

Navigating the System

The PEI Association for
Community Living

www.peiacl.org

- PEI Disability Support Program
- Disability Tax Credit
- Did You Know?
- Preschool on PEI/SNA Funding
- Discussions With Siblings
- How to Tell Extended Family
- Registered Disability
- Savings Plans
- Social Policy

Working on behalf of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families

Attempting to navigate the system of Doctors, Service Providers, Educators, Community Resources, Family issues and Tax information for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families can be complex and confusing. Being able to clearly collect information around available services, community supports, service providers and financial planning should be transparent.

This Family Guide may be a useful tool for individuals and families needing direction.



NEXT STEPS:

- • First-breathe, your son or daughter is still the same person. You just need to arm yourself with a different set of “tools” to adapt to the new challenges.
- Educate yourself with good, correct information - learn as much as possible about the diagnosis.
- Take care of your family relationships-maintain honest, two-way communication with your loved ones.
- Consider bringing a family member or friend with you to the specialists’ appointments. Write down your questions and concerns beforehand and bring them with you.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help-find support groups in your area.

About Us:

➤ The Prince Edward Island Association for Community Living (PEI ACL) is a family-based association empowering people with intellectual disabilities and their families to lead the way in advancing inclusion in their own lives and in their communities.

We do this by sharing information, fostering leadership for inclusion, facilitating networking, connecting people and opportunities and promoting rights and values in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

We provide support and advocacy services, in various environments, such as homes, schools & communities which are guided by the needs of each individual and family.

Our three priority areas are :

- Supporting Families
- Social Policy Reform & System Change
- Employment



Julie Smith
Family Inclusion Facilitator

Contact Julie Smith, our Family Inclusion Facilitator, and she can help you navigate the system you are in and provide an empathetic ear.

Disability Tax Credit

➤ This is a form T2201- the Disability Tax Credit Certificate, that your Doctor needs to fill out. Once it is filled out be sure to review the form and that all appropriate boxes and items are filled in.

If it is accepted when you file, be sure to claim disability tax credit every year. You may need to complete a form every 5 years.

The disability tax credit is a non-refundable tax credit used to reduce income tax payable on your return. This amount includes a supplement for persons under 18 at the end of the year.

You are only eligible for the disability amount if a qualified practitioner certifies on this form that you or your family member has a prolonged impairment, and certifies its effects.

All or part of this credit may be transferred to your spouse or common-law partner, or another supporting person. For details on the disability amount, and to download the form T2201 visit:

<http://www.cra.gc.ca/disability>

DID YOU KNOW:

➤ **You DO NOT need to be referred by a Doctor for Speech Language Pathology Services?**

You can call a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) in your area to have your son/daughter assessed if you are having concerns about their Language development.

Speech Language Pathology provides assessment, consultation, and intervention services for individuals who have communication difficulties. These may include speech sound articulation problems, language difficulties, stuttering, voice problems, etc. Efforts are made to provide parent/caregiver information sessions to support families and caregivers working with their children at home/day care. Topics covered include facilitation of language development, improving speech clarity.

Charlottetown: 902 368-4440

Souris: 902 687-7016

Montague: 902 838-0762

Summerside: 902 888-8160

Evangeline: 902 854-7259

O'Leary: 902 859-8720



Preschool on PEI SNA Funding

➤ This is an online tool to search and sign-up for regulated early learning and child care programs across Prince Edward Island. The early learning centers can apply for a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) grant. The purpose of the Special Needs Grant is to support the inclusion of children with special needs in a licensed early childhood setting. In order to achieve the above, funding is available for additional staff to be employed at a licensed early childhood facility for the purpose of inclusion of children with special needs. For the purposes of this grant, a child with special needs is defined as a person who is under the age of 12 years, has a diagnosed disability and, in order to attain the usual developmental goals, requires additional and/or specific types of stimulation/care. The PEI government website: www.gov.pe.ca has a link to the **Special Needs Grant** that will also give some more information.



Siblings

➤ Throughout their lives, brothers and sisters will play many different roles in the lives of their sibling. They share many of the same concerns as their parents concerning isolation, a need for information, guilt, concerns about the future, and caregiving demands. Brothers and sisters also face issues that are uniquely theirs including resentment, peer issues, embarrassment, and pressure to achieve.

It's important for parents to take the time from their busy schedules to talk to the brother(s) or sister(s). It conveys a message that parents "are there" for them as well and provides an excellent opportunity to talk about a wide range of topics.

