

Bridging to Adulthood Tips: Home and Living Spaces for Adults with Disabilities

person's home and living space is personal. There is no "right type" of "best type" of living situation. Home choice is impacted by many things like preferences, needs, money, resources and availability. Also, someone's living situation may evolve over time.

Examples of Housing Options

A. General Housing Options

- **Affordable housing:** Various [programs](#) in Ontario aim to help people live in affordable places.
- **Living with family** in a variety of housing situations (renting or purchasing)
- **Living with roommates** in a variety of housing situations (renting or purchasing)
- **Living independently** in a house, condo or apartment (renting or purchasing)

B. Housing Options Focused on the Needs of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Looking for ideas? Check out the [Planning Network's A Place to Call Home Videos](#)

Please note that wait times for government funded housing options may be lengthy, depending on the prioritization system and current need. Holland Bloorview alumni have recommended applying early to get on waitlists, being persistent, networking with other families, and speaking with your caseworker as applicable about prioritizing your current and future needs.

- **Living with Family**

If individuals with a range of disabilities or complex medical conditions may qualify for support with activities of daily living from a [personal support worker](#) through [Home & Community Care](#).

- **Group home living**

In this option, a group of people with intellectual disabilities and/or complex care needs live in home with 24/7 staff supervision and support. There may be government-funded spots.

Contact: [Developmental Services Ontario](#) (DSO) if interested in learning more about this option.

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

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A teaching hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto.

- **Lifeshare Program/ Host Family**

With this option, a person with an intellectual disability lives in the community with a [host family](#). The aim is to provide long-term living situation where basic needs are met and the person is meaningfully integrated into family and community life. This program is funded by the government.

Contact: [Developmental Services Ontario](#) (DSO) if interested in learning more about this option.

- **Shared Living Attendant Services (Physical Disability and Complex Needs)**

Shared Living is group accommodation for adults with physical disabilities who have more complex care and/or communication needs. Residents may communicate using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and/or have multiple service needs. Residents may include a developmental component among their primary physical disability. Residents must have the cognitive potential to direct their own personal care. Rent subsidies are available.

Applications are through the [Centre for Independent Living Toronto \(CILT\)](#).

- **Supported Independent Living**

In this option, individuals with intellectual disabilities live alone or with a roommate in a semi-independent situation. A support person comes to the home for a specific number of hours per day to assist with finances, shopping, meals etc. The individual stays alone overnight and is usually able to do basic daily activities (e.g. showering, teeth brushing, dressing) independently.

Contact [Developmental Services Ontario \(DSO\)](#) to learn more about this option and about potential government funding support.

- **Try-It-On-For-Size (Transitional Program)**

[Trying-It-On-For Size](#) is a program for adults with intellectual disabilities that helps with skills for independent living. Participants complete several short-term stays in an apartment (fee for service).

- **Creative Housing Options**

[LIGHTS Toronto](#) works with families to help create and launch independent living situations for adults with intellectual disabilities.

[Partners 4 Planning](#) has created a [Housing Taskforce Booklet](#) showcasing 18 unique housing projects in Ontario for people with intellectual disabilities.

C. Housing Options Focused on the Needs of Adults with Physical Disabilities

- **Attendant Services Coming to Your Existing Home**

People with physical disabilities age 16+ who live with family, roommates, or independently may qualify for [outreach attendant services](#) or [direct funding attendant services](#). An attendant will travel to your existing house, condo or apartment (rented or owned) on a pre-scheduled basis to provide physical assistance with activities of daily living. The person must be able to independently direct their own care and meet other criteria.

Apply through [Centre for Independent Living Toronto \(CILT\)](#) (Toronto/York region) or your local provider listed in the [Ontario Attendant Service Directory](#) (outside of Toronto/York Region).

- **Moving to a Supported Housing Apartment with Attendant Services**

Individuals live in physically accessible units integrated into a larger apartment building. [Attendant services](#) are available on a pre-scheduled and on-call 24/7 basis. The attendant office is either in the actual apartment building (called “Traditional Supportive Housing”) or close by within the geographical region (called “Mobile Supportive Housing”). The person must be able to independently direct their own care and meet other criteria.

Apply through [Centre for Independent Living Toronto \(CILT\)](#) (Toronto/York region) or your local provider listed in the [Ontario Attendant Service Directory](#) (outside of Toronto/York Region).

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- **Transitional Living Programs**

Transitional Living Programs include life skills training for 6-12 months for individuals with physical disabilities, with the goal of transitioning to independent living in the community. Individuals live in an accessible apartment with attendant services for personal care supports. Individuals must be able to direct their own personal care.

Programs include [Bellwoods](#) (Toronto), [Gage Transition to Independent Living](#) (Toronto) and [Personal Choice Independent Living](#) (Ottawa).

