



Service Expectations – Respite/Relief Care

Specialized Homes and Support Services is a suite of services within the ministry's broader system of care. It is comprised of four distinct service types: Emergency Care; Low Barrier Short Term Stabilization Care; Respite Care; and Specialized Long-Term Care. Each of the Specialized Homes and Support Services contracts has within its care type: service expectations, deliverables, and intended outcomes across the province. In accordance with legislative requirements, placement priorities and best practices, Specialized Homes and Support Services are considered only after exploring less intrusive options to meet a child/youth and family's needs, such as wrap-around supports provided within the child's home, supports through extended family, community, or the Family Care Home network.

Respite Care is a family preservation service and is designed to meet the needs of families caring for children/youth with complex needs. It provides carers who have primary care and responsibility for children/youth with a temporary break from the emotional and physical demands of caregiving in order to maintain or improve overall family functioning and well-being. Specialized Homes and Support Services Respite Care is provided outside of the primary carer's home and is part of a support plan to maintain a child/youth's living arrangement within the family, and/or keep children/youth out of full-time care. It may be provided to families of children and youth with varying complex needs, and with any legal status (not in care, in out-of-care arrangements, and in care).

Respite Care is intended to support the improvement of family functioning and enhance overall well-being by providing that break, while at same time seamlessly maintaining a child/youth's important routines and supports, such as continuing to receive/attend their community therapies or connections/routines with extended family. It can be planned for or offered during emergencies or times of crisis, and provides children/youth a culturally safe, developmentally appropriate, structured and warm environment, with qualified staff who can meet the unique day to day needs of the child/youth. Specialized Homes and Support Services Respite Care does not replace other forms of respite/relief available to families. For example, Family Care Homes (foster parents) can still utilize their relief

caregivers and, although Respite Care is available, relief caregivers are the first option for Family Care Home caregivers; and families with support needs may still utilize enhanced respite and use Specialized Homes and Support Services Respite Care only when an out-of-home break is required.

Service Recipients:

The intended service recipients of Specialized Homes and Support Services Respite Care include:

- Families requiring a break from caring for children/youth with extra support needs (with a focus on those with moderate-to-complex medical or behavioural needs) in order to mitigate the risk of a breakdown in their living environment;
- Families requiring a break from caring for children/youth in order to maintain or improve family functioning and their continued ability to support and safely care for their child/youth at home;
- Families where the carer(s) (parent/guardian, out-of-care care provider, or foster caregiver) is experiencing a stressor placing the child/youth’s living environment at risk of breakdown; and
- Families with children/youth who are at risk of coming into care.

Service Length:

Service is aligned to the carer’s planned or emergent needs and ranges from several times each month to longer stays (up to 14 days) as part of the overall support plan for the family. Service use will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with the child/youth’s and carer’s needs. Respite Care is intended to be a short-term service; however, it is recognized that there may be circumstances where the complex needs of the child/youth, and the caregiving demands on the family, require the service to extend as part of a longer-term plan to support ongoing family preservation.

Desired Outcomes:

How this service is supposed to benefit a child/youth/family

Intended Outcomes	How we measure this (examples)
Improved overall family functioning supports ongoing care for the child/youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caregivers report that they have the ability to provide ongoing care for the child/youth (maintaining or improvement) - Decrease in children/youth coming into care
Child/youth experience safety and improved wellbeing	Improved experience of day-to-day wellbeing for child/youth
Child/youth’s attachment and emotional ties to family ¹ and other supportive relationships is improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact with family, community, friends is facilitated and supported by the resource - Self-assessed quality of relationships with caregiver, extended family, community is maintained or increased

¹ Consistent with s.17 of An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families; Policy 1.1 Working with Indigenous Children, Youth, Families and Communities; and other relevant sections of the Child, Family and Community Service Act

How this service is supposed to positively impact the broader system of care

Intended Outcomes	How we measure this (examples)
Stabilize families and care arrangements	Decrease living arrangement breakdown (Out-of-Care and foster)
Reduced number of children/youth coming into care (particularly children/youth with support needs)	Number of families seeking Special Needs Agreements (SNA) to support their child with support needs

Key Benefits of Specialized Homes and Support Services – Respite Care:

- Provides carers with a temporary break from their caregiving responsibilities, and provides children/youth with a predictable respite environment and schedule, as part of a support plan to maintain or improve overall family functioning and well-being
- Prevents the breakdown of families, placements, or out-of-care arrangements by offering an alternative to a child/youth coming into care
- Provides 24-hour culturally safe, trauma informed, developmentally appropriate care to children/youth with skilled caregivers who are trained to meet the unique and individual needs of the children/youth requiring care
- Assists service providers in developing expertise for supporting specialized populations of children/youth (i.e. high medical needs)
- Children/youth and families remain connected to each other, extended family, community, and other important people in their life
- Supports care teams by facilitating assessments, planning and coordination of community supports that support overall child/youth and family well-being

Practice Principles:

