



MONTREAL SPECIAL NEEDS FAMILY ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION FAMILIALE DES BESOINS SPÉCIAUX DE MONTRÉAL
(www.msnf.ca)

Children with Special Needs
Come into our lives
Leaving footprints on our hearts
and ...
We are never the same





Prepared and Written

by

Patricia Marshall, Director

Guide to

MSNF and Families

INITIAL RELEASE OCTOBER 2017



PLEASE NOTE this document is currently being translated into the French language and will shortly be available on our website.



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PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document provides information on the Montreal Special Needs Family Organization “**MSNF**”, who we are and what we do and want to do. The document also explains what a child with special needs means and what he/she needs to reach his/her full potential and live a happier life.

BACKGROUND

MSNF was created by Maddie Pettigrosso following her fourth daughter Victoria’s traumatic illness. Victoria, who was born a normal healthy 6.5 lb baby, began experiencing multiple seizures at the age of eighteen months old causing her to regress to a three month old baby. At this point she became a special needs little girl. The doctors informed the family that Victoria may never walk or talk. Maddie refused to believe that there was no hope and began her life-long therapy journey with Victoria and by doing so she believes that no child should go without special treatments and services because of the family’s financial situation. Although our organization strives to help all children with special needs, families must be eligible for our support.

WHAT IS MSNF

MSNF received its charitable status in 2016 and was created specifically to help under-privileged children receive special treatments, therapy, and services that they so need. **MSNF** is dedicated to improving the quality of life for children with special needs. We are highly committed to filling a void in our community to ensure that these children receive the specialized services, treatments and therapies they require. We rely on donations from individuals, companies, organizations and foundations to help with our mission and goals.

GOAL AND MISSION

Our **Goal** is to raise funds to provide financial assistance to families who would otherwise be unable to afford the cost of such therapeutic services. We rely on the generous donations from members of our community.

Our **Mission** is to ensure that children with special needs and their families receive the financial support and resources to afford the necessary therapy enabling these children to reach their full potential and live happier lives. We can provide mentoring to families and we can also help direct them to their child’s individual needs. We want to be able to provide funding for treatments to under-privileged families. Currently children under five years old can receive government-funded treatments but after they reach age five, they are put on a very long waiting list for a diagnosis and treatments. We, at **MSNF**, want to help these families by getting the treatments privately.



OUR MOTTO

"HELP US HELP THE CHILDREN"

WHO ARE WE

MSNF is made up of working and retired mothers and fathers who volunteer their time to try to help children with special needs the best way they can. They have come together from all walks of life and bring a multitude of experience and a need in all of us to help children and parents who have children with special needs.

Our office is in LaSalle, Quebec, but we service the island of Montreal. **MSNF** will offer support to those who ask and are eligible. Mentoring is also offered to everyone who needs it.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

President, Founder	Maddie Pettigrosso
Vice President	Diana Pettigrosso
Director	Lina de Fazio
Treasurer	Moses Chemtob
Accountant	Amandeep Singh Dhillon
Director/Secretary/Advisor/HR	Patricia Marshall
Director/Advisor/Translator/HR	Arline (<i>Lili</i>) Marchand
Volunteer	Maryika Beely
Volunteer	Tina Chapman
Case Worker/Mentor	Beryl Faure

WHAT DOES SPECIAL NEEDS MEAN

Special needs means that a child is suffering from any of a wide range of physical disabilities, medical conditions, intellectual difficulties or emotional problems including deafness, blindness, dyslexia, learning difficulties, and behavioural problems. Also included are children who have illnesses, such as epilepsy or diabetes or who need physio, occupational and speech therapy.

Children with sight problems can use special apps, tablets, or computers to read. Those with hearing or speech problems also need special equipment.

Children with Down syndrome might attend a regular school, but they have special needs when it comes to learning, so an aide (someone to help) might accompany them to class.

Some children may also need equipment that helps them get around, for example they may need a special bus to go to school, and a bus that lifts them up into the vehicle so they don't have to get up the steps.



The Anatomy of A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD

18.5% of American children under 18 are Special Needs Children. That doesn't mean they aren't smart, talented, or capable. Just that they have specific challenges that a "normal" student would not face.

