



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
Waterloo Wellington

**Association canadienne  
pour la santé mentale**  
Waterloo Wellington

**Family Support Options (FSO)**

**SSAH Program**

**Family Information Manual**

**PLEASE TREAT US WITH RESPECT**

**The FSO Team is here to help you. Inappropriate behaviour or language of any kind will not be tolerated at CMHA WW.**

**Thank you for your cooperation!**

Revised July 2024

Contents

Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHA WW) ..... 3
Our Vision..... 3
Our Mission..... 3
Family Support Options (FSO)..... 3
Special Services At Home (SSAH) ..... 3
Support for children who have a medically fragile / technology dependent designation (MFTD) ..... 4
Respiteservices.com..... 4
Supporting Kids in Camp (SKIC)..... 5
Waiting for SSAH Funding ..... 5
USING SSAH/MFTD FUNDING ..... 5
Role Descriptions – Using SSAH/MFTD Funding .....Error! Bookmark not defined.
The family will: ..... 6
The Agency (CMHA WW) will:..... 7
Transition to Adult Services ..... 7
Communication..... 8
Commonly Used Abbreviations ..... 8
Appendices..... 9
1. Respiteservices.com information sheet..... 9
2. Sample & blank Invoices /submission instructions / ..... 9
Invoice Tracking sheet ..... 9
3. CMHA WW Email and Text disclaimer ..... 9
4. SSAH Fact Sheet ..... 9
5. After Hours and Emergency Protocols..... 9
6. Child Protection and Reporting..... 9
(“Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It’s Your Duty”)..... 9
7. Personal Care Guidelines ..... 9
8. Transition to Adult Services Resource Sheet ..... 9
9. Additional Resources ..... 9

# Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHA WW)

The Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington provides a full care system for those with addictions, mental health or developmental needs. We serve everyone from children to adults to seniors, all under one roof.

## Our Vision

Imagine a community where: when you need support, wherever you are, there's someone.

## Our Mission

We work to build a community in which everyone has what they need to live meaningful lives. We build human connections that make it possible for people to achieve their greatest potential. We inspire and support people in achieving the quality of life that they desire. We are there when you need someone.

**We are CMHA WW. We are more.**

## Family Support Options (FSO)

### WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES

Family Support Options offers a range of supports to families who are caring for a child or youth with a developmental or physical disability at home. The service is for children under the age of 18 who are living at home, or in some cases are living on their own in the community with no other supports from other government funded out of home (residential) services. The Family Support Options catchment area is Guelph and Wellington County.

## Special Services At Home (SSAH)

The Special Services at Home (or SSAH) program is funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). The guidelines for this program can be found at: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/specialservices/guidelines.aspx> Specific use of the funds is set out in the MCCSS guidelines. It is important to note that changes in these Ministry guidelines can occur each fiscal year.

Family Support Options (FSO) Coordinators assist families to apply for SSAH which can be used to provide one-to-one support in the home or in the person's community to meet personal development and growth goals. SSAH also provides funding for parent relief and related supports to help the family meet their identified needs.

At CMHA WW, SSAH can be utilized for respite when the family contracts with a provider of their choice. It is important to note that while CMHA WW plays a role in the administration of SSAH funding – there are also roles for the family (detailed on page 6). We also provide support to all families to make use of the flexibilities attached to SSAH funding to provide camp costs, recreation, and/or routine homemaking.

CMHA WW does offer **some** flexibility to pay for some activities in advance – please connect with your FSO Coordinator for more information.

## Support for children who have a medically fragile / technology dependent designation (MFTD)

FSO Coordinators also manage MFTD supports, which are geared towards providing individualized respite options for children who are medically fragile and technology dependent. This extra support is intended to provide them with opportunities to participate in programs and activities that will enhance their socialization, learning, and enjoyment of seasonal recreation, as well as to provide their parents with needed respite from caregiving. This support may include additional seasonal funding.

The MFTD designation is determined by Ontario Health AtHome (formerly known as Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) – Waterloo Wellington), see their website at <https://ontariohealthathome.ca/region/waterloo-wellington/> for more information. MFTD funding is provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

## Respiteservices.com

CMHA WW manages the **respiteservices.com** database for Wellington County. This database allows families to connect with Independent Support Providers. The Recruitment and Training Coordinator at CMHA WW screens individuals who are interested in supporting people with developmental or physical disabilities. Families who wish to utilize the database can register and create an online profile to access this service. Registered families are also able to place classified ads for providers to read and respond to. Families can read independent providers' classified ads and contact the Recruitment and Training Coordinator if they are interested in connecting with a specific support provider.

