



Family Resource Program Special Services at Home(SSAH)

Created by: Pamela Libralesso, Simcoe Coach



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What is SSAH?

The Special Services at Home (SSAH) program helps families who are caring for a child with a developmental or physical disability. It is funded and managed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCYS).

"The program helps families pay for special services in or outside the family home as long as the child is not receiving support from a residential program.

For example, the family can hire someone to:

- help the child learn new skills and abilities, such as improving their communications skills and becoming more independent*
- provide respite support to the family - families can get money to pay for services that will give them a break (or "respite") from the day-to-day care of their child"*

[Ministry of Children and Youth Services - Special Services at Home Information](#)

Special Services at Home (SSAH)

- In May 2015 the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (The Ministry) mailed a renewal package to most families currently receiving SSAH funding. The due date for this application to be received by the Ministry is September 30, 2015. If you do not complete the application as requested you could risk losing future funding by having to re-apply and possibly be placed on a waitlist.
- Most families are required to complete the full application (pages 1-7).
- **If you have completed a full application in the last 2 years, you will be required to complete a streamlined application (pages 1, 2 & 7 ONLY).** However, if there are significant changes in your child's care needs, your family's situation or in your support network since the last time you have completed an application, you will need to fill out the full application (pages 1-7) and explain the changes that have taken place.



What Can I Use SSAH Funding For?



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- Hiring a respite worker to come in the home and provide caregiver relief
- Respite out of home (through an agency or a respite worker's home)
- Hiring a mediator/worker to work on developmental goals
- One time training for parent or worker to implement personal development programming (e.g. Behaviour Modification training)
- "Disability related" recreation programs (e.g. special needs swimming class or therapeutic riding or other programs offered through agencies that support children with special needs)
- The difference in cost between a typical recreation group and one for children with special needs, or the additional cost to hire a support worker for a child with special needs so they may attend a typical recreation group
- Light housekeeping (e.g. may include housecleaning, snow removal and cutting grass)
- Extraordinary transportation costs related to transportation to respite or activities for personal development and growth
- Child care costs if one parent is not working
- Additional costs for enhanced staffing in a day care



Sources: [Tips for Managing and Spending SSAH funds](#) and [Helpful guide to Special Services at Home](#)

SSAH Progress Report

- A common question from families is about the Personal Development and Growth section of the application, as well as the Progress Report that is required for a re-application.
- You only need to complete the Progress Report if you received Personal Development and Growth funding in the past. You'd have to look at your original letter of approval to find out what you received and for what. If you can't find out for sure then just assume you did receive this funding and talk about the progress your child has made as a direct result of the funding you received. For example:
 - You asked for funds for a mediator to accompany your child to swim lessons, now she has acquired additional exposure to being in the water and no longer cries when in the pool.
 - You asked for funding to join a local scout group to widen his social circle and as a result he has made a good friend who now comes over for play dates.
- The more detail you can provide, the better. Attach a separate page if necessary.
- Attach copies of program descriptions wherever possible, ex. From your local recreation guide, camp brochure etc.

Application Tips



- **Be Very Honest:** Many of us tend to cover up the caregiver burnout we experience, the lack of support we have, and the pressures we are under. For example, if you are having a home visit, do not feel pressure to clean and organize your home from top to bottom in anticipation of the appointment if that is not a true reflection of your day-to-day life. Explain in as much detail as you are comfortable with what your family structure is like (i.e. single parent, married), how many hours you /your partner works, the impact that caring for your child has on your time and resources when it comes to your other children.
- **Medical History:** As much as you are comfortable, disclose any medical history in relation to your child's diagnosis and the limitations on their quality of life due to the diagnosis. It is also helpful to provide as much supporting documentation as you feel comfortable with.
- **Safety:** It is important to explain the safety concerns you have with your child's condition and how it affects their life (and yours). This can include your child's awareness of environmental dangers, if they are a flight risk, medical conditions that endanger their well-being, such as seizures, suctioning, behavioural outbursts, self-harm, etc.



- **Provide Supporting Documentation:** In most cases you are not required to provide more than a written diagnosis by a medical professional, but it can be very helpful to include as much documentation as you are comfortable with. This can provide a broader understanding of the strengths and needs of your child, and can make it easier to complete an application. Some examples of documentation that you might want to include would be a Single Plan of Care, a school safety plan, detailed reports from therapists and physicians, etc.
- **Be as Detailed as Possible:** It is better to provide more detail than not enough. For written applications attach extra pages if necessary. Be sure to include information on behaviours/medical requirements/supervision/expenses that maybe only occur once in a while.
- **Additional Program Information:** It is helpful to know that only the family is reimbursed, the Ministry does not reimburse the service provider/worker directly, and you will receive funds only AFTER services/programs are complete. SSAH does not issue T-slips or provide WSIB coverage.

Application Tips



- **Support System:** Provide as much information as possible regarding the supports you have in place, and whether they are family, friends or paid supports. It is also beneficial to ask a support person to attend any home visits you have.
- **Keep Copies:** Either photocopy or scan and store electronically your entire application. It is helpful to be able to refer back to past applications at renewal time, or when completing applications with other agencies.
- **Provide a Detailed Breakdown of Funds Requested:**
Try to break down the amount you are requesting in as much detail as possible.
- **For Additional Support:**
For ongoing funding support and help with applications throughout the year, contact ACCESS at 1-866-377-0286 for a Brief Resource appointment.

Example:



***Disclaimer:** These are examples for numbers and format only. These are not suggestions or estimations of actual costs/price of services or what you should be requesting.

Special Needs Summer Camp

Cost of camp = \$300/week x 2 weeks = \$600 PLUS

Support worker cost: \$15/hr x 7 hours/day x 5 days/week x 2 weeks = \$1050

Respite

\$15/hr x 10 hours/week x 52 weeks = \$7800

Special Needs Yoga Program

Cost of Program = \$220/16 week session, (1.5 hours/week) PLUS

Support worker cost: \$15/hr x 1.5 hrs/week x 16 weeks = \$360

TOTAL SSAH FUNDING REQUESTED FOR 2016/17 FUNDING YEAR: \$9210.00

SSAH Appeal Process

If you disagree with the outcome of your application you may request a review. The process is as follows:

1. Written Decision

- You will receive a letter advising of the outcome of your application
- You have 20 business days to request a review

2. Request a Review

- Write a request for a review of the decision, attention of the Director (contact information will be in the letter)
- Include as much supporting information and/or documentation as possible

3. Second Stage Review

- If your appeal is not granted at the first level, you can appeal to a second level. This time you write to the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of Operations
- The decision of the ADM is final

SSAH Appeal Tips



1. Remember that the [SSAH Guidelines](#) are only guidelines. They are not legislated.
2. If you are appealing your SSAH contract, it could be helpful to get in touch with others who have some experience with appeals. The [SSAH/Passport Coalition website](#) is a good place to start.
3. **You have more than the right to appeal.** You also have a duty to appeal in order to inform the Minister of your needs. The Ministry of Community and Social Services has no data on the volume of existing needs which are not met. Your only hope for supports may be through recognition of your needs.
4. Do not get sidetracked by arguments about lack of funding. Your concern is that you want your needs to be addressed.
5. Do meet with your local Member of the Provincial Parliament to assist you with your appeal. Ask him/her to write a letter of support and to contact relevant bureaucrats or politicians.