



Blue sky

Welcome Package

Information for Families



Welcome to Blue sky Residential Care

Blue sky is committed to meeting the needs of the communities we serve in a professional, dependable, confidential and competent manner 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

This package provides an overview of that commitment. It contains detailed information involving many aspects of the services provided Blue sky. Please review the information and feel free to ask any questions or let us know about any concerns or complaints.

First here is the contact information for your Blue sky team:

Blue sky Director of Programs & Services

Caitie Burke

Phone: (709) 733.2273

Blue sky Program Manager

Name _____

Phone _____

Blue sky Home Manager/Supervisor

Name _____

Phone _____

Emergency after hours on-call service

Blue sky has an on-call service to respond to emergency issues after business hours.

The Blue sky emergency after hours number is **(709) 685.2659**



Why Blue sky?

Blue sky is dedicated to helping children, youth and their families and strives to provide the highest quality of care to meet the individual needs of the children and youth that we serve. We recognize the ever-increasing need in our communities for reliable, best-practice driven Child and Youth Care and, in collaboration with our community partners, work diligently to meet that need. We integrate evidence-based research with a set of structured program elements to help us achieve congruency between theory and practice. Our outcome-focused programs provide evidence that our work is making a real and meaningful difference for children, youth, and their families.

One of Blue sky's distinguishing features is our professional practice framework which is founded on the Children and Residential Experiences (CARE) model developed by Cornell University around evidence based practices in residential care.

Based on six guiding principles, the CARE model is designed to profoundly influence the way residential childcare professionals think about working with children.

The CARE model proposes that the best residential care is:

- Competence centered;
- Developmentally focused;
- Ecologically oriented;
- Family involved;
- Relationship based; and
- Trauma informed.

Underpinning Blue sky's approach to residential care programming is the belief that we are a partner in care; we work collaboratively with the social workers of the Department of Child Youth and Family Services, families, internal and external health professionals and other significant people in a child's life to help each young person adapt and develop.

We believe that children belong in families and strive to strengthen appropriate family connections.



Programs of Care within Blue Sky

We realize that different children and families have different needs, ranging from a few days respite for a foster family to longer term care for children with exceptional needs. Sometimes families go through a period where they need extra help. To protect children and keep them safe, the court may order that a child or children cannot live at home (*Child and Youth Care Protection Act*, SNL 2010, c. C - 12.2, s. 32). When this happens, we are asked to help to care for these children.

To address the individual needs of the children and youth in our care we deliver services in three types of residential settings:

Emergency Placement Homes

Our Emergency Placement Homes (EPH) support children and youth aged 0 - 18 when the plan of care is for the child or youth to return to their family, or to a foster family, within a relatively short period of time. They provide a welcoming, safe and comfortable environment for children and families in transition 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Each EPH is led by a Home Manager and staffed with a trained and caring team of Child and Youth Care Workers permanently assigned to each home. Their main goal is to identify the needs and strengths of each child or youth and use that information to help develop an individualized program with input from the child and their families.

Specialized Infant Care

The Infant Care program is a specialized service under the EPH program that focuses on early childhood education, ensuring infants and toddlers are meeting their developmental milestones (e.g. learning to walk, building their vocabulary and learning to play catch). Utilizing a play based approach Child and Youth Care Workers receive special training in the care of infants, the importance of healthy attachment building and national professional guidelines on the care of infants and toddlers.

Respite Care

Respite Care is a specialized service under the EPH program serving children from birth to 18 years of age. Sometimes the physical, emotional and social consequences for caregivers can be overwhelming. Planned, professional support provides much needed respite from the daily



challenges faced by the caregiver. Our respite home provides supportive and planned short term stays to children coming from a caregiver's home.

