

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Home respite services provided to families and informal caregivers of individuals with a disability or autism spectrum disorder

Families and informal caregivers who live with a senior or someone with a disability or autism spectrum disorder can experience stress, anxiety and even psychological distress when being confined amid the current pandemic. In such situations, asking for help is essential.

How to access home respite services for families and informal caregivers of individuals with a disability or autism spectrum disorder

Following an assessment of needs by an integrated health and social services centre (CISSS) or an integrated university health and social services centre (CIUSSS), home respite may be provided to families and informal caregivers of individuals with a disability or autism spectrum disorder.

Home respite services may also be provided by Health and Social Services Network (RSSS) partners without prior CISSS or CIUSSS assessment being required.

Users of services who are known to integrated health and social services centres and integrated university health and social services centres

CISSS and CIUSSS facilities are required to contact vulnerable users of services and especially those that live alone, have complex health problems or have pronounced communications difficulties. During these calls, the CISSS or CIUSSS will verify the user's needs, if any services of family or informal caregivers are available and whether or not they are suspected or confirmed as having COVID-19.

Users and their relatives may also contact their case worker to discuss their needs, including home respite. They will be able to come to a common agreement on which options are best suited to the situation.

Persons who do not already receive CISSS or CIUSSS services

If they so desire and feel the need, the families and informal caregivers of a person who has a disability or autism spectrum disorder but is not being followed by a CISSS or CIUSSS, can contact the uptake department of their CLSC and request home respite services.

Individuals who are experiencing signs of anxiety or distress and need support may contact the Info-Social telephone service by dialling 811 (option 2). The service is free, confidential, and

quickly directs callers to a psychosocial professional who can provide advice, answer questions and as required, refer the caller to an appropriate resource within the health and social services network or elsewhere in the community.

Modulation of services

Home respite services have had to be adapted amid the pandemic. That said, services deemed essential have been maintained as is, while others have been adjusted to reflect public health directives and CISSS and CIUSSS capabilities.

Essential respite services continue in the following situations:

- An informal caregiver is exhausted or has a high risk of becoming so
- There is a danger of the individual being relocated or lodged in a residential facility

In situations where users and caregivers who live under the same roof are confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19, respite services will be suspended. Other solutions for supporting users of services and their informal caregivers can be envisaged in such situations, such as increasing the availability of other types of services, such as homesupport services and telephone support.

In situations where users and caregivers who live under the same roof are neither confirmed nor suspected of having COVID-19, non-essential home respite services have been suspended to comply with public health directives, in order to avoid the danger of the virus spreading. Other, appropriate solutions such as telephone support have been put into place by CISSS and CIUSSS centres in these types of situations in order to support users and their family circle on the basis of their needs while still complying with public health instructions.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of public health directives are now in force to reduce the danger of users and their families catching the virus and to protect people that provide home respite services:

- COVID-19: [Public health directives for persons providing home respite services to the families of children who have a physical or intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder](#) (Publication available in French only.)
- COVID-19: [Home care services directives for the health and social services network](#) (Publication available in French only.)

Home respite service providers

Home respite services may be provided by the following parties:

- RSSS facilities

On behalf of a facility by external providers (community organizations, home help social economy enterprises known by the EÉSAD acronym, etc.) or by employees hired under the direct allowance / service employment paycheque arrangement for home care service providers *For more information on policies that have been put in place to ramp up support for employees of external home service providers and ensure an appropriate response to issues that are related to the COVID-19 pandemic, refer to:*

<https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/salle-de-presse/communique-2085/>

- RSSS partners like community organizations and EÉSADs but without RSSS involvement

NB: A single family may receive simultaneous services from more than one type of the providers listed above, based on needs and a clinical assessment.