- Best Interest of the Child (CFCSA) and Best Interests of the Indigenous Child (*An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*)
- Placement Priorities as outlined in s.71 of the CFCSA and s.16 of *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*
- Culturally responsive and aligned to the [Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework](#)
- Trauma-informed approach (in alignment with [Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#))
- Strengths based: practice that concentrates on the inherent strengths of children, youth, families and communities
- Developmentally appropriate: practice that varies with and adapts to the age, experience, interests and abilities of individual children
- Harm reduction: practice that aims to minimize the negative health, social and legal impacts associated with health behaviours – working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination or requiring that they extinguish the problematic health behaviours completely as a precondition of support
- Rights of the Child: Uphold the obligations outlined in s.70 of the CFCSA for children/youth in care; an indigenous child’s inherent right to culture, language, and tradition; and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* which provides a foundation for the protection of children's rights globally.

Deliverables:

- Provide a safe, structured, predictable and supportive living environment, with 24-hour individualized support to children/youth (see below for programmatic features)
- Provide a physical environment that is developmentally appropriate, culturally safe, accommodating of medical, physical and developmental needs
- Provide a physical environment that reflects the needs of the children/youth being cared for and that enables their effective care and comfort
- Provide a culturally safe, trauma informed environment of care where the family, extended family, and community of children and youth placed are welcomed

Programmatic features

Supporting the care provider(s) (or parent/guardian):

- Engage the child/youth's regular care provider to determine the child's needs, preferences and support requirements (Appendix A for examples of information gathered for the SHSS Service Plan)
- Collaborate with the child's care provider (and circle of support/care team, if applicable) to determine how Respite/Relief can effectively provide continuity of care for the broader behavioural-management and care plan
- Provide verbal and/or written updates to the child's regular care provider on the child's progress in Respite/Relief care
- Where appropriate, support the care provider's long-term care of the child, with advice based on the service's experience and knowledge with working with the child/youth over time

Supporting child/youth in everyday living (as per the existing plans for the child/youth and/or the wishes of the care provide):

- Deliver daily recreational activities that promote social inclusion, are developmentally appropriate and accommodate the child/youth's varying interests and needs
- Facilitate appropriate contact with family members, as identified by the child/youth's social worker, parent or guardian
- Engage in an ongoing process of collaboration with the ministry to ensure service quality is maintained and improves over time
- Promote the child/youth's involvement in personal-care routines
- Administer medications, monitor and report side effects and proactively seek medical oversight/consultation for suspected medication issues
- Facilitate regular punctual attendance at school, in day programs, at family visits, at interventions and/or in recreational activities, where appropriate
- Provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks in accordance with traditional foods and/or Health Canada's "Canada Dietary Guidelines" or upon the professional advice of dietary experts, where appropriate
- Facilitate contact with appropriate religious and/or cultural community members
- Ensure child/youth has access to technology to support their education, recreation and social development
- Manage crisis situations at all hours in and outside of the resource
- Actively search for youth who have not returned to the resource and/or are involved in high-risk activities

Staffing Model/Expectations

2-3 Bed Resource	Staffing
Residential Child/Youth Workers (see appendix B for staffing expectations)	Residential Child/Youth Workers (at least 2 workers at the resource at all times)
Night Staff (see appendix B for staffing expectations)	Awake Residential Night Worker (at least 1 worker at the resource at all times)
Supervision and Program management (see appendix B for staffing expectations)	Residence Coordinator
	Program Manager
Supplemental Supports – additional support to meet the needs of the child/youth. These supports will be provided based on the child/youth’s service plan and determined/approved through collaboration with the ministry. Efforts will be made to leverage existing community services and supports (e.g. Ministry provided and contracted Child and Youth Mental Health and Child and Youth Support Needs services). for the purposes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment • Clinical consultation • Intervention and therapies provision • Clinical care planning 	Examples of supplemental supports include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional staffing • Clinical consultative services • Clinical interventions • Cultural supports

If required, additional on-call staff as needed to ensure sufficient staffing ratios at all times. Subject to MCFD approval, staff may be redeployed to other programs during periods of extended vacancy.

Qualifications:

Staff at the agency will have an appropriate level of training and experience for their position per Appendix B.

Special Equipment:

Children/youth require universal accessibility at the facility. Reasonable access to child-specific equipment will ensure their safety, recreation, and socialization in and out of the facility (for example: equipment augmenting inclusion, transportation supports).

Appendix A: Examples of information and planning considerations

SHSS Service Plan for Respite/Relief Care:

- What are the physical, medical, behavioural, mental health, trauma, identity confirming and developmental-related supports needs of the child/youth?
- What are the child/youth's goals and how can the service provider support these goals?
- What community or other supports does the child/youth require continued access to?
- Does your child/youth have special routines and schedules?
- Is your child/youth safe alone?
- What are calming activities to soothe the child/youth?
- How to track behaviours, anticipate problems, and redirect the child/youth?
- What behaviour management techniques may be used? What techniques are prohibited?
- What kind of food does the child/youth like?
- How can the physical environment be used to support the child/youth's comfort, need for stability and support?
- What supports are needed for the child/youth's education and recreation?