Apply through [Centre for Independent Living Toronto \(CILT\)](#) (Toronto/York region) or your local provider listed in the [Ontario Attendant Service Directory](#) (outside of Toronto/York Region).

- **Post-Secondary Residence/ Support Programs**

Holland Bloorview clients can also request a referral to the [Post-Secondary Transition Program](#) for consultation about accessible university and college options.

Ontario's universities and colleges have various accessibility options for students with disabilities who live in on-campus residence. See examples in the [Transitions Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities](#) for examples.

[Attendant services](#)) may be available for students with physical disabilities who require assistance completing activities of daily living and who can direct their own care. The services are paid for by the government. Some colleges and universities have specific attendant services partnerships while other colleges and universities require students to use local attendant service providers in the community where the school is located.

Applications are through [Centre for Independent Living Toronto \(CILT\)](#) (if the college or university is in Toronto/York region) or the provider listed in the [Ontario Attendant Service Directory](#) (if the college or university is outside of Toronto/York Region). Speak with the specific college or university for further details.

Housing Guides and Navigator Programs

The following resources may be of interest to individuals and/or families who are exploring various housing options.

- [Service Navigator Program](#) through Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT) for adults with physical disabilities.
- [Accessible house and apartment listings](#) through Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT)
- [Housing Resources](#) from connectability.ca for adults with intellectual disabilities.
- [Housing navigators](#) and [Housing Toolkit](#) and from Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) for adults with intellectual disabilities.

Help With Housing Costs

1. Ontario has a variety of [affordable housing initiatives](#) that you may be able to apply for.
2. If eligible, make sure you apply for [Ontario Disability Support Program \(ODSP\) income support](#) to help with the cost of housing (e.g. help with paying rent, college or university residence fees,

and/or board and lodging even if living with family). Also, speak with your ODSP caseworker about the [Mandatory Special Necessities Benefit](#) to help cover costs of medical transportation and medical supplies to maximize the amount of money you have for housing.

3. For individuals with developmental disabilities who qualify for [Developmental Services Ontario](#), we recommend speaking with your caseworker about government funded housing resources as early as possible, since waitlists are needs-based and tend to be lengthy.
4. For individuals requiring assistance with completing activities of daily living, we recommend speaking with your caseworker to maximize the amount of government funded [personal support worker](#) hours or [attendant service](#) hours you get at home. This may help to reduce out-of-pocket support worker costs and free up more money for housing.
5. Cities and municipalities have local programs that may help individuals in financial need with rent, utility bills, energy conservation or other costs e.g. [Toronto](#), [York Region](#), [Durham](#), [Simcoe](#), or use [211 Ontario](#) to find your local municipality.
6. We also recommend reviewing Holland Bloorview's detailed [Funding & Financial Supports Guide](#) for ways to maximize the amount of funding you are receiving from tax credits, government initiatives and alternative funding sources for housing and other related costs.

Physically Accessible Housing Resources

Planning to renovate your current home to make it more accessible?

Home Renovation Process:

- Ask your current **occupational therapist** or contact your local [LHIN Home & Community Care](#) service to ask for a “referral for a **home assessment**”. An occupational therapist can work with you to develop a home accessibility or renovation plan.
- [Accessibility recommendations](#) for various rooms are available from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- Review the City of Toronto or your local municipality's [advice for choosing and working with a contractor](#) who has a **valid trade licence**.

Help with Costs of Home Renovations:

- Look for potential funding resources for home renovations through Holland Bloorview's [Funding & Financial Supports Guide](#).
- Speak with your [ODSP](#) caseworker to see if certain [devices and equipment costs](#) may be covered e.g. threshold ramps, grab bars, visual carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, cooling devices, hospital beds, therapeutic mattresses, Hoyer lift and slings, bath lifts, bath seats, commodes, toilet rails, raised toilet seats, etc.

- Check out March of Dimes Canada’s webpage on [low or no cost home modifications](#).

Planning to move into an accessible rental?

- Speak with your [ODSP caseworker](#) to ask if there may be financial help with moving costs.

Where a move is required to prevent homelessness, for immediate safety, or due to health/medical needs, you may be able to access your municipality’s **Housing Stabilization Fund**.

There may be financial help for moving costs, last month’s rent, utility deposits, appliances, mattresses or other costs. For more information see programs in [Toronto](#), [York Region](#), [Durham Region](#), [Simcoe County](#) or use [211 Ontario](#) to find your local program.

Planning to purchase your own accessible home?

- The Realtor.ca [Find a Home](#) search allows you to **filter the results by keywords**.

You can try entering keywords like “accessible”, “accessibility”, “wheelchair”, “ramp”, “porch lift”, “elevator”, “stair lift”, “Hoyer”, “ceiling lift” etc. to search for houses listed with specific features.

The information provided in this handout is for reference only. It is not intended as a recommendation or endorsement of specific programs, or as a comprehensive resource list.

This handout is brought to you by Holland Bloorview’s Transitions Team
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