

PARENT GUIDE



Integrating children
with special needs
in a child care services



J'me fais
une place
en garderie

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Background and Objectives of this Guide



THE ORGANIZATION

J'me fais une place en garderie (JMFPG) is a resource that has promoted the integration of hundreds of children in Montreal child care services since 1994. Our mission:

To support families living with children from 0-5 years old with a mobility impairment, whether or not associated with another disability, during the process of integration into child care services authorized by the Government of Quebec.

BACKGROUND

This guide is the result of a requirement study done in 2012-2013 by our organization, *J'me fais une place en garderie*.

This study confirmed the need for a comprehensive resource kit to help parents integrate children with special needs into child care services. In short, a document that includes reflections, tricks and tips, advices, resources, and testimonials.

THE GOAL

Inform, empower, and support parents of special needs children during their integration into a child care service.

Raise awareness to promote collaboration and cooperation between parents and their child's educator, as well as with the child care service in general. Parents are, first and foremost, partners of the child care service, and their involvement impacts the successful integration of their child. This guide is thus designed to inform parents what attitudes are appreciated by child care services, thereby helping their child's integration.

THE OBJECTIVES

1

ACCESSIBILITY

Ensure a reference document about integrating children with special needs in child care services is available to all parents.

2

COLLABORATION

Educate parents about the role they can play and the benefits of their collaboration with child care services.

3

ORIENTATION

Help parents understand the role of the child care service environment as compared to the rehabilitation sector.

4

PARTICIPATION

Promote the child's participation in daily activities at the child care service: encourage socialization and independence above all.

5

COMPLEMENT

Provide JMFPG staff with a working tool that complements the support they offer to parents.

IN ESSENCE ...

We propose that integration should be viewed and implemented as a 4-step process:

1. REFLECTING about the integration
2. RESEARCHING a child care service
3. PREPARING for the integration
4. DAILY COLLABORATION with the child care service





Integrating your special needs child into a child care service...? YES, IT'S POSSIBLE! As a parent, you play an essential role during each step of the process!

Thinking about the integration may lead you to seek answers to many questions, such as:

- How is the child care environment different from therapy and home life?
- What are the potential benefits for my child?
- Will my child be accepted by others (adults and children) at the child care service?
- Can a child care service meet the special needs of my child?
- Will the child care service view my involvement in a positive light?
- How can I collaborate and communicate with the child care service?

These are the type of questions this guide tries to address while exploring the **4 steps** of the integration process.



STEP 1

REFLECTING about the integration

WHY INTEGRATE YOUR CHILD INTO A CHILD CARE SERVICE?

THE UNCERTAINTIES

Anxiety and doubts can cloud your thoughts:

- Fear that the child care service might refuse your child.
- Fear that you are not choosing the right environment for your child.
- Fear that your child cannot adapt to the environment and routine.
- Fear that your child might be ignored, rejected, judged.
- Fear that your child may not receive enough stimulation.
- Fear that your child may be seen as a burden.



Understand that these concerns are perfectly normal, and they tend to disappear as you and your child progress through the steps toward integration. Give yourself time to adjust to the situation and enjoy the experience as it unfolds.

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION

The benefits for our children help convince us to choose integration and reassure us that it is the right choice. The benefits are numerous and, in the majority of cases, have convincing positive spin-offs for the children, their parents, the educators and, finally, their friends.

Benefits for the special needs child

- They gain and develop social skills.
- They gain emotional independence by developing relationships with adults other than their parents.
- Surrounded by friends and without the exclusive attention of a single adult, they become more autonomous (when eating, dressing, moving around...).
- Surrounded by peers, they learn through imitation and build friendships.
- Their global development improves.
- Their self-esteem is enhanced as they realize they can do things others can do.
- They blossom in a new life environment.

Benefits for other children

- They develop empathy with others.
- They learn responsibility by helping with the special needs of the integrated children.
- They become more respectful and tolerant by accepting differences.
- They observe perseverance and courage in the child with special needs.
- They appreciate the importance of helping others.

