

“The Special Services at Home (SSAH) program helps children with developmental or physical disabilities and adults with a developmental disability to live at home with their families by providing funding on a time-limited basis to address individual needs. With this funding, families can purchase supports and services which they could not normally provide themselves and are not available elsewhere in the community.”<sup>1</sup>

SSAH is most commonly used by families to contract a respite/support worker to work with their special needs family member. The worker may help people with disabilities develop new skills and join in community life. For example, a worker can be paid to teach someone social skills or how to perform daily living tasks independently. The worker may also be trained to implement recommendations from a behaviour, speech or infant development program.

SSAH also helps families by recognizing the added responsibilities of caring for a family member with a disability. A good example of this help is parent relief (or respite) so family members can have time for their own needs, or the needs of other people in the family.

“People of all ages with a developmental disability and children under 18 with a physical disability are eligible for SSAH. To qualify, individuals must live in Ontario with their families, have an ongoing functional limitation as a result of a disability, and require support beyond that which is a normal family responsibility.”<sup>1</sup>

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## **Tips for Recruiting a Support Worker**

### **When to begin your search:**

- Contact CLW when you have received notification of approval for your funding and/or you are ready to hire a worker.

### **Where to look for a worker:**

CLW has a registry of workers that are available to provide support. Support Workers are recruited throughout the year.

Upon registering with CLW, a search of the Support Worker Database will be completed and profiles of suitable workers will be forwarded to you in the manner requested (mail, email or fax).

Upon interviewing potential workers, you decide on the Support Worker you would like to contract with and then notify CLW of the person you have chosen. In some cases you may decide that the profile of the Support Workers sent to you are not suitable. COMMUNITY LIVING WALLACEBURG can perform another search of the Support Worker Database and where possible will continue to search for a suitable Support Worker until you have hired someone.

A family may contact CLW at anytime to have another search completed when their needs have changed or a new Support Worker is needed.

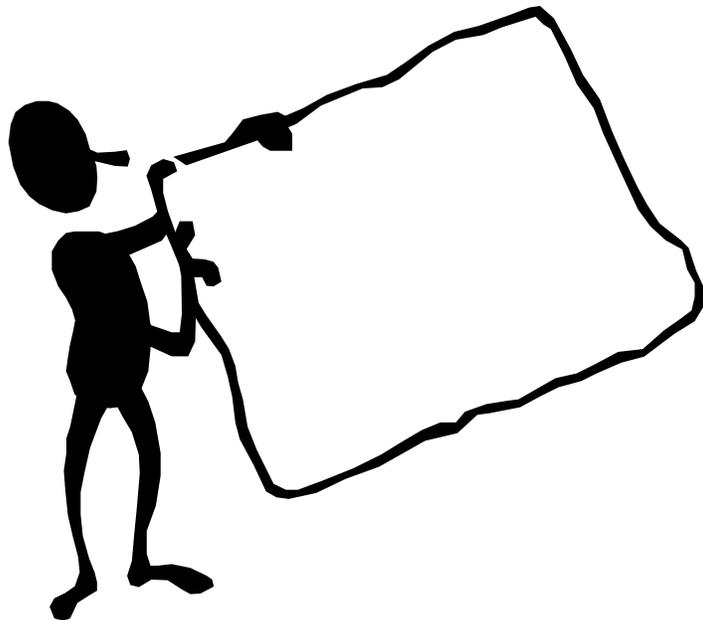
If you are using the Support Worker Database, it is possible there may be a two-week wait. There may be a longer wait when a special request is made or suitable Support Workers are not available during the times you require support.

In some cases, we may be able to fulfil an immediate need as we do have some Support Workers with flexible hours who are willing to provide relief. **Please note:** there is no guarantee that an appropriate Support Worker is available on short notice.

The **local community** can be an excellent resource for potential workers. You as parents are often the best recruiters of Support Workers. By speaking to others that you are involved with in your community, you may become aware of individuals that would be interested and available. Any individual that you contract with can apply to the Support Worker Database.