Appendix B Staffing, qualifications and expectations (examples)

Note – SDAs will populate the required position information in accordance with the populations needs and contracting requirements.

Residential Child/Youth Workers	
<p>Expectations/Potential Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, participates in assessment, goal setting and progress evaluation of children / youth. • Teaches children / youth to relate in a socially appropriate manner through the use of daily routines and activities. • Monitors clients in a staffed-resource setting and ensures their safety and well- being. • Provides trauma informed counselling (through behaviour management, attachment based, relational or other appropriate evidence informed modalities) to clients on a one-to-one and/or group basis by performing duties such as providing feedback on clients’ behavior, teaching coping techniques and adaptive behavior and providing guidance and support. • Provides emotional support and crisis intervention to clients which may include non-violent physical interventions. • Ensures communication and liaison between group home, school, family and the community. • Ensures that clients’ physical needs are met by performing duties such as assisting with basic personal hygiene, preparing meals, and administering medication as required in accordance with established guidelines, procedures and instructions. • Maintains reports such as statistics, logbooks, daily activities on residents. • Carries out household duties such as meal preparation and household cleaning. • Accompanies clients to appointments and community outings. • If required street searches for missing children and youth. 	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum two-year relevant diploma, or equivalent of education/experience working with children with support needs. • Specific training in behavioural modification, youth under 12 with support needs, attachment based parenting, and relationship based interventions (trauma informed practice)

Awake Residential Night Worker	
<p>Expectations/Potential Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors residents through the night and attends to any medical, emotional and behavioural needs that arise during the night. • Follow through on direction regarding specific residents left by the day staff. • Notifies staff of any major problems or emergencies. Responds to emergencies in accordance with established policies and procedures. • Supports residents with their morning and evening routines at the beginning and end of the shift. • Ensures that residents follow house rules. Monitors curfew regulations and reports to appropriate authorities as required. • Administers medications to residents in accordance with established policy. • Ensures that logbooks and other documentation such as charts and incident reports are complete. • Performs light housekeeping duties such as vacuuming, dusting, emptying garbage, cleaning and laundry. Performs minor building maintenance such as changing light bulbs. Reports maintenance needs to the supervisor. • Secures the building by arming alarms and locking doors and windows. • Prepares and assists residents in breakfast preparation. 	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum two-year relevant diploma, or equivalent of education/experience working with children with behavioural and other needs. • Specific training in behavioural modification, youth under 12 with support needs, attachment based parenting, and relationship based interventions (trauma informed practice)
Asleep Residential Night Worker	
<p>Expectations/Potential Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeps through the night hours but is required to wake in order to attend to unusual night-time needs that arise with the residents. • Supports residents with their morning and evening routine such as washing, brushing teeth, combing hair and assisting the residents in the preparation of their breakfast. • Administers medication to residents in accordance with established policy. • Responds to emergencies in accordance with established policies and procedures. • Completes related records such as logbooks, charts and incident reports. • Secures the building by arming alarms and locking doors and windows. 	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in a related human/social service field. One-year recent related experience (or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience) • Specific training in behavioural modification, youth under 12 with support needs
Additional on-call and relief staff as needed to support the desired population	
<p>Expectations/Potential Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As needed 	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As needed

Residence Coordinator	
<p>Expectations/Potential Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees the day to day operations of a residence, provides ongoing supervision of staff, and evaluates program policies • Develops, implements and evaluates residence goals, objectives policies and procedures and ensures the required standards are maintained. Identifies both physical and program needs of the residence to appropriate authority. Plans with staff for changes. • Schedules, supervises and evaluates residence staff and monitors daily operations. Assists in recruiting and selecting of staff and provides guidance, training and orientation on policies, procedures, techniques, report preparation or other matters arising in the residence. Identifies the needs of staff for professional development. • Monitors, authorizes and allocates expenditures within the operating budget for the year and assists senior management in preparing the budget. Prepares and maintains related documentation. • Ensures the cleanliness, safety, security and maintenance of the residence in accordance with applicable licensing standards either directly or through delegation to staff. • Maintains the residence’s inventory of supplies. • Works as a residence worker performing the duties as required. 	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Diploma in a related human/social service field. Three years recent related experience, including one year supervisory or administrative experience (or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience)
Program Manager	
<p>Expectations/Potential Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide supervision that supports consistent quality service • Provides leadership, guidance and participates with staff, families and others in planning and providing client plans, case conferencing, case management and the preparation of related documents and reports. • Coordinate the care team to ensure integrated and holistic assessment and planning • Facilitate training for staff • Liaises with the community, government, families, officials, professionals, and organization staff and promotes community involvement in the program. 	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in a related human/social service field. Three years recent related experience, including one year supervisory or administrative experience (or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience)

Additional professional contracted under supplemental supports, including sub-contracting of resources, require approval by the ministry.