Benefits for the child's parents

- They find it easier to find a balance between work, family life, and therapy for their child.
- They benefit from some respite and support.
- They have the opportunity to meet other parents.
- They live the same social experience as other parents in a child care environment.
- If desired, they are in a position to pursue their careers or return to school, etc.
- They observe their child in a different environment than home.
- They learn and develop communication and collaboration skills with new partners.

Benefits for the educator and the staff at the child care service

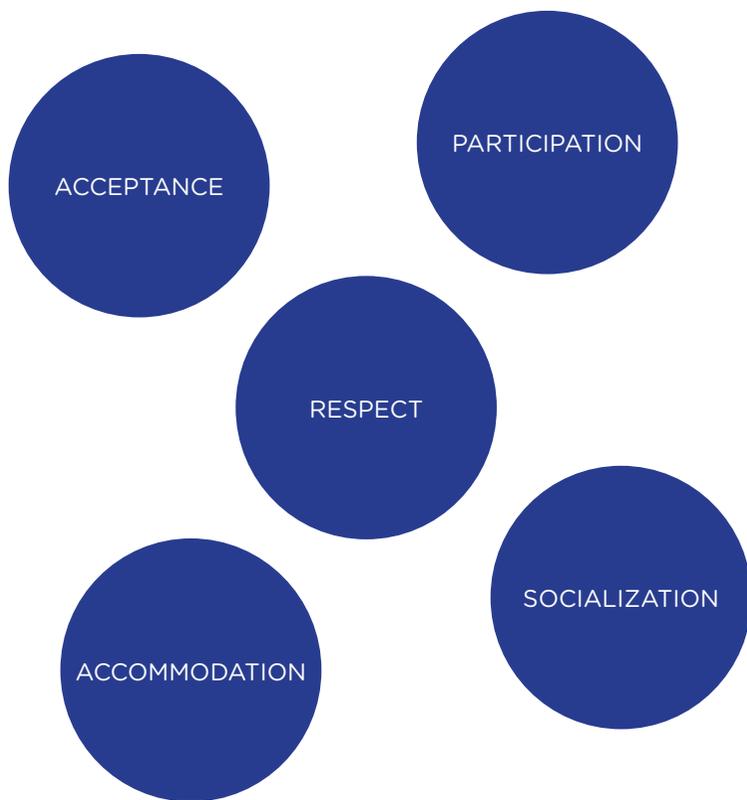
- They experience a professional challenge.
- They gain new knowledge and become more open-minded about differences.
- They are involved in a rewarding experience.
- They develop new skills and strengthen their creativity.
- They learn to appreciate the value of team work.
- They adjust their expectations and opinions about integration.



UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING INTEGRATION IN A CHILD CARE SERVICE

Integration is achieved when the special needs child is accepted in an environment that accommodates their differences and needs by planning the adaptations and support required to facilitate social participation and encourage independence.^{1,2}

IN A FEW WORDS, INTEGRATION MEANS...



¹ Bélanger, M. and Berger, P. 2006. *Les approches adaptatives et inclusives visant l'intégration scolaire, professionnelle et sociale des personnes handicapées*, Drummondville, OPHQ.

² Calva, V., Lavallée, C., Déziel Lusignan, J., Martin, J.-F., Massé, M.-C. et Richer, M. C. 1996. *Bon à quoi on joue ? Guide d'intégration des enfants ayant une déficience intellectuelle en services de garde*. Montréal, AMDI.

3 FACETS OF INTEGRATION

1

Facilitate and ensure social participation of the integrated child

Explanation

Encourage the child to play, make friends, and communicate with peers. The special needs child should participate in the same activities as the others, and be given responsibilities and roles where they are appreciated. In essence, they should follow the normal rules and routines of the child care service.

Example

Sophie has a mobility impairment and moves around with a walker. This week, Sophie is tasked with handing out plates, utensils, and glasses to her friends before lunch. To help her fulfill this responsibility, a basket is attached to her walker so she can carry the dishes and give them to her friends.