Group Homes

Our Group Home program provides care to children and youth whose needs for residential support and programming are longer term in nature. Within this program we provide for latency age and adolescent children and youth whose exceptional needs require high levels of support. Each Group Home is led by a Home Manager and staffed with a trained and caring team of Child and Youth Care Workers permanently assigned to each home. Their main goal is to create daily programming that is unique to each child or youth in order to help foster relationships and develop skills that encourage resiliency and independence.

Individualized Living Arrangements

In some cases we also provide Individualized Living Arrangements (ILA) for one or two young people whose needs cannot be met in a family or foster home environment and who may not be eligible for a Group Home setting. These children and youth often have extraordinary medical, emotional or behavioral needs. Each ILA is led by a Home Supervisor and staffed with a trained and caring team of Child and Youth Care Workers permanently assigned to each home. Their main goal is to help foster and develop life skills that encourage independence in a setting that recognizes the young people's strengths, challenges and resiliencies.

Blue sky makes every effort to modify and focus the home on the individual needs of the child or youth and an example of this type of focused home would be the Special Needs Home(s) for Persons with Exceptionalities.

Special Needs Home(s) for Persons with Exceptionalities

Blue sky offers extra services for children with exceptionalities who require additional care. Children and youth in these homes usually have a profound and enduring loss of function that inhibits their ability to participate in activities of daily living. This program supports the belief that every child has the right to choose and pursue meaningful activities in the least restrictive environment possible and the right to every opportunity for success in their lives. With trained staff, specialized equipment, and modified homes, we foster maximum independence for these young people. The age group served in these homes is 2 to 21 years of age, and the planned outcomes for these children include education and increased skills of daily living.



Assessment Process and Service Delivery Plans

So we can help each child reach their fullest potential, Blue *sky* initiates an assessment process. This process begins when a child or youth comes into our care and we ask for detailed information so we can begin to better understand them. We also use specific assessment tools to help further identify the young person's strengths and needs.

Blue *sky* currently uses two formal assessment tools which are completed by a qualified staff:

1. The **ASQ-3** (Ages and Stages Questionnaire, 3rd ed.) is a screening and monitoring system that assesses a child's development in their first five years.
2. The **TCOM** (Total Clinical Outcomes Measurement) Assessment tool is a group of assessments designed to aid in collaborative interventions among the family and professionals involved with a child or youth and assess several areas of needs and strengths.

Once an assessment has been completed and strengths and needs are identified, this information is used in a formal planning process which results in an individual **Service Delivery Plan** (SDP) being completed for every child or youth. The SDP includes medical and legal information about the child or youth as well as information about their academics, relationships and activities of daily living. It is a process that involves families, social workers and other professionals involved in the young person's life. The SDP clearly outlines their strengths and needs as well as specifies the goals and activities identified to help the child or youth develop to their fullest potential during their time with Blue *sky*.

Families and children are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the SDP and to attend any program meetings that involves the development of their goals. These meetings are a great opportunity to set new goals and offer any suggestions to help those we serve.

The SDPs are updated on a regular basis every 90 days. When the plan has been completed, the child or youth, their family and the assigned Social Worker are provided with signed copies. The original SDP is placed in the child's permanent file at the Blue *sky* office.



Transition Procedures

When a child or youth is transitioned into another Blue *sky* program, a Transition Plan will be made available that will include the child's current progress (educationally, emotionally, vocationally, and medically), will include the goals met while in care, and will indicate support systems that will be required. It will also identify the strengths, limitations, needs, and preferences of the child or youth served. The children and families are notified with as much advance notice as possible and are requested to offer input that would help make any transition easier on those who need to move.

Discharge Procedures

When a child or youth leaves the care of Blue *sky*, a written Discharge Summary will be provided that will include the date of admission, identify the presenting condition of the child or youth served, will describe the services provided while in care, and outline goals and objectives that were met. The discharge plan will explain why the discharge is taking place, and provide a list of recommendations for support services.



Program Expectations: Rules vs. Expectations

“The manner in which a child’s pain-based behavior is responded to is one of the key indicators of the quality of care as experienced by children.”

