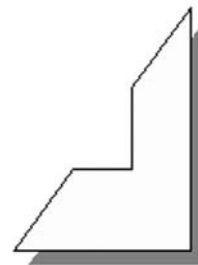


Special Services
At Home

A Guide for Families

Special Services at Home
Advisory Committee



Simcoe County
2006

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Introduction to the Special Services at Home Program

The Special Services at Home is one of a range of services funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Special Services at Home (SSAH) is intended to provide supports to:

- Individuals living at home with their Families and,
- Families caring for family members

who have a disability and as a result have special needs which require services beyond care normally provided by family. When this is the case, the government has a commitment to assist with the costs and required services by supplying a range of family support services. SSAH is one of this range of community services for families and is based on the belief that families are primary caregivers for individuals with disabilities. As a result, SSAH focuses on the provision of funds to assist families to purchase supports which are not otherwise available in the community.

Its aim is to provide funding for families to purchase 1:1 respite and services to support families while their special needs family member lives at home. In some instances individuals living in residential care may be eligible for funding. Please contact your Special Agreements Officer (SAO) for further information.

In December 2005, the following changes were introduced to the special Services at Home (SSAH) program; Eligibility for SSAH funding is expanded to include special needs families' members who are not living at home with their families and not residing in ministry-funded residential accommodation. As well, primary caregivers can use their SSAH funding to

compensate some family members to provide respite and/or personal development and growth.

The Special Services at Home program is not intended to duplicate existing services available in the community.

Children who have a developmental disability or a physical disability, and adults who have a developmental disability are eligible for Special Services at Home funding.

Special Services at Home Guidelines (1991) are available at the local office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, as well as the agencies listed in this guide. The guidelines are also available to view on-line by visiting the Ministry's web site www.MCSS.gov.on.ca

What can Special Services at Home Do for You?

The Special Services at Home (SSAH) program allows you to hire someone to work with your family member, at home or in the community, or to purchase out of home respite services. You can find your own mediator/worker or use a local agency to assist you in finding a suitable mediator/worker. (please see the agency list at the end of this book).

The SSAH program recognizes that it cannot meet all human needs. As a result, its resources are focused on meeting needs broadly described as:

The most common use of Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding is to allow you to hire someone to work with your family member

- personal development and growth and/or
- family relief and support

SSAH funding can be used to provide the human resources necessary to carry out programs. Usually a special services worker provides direct assistance to the individual with a disability. Direct assistance will:

- address specific personal
- development and growth needs,
- focus on a goal (outcome expected) within a projected time frame,
- follow a plan for delivery of programming (method) and
- periodically review the progress made and the continuing appropriateness of the goals and plans.

Family relief (respite) is valued by families. This allows caregivers to spend time with other family members or attend to personal matters. Supported individuals gain opportunities for skill building, involvement in leisure activities, community outings etc., or time away from the family home (out of home respite).

The following services are not funded under SSAH:

- Basic Care: Costs related to caring for the basic needs of children or dependent family members. e.g. food, clothing, diapers, baby sitting, child care, dental care, routine medical costs and medical fees.
- Child Care Fees: Regular costs of centre based, family or informal child care or nursery school services which a family normally meets.
- Basic Camp and Recreation Fees: Regular recreation costs which a family normally covers, such as overnight/day camp and swim programs.
- Education and Employment: Costs related to education, ABA, IBI Services, supported employment and vocational activities.
- Assistive Devices: Costs relating to specialized equipment and dental service.
- Home and Vehicle Modifications
- Professionals Services: With two exceptions, the services of speech and language pathologists, physiotherapists' nurses, nursing assistant's occupational therapists, psychologists and other similar professionals are not eligible for funding through the SSAH program.

These services should be obtained from an established community resource. The two exceptions are nursing services required for respite care and a professional to monitor the mediator model, if not available otherwise.

In some instances, SSAH may fund:

- training for family members or workers so that they can meet the needs of the individual
- reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses related to meeting the individual's needs, e.g.: advertisement cost, mediator travel cost, etc.
- child care costs over and above regular child care costs

The Application

How to apply for Special Services at Home funding

Applications for SSAH are available from:

- Your MCSS/MCYS Local/Regional office
- An Agency
- From the Ministry's web site www.MCSS.gov.on.ca and click on 'developmental services'

If you would like assistance in completing the form, a Special Agreements Officer from the Ministry may assist.