Sophie loves to dress up. A dress-up area is set up and Sophie goes there regularly with two friends who help her when necessary and, most of all, have fun with her while they pretend to be firefighters, cooks, bunnies, magicians...



2

Contribute to the development of the integrated child's specific skills

Explanation

Take the child's specific needs into account by suggesting activities and games that will help develop their skills. Plan adaptations to the environment that facilitate learning in a group context and when playing games and participating in activities.

Example

Etienne is being followed by a speech therapist because he has delayed language development. The educator at his child care service is asked to plan strategies and activities that encourage Etienne to express himself verbally. Since Etienne loves animals, a box of animal puppets is included in the theatre area. An activity with animal sounds is also scheduled, and books featuring different animals are placed in the reading nook.



3

Ensure the integrated child's health and safety considering their special needs

Explanation

Take the special needs of the child into account when it comes to health and safety by planning the required accommodations, equipment, and facilities.

Example

Maya has a feeding tube (a tube attached to her stomach that allows her to eat). It is essential to place Maya in her positioning chair during meals. But even though she can't sit at the same table as her friends, the eating area is set up in a way that lets her sit near them while her feeding is being supervised.



IN A NUTSHELL...

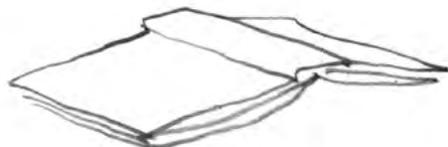
A child care service provides an environment where the priorities are socialization, games, and independence. Surrounded by friends and immersed in an animated atmosphere, the integrated child is stimulated and appreciated.



You take special needs into account by planning accommodations and adaptations that facilitate development and learning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

To learn more and better understand the role and mission of child care services, we invite you to read the [educational program of educational child care services in Quebec, *Accueillir la petite enfance*](#), available on the website of the ministère de la Famille.



“Why a regular child care service? After Sarah-Catherine was diagnosed, I promised myself I would live my life as normally as possible (I must say I also had a little man who is 2 years older than Sarah, and who also had the right to live like everybody else). Sarah wouldn’t be an outcast from society; she would find her own place. A child care service is, in my view, a foundation, a mini-society. What Sarah needed was other children around her, like any child would need.”

Louise Desaulniers, Sarah-Catherine’s mom





STEP 2

RESEARCHING a Child Care Service

Waiting for space in a child care facility can take a long time, but suggestions in this step will help guide and facilitate your search.

TYPES OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

There are different types of child care services, and a summary of each of them is provided below. However, to help you make an informed decision, you can find more complete information on the website of the ministère de la Famille.

Home Day Care

Les bureaux coordonnateurs (BC) de la garde en milieu familial coordinate educational services offered by home child care providers (RSG) in each region. People who are responsible for child care services in private households can be recognized and subsidized by the government if they offer an educational program.

Subsidized Day Care

These day care centres are for-profit organizations that are subsidized by the government and provide educational child care services in their facilities.

CPE

Centres de la petite enfance are non-profit organizations that are subsidized by the government. They provide educational child care services in their facilities and are administered by a Board of Directors where parents form the majority.

Unsubsidized Day Care

These day care centres provide services for a daily fixed amount (e.g. \$35 a day). They are not subsidized by the government and thus do not receive the integration allowance available for children with special needs.³

³ The integration allowance for children with special needs is further detailed in pages 30 to 40



A home day care can be a smart choice for practical reasons, such as proximity and the availability of space for your child, but also because an environment with a more flexible routine and smaller number of children can facilitate integration.

YOUR NEEDS

Identifying your needs can help guide your research:

- Do you prefer a child care service near your home, your workplace, or on your way to work?
- Will you travel to the child care service by car, public transit, paratransit, or on foot?
- Do you need a full-time or a part-time child care (what days)?
- Do their usual operating hours fit with your child care needs? Most services are open from 7 am to 6 pm.

LOOKING FOR A CHILD CARE SERVICE

You now need to target the child care services that work best for your needs and preferences and add your child to the waiting lists of these facilities.

