

Ready, Set, Go (RSG) Program



JFCY's Child Welfare and Leaving Home guides:

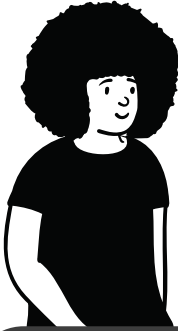
Going
into
Care

Being
in
Care

Leaving
Home

Voluntary
Youth Service
Agreements
(VYSAs)

Ready,
Set, Go
(RSG)
Program



This pamphlet gives
general legal information for
young people in Ontario

Speak to a lawyer if you have
questions about your specific
situation

**Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY)
provides free and confidential legal
services to young people in Ontario**

If you are under 18 and have a legal question or
problem, call JFCY toll free: 1-866-999-5329 (JFCY)

JFCY also has specialized services:



Your Way Forward (YWF) for
young people who have been
victimized by sexual and/or
family violence



Street Youth Legal Services
(SYLS) for youth under 25 who
are experiencing homelessness

The Ready, Set, Go (RSG) Program:

provides transitional supports for young people who are receiving services from a **Children's Aid Society (CAS)** or **First Nations Child and Family Service Agency (Agency)** before they turn 18.

This program can last up to the age of 23.



If you are **First Nations, Inuk or Métis**, you may be eligible for **additional supports**. These supports may continue **up to the age of 26**.

Topics:

- Ready, Set, Go Program
- Agreements and Youth Plans
- Financial and Care Supports
- Benefits
- Records and Documents
- Ending Agreements

RSG: READY, SET, GO

TRANSITION SUPPORTS



What is the purpose of Ready, Set, Go (RSG)?

The Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program is designed to make sure that CAS or Agency workers give youth all the tools they need to achieve their goals and to one day live independently as an adult.

The RSG program provides:

- transition supports beginning before 18; and
- supports after you turn 18.

BEFORE 18



Transition Supports Before 18

If you are in Extended Society Care, the Society must give RSG transition supports before you turn 18. If you are on a Voluntary Youth Service Agreement (VYSA), RSG transition supports are optional. Ask your worker whether you are under the RSG program.

AFTER 18



Supports After 18

You will be entitled to on-going support and services up until your 23rd birthday, if on your 18th birthday you are:

- In Extended Society Care
- On a VYSA that ends on your 18th birthday
- Under a customary care agreement, or
- Receiving renewed youth supports



If you are First Nations, Inuit or Métis, you may be eligible for supports from the Canadian government until your 26th birthday. Talk to your First Nations Agency, Band, or worker for more information.

RSG: READY, SET, GO

Ready, Set, Go program for youth over 18 is made up of two parts:

**Part 1 - your RSG Agreement; and
Part 2 - your Youth Plan**

PART 1: RSG AGREEMENT



Part 1: What is a RSG agreement?

Your RSG agreement is a basic contract for the CAS/Agency to continue to provide you with support and services after your 18th birthday. It is voluntary.

A RSG Agreement can last for up to one year, and can be renewed up to your 23rd birthday. If you choose not to renew or sign the new agreement, you will stop receiving RSG services until a new agreement is signed.

If you were eligible for RSG on your 18th birthday, you can ask for RSG services any time until you turn 23.

What if I want to move?

You are generally still entitled to support, including financial support, even if you move. This includes if you move to a new province or territory.

You must still stay in contact with the CAS/Agency so that they can provide the services to you.

MOVING



AGREEMENT CONTENTS



What is included in an RSG agreement?

Your RSG agreement must include information about:

- meeting with the CAS/Agency worker to finalize your Youth Plan within 30 days
- the financial support you will be given
- the process to end an agreement
- the complaints process

KEEP A COPY



After you sign the RSG agreement, the worker must give you:

- A copy of your RSG agreement
- A copy of your RSG Youth Plan,
- Written information about the RSG program and supports for post-secondary education
- If financial support is being paid to your caregiver under a subsidy, rather than to you, they must also give you a copy of that agreement.

It is important to ask for these documents if you do not receive a copy from your worker.

PART II: RSG YOUTH PLAN



Part 2: RSG Youth Plan

The RSG Youth Plan lists specific supports youth will receive. It should be based on your goals, needs, and strengths; as you identify them.

It will usually cover:

- Identification documentation
- Education, training and employment
- Financial stability and financial literacy
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Identity, culture and belonging
- Family, relationships, and supports
- Rights, responsibilities, and self-advocacy
- Self-efficacy (including self-care)

Your Youth Plan should include who is responsible for each goal, and timelines on when a goal or task will be completed. However, you are not required to meet the goals in your Youth Plan to receive RSG supports.

At least once every three months, your worker should meet with you to go over your plan.

At least twice a year, your Youth Plan should be updated.

FINANCIALS & WORKING

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS



Financial Supports

Under your RSG Agreement, the CAS/Agency must provide you with monthly financial support:

<u>Age:</u>	18	19	20/21	22
<u>Amount:</u>	\$1800	\$1500	\$1000	\$500

If you are in post secondary or training (college, university, skilled trades, apprenticeship, etc.) you may receive an additional \$500 a month starting on your 20th birthday.

In general, you can still receive RSG financial support if you are working. However, you may not be entitled to financial support if:

- You are working 40 hours a week and earning minimum wage or higher
- You are receiving monthly financial support under Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program
- Your caregiver has an agreement with the CAS/Agency to care for you while you finish high school

In these situations, you are still entitled to:

- Other non-financial RSG supports
- Money or bank accounts held by the CAS/Agency on your behalf. Ask your worker whether the CAS/Agency has any bank accounts for you. Check out our VYSA guide for information about RESPs and OCBE.

