

# Western Region Respite Program

Guidelines for Independent  
Respite Contractors



Yarmouth Association for  
Community Residential  
Options

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## What is YACRO?

The **Yarmouth Association for Community Residential Options (YACRO)** was established in 1991. It is a not-for-profit agency that provides residential support for children and adults challenged with disabilities.

The agency exists to enhance each person's potential to live, work and socialize within the community in the least restrictive, most inclusive manner.

### **We are committed to:**

- Advocating for recognition of the rights and dignity of all the people for whom we work
- Delivering quality services
- Providing for the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of the people taking part in our programs
- Supporting families through the delivery of a Respite Program
- Encouraging family, friends and community involvement
- Refraining from the use of aversive and overly intrusive techniques
- Developing and encouraging self-advocacy and independence

### **Our programs consist of:**

- An Independent Living Program
- Small Options Homes
- Specialized Options Homes
- Western Region Respite Program
- Vocational Services

### **What services does the Western Region Respite Program provide?**

The Respite Services Coordinator, upon completion of a home visit, assists families in locating an Independent Respite Contractor to provide respite services to their family.

Independent Respite Contractors are individuals who have completed a screening process and have indicated interest in one or more of the following programs:

- Autism Registry
- Respite Families
- Volunteer Program
- Respite House
- Registry of Independent Respite Contractors

**The family benefits by:**

- Receiving stress relief
- Reducing social isolation
- Enhancing family functioning and coping skills
- Reducing requests for residential placements
- Improving attitudes towards the child
- Allowing more time for other members of the family

**The child benefits by:**

- Learning social skills
- Maintaining and enhancing his/her quality of life
- Developing life skills
- Participating in recreational activities

**Who may use these services?**

Families caring for children/youth (birth to eighteen years of age), who require extraordinary amounts of care and supervision due to a mental/physical disability or illness, qualify to receive these services.

**The family must reside in one of the following counties:**

- Annapolis
- Digby
- Hants
- Kings
- Lunenburg
- Queens
- Shelburne
- Yarmouth

**What is an Independent Respite Contractor?**

An Independent Respite Contractor is a self-employed individual. He/she provides respite services to families who are looking for a break from the stress involved in caring for a child who has a disability. In some cases this break may be invaluable.

Independent Respite Contractors may provide services in his/her home, the home of the child, out in the community or in YACRO's Respite House. Regardless of the location of the services, he/she is in charge of and completely responsible for the care of the child.

Independent Respite Contractors take direction from the parents, guardians, and/or social worker of the child. Each Independent Respite Contractor remains legally responsible to report any suspected abuse. Please familiarize yourself with the CHILD ABUSE PROTOCOL (page 14) for further clarification and instruction concerning this issue.

YACRO coordinates the Western Region Respite Program. The Respite Services Coordinator is the only employee of the Western Region Respite Program. Independent Respite Contractors are NOT employees of YACRO. When YACRO employees are providing respite as an Independent Respite Contractor, they are NOT working for YACRO.

Independent Respite Contractors are NOT covered by Workers' Compensation. Should an injury occur, the Independent Respite Contractor is totally responsible for him/herself. Independent Respite Contractors are working for the families using their services and for Family & Children's Services. Independent

Respite Contractors are also responsible for reporting any and all of their income to Revenue Canada.

YACRO is responsible for the RESPITE HOUSE. The Respite House is a responsibility shared by YACRO and the Independent Respite Contractors. The Independent Respite Contractors using the house are responsible to ensure that the facility is kept CLEAN, IN ORDER AND SAFE!

### **The Application Process**

When you apply to become an Independent Respite Contractor, you will receive a package containing the following: an Independent Respite Contractor Questionnaire, a Reference Check Sheet, A Child Abuse Register Search form, an explanation on how to obtain a Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening Check, three forms that you must read, date and sign (Independent Respite Contractor Agreement, Expected Behaviors of Independent Respite Contractors and a Confidentiality Form).

Please complete the Independent Respite Contractor Questionnaire and return it to us. Remember to sign and date this document on the last page. The Reference Check sheet must be completed and returned to us as well. We require three work or volunteer-related references. Always remember to ask permission before using someone as a reference.

You must go to your local RCMP detachment and request to have a Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening. Please send the original copy to us.

Please complete Section a.-1. of the Child Abuse Register Search Form, but do not sign it. Take the form to your local Department of Community Services or bring it to our office (by appointment) as you will need a Commissioner of Oaths. Also bring picture identification. You will need it to prove your identity. NOTE: Upon completion of this step, mail the form to:

Private & Confidential  
Child Abuse Registry  
Family & Children's Services Division  
Department of Community Services  
P.O. Box 696  
Halifax, NS B3J 2T7.

