

Choosing an Out of Home Living Arrangement and Respite Providers

Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)

When exploring potential out of home living arrangements or out of home respite, you need to be satisfied that the provider will properly support your child's health, safety and well-being while they are in their care. The following is a list of things families should consider to ensure a potential out of home living arrangement is right for their child:

Background and Qualifications

- Ensure potential providers have a current criminal record check and required training (e.g. First Aid). Request to see documentation and/or certificates.
- If the provider is going to be driving your child, ask to see their driver's license, vehicle registration and insurance to ensure all are current. Request references who can speak to the quality of the service provided.
- If you are considering a provider from an agency, ask if the agency is accredited and the status of its accreditation.

Physical Space

- Make sure the home:
 - is well-kept and safe for your child, based on his or her needs and has appropriate living space;
 - has modifications to accommodate your child's physical needs, such as ramps, accessible washrooms, and other amenities;
 - is accessible and convenient for your family, enabling regular contact; and

- is equipped with acceptable safety features such as smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguisher, and bath water temperature restrictors.
- is smoke-free: ensure the caregiver has a no-smoking policy in the home and in vehicles your child will be accessing;
- is equipped with safety procedures. Make sure the caregiver has policies/processes to ensure safety, such as policies on bath water temperature, how to store medication, etc.

Child and Family-Specific

- Discuss your child's specific behavioural, physical, medical and cognitive needs with potential providers to ensure they understand your child's disability and can tell you how they will meet your child's needs. Potential providers should have strategies for promoting your child's inclusion and participation in the community – ask for examples of activities.
- Consider the impact of an out of home living arrangement or out of home respite on your child's current educational program. – Will your child have to change schools? Will you need to arrange transportation to and from school?
- If you are considering a group home or foster care, make sure you discuss who else lives in the residence or property, the caregiver's ability to meet the needs of everyone within the residence,

and the potential for your child learning unwanted behaviours or any safety risks living with others.

- Make sure to clarify who is responsible for damages to the residence or property.
- Items to discuss with your chosen provider: Your child's diagnosis, medical history, current medical/dental treatment, prescription and approved over the counter medications, medical contacts and emergency procedures relevant for your child.
- The supports your child requires to meet their daily living activities including specific requirements during usual sleep/overnight hours.
- Your child's educational program and the educational support expected from the provider, where applicable.
- The number of days, and dates your child will be staying in the living arrangement.
- For out of home living arrangements, your visitation schedule and your child's scheduled visits home.
- Transportation arrangements to/from the living arrangement.
- The decisions the potential provider can make in regards to your child and their daily care, routines and emergent needs.
- Approved contacts such as emergency contacts, family and social contacts and the frequency and method of communication.
- Non-approved contacts and instructions for redirection when your child asks to speak to someone that is not approved and messaging for the non-approved contact if they try to make contact.
- Approved internet and/or social media usage.
- Your parenting approach and style, as well as positive approaches and specific strategies to managing your child's behaviour. Make sure you identify any challenges you are currently experiencing or worried about (i.e. substance usage, running away, aggressive behaviour, etc.) and how you expect the provider to respond.
- You will need to decide under what circumstances, if any, the provider can use restrictive procedures and how they will keep you informed.
 - A restrictive procedure is any act that limits or restricts an individual's rights, access or ability to move freely. This includes restraining a child or using time out.

Administering medication that is taken on an as needed basis to change a child's behaviour is considered a restrictive procedure.

- Restrictive procedures may need to be used during a limited or short-term basis to ensure the child's or another person's safety. In these situations, it is important that a plan be in place to ensure that proper procedures are being followed and the restrictive procedure does not put the child at risk of physical, mental or emotional harm.
- You must provide your approval of the specific procedure and when and how often your service provider may use the restrictive procedure.

Financial Responsibilities:

- Parent/Guardian financial responsibilities include:
 - educational, school fees, medical and dental costs
 - clothing, food, educational supplies, grooming, hygiene and personal care products, medications and/or any other supplies required for the child
 - funding for the child's social, recreational, cultural or spiritual activities
 - spending money
 - social, recreational, religious and cultural activities the child may participate in
 - for out of home living arrangements specifically:
 - o educational, school fees, medical and dental costs
 - o assist with the move to the placement, including providing bedroom furnishings (bed, dresser, linens, etc.) and other items as required

Monitoring your child's living arrangement

- You are responsible to monitor your child's out of home or respite arrangement to ensure your child's physical, mental, emotional and cultural needs are being met.
- Parents, service providers, and FSCD worker need to participate in the development of and

have copies of the Individualized Family Support Plan - Out of Home (IFSP-OOH) and it should outline the above, and any other, decisions.

- Each region works with families and guardians to explore out of home living arrangements that may be available to meet the family and child's needs.
- You may cancel services and remove your child from the living arrangement at any time.
- Regional practices regarding developing and funding out of home living arrangements vary.