There are many ways to look for a child care service:

- The websites of the ministère de la Famille and our organization, where information on the various search engines available is regularly updated.
- Your CSSS can be a useful resource.
- Your local newspapers, as well as notice boards at your grocery store, drugstore, and other establishments in your neighbourhood.
- Nearby playgrounds where, in the morning, you can meet people in charge of home care facilities.
- Family, friends, acquaintances... they are all sources of information that can help you find an available space.



When you're ready to add your child to the waiting list of the preferred facilities, you should specify that your child has special needs, and talk about their strengths and interests. Child care services appreciate your honesty, and some even reserve spaces for integration which can increase your child's priority.

THE FIRST VISIT

It's time to get acquainted. The first conversation is often by telephone, but the goal is to schedule a face-to-face meeting as soon as possible.

To prepare the first visit...

- It can be useful to describe your child in writing and give this description to the child care service.
- The *ministère de la Famille* website includes an interesting section about choosing a child care service and provides documents that can help guide your discussions and observations when you visit.

During the first visit...

- This is the time to assess the environment, especially the receptiveness, kindness, and attentiveness of the people who work there. These qualities tend to have a greater influence on your choice than the location of the facilities, for example.
- Also, even though the overall attitude of the child care service is welcoming, it doesn't mean they won't have any concerns and apprehensions. Some misgivings are normal and often lead to concrete and effective solutions when it comes time to prepare for the integration.

Concerns expressed by the child care service typically include:

- Apprehension about trips and outings.
- Apprehension about the reaction of other parents.
- Worries about supervising the whole group of children and a potential work overload.
- Questions about the accommodations required for play areas and outings.
- Questions about everyday activities and routines.
- Apprehension about contact with the child.
- Doubts about whether they have the knowledge and skills required to satisfy the child's needs.
-

When faced with the concerns of the child care service:

- Take the opportunity to express your understanding and readiness to listen to their concerns, and communicate your willingness to collaborate and be an available, attentive, and respectful partner.
- You can also ease their apprehensions by telling them about the therapists or other professionals that support you and your child. Knowing that they can get help and advice from others in your network will reassure them.
- If the child care service is not aware of the integration allowance for children with special needs, you can invite them to consult the *ministère de la Famille* website.

CHECK YES, CHECK NO

Following your meeting or telephone exchange, the child care service makes their decision: to integrate your child or not!

Yes

An increasing number of child care services agree that children with special needs have the same rights as other children. They recognize the advantages and welcome the values of tolerance and helpfulness that integration brings to their team, as well as to other children and their parents.

No

It's possible that the child care service of your choice refuses to integrate your child... There could be many reasons for their refusal. Maybe they don't have the required human or material resources, or the physical environment is not adapted. Also, perhaps their team does not seem ready for such a challenge.

As a **parent**, the choice of child care service is yours alone. If a place is offered following a visit or telephone conversation, you are free to decline and continue your search.

FACED WITH A REFUSAL, WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO REACT?

You probably have to accept their decision. However, it is important that you have talked about:

- Your child's special needs, as well as strengths, interests, and abilities.
- The involvement of therapists or other interveners that can help with your child, and the integration allowance provided by the *ministère de la Famille*.
- Your expectations, that respect the role of the child care service, and illustrate your desire to see your child surrounded by friends and participating to group activities.
- The possibility of a progressive integration that gives everyone time to get used to the integration.
- Your collaboration and your availability.



When you are looking for a child care service, refusals are almost bound to happen. If you persevere, you will find a child care service that you love and that is ready and motivated to welcome your child!



STEP 3

PREPARING for the Inegration

MEETING BETWEEN THE PARENTS AND THE EDUCATOR

While normally planned before your child begins day care, this meeting could also take place a little bit later. The goal is to get to know each other better and discuss your respective expectations and concerns. During this meeting, you can describe your child's specific needs and both parties can determine what adaptations, equipment, and amenities will facilitate the integration.