Parents, family members, legal guardians and individuals who are 16 years of age and over may apply. They may do so alone or with the assistance of an agency, professional or any person of the individual's or family's choice. (please see a list of agencies at the end of this book).

The application process

Applications may be forwarded to the Ministry Office at any time throughout the year. Funding decisions are made and forwarded to families when a completed application and all requested information has been received and reviewed.

The Special Agreements Officer will review your application and can make a number of recommendations:

Applications are accepted throughout the year

- that your application be approved as requested
- that your application be approved with some changes
- that your family member is not eligible
- requested documentation has not been received
- that your approved application be placed on a wait list

If your initial application is approved, a Special Agreements Officer will contact you to review all relevant details. If your application has been approved with changes or has been denied, or has been placed on a wait list, you have the right to request a review of the decision. Directions on how to request a review will be enclosed with notice of the decision.

If your application is approved as requested you will receive a notice of authorization in the mail. If you have not received notices of decision after submitting the application contact the Ministry office.

An example of an application with tips for how to complete it is included in this booklet.

Reapplication Process for Special Services at Home:

You must re-apply to Special Services at Home every year. The SSAH Program will send a

renewal application form approximately two months before the end of your current contract. The form will need to be completed in order to re-apply for Special Services at Home for the upcoming year. When re-applying, you will NOT need to send in verification regarding your family member's diagnosis but you or your mediator/worker will be asked to complete a progress report regarding the results of your family member's programming for the past year.

Any changes in your family member's needs should be clearly noted on the application form as well as full details of your request. The application form should be completed and returned to your Special Agreements Officer promptly to avoid any interruption in service to your family member.

Some points to remember when filling out your application

- Keep a photocopy of your application and all supporting documentation.
- Read your application carefully. Make sure that you provide all the necessary information.
- The application form must be signed in order to be processed.
- The initial application must include a diagnosis, clearly confirming the nature of your family member's disability from a professional. These professionals include:
 - Medical specialists
 - Speech and Language Pathologists
 - Physiotherapists
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Psychologists
 - Audiologists
 - Optometrists
- If your son or daughter is receiving Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), it may not be necessary to include medical documentation if it has already been submitted. If in doubt, check with your Special Agreements Officer.
- It is not necessary to send medical documentation with every

re-application but updated medical information will help explain any changes in your request from one year to the next.

If you want an agency to manage your funding

Most families choose to manage the funds themselves.

An agency may provide additional support to families by managing the funds. This arrangement would involve some extra steps. If you would like an agency to manage the funds for you, you will need to contact the agency before completing your application. The SSAH program does not provide increased funding for administration fees charged by an agency.

How to decide what to pay your mediator/worker

The application form asks how much you will pay your mediator/worker. The Ministry does not have a pre-determined pay scale for mediator/workers. When determining the budget for your program, you probably want to consider:

- What kind of work will the mediator/worker be doing?
 - Does it require special training?
 - Does it involve lifting?
 - Does it involve carrying out a program?
 - What are the needs of your family member?
 - Will the mediator/worker be in a supervised situation or working independently?
 - Will it be difficult to find a mediator/worker? (Due to location of home or age of individual, or based on individual needs)

The hourly rate you will need to offer the mediator/worker will reflect the work you want them to do. If you want to know what other mediators/workers earn in your area, you may ask other parents or an agency worker.

Special Services at Home Request for Review

When you receive a response to your application, review it carefully.

Does it reflect the amount you requested in your application?

- Have changes been made to the funding or service you requested?
- Has your request been denied?
- Has your application been placed on a wait list?

If you are not satisfied with the decision, you have the right to request a review. You must do so within twenty (20) working days of receiving your response. A written request for review must be forwarded to:

Regional Director

Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Central East Region

465 Davis Drive

Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8T2

In your letter, you should indicate the reason for your request for review. You may want to provide additional information or documentation as soon as possible after making your request. You may also request a meeting to discuss the situation, or ask what further information the Ministry requires to help in their review process.

Please note, it is recommended that you keep copies of documentation and letters for future reference. You may also wish to send a copy of your letter to your agency worker.