Some locations where potential workers live close to you are:

- Day Care
- Elementary and High Schools - educational assistants, other parents, co-op students, guidance job boards and child care program (if there is one at the school)
- Local College/University - career centre; psychology/social work departments may have bulletin boards or websites
- Neighbours
- Friends
- Parks and recreation programs - current or previous camp counsellors
- Local newspapers
- Local hospitals and Long Term Care facilities
- Local church bulletins
- Youth groups
- Parent Support groups



*A sample job posting is included as a guideline and can be found on page 14.*

## **What are your needs?**

Identifying your needs is probably the most important thing you have to do to achieve a good fit between your family and your respite worker. Start by asking yourself some questions and recording your answers. Here are some examples:

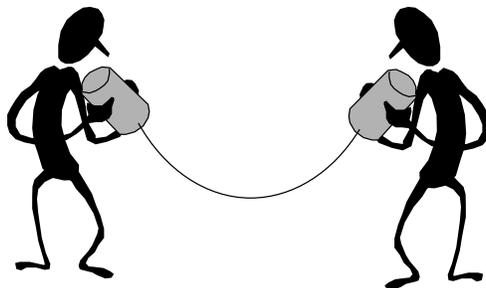
- What do I need/want the worker to do with my son/daughter?
- Will they be administering medication?
- Do I want a non-smoker?
- Do I need a worker with a license? His/her own vehicle?
- Do I need a worker who can swim? Do I want specific qualifications?
- Do I have a preference for the worker's gender? Age range?
- Will I require the worker to have first aid and/or CPR?

## **What qualities should I look for in a potential worker?**

- Knowledgeable, warm, caring
- Willing to learn
- Problem solver, good judgement
- Able to take direction
- Positive outlook, energetic
- Dependable, punctual
- Flexible, accessible and responsive to family's needs
- Good rapport with son/daughter and family

## **Initial telephone contact:**

- Tell the person that you have received their name from CLW's Support Worker Databank.
- Explain when you need a worker (days and times), what you would like the worker to do and where the activities will take place.
- If the person is interested then set a date and time when you can meet with the person for an interview. It is important that you choose a time when your son/daughter will be present during the interview so the person can meet and interact with him/her.



## The Interview

Now that you have identified your needs and have written them down, you are ready to interview. The interview is where you talk about these needs with a potential worker.

### **How to conduct the interview**

- Schedule a time that is convenient for you and the potential worker.
- Plan about an hour for each interview. Don't be in a hurry.
- Take the time to check references and ask for verification of professional expertise.
- Be prepared – have your questions ready, your son/daughter's profile handy, your expectations highlighted, and your son/daughter present for part, if not all of the interview.
- Be specific about your needs and how you expect the respite time to be spent with your son/daughter.
- Be sure to discuss salary expectations – the rate of pay, how it will be invoiced, how the payment will be delivered and when.

### **Interview questions for potential respite workers:**

1. Please tell me about yourself.
2. Please expand on your experience working with children/adolescents/adults.
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 son/daughter cries when I leave, how will you handle the situation?
8. If my son/daughter has to be taken to the hospital for an emergency, what steps would you take?
9. What would you do if my son/daughter did not respond to your request?
10. What hours are you able to work? During the day, weekend, holidays, short notice? 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 son/daughter out for activities?
13. Describe a difficult problem you have had to handle with an individual. How did you handle it?
14. Do you have any special training or experience you would like me to be aware of?
15. Do you have a valid driver's license? Would you take my son/daughter in your own vehicle? Would you drive our vehicle?

## **About references – Things to consider**

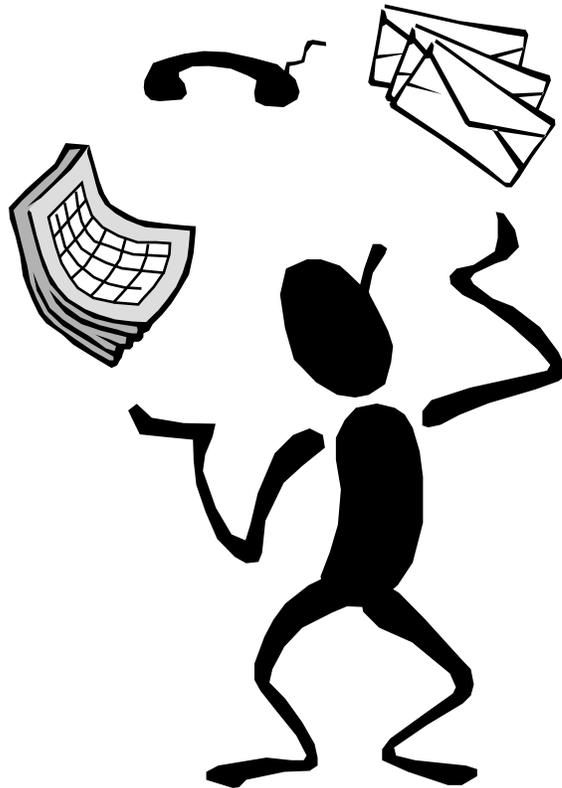
Community Living Wallaceburg does not check references as part of the screening process for the Support Worker Databank. Parents/guardians/caregivers are encouraged to check references for yourself. References can be either personal or work related.