MEETING BETWEEN YOUR CHILD AND THEIR EDUCATOR

We also recommend bringing your child along for a visit to the day care. This gives your child a chance to become familiar with the new environment and establish the first ties with the educator. For the educator, it is an opportunity to meet the child face-to-face and begin to develop a relationship.



It is hard to plan for every possibility, no matter how much time and energy you spend preparing. Your child's needs at day care will become known in real time, and only then will it be possible to develop concrete strategies to address them.

ALLOWANCE FOR INTEGRATION OF DISABLED CHILDREN

IN SUMMARY...

- An amount provided by the ministère de la Famille for subsidized care services that accept a disabled child.
- The funding covers two categories of expenses:

A

EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATION

This is a fixed amount that covers fees for the management of the child's file, the acquisition of equipment, and any physical adaptations required at the child care service.

B

OPERATIONS

This is a supplement to the regular allowance provided for each child. The measures implemented with this financial support can vary. For instance, the child care service might plan to lower the ratio of children per educator, or add staff during specific times or activities.

- To qualify for this financial support the child care service must complete various forms, in collaboration with parents and partners from the health care and social service networks.

To learn more about this allowance, you can visit the Ministère website but, in a nutshell, the required forms are:

Professional's Report

You must obtain this form and provide it to the rehabilitation centre (or other establishment) that follows your child. It must be completed by a professional who is recognized by the Ministère. Once completed, feel free to read their assessment.

Integration Plan

This document is used to create a profile of your child and identify their special needs. It also gives clues as to what additional human, material, and educational resources the child care service will need to integrate your child into the routine of the group. We recommend organizing a meeting with the people concerned so you can complete this document together.

Annual Assessment

Similar to the integration plan, this document is normally completed once a year. Its goal is to assess the progress of your child and to review the measures implemented. Among other things, this document can provide useful information and notes for the next educator when your child moves to a different group.

Exceptional Measure

This form can be used to apply for an additional allowance to cover exceptional costs related to the care of your child. To be eligible for this allowance, the child care service must prove that the essential needs of your child are a major challenge to their integration in daily activities and routine.

The role of the child care service is not to provide individual rehabilitation or stimulation for your child, but rather to complement the health and social services network -- even if this network does not yet follow your child. The government allowance makes it possible for the child care service to plan the accommodations that will facilitate your child's integration with, and contribution to, their peer group.



Remember that the allowance provided by the government is to facilitate your child's involvement in the activities and routine of the group.



ALLOWANCE TO INTEGRATE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN DAILY ACTIVITIES

The goal of the integration allowance is to help children with special needs participate in daily activities of the child care service; following the routine and socializing with friends in the group.

Sometimes, out of concern and the desire to support a child with a specific aspect of their development, the child care service may remove them from the group to provide individual stimulation or therapy.

Indeed, some children have a great deal of difficulty adapting to group life, and the child care service could decide to work with them individually or in small groups with selected friends at times. However, such interventions must be temporary, since their goal should be to help the child develop the skills required to participate fully in the daily life of the child care service.



To respect the purpose of the child care service and the integration allowance, strategies should be focused on including children with special needs in the group, rather than excluding them.

Positive words from child care services...

"He brought so much happiness and love to the group. Because of him, we learned about empathy, helpfulness, understanding, differences, cooperation, and more. It made us better people."

"The highlight of this child's integration is on the social level: her interactions with other children. Her joy, her smiles and laughs, show us that she is happy and that she wants to learn and play with others."

"Her reaction to the presence of other children is improving every day. She is more relaxed and at ease in her environment. We can also see the impacts of the integration on other children as they learn how to interact with her, bring her toys, hug her, and make her laugh."

STRATEGIES

By observing your child and soliciting advice from you and the health and social services network, the child care system can implement various strategies to promote integration. Some strategies are possible because of the financial support provided by the Ministère, while others require no funding, as it is the case for planned activities and the educator's involvement.