(Anglin, 2002; Brendtro & Shahbazian, 2004)

Children will do well if they can. In order to foster self-efficacy for the children in our programs we set expectations for children to follow. When a child in care fails to meet expectations, it is the Child and Youth Care Workers’ responsibility to figure out why the child has failed and what they can do to help the child meet the expectation the next time around.

One of the expectations of our programs is that the children follow the “rules”. **Rules** are developed for safety reasons only. We set **expectations** for children to help teach self-regulation skills. We are teachers, not jailors!

“Helping children learn self-regulation skills increases their resiliency and improves their ability to develop positively.” (Gardner et al., 2008; Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008).

Children and youth in any Blue sky Residential Care program are expected to meet the following expectations:

- Follow all safety rules posted in the home and explained to them by the Child and Youth Care Workers;
- Participate in the program activities, as specified on their Service Delivery Plans;
- Cooperate with reasonable staff requests;
- If unsupervised community access is permitted, inform staff when leaving the home and return to the home according to curfew;
- Keep personal areas clean and tidy, and complete chore assignments as scheduled;
- Attend school, camp, extracurricular activities and other program activities as scheduled;
- Attend to personal hygiene;
- Refrain from aggressive, destructive, malicious and inappropriate behaviors;
- Respect the property and belongings of others;
- Refrain from the use of alcohol and illicit drugs, as well as the misuse of prescription or over the counter medications;
- Weapons and firearms are not permitted under any circumstances.



Staff Qualifications and Training

Blue sky's Child and Youth Care Workers are required to have completed (or near completion) a minimum of 3 years of a university degree in Social Work, Education, Psychology, or Sociology, **OR** community college studies pertaining to family dynamics, **OR** have a Child and Youth Care Worker Diploma. Apart from this, all active staff have had previous experience in working with children, youth or adults prior to their joining the Blue sky team.

In addition, each worker is required to have a clear Record of Conduct, a clear Child, Youth and Family Services Record Check, and a current First Aid Certificate (within 60 days of hiring).

Once hired, each employee has available to him or her a number of training courses, workshops and seminars:

- ❖ **Children and Residential Experiences (CARE)** training program is a thirty hour course focused on providing a framework for the delivery of "best practice" residential care at the management and front-line worker level.

- ❖ **Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)** focuses on the management and de-escalation of crisis or potentially critical situations that can occur in the residential care setting.

- ❖ **Trauma Training** prepares our staff to operate from a trauma sensitive framework, one of the pillars of our organization's philosophy.

- ❖ **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** prepares employees to recognize and help those having suicidal thoughts or feelings.

Other courses, workshops and seminars are offered to Child and Youth Care Workers based on specific needs of the children and youth in our care. Blue sky is constantly upgrading their training programs and offering employees opportunities to further their expertise in the field.



Children's Rights

At Blue sky, we firmly believe that *all* children have the right to equal opportunity regardless of their gender, colour, sex, creed or other status.

Know and understand children's rights

CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO

- Be and feel safe;
- Be treated fairly no matter what their race, sex, culture, religion, abilities, or sexual orientation;
- Have a say about what happens to them and express their thoughts and feelings;
- Be properly fed, clothed and cared for;
- Go to school;
- Receive medical and dental care;
- Participate in social and recreational activities;
- Participate in their religion and culture and speak their language;
- An interpreter if they are not being understood because of language or abilities;
- Reasonable privacy;
- Know and understand the rules, expectations and their responsibilities;
- Give or refuse consent for the provision of any services;
- Talk privately with their lawyer, the Ombudsman, or their Member of the House of Assembly or an Advocate; and
- Be told how to contact the Advocacy Office.



If a child is age 12 or older,

THEY ALSO HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Know that a decision is being made about them in court so that they can go there when it happens;
- Ask to have a review or an appeal of their placement; and
- Help make their plan of care.

If it doesn't feel fair, maybe it's not right! Call an Advocate!