THERE ARE FOUR MAJOR TYPES OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

- PHYSICAL:** Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Asthma, Spinaery, etc.
- BEHAVIORAL / EMOTIONAL:** ADD, Oppositional Defiance Disorder
- DEVELOPMENTAL:** Down Syndrome, Autism, Dyslexia, Processing Disorders
- SENSE IMPAIRED:** Blind, Visually Impaired, Deaf, Lipread (hearing)

HERE'S OUR GUIDE ON HOW TO IDENTIFY AND CARE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

THE BASICS

Is your child being treated humanely?
 Know your rights

THE IDEA ACT
 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

- Students with disabilities must be prepared for further education, employment, and independent living.
- If a child's strength, endurance, or stamina cannot keep up with school activities, they can qualify for "other health impaired" special education status.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT:

- Prohibits schools from discriminating against children with disabilities.
- Requires schools to provide accommodations for disabled students.
- Students with impairments that substantially limit a major life activity can qualify as disabled (learning and social development deficits too).

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

- Schools must meet the needs of children with psychiatric problems.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND:

- Schools must uphold achievement standards for children with disabilities.

TREATMENTS AND SERVICES

Children with special needs require a minimum of at least one hour of therapy per week to help reach their optimal development. **MSNF** can help provide an opportunity for services as no child *meeting the criteria* is turned away. The types of treatments may include but are not limited to:

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

ABA is the use of these techniques and principles to bring about a meaningful and positive change in behavior. Analysts began working with young children with autism and related disorders in the 1960s. Early techniques often involved adults directing most of the instructions. Some allowed the child to take the lead. Since that time, a wide variety of ABA techniques have been developed for building useful skills in learners with autism – from toddlers through adulthood. These techniques can be used in structured situations such as a classroom lesson as well as in “everyday” situations such as family dinnertime or the neighborhood playground. Some ABA therapy sessions involved one-on-one interaction between the behavior analysis and the participant. Group instruction can also prove useful.

SPEECH THERAPY

Speech Therapy focuses on receptive language, or the ability to understand words spoken to you, and expressive language, or the ability to use words to express yourself. It also deals with the mechanics of producing words, such as articulation, pitch, fluency, and volume. For children, it generally involves pursuing milestones that have been delayed.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational therapy deals with strengthening fine motor skills like writing, cutting, shoe tying and using utensils. For children, whose "occupation" is school and play, it focuses more sharply on developmental milestones and skills required for playground and academic activities. Occupational Therapists working with children typically use techniques and are designed to target areas of delay and difficulty.

PHYSIO THERAPY

Physio Therapy helps people affected by injury, illness or disability through movement and exercise, manual therapy, education and advice. Physical therapists use their training and skills to treat a wide range of physical problems linked to different systems in the body. The therapist helps to encourage development and facilitate recovery, while helping them to remain independent for as long as possible.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

There are alternate treatments that can also provide help and improvement depending on the child. A personalized evaluation is needed to define what the most appropriate treatments are. The treatments listed below are excellent treatments to help and relax a child. Such treatments include Reflexology, Massotherapy, and Metamorphic Massage.

REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is a form of bodywork that involves applying pressure to the hands and feet to produce changes in pain and other benefits elsewhere in the body. According to reflexologists, pressure on the reflex points also helps to balance the nervous system and stimulates the release of endorphins that help to reduce pain and stress.

The underlying theory behind reflexology is that there are certain points or "reflex areas" on the feet and hands that are connected energetically to specific organs and body parts through energy channels in the body. By applying pressure to reflex areas, a reflexologist is said to remove energy blockages and promote health in the related body area.

Here are some examples of reflex areas and their corresponding body parts:

- The tips of the toes reflect the head
- The heart and chest are around the ball of the foot
- The liver, pancreas and kidney are in the arch of the foot
- Low back and intestines are towards the heel

Some of the benefits of reflexology include the ability to stimulate nerve function, increase energy, boost circulation, induce a deep state of relaxation, eliminate toxins, stimulate the central nervous system, prevent migraines, clean urinary tract conditions, and speed recovery after injury or surgery. This alternative medicine also has positive effects on the psyche, providing a feeling of well-being and relaxation. An economic, preventive and therapeutic method, reflexology is used to relieve a number of functional disorders.

METAMORPHIC MASSAGE

The benefits of a metamorphic massage is that it brings a deep relaxation that will allow a child to abandon the patterns of discomfort such as fears, anxieties, stress. The metamorphic massage helps to discover new perspectives. It allows better anchoring, greater self-confidence, a new way of seeing life, an awakening of consciousness, a letting go of fears. It helps us to face the difficulties with more lightness. This type of massage is for anyone at any age of life, even very young children and pregnant women will benefit from this massage without any contraindication.