1

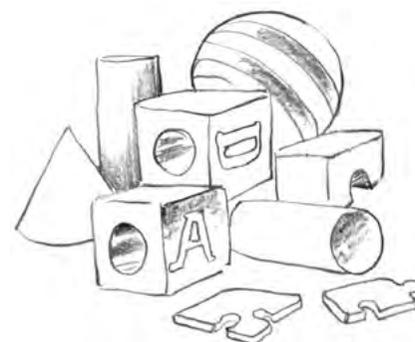
Acquisition of Equipment or Supplies, Specialized or Non-Specialized

Explanation

As a first step, we suggest inspecting the games and toys that are already in the child care service to identify those that could meet the special needs and desired learning goals of the child.

Example

Antoine is 3 years old and finds it difficult to pick up small objects because of diminished fine motor skills. A couple of cardboard books were recovered from the nursery. Also, puzzles with large pieces were purchased to help Antoine with his grip. This did not prevent his friends from helping him by turning pages of smaller story books, or by doing the puzzles with him!



2

Adult Companions

Explanation

Since full-time companions are not covered by the integration allowance, additional staff should be planned for specific times when their help is really required. The child care service should thus pinpoint periods when your child's disabilities would restrict their participation and integration without extra support. During these periods, the additional person should focus on helping your child join the group, rather than excluding them.

Example

Maxime is a 4-year-old boy with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). He is very active and has a short attention span. During organized activities and outings in the morning, the group educator prefers to have the support of an additional person to help supervise the whole group and give individual attention to those who need it. An attendant therefore joins her from 9:30 to 11:30 A.M.



Even though a companion can be present at specific moments, the educator remains the first and main person in charge of the group and your child. Together, they participate in your child's development and integration as members of a team.

3

Reduced Child-Educator Ratio

Explanation

The child care service may prefer to reduce by one the number of children in the group.

Example

Myriam has a visual impairment; she is 1 year old and joined the nursery group. The child care service decided to reduce the number of children in the group to 4 instead of the 5 usually allowed at this age. This way, the educator feels she is more able to meet Myriam's needs. She also thinks having fewer children reduces the level of noise and movement, which is a benefit to Myriam since she is very sensitive to these stimuli.



4

Adjustment of the Physical Environment

Explanation

The physical organization of the child care facilities can often be modified to support your child's integration.



Example

Adele has a motor impairment and is integrated with the group of 4-year-olds. Because she moves with a special chair, the facilities were adjusted to reduce the number of obstacles. For example, the lunch table that was near the entry was moved closer to a wall, so Adèle can enter and exit easily. The game areas were divided so there is enough space for Adèle's special chair when she needs it. There is also a bench and cushion that allow her to be positioned correctly and play without the chair.

5

Planned Game and Activities

Explanation

Activities that consider your child's special needs and learning goals can benefit all children in the group.



Example

Maelie has an intellectual disability with multiple sensory impairments. The occupational therapist suggested Maélie would benefit from activities that encourage her to touch different textures. Arts and crafts provide many opportunities, since materials such as finger-paints, textured papers, cotton balls, feathers, etc. have many different textures. The educator also thought of mixing Jello powder with a little water to create a granular material that Maélie can touch and even put it in her mouth!!!

6

The Educator's Involvement

Explanation

Educators can adapt the way they interact, communicate, and intervene with your child to facilitate their integration.

Example

Jeanne is 4 years old and exhibits language and comprehension delays. It is sometimes difficult for Jeanne to understand and respond to the educator's many instructions. To help her, the educator speaks slowly to all the children, ensuring she provides one instruction at a time. If necessary, she asks a friend to help Jeanne... but makes it clear that the friend should not do the task in her place! When talking to Jeanne or the group, the educator uses short and simple sentences, with clear articulation.



GRADUAL INTEGRATION

If it is feasible, a gradual integration can often benefit both the child and the child care team. Your child begins by attending a couple of hours per day, but this duration is progressively increased to the whole day.

Gradually, your child will become familiar with the new environment, the routine, the friends and educators. The adaptation period is also helpful for the educators, who have time to get to know your child and find appropriate ways to facilitate integration.



