

Self-Managed Overnight Respite Policy		Date Approved	March 3, 2022
Branch/Division	Disability and Specialized Services/ Community Service Delivery	Applicable to	Children’s disABILITY Services
Responsible Authority	Assistant Deputy Minister Community Service Delivery	Next Review Date	
Policy Owner	Director, Children’s disABILITY Services	Date Reviewed	
		Date Revised	

1.0 Policy Statement

Children’s disABILITY Services provides respite to strengthen families, to reduce caregiver and family stress, and to support families to stay together longer, when this is in the best interest of the child and family. While daytime respite is a key part of meeting these additional needs, some families may experience a more significant rest period by implementing overnight respite.

2.0 Background/Context

Families caring for children with developmental and physical disabilities experience additional challenges that can be emotionally and physically demanding. Research supports that parents experience lasting positive benefits from taking short breaks from the additional responsibilities of caring for children with disabilities. Respite can strengthen families, reduce stress, support families to stay together longer and to care for their children in their own communities where they grow and thrive best.

3.0 Purpose of Overnight Respite

The purpose of respite is:

- 1) To provide families with a temporary break in order to:
 - Relieve parents from some of the additional demands of caring for a child with a disability
 - Provide parents with time to meet their own personal needs
 - Provide parents time to spend with other family members, including other children
- 2) To provide children with disabilities opportunities to participate in age-appropriate social, recreational and developmental activities that promote independence and personal growth.

Respite care is distinct from and is not a substitute for child care, nursery school, before and after school programs or other long-term arrangements intended to meet the child care needs of the family.

Respite is not provided during school hours for school-age children.

Overnight respite is intended to provide a more significant rest period for the families. Overnight respite provides a longer rest period to families, permits parents to give more attention to their other children and provides time for the parents to sleep without being interrupted to attend to their child with a disability.

4.0 Definitions

Conditional Funding Agreement/Funding Agreement Letter: The contract between Children’s disABILITY Services and parents in a self-managed respite arrangement. It describes the terms and conditions of the arrangement.

Assessment: A case management process that identifies the strengths and needs of the child and family in determining the goals and requirements of respite and the appropriate service option.

Community Service Worker: The Children’s disABILITY Services staff person responsible for assessing families’ need for services and for planning respite services.

Formal Supports: Supports provided by government, agencies or organizations.

Informal Supports: Supports provided by family, friends, neighbours and others within a family’s social network.

Overnight Respite: A period of respite typically lasting 12 to 48 hours.

Parent: For the purposes of this policy, refers to the person(s) responsible for the care and custody of the child eligible for Children’s disABILITY Services. Parent may refer to birth, step or adoptive parents or the legal guardian.

Respite Providers: Individuals hired and managed by families to deliver respite services under a *Conditional Funding Agreement*.

5.0 Policy

5.1 Eligibility

Families may be eligible for overnight respite if they meet the following criteria:

- They are raising a child who is eligible for Children’s disABILITY Services (CDS); and
- There is an identified need through a case management assessment for parents to have a more fulsome break from the additional disability-related demands of parenting a child with disabilities that cannot be met with available informal or formal supports, including daytime respite.

5.2 Service Description

Self-managed respite allows families to recruit their own respite providers, establish their own service schedule and manage their respite funding. CDS provides funding to families to self-manage their respite services based on assessed need and approved respite plans.

Funding for self-managed overnight respite services are provided through a *Conditional Funding Agreement/Funding Agreement Letter*.

Respite care is provided on a time-limited basis according to the assessed needs of the family and the disability-related needs of the child. Respite providers must be 18 years or older and they must not reside in the home of the family receiving respite services.

The child who is open to CDS must be present during the provision of respite services.

Families maintain their parental rights during the provision of respite and, in the event of an emergency, the respite provider or emergency services must be able to contact parents for direction. Should there be no way of contacting a parent in the case of an emergency, decision-making authority will be delegated to the proper authorities until such a time as contact can be made with the parent.

CDS provides guidelines to further safety and good practice regardless of where the respite takes place. Despite these guidelines, CDS does not have the authority to license respite homes. Overnight respite is outside section 8 of The Child and Family Services Act; therefore, parents assume the risks, liability and responsibilities for overnight respite.

5.3 Eligible Expenses/Funding

Funding is to be used solely to cover the wages of the respite worker to deliver overnight respite services to the family. Families are responsible for covering any related costs incurred during the provision of services such as transportation to activities, admission fees, meals, etc.

5.4 Basic and Adequate

Funding for self-managed overnight respite shall be provided in a basic and adequate way (that is, the minimum required to meet the assessed needs of the child and family). Determining what is basic and adequate depends on the child's disability-related needs, family capacity and other available natural supports.

While parents of typically developing children may also require breaks from the responsibilities of parenting, CDS-funded respite is intended to provide breaks from the additional demands of parenting children with disabilities.

One or more of the following factors must be present when assessing need for self-managed out-of-home overnight respite:

- The child has disrupted sleep and caregivers report that a lack of rest/sleep is significantly impacting their ability to provide care or are unable to continue at the current pace;
- The caregivers report serious issues as a result of minimal one-on-one attention impacting the well-being of other children and/or their marital relationship;
- The child's disability regularly prevents the family from participating in activities and affects family well-being and relationships;
- The family experiences disability-related challenges when trying to participate in community activities; care needs of the child prevent the family from participating in community activities. Caregivers report feelings of isolation;
- The child's needs create safety issues that affect how the family makes choices and accesses the community; or
- Short-term hourly respite is no longer able to meet the respite goals outlined with the family and Community Service Worker.

The assessed amount of overnight respite is intended to provide families with longer periods of rest, permit parents to give more attention to their other children and provides time for the parents to sleep without being interrupted to attend to their child's disability-related needs.

6.0 Core Supporting Standards, Procedures and Guidelines

6.1 Standards

In most cases, overnight respite will be provided for 12 to 48 hours at a time. Overnight respite services must not exceed seven consecutive days, and must not total more than seven days within 30 days.

Families are responsible for following the terms and conditions set out in the *Conditional Funding Agreement* developed in cooperation with their Community Service Worker (CSW).

Families shall ensure that their respite providers are informed about the needs of the child and they are able to meet the physical, medical, social and emotional needs of the child, regardless if the service takes place in the family or respite provider's home).

Families are expected to use the service according to their assessed need and approved service plans.

Families are not permitted to save their overnight respite hours to use as a larger block of time.

Families with self-managed respite must submit invoices, respite care time sheets or suitable equivalent, and all supporting documentation to CDS to demonstrate that services were received.

6.2 Procedures

The CSW will perform an assessment of the family's needs and their informal and formal supports, and the CSW will provide information about other overnight respite options, if appropriate. The assessment will consider the factors outlined in Section 5.4 Basic and Adequate.

The CSW shall develop a self-managed overnight service plan for program manager approval. Following approval of the service plan, families will be sent a *Conditional Funding Agreement* or *Funding Commitment Letter* outlining approved funding amounts and service hours.

6.3 Guidelines

Families may receive respite on a regular or intermittent basis as they request, when recommended by CSWs, approved by program managers and dependent on availability of funds and service providers.

Self-managed overnight respite is funded at an hourly rate if the respite provider is required to be awake overnight to meet the needs of the child and at a flat rate if the child does not present with disability-related sleep issues requiring support throughout the night.