Running the program

Finding a mediator/worker

The following are some suggestions to help you to find a mediator/worker:

Contact local high schools, guidance department, teachers, friends, acquaintances, educational assistants, community colleges, universities, local churches, youth groups, and parent support groups.

Post job advertisements at the library, Canada Employment Office, Student Employment Office, local Community Centre and local supermarkets.

As a result of a recent SSAH policy change, some family members may be hired as mediators/workers. This policy change has been made in order to support families in their search to obtain 1:1 respite support for their "family member with a disability". For further information regarding this new policy, please contact the Ministry office and speak with a Special Agreements Officer.

Tips for families interviewing mediators/workers

- Ask to see a resume and ask for names, addresses and phone numbers of references. Check the references.
- You may want to ask the applicant to arrange a Criminal Reference check through their local police department.
- Interview several workers to find the one that best meets your needs.
- Explain your needs clearly to potential mediator/workers. (*i.e., I need someone to do Orientation and Mobility training (bus training) with Ann, or, I need someone to provide personal support and developmental programming every Saturday morning for three hours. Can you meet this commitment?*)
- Ask potential mediator/workers to describe themselves and interests that might be of benefit to your child/family member. (Tai-Kwon-Do, cooking, hockey games, music, swimming, etc.)
- Ask about experience with particular procedures (behavior management, seizure activity, CPR, etc.) if relevant.
- Look for creative and energetic workers. Ask applicants to give an example of how he/she would support your family member for a day.
- Schedule part of the interview when your family member can be included and observe how the potential mediator/worker relates and interacts with him or her.
- Ask about your mediator/worker's availability in an emergency situation or on short-term notice.
- Review the rate of pay and invoicing procedures with the mediator/workers you are going to hire.

- Define or describe your expectations of the mediator/worker and ask them to clarify his/her expectations. You may want to discuss schedules that work for all involved, advance notice required about changes in plans, what kind of additional expenses you will cover, such as admission costs, supplies, food, etc.

Important points to consider

- Discuss with your insurance company whether your household/tenant policy has adequate coverage for personal liability.
- If the mediator/worker will be using his/her own car to drive your family member, they should discuss this with their insurance agent (minimum \$1,000,000 liability). Make sure that appropriate licensing and insurance provisions are in place.
- In most cases your mediator/worker is considered to be a self-employed, independent contractor.
- If there are specific work related issues you may wish to contact :

Revenue Canada1-800-387-1710

Workplace Safety and

Insurance Board (WSIB)1-800-387-5540

Employment Insurance and Ministry of Labor - check the Blue Pages of your telephone book for the local office.

How the program works

It is your responsibility to pay the worker

- If an agency is managing the funding for you, they will explain their procedures to you.
- You will receive invoice sheets and instructions when you receive your authorization in the mail. Please check the beginning and end dates carefully.
- You and your mediator/worker will keep track of dates; hours worked and rate of pay. Both of you must sign the invoices.

- The invoices are sent to the Ministry by fax or mail.
- Direct deposit is the preferred method of payment.
- You may choose to have more than one mediator/ worker. You would need to fill out separate invoices for each worker.
- You may decide to use the mediator/workers more or less often at different times of the year. You just need to make sure you don't go over the total amount authorized for the year as outlined on your authorization.
- If you have questions about how to invoice, you may contact your Special Agreements Officer.
- Funds cannot be carried over beyond expiry date of your authorization.
- You need to re-apply for funds as the 12-month expiry date approaches. A re-application will automatically be mailed to you, two months prior to your expiry date.

Planning a program with your mediator/worker

- It would be helpful for your mediator/worker to have the following information in writing:
 - correct 911 address
 - emergency phone numbers
 - health card number
 - information about medications
 - allergies
- If you want, professionals such as therapists, behavior management consultants, or developmental services workers are usually willing to meet with you and your mediator/worker to help design the program.
- Your plan should include goal statements and recommended activities.
- You may ask the mediator/worker to keep a brief record of activities. This can be very helpful when it is time to fill out the Progress Report for the Ministry.

- Occasionally you may want to set aside some time to meet with the mediator/worker to review progress and concerns. The mediator/worker should be compensated for this time.
- The '*mediator card*' is available for your worker's use for identification and community activities. To learn more about this card ask your Special Agreements Officer.