You can also take advantage of a gradual integration by adjusting the routine and rules of your home to coordinate with those of the child care service, so your child experiences a similar structure and rhythm in both environments.



RAISING AWARENESS...

Among the team at the child care service

Integration is not a challenge for one individual. A child's educators can only succeed with the support of their colleagues. During the activities and routines of the child care service, the educators must rely on the availability and motivation of their team to lend a helping hand and invest time with your child. In any case, sooner or later, your child will change groups and a different educator will become their new key person.

YOUR ROLE...

It is wise to ensure the whole team is aware of the information communicated to your child's educator. When you consent to the transfer and exchange of information, you encourage the child care service -- especially administrators in larger centers -- to involve the whole team in your child's integration. At the same time, when necessary, you can emphasize your availability and willingness to answer questions from the team.



In the playground, during drop-offs and pick-ups, when your child's educator is between shifts or rotating activities ... these are ideal opportunities for you to help the team members learn more about your child and increase their involvement.

Among friends in the group and their parents

To prepare for the integration, the child care service should speak openly about your child's upcoming arrival and special needs. Even more, they must emphasize how much importance they place on your child's integration and right to equal opportunities, the motivations for welcoming children with special needs in the first place.

YOUR ROLE...

During drop-offs, pick-ups, and other occasions at the child care service, you are likely to meet and interact with other parents, especially those with children in the same group as yours. The questions they ask are opportunities for you to speak about your child, your child's special needs, and also about the beneficial changes the integration brings to your daily life (e.g. returning to work, reducing isolation, respite...).





STEP 4

DAILY COLLABORATION with the child care service

IN ESSENCE...

How to be a good partner to the child care service?

Communication tools that are probably already implemented at the child care service may include:

- Log book
- Agenda
- Dashboard at the entrance of the room
- Bulletin board at the entrance of the facilities
- Scheduled evaluations of your child by the child care service



No matter what communication methods are in place, none can substitute for face-to-face meetings and discussions. During your child's integration, it is always better to take the time to speak with the staff directly as opposed to simply reading the agenda or the log book, for example.



SOME IDEAL MOMENTS TO COLLABORATE AND DISCUSS

When you drop-off or pick-up your child

These can be ideal moments for dialogue, assuming the educator is present and, more importantly, available. If your regular schedules do not usually coordinate, it is a good idea to occasionally synchronize your visits or plan to have a meeting by phone. In this way, you can build relationships with your child's educators and have opportunities to communicate with them directly.

During your communications, you can share information and observations about your child, such as changes in behavior, sleeping habits, diet, or therapy sessions.

During meetings scheduled for in-depth discussions about your child's integration

At the beginning of the integration, and on a regular basis afterwards, it is useful to meet with the educator to get feedback and discuss specific experiences at the child care service. Such meetings are ideal occasions to talk about your child's needs, identify the priorities and specific goals, and establish strategies for reaching these goals.

During outings or other activities with the child care service

At the beginning of the integration, as well as at other times, you can offer the child care service your support. For example, the outings or special activities organized by the child care service can be opportunities to get involved. Such occasions give you the opening to observe your child while also interacting with their educator.

During regular therapy sessions, when the rehabilitation center meets to discuss your child's intervention plan, or when the therapist visits the child care service

When completing your child's file for the child care service, do not hesitate to share the information required for them to contact their therapists or other people who follow your child.

Although phone calls are quick and easy, it is often appreciated and even recommended that therapists visit the child care service in person. Such visits are opportunities for all people involved with your child to meet, ask questions, and discuss strategies and concrete measures tailored to fill your child's needs in the child care service.

Normally, rehabilitation centres schedule annual meetings to establish an intervention plan for your child. Since such meetings include all parties concerned with your child, you can invite the educator to participate.

Role of the therapist with regards to the child care service

Therapists can help the child care team understand your child's special needs, but their advice and suggestions should be adapted to consider the physical environment, role, and specific approaches of the child care service. The child care service should not try to reproduce the stimulation provided to your child during therapy. The goals may be similar, but the methods chosen must consider daily life of the group at the child care service.