A 1-page flyer with information on registering with [www.respiteservices.com](http://www.respiteservices.com) can be found in your SSAH Information package or folder. The full respiteservices.com information manual for parents and caregivers can be found at our website; <https://cmhaww.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Family-Information-Package-Final.pdf>

It is important to note that Independent Support Providers are **NOT employees of CMHA WW.**

## Supporting Kids in Camp (SKIC)

The SKIC program provides one week of support at camp in the Guelph-Wellington region for children under the age of 18 who have two of the following: physical, cognitive, or behavioural challenges. Children must live in the Guelph-Wellington region and want to attend a day camp and needs support for successful inclusion. SKIC provides the child a trained and experienced one-to-one workers, called Support Counsellors, so that they may attend community summer camps.

There is no cost to families for this service.

This program is funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and will address one-to-one support needs during summer camps. If you are interested in applying for a support counsellor so that your child may be fully included and supported at a summer camp program, please review the information available at <https://cmhaww.ca/services/children-youth-families/skic/> or ask your FSO coordinator for more information.

Online registration for SKIC opens in the spring (April) each year. Registration is on a first come, first served basis and spots tend to fill quickly. Please check the following link for updates. (<https://cmhaww.ca/services/children-youth-families/skic/>)

## Waiting for SSAH Funding

Families whose application for funding is at the MCCSS waiting for funding may also access respite providers at the [www.respiteservices.com](http://www.respiteservices.com) description noted on the previous page.

\*Please note that if your child is on the waitlist or the “service registry” for SSAH funding at MCCSS – **the parent(s) and/or legal guardian is fully responsible for providing payment** to a respite or one-to-one worker that is accessed via this website or independently.

## USING SSAH/MFTD FUNDING FOR RESPITE

When using SSAH/ MFTD funding for respite - the family hires and contracts with an Independent Support Provider (or ISP) of their choice.

Families are also allowed to choose their own combination of supports. The funds may all be used for camp, respite programs, one-to-one supports or a combination of all three. Families may choose someone they are familiar with as the Independent Support Provider or they may choose to utilize [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com) or advertise locally for an Independent Support Provider/s. They may also use a licensed temporary help agency. Family members other than the primary caregivers may provide the support if they are **over the age of 18**. Please refer to the [www.respiteservices.com](http://www.respiteservices.com) website for information on finding a provider.

For respite, the cost or charges are established between the family and the provider. Families may choose to pay a lower hourly rate for various tasks in order to get more hours from their yearly funding allocation. Others may choose a higher rate for more specialized tasks or to retain a highly skilled provider.

Independent Support Providers are **not employees of CMHA WW**. To determine the working relationship between family and provider please refer to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for clarification. Additional information can be found the CRA website; <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency.html>

Families and Independent Support Providers are required by MCCSS to adhere to the guidelines. The most up to date guidelines are available on the MCCSS website: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/specialservices/guidelines.aspx>

To access SSAH funding - families must submit invoices for reimbursement. Blank and sample invoices can be found at the CMHA FSO website at; <https://cmhaww.ca/services/children-youth-families/family-support-options/> **(look for the “Invoicing Information” tab)**

### The family will:

1. Use respectful language when communicating with their FSO Coordinator and this will be reciprocated.
2. Adhere to MCCSS guidelines for the program. The most up-to-date guidelines can be found at the following website; <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/specialservices/guidelines.aspx>
3. Complete the renewal application for SSAH funding with assistance from CMHA WW as required. The frequency of this renewal is determined by MCCSS.
4. Notify both the MCCSS and CMHA WW of any changes in name, address, phone number or child custody. This also includes if parents have separated, legally separated and/or divorced.
5. Remember that SSAH supports **cannot** occur at a preschool or daycare, at a school, or in a workplace, **with the exception of before and/or after school care**, which is now covered under SSAH funding,
6. Maintain accurate records of SSAH funds and/or hours and submit signed completed invoices on a **regular basis**, including receipts.
7. Reimbursement for expenses incurred during programming time may be the responsibility of the family. Some costs may be covered by SSAH funding. Details of what is covered under SSAH/MFTD funding under any specific fiscal year is detailed on the MCCSS website of <https://www.ontario.ca/page/special-services-home>
8. Should a concern arise regarding the safety and/or well-being involving the child receiving SSAH and/or the Independent Support Provider, the family is responsible for assessing the nature of the event, the appropriate action to be taken and the need to be present to facilitate care. Notify CMHA WW with the details of the event as soon as possible.
9. Will read and adhere to the following policies:
  - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It’s Your Duty (Appendix 6)
  - Personal Care Guidelines (Appendix 7)

For Guelph and Wellington County, CMHA WW is the transfer payment agency that can help families manage their SSAH funds. We do not take any fees from contract funds in order to administer them.