If your situation changes, you may be eligible to start receiving financial support again. Tell your worker right away and they will then ask you to sign a new RSG agreement.

IMPACT OF WORKING



FINANCIAL LITERACY & CARE SUPPORTS

FINANCIAL LITERACY



Financial Literacy

The CAS/Agency should provide you with supports to help you build and manage your money, e.g.:

- Before your 18th birthday, help you meet a financial planner about your RESP and OCBE savings and to develop a financial plan
- Ensure you have a personal bank account, understand credit scores, and have filed your taxes
- Make sure you are connected with and have information about other financial supports available to you

CARE SUPPORTS



RSG Care Supports (Non-financial)

RSG can offer you support with school, work, health, housing, and other things.

It can also include connecting you with other organizations, who can provide support for you even after the RSG program ends.

See the following page for examples of RSG care supports.

EDUCATION & WORK



Education and work

Your worker can offer support to meet your education/employment goals, such as:

- Getting your high school diploma or GED certificate
- Connecting with a tutor or mentor
- Support with job applications, resume and cover letter preparation, and interview skills

HOUSING



Housing

Your worker should speak with you about your current housing options and your long term goals for housing. Your worker can also:

- Connect you with people and programs for help, e.g., with a Youth in Transition (YIT) Worker or Housing Support Worker
- Support you with applications for housing subsidies and assistance

If you have found housing but are struggling with up front costs, speak with your worker about what help is available to you. The worker may be able to support you with things like deposits, utilities, reviewing your lease, and finding a co-signer.

OTHER BENEFITS

AFTERCARE BENEFITS



Health & Well-Being: Benefits for Youth over 18

As a young person who was formerly in care or under a VYSA, you may be eligible for the Aftercare Benefits Initiative (ABI). ABI provides health and dental benefits up to the age of 25. You may also be eligible for counselling benefits up to the age of 29.

Before your 18th birthday, your worker should make sure you are connected with health professionals, like a family doctor or registered nurse, optometrist, and, if you would like, a mental health professional.

Other Supports and Benefits

The **Children's Aid Foundation** offers support to youth leaving care, including:

- Scholarships and bursaries for school
- Employment support programs and bursaries
- Mental health support
- Telus for Good program for free access to a phone plan and internet

There are many other programs, benefits and grants that you may be eligible to support you.

Speak to your trusted adult supports or your worker about possible options available to you.

CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION

OTHER SUPPORTS

DOCUMENTS & RECORDS

DOCUMENTS & RECORDS



Documents and Records

If you were in CAS/Agency care before entering RSG, your CAS/Agency may have had obligations to collect information and copies of documents for you.

The CAS/Agency should also apply for missing or expired documents, and correct errors in your documents. This includes your:

- Citizenship/immigration status documents
- Health card
- Birth certificate and statement of live birth social insurance number
- Indian status card/First Nations membership documents
- Ontario photo ID card or driver's license. If you do not have a driver's license but would like to take the test, the Society should support you

The CAS/Agency should also keep copies of records they receive for you, like your:

- School transcripts and report cards
- Medical history, immunization records, and assessments
- Legal documents, court orders, and any agreements, including your VYSA and RSG Agreement

ACCESS TO RECORDS

ACCESS



What if the CAS/Agency will not let me access my records?

If the CAS/Agency does not give you a copy of your records, you can make a request to the Information and Privacy Commission. Speak to a lawyer for more information.

Immigration documents

If you are not a Canadian citizen, do you have a copy of your passport, work and/or study permit, or permanent residence card, and any papers filed to support your immigration application?

In general, the CAS/Agency must consider what steps are needed to support you with your immigration status in your best interests, and connect you with services where possible.

Speak with a lawyer if you have questions about your immigration status.

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS



ENDING RSG AGREEMENTS

GIVING NOTICE



Ending a RSG Agreement for Support

You can end a RSG agreement at any time.

To end the RSG agreement, you must give notice to the CAS/Agency. Your RSG agreement will stay in place for three months after you give notice.

If you change your mind, you can enter into a new RSG agreement any time before your 23rd birthday.

IT'S YOUR DECISION



When can the CAS/Agency end a RSG agreement?

You are entitled to RSG supports whether or not you achieve the targets in your RSG plan.

Unlike a VYSA, if you are entitled to RSG on your 18th birthday, the CAS/Agency cannot refuse to give you services because you are “no longer in need of protection”.

If your worker asks you to end your RSG agreement, speak to a lawyer right away or contact the Ombudsman’s Office.

More information in our other guides:

- **Going into the Care of a Society or Agency**
- **Being in the Care of a Society or Agency**
- **Leaving Home**
- **Voluntary Youth Service Agreements (VYSA’s)**

YOUR NOTES:

[illegible]

FOR HELP FINDING A LAWYER:

Justice for Children and Youth:
1-866-999-5329 www.jfcy.org

OTHER SERVICES:

Kids Help Phone: Phone and online support
1-800-668-6868 www.kidshelpphone.ca

211 Ontario:
www.211ontario.ca (dial 211 from any phone)

Children's Aid Foundation: cafdn.org/for-youth

My CAS worker's name & phone #:

My OCL lawyer's name & phone #:

Other info:



This publication is also available in French upon request.
Cette publication est également disponible en français sur demande.

April 2024