ATTITUDES THAT IMPACT THE QUALITY OF YOUR COLLABORATION WITH THE CHILD CARE SERVICE

The quality of your collaboration with the child care service, and more specifically your child's educator, is a factor in successful integration.

The better your relationship and interactions with the child care service, the greater the chances for your child and all those involved to experience a harmonious, rewarding, and positive integration.

You, like your child's educator, have knowledge, abilities, and ideas that could benefit everyone if they are shared. Therefore, you need to establish sustained and efficient communications where everyone has the opportunity to express themselves and be heard.

POSITIVE ATTITUDES!!!

RESPECT

Respect the role and responsibilities of the child care service by acknowledging that they are capable of meeting your child's needs during group activities and routines. Accept that their strategies might be different from yours or from the therapists. They can be different while still being complementary!

RECOGNITION

Recognize that the child care service favors approaches, activities, and interventions that encourage socialization, play-based learning, and independence. Recognize that the child care service is a stimulating environment that supports your child's development on every level: emotional, social, cognitive, motor and language skills, etc. Finally, recognition basically means valuing: valuing the skills and engagement of the child care team and your child's educator.

TOLERANCE

Be tolerant if it takes a while for the child care team to learn how to deal with your child. There is no recipe for a successful integration. Give the child care team time to get to know your child and identify their day-to-day needs. Give them time to deal with their own concerns, fears, and apprehensions. Be patient!

LISTENING

Listen closely to the child care team when they ask questions, give suggestions, and ask for support. At the same time, feel free to give your tips, ask questions, and discuss your concerns and expectations. Listen by being available and open to dialogue and two-way communication.



Finally, there are many ways to get involved and to be available for the child care service. In addition to the frequency, timing, and location of your exchanges and meetings, your respect, recognition, tolerance, and willingness to listen will greatly improve the quality of your partnership with the child care service.

INDICATORS OF A SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

Don't be discouraged when things get tough. Integration is an ongoing, organic, and dynamic process that naturally requires adjustments. The challenges and difficulties encountered often stimulate a search for solutions.

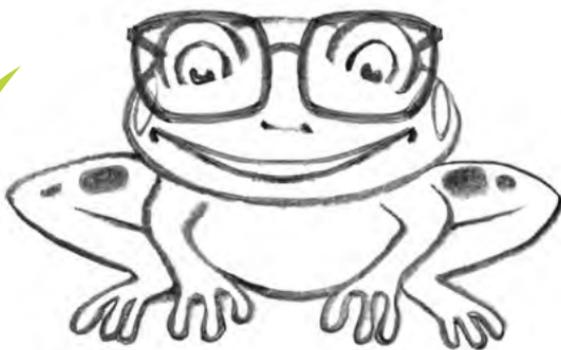
Despite some unavoidable challenges, here are some signs that indicate your child's integration is going well:

- After a couple of weeks, your child is smiling and happy to go to the child care service.
- Your child is drawn to other children, approaches them, plays and interacts with them, and even builds friendships.
- Other children in the group approach your child; interacting with your child and providing help if needed.
- Your child participates in group activities despite their limitations or special needs.
- Your child seems to be attached to the educators, finds comfort with them, and enjoys being with them.
- Your child develops new skills that can be observed at home.
- There is good collaboration and regular communication between you and your child's educator.
- You feel confident!!!
- Therapists from the rehabilitation centre get involved by proposing strategies and advice that facilitate the understanding of your child's special needs and, above all, make it possible for your child to participate in group activities and routines.



Remember that the way your child participates in activities is more significant than the outcome or success of the activity itself. Despite their limitations, they benefit greatly from being with friends and experiencing the stimulation provided by the child care service.





My child's integration gave us...

“Confidence: confidence that my child can manage outside the family to a certain extent and can be a participant in society. Also, the possibility for our family to live a normal life, without the impairment being a daily obstacle.

Thank you!”

(Isabelle, Erwan's mom)



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