Upon completion of your screening process, if clear, and the return of all necessary documents, we will contact you for an interview. The interview is composed of twelve questions and will assess your suitability to provide respite services.

**PLEASE NOTE:** One of the most frequent reasons that the application process is delayed, is that the applicant has not read all the instructions and signed all the necessary forms. We appreciate that the package takes time to go over, but it will reduce frustration for everyone involved if enough attention is given to this initial process.

Once more, here is an itemized list of all the information that should be included in your package when you return it to us:

1. your resume
2. Independent Respite Contractor Questionnaire
3. the results of your Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening.
4. Reference check list
5. Independent Respite Contractor Agreement
6. Expected Behaviors of Independent Respite Contractors
7. Confidentiality Form

You will have mailed the Child Abuse Register to the address indicated above and they will return a copy to us by mail.

#### **Expected Behaviors of Independent Respite Contractors**

1. Physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse is prohibited. Such abuse includes, but is not limited to:
  - unauthorized use of aversive behavior techniques
  - depriving clients of meals
  - corporal punishment
  - use of profane language in reference to clients
  - sexual overtures toward or relationship with a client

2. Client confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
3. Clients should not be left unattended.
4. Independent Respite Contractors shall comply with the terms and conditions of the Respite Services Contracts they have with families, and the Independent Respite Contractor Agreement.
5. Theft of family or client property is prohibited. Intentional damage to such property is prohibited.
6. Independent Respite Contractors shall not report to work under the influence of alcohol.
7. Independent Respite Contractors shall not consume, while on duty, any prescription or other drug that may impair functioning or judgment on the job.
8. Independent Respite Contractors are responsible for the accuracy of the recording of their hours worked and collection of payment from the family or social worker.
9. All relationships with families and social workers are to be maintained in a manner which enhances professionalism, reflects dignity and cooperation, maintains the mental health of the family and always considers the best interest(s) of the child.
10. The Independent Respite Contractor is expected to read, understand and comply with all the above. The failure to comply with any of these expected behaviors will result in the removal of his/her name from the Registry of Independent Respite Contractors.

### **The Independent Respite Contractor Agreement**

The Independent Respite Contractor is expected to read, understand and sign the following agreement in order to enhance the successful provision of respite services to a child with a developmental delay, disability and/or complex medical condition.



1. Assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child with regard to medications, personal care, nutrition, etc. Independent Respite Contractors shall not dispense unauthorized medications to clients.
2. All information regarding clients and their families is confidential. Client's concerns are discussed only with the parents/guardians or the Respite Services Coordinator. Any breach of confidentiality will result in the termination of both the match and removal from the Registry of Independent Respite Contractors.
3. The Independent Respite Contractor shall provide care for the client in either the child's home, the Independent Respite Contractor's home (if so authorized) or a respite facility.
4. The Independent Respite Contractor will attend an orientation session(s) in the child's home under the direct guidance/direction of the parent(s)/guardian(s).
5. The Independent Respite Contractor agrees to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s), of any of his/her clients, as soon as he/she finds out that he/she will be late for work. Reasons for cancellations must be extremely important and the personal life of the Independent Respite contractor must not interfere with his/her responsibilities.
6. The Independent Respite Contractor agrees to contact the Respite Services Coordinator immediately for any problems or concerns.
7. The Independent Respite Contractor agrees to make his/her own arrangements regarding income tax, CPP and EI.
8. Yarmouth Association for Community Residential Options will not be responsible or liable in the event of an accident, sickness or injury to the Independent Respite Contractor while he/she is caring for a client.

## **The Declaration of Confidentiality**

The Declaration of Confidentiality reads as follows and the Independent Respite Contractor must read, understand and sign it as part of the application process.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that all information disclosed to me through my association with Yarmouth Association for Community Residential Options, in regard to any client or their family, is to be held in confidence.

I understand and agree to discuss the personal information of a child/youth, and/or their family ONLY with those individuals directly related to the provision of respite services to the child/youth and their family. Further more, I agree to maintain an attitude of respect and professionalism when discussing these matters.

I also understand that breach of confidentiality will cause the removal of my name from the Registry of Respite Workers.

## **Keeping Your File Up-To-Date**

The Respite Services Coordinator is your initial representative to families who are seeking respite care. In order for the Coordinator to make informed decisions regarding which families might most benefit from your particular credentials, your file must be kept up-to-date.

That requires you to inform the Respite Services Coordinator of any changes in your situation that could affect the process of connecting you with a suitable match.

Update your resume whenever you have information to add that may enhance or increase your employability.

Inform the Respite Services Coordinator of name, address or phone number changes. If you have an e-mail address or fax number, they provide a quick and easy way to contact you.