How to Tell the Extended Family

When you decide it is appropriate to disclose information about your child's diagnosis, you should be prepared to deal with the potential for friends and family members to need extra support and education in the area of that particular disability. They may very well be relieved to learn there is a name for the difficulties they see their family member experiencing but they may also express feelings of discomfort with the diagnosis. This is all perfectly normal. Some people may call a family meeting to discuss the issues facing their son or daughter. Others might feel more comfortable enlisting the help of an extended family member to support them in letting friends and relatives know about the disability and, if it's genetic, the potential implications for the family at large. There is no right or wrong. The ways to address the issue of disclosure are as diverse as each individual family. There are any number of organizations and websites at your disposal so educate yourself. This will empower you to be the best advocate for your son or daughter with an intellectual disability. PEIACL can help you find the way that works best for you.

You may be approached by friends, relatives, educators and community members who genuinely desire to learn more about your son or daughter. Use this opportunity to educate. The more supportive, knowledgeable people we have in our family member's life the better chance they have to live the fully inclusive life we envision for them.

PEI Disability Support Program

The PEI Disability Support Program (DSP) is a social program with a financial component. This means it is open to all Islanders with a qualifying disability, and may provide financial help. The purpose of DSP is to assist with personal planning and to help meet the needs related to an individual's disability. These supports are needs-based.

Supports are provided in three main areas: child disability supports, adult disability supports, and employment and vocational supports. Supports can take a number of different forms, including support for respite care, community living and community participation supports, technical aids and other devices and family support programs.

This is done initially by an intake process over the phone. It is based on Diagnosis and the outcome of an Assessment need. Contact a DSP worker in your area.

For more information on the Disability Support Program, visit: www.gov.pe.ca and follow the link to Disability Support Program.



Social Policy

PEI ACL is committed to working on removing barriers to well-known systems of exclusion, poverty and discrimination faced by families and/or individuals across Prince Edward Island.

Priority areas include:

- Changes to the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).
- The Government of Canada allows \$7,899 as a base amount for non-refundable Disability Tax Credit to eligible Canadians while PEI base amounts remain at \$6,890 for the same credit eligible to Islanders. We are asking our provincial Government to amend the PEI Tax Act to bring the base amount equal to the Federal Income Tax Act.
- Supported Decision Making Legislation.

PEI ACL promotes the rights and values in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

For the last 60 + years we have taken a leadership role in the area of law reform and social policy. Working with governments at all

levels and the community, we promote policies and programs that support people with intellectual disabilities in every aspect of life and work to break down barriers in the systems.

With the varying policies and systems that are affecting families/individuals, the PEI ACL has been focusing on the compliance within the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

With rates of disability growing across PEI and around the world, due in part to aging populations, we can no longer afford the cost of exclusion. Good public policy creates a society in which people – in all their diversity – are equally valued, free, safe and respected for their presence and contribution in social, political, cultural and economic life in their community.

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)



A registered disability savings plan (RDSP) is a savings plan to help parents and others save for the long-term financial security of a person who is eligible for the disability tax credit.

The RDSP has many positive aspects to it. You don't need any money to open an RDSP. There are two parts to remember. The Bond is money that the Government will deposit into the RDSP of low and modest income Canadian families regardless if a contribution is made to the RDSP. The Canada Disability Savings Grant is a matching grant, so if you were to put money into the Savings Grant, the Government will match up to 300% of what you put into the Grant depending on the beneficiary's family income. To receive either the Bond or the Grant you need to apply at the financial organization where you have your RDSP. Bonds and Grants will be paid into the RDSP until the beneficiary turns 49 years of age.

Contributions to an RDSP are not tax deductible and can be made until the end of the year in which the beneficiary turns 59.

Contributions that are withdrawn are not included in income for the beneficiary when they are paid out of an RDSP. However, the Canada disability savings grant, the Canada disability savings bond, and investment income earned in the plan are included in the beneficiary's income for tax purposes when they are paid out of the RDSP.

To be eligible for the Registered Disability Savings Plan, you must:

- Be under 60 years of age (if you are 59, you must apply before the end of the calendar year in which you turn 59);
- Make sure you or your relative qualify for the Disability Tax Credit;
- Have a valid Social Insurance Number;
- File a tax return for two years prior (to receive the Grant and Bond)
- Make sure you sign up for the Canada Child Tax Benefit if your child is under age 18.

For more information on the RDSP, visit www.rdsp.com or www.disabilitysavings.gc.ca.



Prince Edward Island
Association for
Community Living
Diversity includes.

If you or a family member needs assistance, please contact our office to find out how we can help.

The PEI Association for Community Living

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