Should you not use your child’s SSAH funds for two consecutive fiscal years – your child’s CMHA WW file will be changed to “Follow Up”. Follow-Up status at CMHA WW implies that

the file is no longer active. The SSAH funds for the current fiscal year are still available, however, not being used. To re-activate your child's file, please get in touch with your FSO Coordinator. Please note that we are also obligated to inform the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) should we need to put your child's file into "Follow Up" status, as they are the funder of the SSAH program.

### **The Agency (CMHA WW) will:**

1. Adhere to the MCCSS guidelines for the programs.
2. Report to MCCSS as required.
3. Assist families with required processes including the following:
  - a. Explanation of programs and guidelines
  - b. Completion of documentation and consents
  - c. Establish goals
  - d. Renewals of applications as required.
4. Communicate any or all relevant CMHA WW and MCCSS's policies, procedures and changes to families.
5. Provide an orientation to services, programs and overall guidelines.
6. Monitor program funds.
7. Provide updates regarding use of funds.
8. Assist families to access the respiteservices.com data base via;  
<https://respite services.com/Wellington/respite services>

## **Transition to Adult Services**

Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) is the access point for adult developmental services funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) in Ontario. There are 9 DSO locations across the province.

When your child turns 18, the following developmental services end; Special Services at Home (SSAH), Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), and services through the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) or AccessOAP. This means that you must apply through DSO to see if your child is eligible to receive adult MCCSS funded supports available in your community.

When you connect with your area DSO they will help you:

- understand and complete the application process.
- determine the kind of services and supports you need.
- get access to MCCSS funded services and supports that you need when a spot is available.
- find information in your community.

When your child turns 16, contact with the Developmental Services Ontario office (DSO) should be initiated. Although not eligible for adult services until age 18, DSO can accept diagnosis documentation at age 16 (which is typically a psychological or psychoeducational assessment). This is required to confirm the individual is eligible for adult developmental

services. Please be aware that although they have been eligible for services as a child, this does not guarantee their eligibility as an adult. The DSO has established new eligibility criteria for those 18 years of age and older. Once the DSO receives your information they will review it in an attempt to confirm eligibility and contact you regarding what else is needed. For more information please contact Developmental Services Ontario at;

1-888-941-1121 OR <http://www.dsontario.ca/agencies/dso-central-west>

If your child solely has a physical disability without an intellectual disability **OR** if your child solely has an MFTD designation without an intellectual disability – please connect with your FSO Coordinator about other potential resources as your child transitions to adulthood.

## Communication

Coordinators will send regular updates by mail to families around use of funds. Families can also call or email their FSO Coordinator at any time to get an update about funds remaining.

If you require support or more information about the FSO Program at CMHA WW, please go to <https://cmhaww.ca/services/children-youth-families/family-support-options/>

Families can review the e-mail and texting disclaimer (see appendix 3).

## Commonly Used Abbreviations

AIR	Access Information and Referral
CMHA WW	Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington
CRA	Canada Revenue Agency
DSO	Developmental Services Ontario
FSO	Family Support Options (a program of CMHA WW)
MCCSS	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
MFTD	Medically Fragile Technologically Dependent
Ontario Health AtHome	Formerly known as Home Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) or the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) - a single organization that supports home care in Ontario
SKIC	Supporting Kids in Camp (a program of CMHA WW)
SSAH	Special Services at Home



## Appendices

1. **Respiteservices.com information sheet**
2. **Sample & blank Invoices /submission instructions / Invoice Tracking sheet**
3. **CMHA WW Email and Text disclaimer**
4. **SSAH Fact Sheet**
5. **After Hours and Emergency Protocols**
6. **Child Protection and Reporting (“Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It’s Your Duty”)**
7. **Personal Care Guidelines**
8. **Transition to Adult Services Resource Sheet**
9. **Additional Resources**