Personal References can include an adult friend, minister or priest, a teacher or professor, or a neighbor.

Work related References may include a past or current employer/supervisor or a family that the applicant has babysat for or supported through SSAH.

Here are a few suggestions for questions you can ask a reference:

- What is your relationship with the applicant?
- How long have you known this person?
- Describe the position you are recruiting for and ask the referee if he/she has any concerns about the person's ability to perform such duties.
- Does the applicant follow directions?
- Is the applicant reliable? Punctual? Honest?
- Is there anything else you would like to comment on?



## **Maintaining a Good Relationship with Support Workers**

Once you have chosen the person(s) or Support Worker(s) to work with your son/daughter, it is important to establish and to keep a good working relationship. Listed are some issues identified by both workers and families as important things to remember and to discuss.

### **The Schedule**

Try to plan the day, time period, and the expectations for the worker. What do you want the worker to do? where?, and how? Is this time period for developmental programming, social skills training, just plain respite, or all of the above? Indicate your expectations and ask the worker if he/she has any questions or suggestions. Keep in touch – give workers advance notice of any change in you or your son/daughter's schedule. Always keep the worker up to date on your son/daughter's health status or performance level when they are working.

### **Rate of pay**

The rate of pay should be established at the interview or when you make an offer of employment. Be sure to include how you will pay (cheque or cash) and when you will pay (weekly, monthly, etc.) You should outline a protocol for time sheets and/or the SSAH invoice sheet. Be specific. You may need to consider varying rates – so much per hour for behaviour management, for therapy or community integration or for while your son/daughter is sleeping and not in need of direct support. The current average rate is about \$12-\$14/hour, higher rates may recognize special training or experience.

### **Probationary period**

There may be times when you don't get a good fit when hiring a worker, whether it is from their perspective or yours. A way to acknowledge this possibility and to be helpful for all concerned is to establish a probationary period before any final employment commitment is made by either party. Of course, the worker is paid the agreed upon wage during this period, but at any time in the probationary period either one of you can opt out of the contract – no questions asked. However, once a worker is employed on a contract basis it is recommended that you give reasonable notice if you intend to terminate employment, and expect the same from your worker.

### **Supervision**

The nature of the relationship between the support provider and the family must be determined between the two parties. Support providers are providing a service under contract with the family. The family is expected to provide the general supervision of the workers work, an outline of job expectations, and the hours of work, provide orientation, training and information required to support an individual.

### **Transporting Individuals**

You may request that a worker drive your son/daughter and use their own vehicle. If a worker agrees to transport ensure the worker has:

- A valid driver's license
- Safe vehicle
- Minimum of \$1,000,000 liability on their insurance (you may wish to speak to your insurance company for requirements)

The family may decide to cover the cost of transportation during the time the worker is with their son/daughter. An average amount would be \$0.35/Km. This would not include the workers transportation to and from the work place.

The worker is responsible to ensure all passengers are safe, and proper seat belts and car seats are being used. It is good practise to keep a First Aid Kit in the car. A phone or change for the pay phone for emergencies is also helpful.

### **Length of Agreement between Parent and Worker**

It is hoped that once an agreement has been made for respite support that the commitment of the worker to the family will lead to an ongoing, productive and satisfying relationship. A longer term commitment alleviates the family from having to retrain and rehire a new worker. If a worker decides to leave or the family no longer needs the workers support it is important to give each other notice. Families may begin looking for a new worker immediately and workers for other families to work with. **It is just as important to give notice to the individual being supported.**

### **Confidentiality**

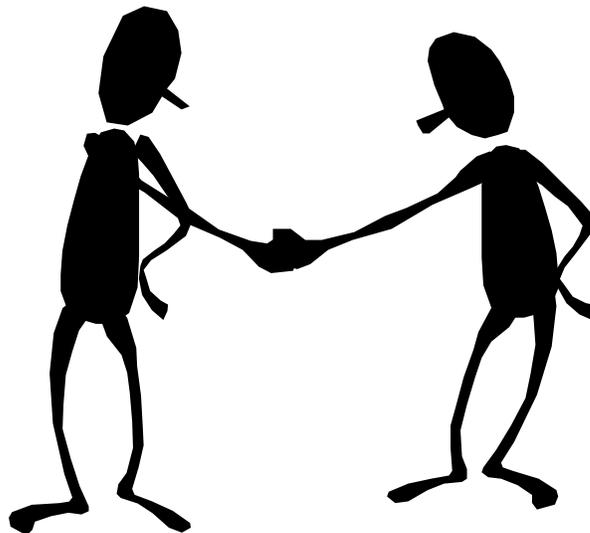
It is important that you maintain confidentiality with your worker and that your worker maintains confidentiality with you and your family. All personal information must not be discussed unless the person is present or has given their consent to specific information being discussed.