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

193 LeMarchant Road

St. John's, NL A1C 2H5

Tel: (709) 753-3888

Appeals / Complaints Procedure(s)

Children, youth and their families have the right to report complaints and concerns regarding the quality of care received. Complaints or concerns can be reported to the Child and Youth Care Workers, as well as to the Home Manager, Home Supervisor, Program Manager, or to the Director of Programs and Services (Caitie Burke) at **(709) 733-2273**. If there is an after-hours emergency (between 4.30pm and 8.30am) that needs to be addressed immediately, the Blue sky After-Hours Emergency line is **(709) 685- 2659**.

It is Blue sky policy that once a complaint or concern has been communicated the child, youth or family member will receive a follow-up call by the next business day to gather more information on the circumstances surrounding the complaint and be asked to communicate their expectations around the resolution of the complaint. All complaints received will be taken seriously and investigated according to Blue sky policy.



Quality Assurance

Blue sky is committed to excellence at all levels of the organization and involves staff, volunteers, third-party oversight, community partners and clients in assessing quality, pursuing opportunities to improve programs and services, and resolving identified problems.

Blue sky follows the Child and Youth Services Standards Manual as developed by CARF International. CARF's Mission statement is as follows:

“The mission of CARF is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the persons served.”

Quality is everyone's responsibility at Blue sky. If we are not meeting your expectations of Quality Service, please let us know by contacting your Program Manager or by notifying any Blue sky employee. We are continuously reviewing our outcomes and seeking new ways to improve our services.

The **Risk Management Program** identifies and prevents potential risk situations wherever possible, and ensures that prompt and appropriate actions are taken when a potential risk is identified. Risk is identified through examining inspection, reports, claims, incident reports, and complaints. Risk Identification Activities include:

Assessment – a community and home environmental safety assessment is undertaken prior to the placement of any child or youth. After placement, ongoing assessments by staff, Program Managers and the OHS team are conducted.

Monitoring – Blue sky has an ongoing program of monitoring with various reporting sources to capture risk incidents including, but not limited to, regular review of person served progress notes and on-call records, 24 hour emergency on-call services, and 24 hour telephone checks.

Incident Reporting – Our incident report management system ensures that all client and staff incidents are recorded and reviewed to identify risks. On a monthly basis, all incidents are analyzed and new strategies to control and manage risks are identified for implementation.



Why is Accreditation Important in Residential Care?

Blue sky is accredited by CARF Canada and this holds us to the internationally recognized highest standards of quality service delivery.

Accreditation is a way of ensuring that the checks and balances for quality care are in place so that organizations are better able to meet the expectations of our population now and into the future. To achieve these accreditations, each of our offices undergoes an accreditation review and survey of its operation every three years.

Here are ten reasons why this accreditation is important to Canadian families:

1. An enhanced **quality of service** that supports the rights of the persons served with competent staff that are caring and committed.
2. **Focus on safety**, so that the people we serve are able to live safely in our home for as long as they remain with us, through regular home inspections and by ongoing training of our staff.
3. **Collaborative planning** to ensure our services meet the needs of the people we serve by bringing together the best of resources from the community.
4. **Strong human resource practices**, selecting the best possible people to provide care and providing a healthy work-life balance for our staff.
5. **Commitment to training and education of our staff**, so that they are able to meet the needs of the people we serve, particularly considering the growing need for quality residential care services in our communities.
6. Respecting the **confidentiality** of the people we serve.
7. **Commitment to quality improvement** through ongoing evaluation of the level of satisfaction felt about our services by the people we serve.
8. Focus on **quality healthy living and infection control practices** to ensure the safety of the people we serve and the staff who work with them.
9. **Adherence to best practice standards**, always seeking ways to deliver the best quality of care with a commitment to continuous improvement.
10. A commitment to operate within a framework of **cultural and spiritual sensitivity**, to ensure that the delivery of our services respect the diverse backgrounds of the people we serve.