If you would like more information

The following agencies may be able to help you with more information about the Special Services at Home Program:

Special Agreements Officer

Ministry of Community and Social Services and Ministry of Children and Youth Services705-737-1311

Toll Free1-800-461-7551

Infant Development/Early Intervention/Resource Teacher Programs (0 to school age)

Alliston705-435-4792

Barrie705-726-9082

Bradford905-775-3039

Collingwood705-446-0816

Midland705-527-7022

Orillia705-326-2214

Family Resource/Family Support

Alliston705-434-3003

Barrie705-726-9082

Bradford905-775-3039

Collingwood705-445-9770

Midland705-526-6894

Orillia705-326-6502

Adult Support Program of

Simcoe County705-725-7997

The following may be some other helpful telephone numbers:

Children's Treatment Network	705-719-4795
Toll Free	1-877-719-4795
Bloorview Kids Rehab	1-800-363-2440
Kerry's Place Autism Services	905-713-6808
Easter Seal Society	1-800-461-3391
Georgian College	705-728-1968
Ontario Disability Support Program	705-737-1311
Inclusive Recreation Program	705-733-3227
The Community Care Access Centre	705-721-7444
Geneva Centre	1-416-322-7877
Behaviour Management Services of York and Simcoe	705-792-6410

Recreation Departments

Alliston New Tecumseth	905-729-1260
Barrie	705-739-4223
Bradford	905-775-5359
Collingwood	705-444-2500
Midland	705-526-1043
Orillia	705-329-7250

C.H.A.P. Program

(Community Helpers for Active Participation)

The CHAP Program Coordinators manage a central registry of eligible workers (mediators and relief providers). This is a service that has been requested by families and will help streamline the process for hiring and replacing workers.

This program is considered an additional strategy for hiring workers, and does not replace existing successful practices.

Workers who are registered with the program have been screened and interviewed, have supplied letters of reference, undergone a Police Reference Check and attended an orientation session.

The workers are **not**, and should **not be considered**, trained therapists. The workers are prepared to provide parent relief and respite, and to help implement programs designed to promote personal development and growth.

Requests are submitted to the CHAP Program Coordinators.
A registry search is conducted to identify suitable potential workers.
The family will conduct interviews and make hiring decisions.
There is no charge for this service.

Families who are looking for a worker can find information on the respite services website. The worker registry can be searched at www.respiteservices.com or contact a C.H.A.P Co-coordinator at:

If you reside in Barrie or Bradford and surrounding areas:

Simcoe Community Services
39 Fraser Court
Barrie, ON
L4N 5J5
Phone. 705-726-9082 ext 259
Fax. 705-720-1083

If you reside in Alliston, Collingwood, Midland, or Orillia and surrounding areas:

Community Support Services
165 Ferris Lane
Barrie, ON
L4M 2Y1
Phone. 705-733-3227 ext 235
Fax. 705-735-6826

Respite

Information about respite is available at www.respiteservices.com

Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)

The Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program (ACSD) eligibility must be considered prior to applying for SSAH Funding. The Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services can assist you with this process.

The ACSD Program is regulated under the Ontario Disability Support Program. The Program is a monthly benefit to assist parents with the extraordinary costs associated with caring for a child living at home.

To be eligible, the child must be 17 years of age or younger, must have a severe disability which results in a functional loss and there must be extraordinary costs incurred as a result of the special needs.

Your initial application will require that you submit verification of your child's disability from your doctor, psychologist or other professional.

The monthly benefit range is between \$25 and \$400 depending on the following:

- Size of the family (including parents)
- Total family income (gross)
- Extraordinary costs arising from the child's disability

Additional benefits for the child include a prescription drug and dental card, vision care and/or hearing aids with prior approval.

Families may complete an application prior to meeting with their Special Agreements Officer. Legislation requires that a home visit must occur prior to a family being approved for the ACSD benefit.

Your entitlement for ACSD is reviewed by your Special Agreements Officer on a yearly basis. Application forms for ACSD are available from your Special Agreements Officer at the local Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

A home visit is required with all initial applications.

This handbook was originally developed by the Simcoe County SSAH Advisory Committee and designed by Paul Vorstermans.

Revised jointly by the Simcoe and York Region SSAH Advisory committees.

Sponsored by: The Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services

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