### **Some tips for maintaining a good working relationship**

- Identify and discuss problems as soon as they arise. Be prepared to negotiate a solution to the problem.
- Keep communication open and on-going. You may want to maintain a **communication book** to keep everyone informed and be responsive to any suggestions or recommendations documented.
- Discuss specific strengths and needs of your son/daughter and any strategies used to support him/her with communication, behaviour or in various situations in the community or at home.
- If serious problems arise document dates, times, issues and concerns. Abuse or suspicion of abuse is to be reported to the

Children's Aid Society. However, in situations like this you will probably want to confide in someone that you trust in order to get some personal support and assistance. For example, your doctor, nurse, social worker or friend.

- For quality programming and/or therapy services, invite the Support Worker to accompany you to a therapy session to observe the therapist at work with your son/daughter. In this environment, the Support Worker can ask the therapist questions and observe and implement the program under the watchful eyes of an expert. This also allows you to observe the Support Worker in action with your son/daughter.
- Discuss activities, any costs associated with activities and travel expenses with the worker. A worker is not expected to pay for entrance and activity fees or travel (mileage or transit) during the time he/she is providing support. Remember: many places in the community offer discounts, on entrance fees and activities, to Support Workers or individuals with a disability.
- Train workers on proper use of any communication aids, assistive devices or equipment.
- Only the person contracted by the family or registered with the Support Worker Database should provide care to the individual. If a worker is not able to fulfil hours a family would be responsible to make other arrangements.



# **SUPPORT WORKER NEEDED**

We are looking for an enthusiastic and responsible individual to provide one-to-one support.

Description of Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Worker's Role: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Nearest Main Intersection: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate of Pay: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact:**

## HOME ALONE - A Checklist for Families

***It is recommended that the following information be available to your worker when he/she is in your home:***

- Your full name
- The name of the place you can be reached, the phone number and the expected time of your return
- The phone number of a neighbour or relative to call for assistance if you cannot be reached in an emergency
- A list of emergency numbers. You may want to leave cab fare and your son/daughter's health card.
- A tour of the house, pointing out and explaining telephones, door locks, security systems, the thermostat, circuit breakers, water shut off, and the location of a flashlight
- Medical information, including allergies, medical conditions and the administration of medications
- Review of special instructions and equipment/adaptive devices
- House keys
- Knowledge of your family rules, such as disciplining and /or behaviour management, television viewing, stereo and phone use, visitors to your home, and acceptable forms of recreation
- Meal instructions, snacks, bottle/feeding schedules
- Location and instructions for clothing, equipment and other sundry items
- Information about routines and needs, such as stories, teeth care, bathing, nightlights, bedtime
- Suggestions for activities
- Homework and/or chores your son/daughter is encouraged to complete
- Information and/or awareness of family pets
- Smoking rules in your home

# The Ten Commandments For Families with Children Who Have Special Needs

(Kathleen Jordan & Maureen Shaw)

*We shall* be the advocates for our child and family and will endeavour to respect and reinforce in the view of others, the uniqueness and individuality of all concerned.

*We shall* acknowledge the humanness of all the professionals serving and supporting this family, and remember that they too are unique, no better or worse than the rest of us and who have chosen this way to make their living.

*We shall* endeavour to regard the professional as our equal, participating **ACTIVELY** in the partnership.

*We shall* accept the responsibility for our child and shall assist and support them in attending to their own best interests.

*We shall* recognize the professionals as resources and shall choose those professionals whose actions and attitude demonstrate a respect for the child and the family.

*We shall* accentuate the positive and keep the negative in perspective.

*We shall* ensure that when contracting for service that the service goals are focused on the child and the family receiving these services and that the goals are stated in a clear and precise manner.

*We shall* be persistent in our efforts to access accurate, complete and unbiased information in an attempt to make informed decisions on behalf of and with our child.

*We shall* recognize our vulnerability, sensitivity and emotional involvement and make an effort to direct our anger and frustrations appropriately.

*We shall* endeavour to develop a sense of humour, to celebrate and to care for our families and ourselves in order to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

