

# Respite... YOU deserve it!

## March Break Survival 101

Breaks from school days can cause stress for children with disabilities and their families. School is a routine event for children with disabilities. Many look forward to the bus to school, the time with friends, and the time they have with staff at school. They expect these things will happen in their day, and it may be confusing for them when events are different.

For parents the Break can be stressful too. The routine at home for taking care of the house is shifted by the needs for caring for children. Parents who work have less flexibility to shift their time and energy.

There are other demands if children are involved in March Break programs outside of the home. Driving back and forth, dealing with weather conditions, preparing lunches, and handling the new transitions can add stress to you and your child. Juggling all of these demands may cause you to feel more tired and frustrated.

These ideas might help to balance the week:

Ask members of your family to help out during the week. If others can help with household chores, it is easier to balance the needs of your children.

Make the day at home predictable for you and your child. Try to list things you plan to do on each day so you know in advance what to get ready for.

Plan activities that are fun and relaxing. "Down time" activities like watching a favourite movie together or playing a board game might be fun.

Have a “stay home, pajama morning” where the way you dress is a cue that the day ahead will be relaxed.

Try and get out for a walk. Explore the last of Winter days together and look for signs of Spring.

If you have respite workers – book some time so you get a well deserved break too!

Consider recreation programs in your community. Contacting your community center might lead to programs that will be fun for your child. Local libraries, museums, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Community Centres might have ideas that will work for your family,

Check in with people involved with your child. They may be aware of recreation options that suit your child well.

Finally – plan a special time or treat for yourself for after March Break. You can expect an increase in demands for the week – but you will have great memories and maybe a little chocolate hidden on the top shelf – just for you!

Remember: Respite – YOU Deserve It!