

# RESPIRE TIP



## DIRECT FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Direct Family Support (DFS) program provides supports and services, including Enhanced Family Support (EFS), to both children and adults with disabilities who live at home with their families. The intent of the program is to support and provide funding to eligible families to enable them to support their family member with a disability at home.

### **Eligibility: Direct Family Support for Children:**

To be eligible for the Direct Family Support for Children (DFSC) program the application and/or assessment process must identify and determine that the child/family meet the following criteria:

- The family and child are permanent residents of Nova Scotia.
- The child is under 19 years of age.
- The child is living in the home of a family member/guardian of the child.
- The child has been diagnosed by an approved clinician as having a mild or moderate intellectual disability with a significant behavioural challenge that has been documented within the last two years.
- The child has been diagnosed by an approved clinician as having a severe intellectual disability that has been documented within the last two years.
- The child has a significant physical disability with ongoing functional limitations that are a result of the disability and which seriously limits their capacity to perform age appropriate activities of daily living as determined by an approved clinician.
- The family meets the [DFSC Program income guidelines](#).
- The family agrees to participate in the assessment process.

### **Eligibility: Direct Family Support for Adults:**

To be eligible for the Direct Family Support for Adults (DFS) program the application and/or assessment process must identify and determine that the applicant/individual and their family meet the following criteria:

- The applicant and their family are permanent residents of Nova Scotia.
- The applicant is 19 years or over.
- The applicant is residing in the home of a family member or guardian.
- The applicant has a medical diagnosis of one or more of the following: intellectual disability, long term mental illness, or physical disability.
- The applicant and family have unmet needs as identified through the assessment process.
- The applicant meets the financial eligibility criteria as outlined in SPD policy and procedures.
- The applicant and their family agree to participate in the assessment process as outlined in SPD policy and procedures.

### **Enhanced Family Support for Children and Adults:**

As part of the DFS Program, Enhanced Family Support provides funding to help families to support children and adults with disabilities at home when their care and support needs are considered extremely challenging and they require comprehensive, highly structured and skilled forms of support and intervention. This funding will allow families to hire support workers who have specialized training, education or experience related to the needs of the child or participant.

To be eligible for EFS, adult participants or children and their families must meet the requirements of the SPD/DFS Program and the EFS eligibility criteria, as outlined in the [Enhanced Family Support for Adults Policy \(EFSA\) \(PDF\)](#) and [Enhanced Family Support for Children Policy \(EFSC\) \(PDF\)](#).

**How to apply:** For more information about the Direct Family Support Program or to learn how to apply, please contact your local Nova Scotia Community Services office:

<http://novascotia.ca/coms/departement/contact/index.html> or call toll-free at 1-877-424-1177.

When you explain you are interested in the Direct Family Support program, they will set up an appointment for an assessment which takes place in your home. You will be assigned a caseworker who will come to visit you and your family member with high needs to discuss the following:

- your family life and how you are managing
- your family income. You will be asked to provide documentation of your family's yearly Income
- details on your family member's diagnosis, their functioning ability and their needs .

The caseworker may also ask about any unmet needs your family has. These are extra costs which you family experiences because of your family member's disability. For children, funding may be available for medications, transportation to medical related appointments, and equipment such as diapers. For adults, funding for unmet needs may include shelter, food, clothing, prescriptions, transportation and a comforts (personal use) allowance.

Following the assessment, you will be notified if you qualify for the program or not. The Direct Family Support Program provides families with the funds to hire respite workers or fund respite opportunities for the family member. Direct Family Support does not have respite workers to offer to families. It is the responsibility of the parents themselves to find appropriate respite workers or programs.

For information about how to find a respite worker, please see our Respite Guides at: <http://disability.novascotia.ca/content/respite-partnership-publications>

*This Respite Tip has been brought to you by the Nova Scotia Partnership on Respite, Family Health, and Well-Being. Information on the Respite Partnership and this and other Respite Tips can be found at: <http://disability.novascotia.ca/content/nova-scotia-respite-partnership>*

*Respite, WE deserve it!*



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