The duration of a metamorphic massage varies according to the complexity of the case, it can vary from a few minutes to one hour of treatment.

COSTS OF TREATMENTS

The cost to treat one child with a special need and to treat a child with multiple issues can vary so much. The following chart details some scenarios and associated costs to the family. Costs can vary but they can be as much as \$1200 a month per child. Below are approximate costs of these special services and treatments. Costs can vary with each therapist.

We, at **MSNF**, believe that all children should be able to receive the special care they so desperately need.

The Chart below is an approximation of costs based on some families' experiences. Costs can vary.

Children with Special Needs require Special Services and Treatments			
	Costs	Low Scale	High Scale
Initial Consultation opening a file and meeting with speech therapist. \$50/hour	\$150.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00
Pre-school Language Evaluation 1 to 2 evaluation sessions, data analysis, feedback and report	\$600-\$800	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00
School-Aged Language Evaluation 2-3 evaluation sessions, data analysis, feedback and report	\$800-\$1200	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,200.00
Basic Evaluation 1 evaluation session, data analysis, feedback and report	\$150-\$300	\$ 150.00	\$ 300.00
Basic Articulation Evaluation	\$150-\$300	\$ 150.00	\$ 300.00
Fluency (Stuttering) Evaluation 1 evaluation session, data analysis, feedback and report	\$150-\$300	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Voice Evaluation 1 evaluation session, data analysis, feedback and report	\$150-\$300	\$ 150.00	\$ 300.00
Progress Report	\$100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Home Report	Starting at \$200	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Government Form and other forms	\$100 per hour - pro-rated	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Application for a Special Needs Allowance (laptop and software) 1 session - report and government form	\$250	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
Therapy - Fees 50 minute session (children under 18 years of age)	\$110	\$ 220.00	\$ 110.00
		\$ 3,170.00	\$ 4,110.00



ELIGIBILITY OF MSNF FUNDING

The goal of **MSNF** is to pay the costs for children to receive their necessary treatments. In order to determine if a family is eligible to receive our help, they must fill out an eligibility application in order that we can assess their needs. **MSNF** does have a selection criteria and this is used in determining what funding the organization can provide.

In order to pay for the treatments, **MSNF** continually searches for donations from companies, individuals, and government agencies (including Federal, Provincial and Municipal agencies). Raising funds is daunting but we forge ahead with fundraisers and sending letters to many companies, organizations, governments and individuals. We also spread the word about our organization through various social media avenues.

It is not an easy job to get funding and we need volunteers to help chase the funding. We appreciate the volunteers we have already but we are always looking for more. We have reached out to the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal for its help and they have been most gracious in steering us to the right places.

We ask the families of the children we are helping to help us help them as well.



GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The Montreal Special Needs Family organization “**MSNF**” is a non-profit community organization providing financial support towards speech, language and therapy services for children with special needs.

The Charitable Registration Number is: 831607197RR0001.

Donations over \$20.00 are eligible for tax receipts.

Phone: 514-318-3255
Mailing address: 7491 Cordner, LaSalle, QC, H8N 2R5
Website: www.msnf.ca
Email address: admin@msnf.ca

USEFUL LINKS

Below are some links that may be helpful to families. We, at **MSNF**, try to find all sources of help for families that have a children or children with special needs. This section will be continually updated as needed.

QUEBEC GOVERNMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONAL CARE NEEDS

Parents who take on exceptional responsibilities to provide special care or ensure a continual presence at the side of a child can use this form to apply for the supplement for handicapped children with exceptional care needs.

- http://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca/en/services/formulaires/soutien_aux_enfants/seh-necessitant-soins-exceptionnels/Pages/LPF-827.aspx

QUEBEC GOVERNMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Application for a Supplement for Handicapped Children, This form is to be used by the person who has a handicapped child in order to apply for a supplement for handicapped children.

- http://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca/en/services/formulaires/soutien_aux_enfants/supplement_enfant_handicape/Pages/supplement_enfant_handicape.aspx

QUEBEC GOVERNMENT CHILD ASSISTANCE

One can apply for child assistance payments directly on their website at the following links.

- www.retraitequebec.gouv.qc.ca
- https://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/www.rrq.gouv.qc/Anglais/formulaires/soutien_aux_enfants/LPF800_en.pdf

SUCH A TRUE STATEMENT