If your availability for work has changed since your last contact with the Respite Services Coordinator, please let send it to us. Perhaps you are temporarily unable to offer your

services due to changes in your personal situation but do not want to have your name removed from the Registry of Independent Respite Contractors. You may request to have your name put on the Inactive List which allows you to resume work at a later date.

Your Child Abuse Register search, Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening must be renewed every two years. You will receive a notice from the office and will be required to complete this process within a reasonable period of time. Failure to do so will require that your name be removed from the Registry of Independent Respite Contractors.

### **Guidelines for Use of the Respite House**

The Respite House is located at 32 Prince Street, Yarmouth. It is under the supervision of The Yarmouth Association for Community Residential Options (YACRO). YACRO and the Independent Respite Contractors using the Respite House, are responsible for the care of this facility. The Independent Respite Contractors using the Respite House are expected and required to ensure that the facility is kept clean, in order and safe at all times!

Our main objective for the Respite House is to provide a safe and comfortable location for the children and Independent Respite Contractors. The Respite House comfortably accommodates two children/youth and two Independent Respite Contractors. There must never, under any circumstances, be more than four people occupying the Respite House at one time.

No pets are allowed at any time!

Guests: Independent Respite Contractors should not bring their children to the house for their shifts. If you bring friends or family, you are liable for their safety.

Groceries: Funds for the food items that are purchased for the Respite House are primarily provided by the families/guardians of the children/youth who use the house. YACRO, however, does supply some limited, non perishable grocery items. Please ask for a list of regularly stocked items. It is the responsibility of the Independent Respite Contractor to make sure that they have food to feed the child/youth that they are providing respite to. It is not YACRO's responsibility to provide food.

Housekeeping: Housekeeping is the Independent Respite Contractors' responsibility. Everyone is expected to do his/her part to keep the facility clean.

Communication and Documentation: Document daily events in each child's information binder in order to protect yourself and to keep team members up-to-date on what is happening. A miscellaneous communication binder has also been started. Contribute to the communication binders and read the entries of the other members of the team regularly.

Damages to the house: Funds for repairing damage to the house are limited. Sometimes children will act out in aggressive ways. Do your best to be vigilant to protect the child, other children and the facility from harm. Please try to redirect the children's play from jumping on beds to other activities such as bouncing on the trampoline.

Liability: You, the Independent Respite Contractor, are liable for anything that happens to the child when he/she is in your care. As mentioned above, you are also liable for the safety of any guests you bring into the Respite House.

Scheduling:

- Independent Respite Workers Contractors will work with only one child/youth at a time.
- Each child has an Independent Respite Contractor who is responsible for his/her scheduling.
- Each child has a list of Independent Respite Contractors that were chosen by the social worker, family and Respite Services Coordinator. Only those listed are to be scheduled. The Western Region Respite Program matches child and Independent Respite Contractor based on information given by the family and social worker. If additional Independent Respite Contractors are required to fill gaps in scheduling, you must contact the Respite Services Coordinator, immediately. The decision as to who should be scheduled is a family decision. The family **MUST** have a say in the matching process. This is not a decision that an Independent Respite Contractor can make.

Emergency Planning: The emergency supplies box is under the bed in the bedroom/Independent Respite Contractor office.

### Maintaining professionalism:

- Independent Respite Contractors take direction from the parent and/or social worker of each child. Although you may have the best interests of the child at heart, you cannot decide what is best for the child; only the parents or legal guardians have this right.
- Although you are not responsible for a child that someone else is contracted to work with, you remain legally responsible to report any suspected or witnessed abuse. PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE CHILD ABUSE PROTOCOL. THIS PROTOCOL IS PLACED IN THE RESPITE HOUSE AND AT YACRO'S OFFICE FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTION.
- Maintain professionalism in all your communications with other Independent Respite Contractors, the children in your care, their families and social workers. Do not gossip or disclose personal information. Be a good role model to each other and especially to the children in your care. Have respect for all other people in the program whether or not you agree with their work methods or points of view. Most of all, have fun!

### **The Child Abuse Protocol**

THE CHILD ABUSE PROTOCOL for Residential Child-Caring Facilities, second edition, is a document prepared and distributed by the Family and Children's Services Division of the Department of Community Services of the province of Nova Scotia.

A copy of this Protocol along with emergency phone numbers and instructions for reporting any suspected or witnessed child abuse has been placed in the Respite House for your information. You may also obtain a copy of this document from your local Family and Children's Services.

It is your responsibility, as an Independent Respite Contractor, to familiarize yourself with the Child Abuse Protocol and to follow its guidelines and instructions should the necessity arise.

If you require further instructions or guidance concerning this issue, please call your local Family and Children's Services.