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Revised April 2026



Welcome to Aspire Richmond!

Aspire is a community living organization. We serve and support people with developmental disabilities and their families. We are here to share some of your journey as you grow, learn, struggle, and laugh together with family and friends.

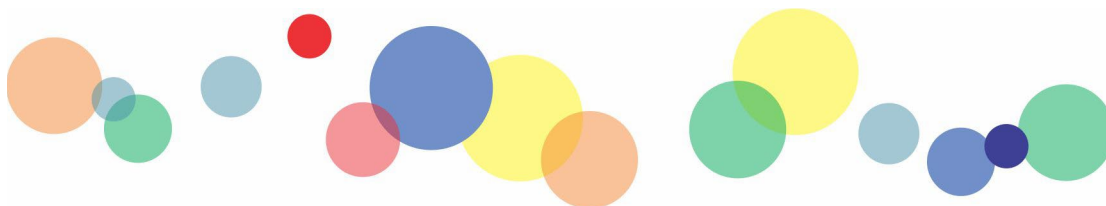
You will meet many others on your journey: friends, staff, volunteers, and other families. We hope you will take part in the community network that is Aspire.

This handbook will help you understand:

- Who we are and how we started
- What we do and what we believe
- Our policies on privacy, rights, advocacy, health and safety, and service quality
- What to expect from our programs

We believe that having the right information helps you make good choices.

Please take time to read this handbook and keep it nearby—you might want to refer to it later.



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Who We Are

Aspire is a non-profit organization that follows the rules of the B.C. Societies Act. We offer programs and services in the community for people of all ages with different abilities, and for their families.

The people we support are of all ages and have a wide range of abilities and circumstances. Some people live at home with their families and some live in homes supported or operated by Aspire. Some people have serious health care needs or other challenges as well.

We believe everyone has a right to be part of their community, feel valued, and be accepted for who they are. If families are well supported, then people within those families will be too.

We offer many kinds of help and resources to meet the needs of each person and family.

Aspire is made up of the people we support, their families, and others who believe in building an inclusive community. We follow a Constitution and By-laws that explain how we run things—like choosing our Board of Directors, holding annual meetings, and reporting on our finances.

Most of our funding comes from the provincial government. We also receive money from program fees, donations, and fundraising. Government ministries help decide who qualifies for services and, in some cases, they manage the waitlists. We'll talk with you during the intake process about how long you might need to wait for support.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Mission, Vision and Values guide our programs, activities, and decisions. They remind us, every day, of why we do what we do.

Our Vision: Thriving, connected, happy lives.

Our Mission: From infancy through adulthood, we support people with developmental disabilities to define, discover and advocate for their self-determined goals, passions and happiness.



We do this by:

- Amplifying the voices, needs and desires of the people and families we support.
- Treating all people with kindness, dignity and respect.
- Providing flexible programming and services that respond to the changing needs of individuals and families.
- Building the most inclusive, equitable, safe and diverse organization possible.
- Creating accessible conversations, events and spaces to inspire, educate and bring communities together.

Our Service Values are:



RIGHTS

supporting the rights of people with disabilities to full and equal citizenship



FAMILY-CENTRED

strengthening the importance of the family role



PERSON-CENTRED

recognizing the diversity of each person with unique plans and personal support



INCLUSION

supporting people to belong in all parts of community, including social, financial, spiritual life, and more



CHOICE

learning people's preferences, hopes and dreams, interests and decisions that define their life in small and big ways.



MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

helping to grow the number of family members, friends and others in a person's life



GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

supporting the ongoing development of skills, abilities, and talents of each person



ADVOCACY

protecting the rights and interests of people and families



COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

working with communities to welcome and include all people



LIFE LONG SUPPORTS

assisting people and families through the natural lifecycle

Our Organizational Values are:



MUTUAL TRUST
be sure of the reliability
of people and systems



RESPECT
the value and dignity of all is upheld
by listening to and recognizing each
other's contribution and opinions



OPENNESS
freedom to share opinions and
ideas without fear of punishment



RESPONSIVENESS
planning for different
situations and outcomes



FAIRNESS
people are treated equitably



CONTINUOUS LEARNING
offering ways to improve
one's own work and the
work of the team

We want to support you and your family to live the life you want – to fully take part in our programs and in the Richmond community.

Our Philosophical Approach

Person and Family Centred Practice

Your Life, Your Choices - At Aspire, our staff, caregivers, and volunteers are here to help and support you—but we know this is your life. Everything we do is respectful of the rights of individuals we serve. We support families to make your own decisions and choices, even when that means taking risks, changing your mind, or making mistakes. We are here to walk beside you, not to take over. Think of us as your partners, helpers, and guides—ready to support you in the way that works best for you.

Planning

We help create personal plans for the people we support. These plans might include:

- A care plan to guide staff or caregivers in how to best support you or your family member
- A person-centered plan that focuses on your goals, dreams, and what's important to you

We believe planning works best when you and your family are involved. Your ideas, choices, and goals are at the heart of the process, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

Supporting Families

We know that when we support someone, we're also supporting their family. Families often know their loved ones best.

Families can include:

- Immediate family
- Extended family
- Close friends and support networks

Families may need different kinds of help at different times in life. We're here to provide support, share helpful information, and connect you with other families.

If we can't offer the support you need, we'll help you find another organization that can.

Celebrating Diversity

Richmond is a diverse community, with people from many different cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences. At Aspire, we celebrate and value this diversity.

We welcome people of all:

- Cultures, races, and religions
- Ethnic backgrounds and places of origin
- Abilities—both physical and intellectual
- Sexual orientations and gender identities
- Economic, social, and personal experiences

Here's how we support diversity and inclusion:

- We listen to many voices when making decisions
- We hire staff who reflect our diverse community
- We train our team to provide respectful, culturally aware services
- We translate some materials into different languages
- We work to keep our organization free from discrimination and harassment
- We make sure everyone has fair access to our services

Everyone deserves to feel welcome, respected, and included—and we're committed to making that happen.

How We Began

Aspire began like many community living organizations in B.C.—with parents who wanted better services for their children with developmental disabilities, close to home.

In the early 1980s, a group of parents in Richmond came together to form the Richmond Society for Special People. Their first program was after-school care for children and youth with special needs.

Over time, we grew and added more services. In 1988, we joined the BC Association for Community Living (now called Inclusion BC) to connect with other organizations across the province.

Since then, many important changes have shaped who we are:

- Large institutions for people with developmental disabilities were closed in B.C.
- New community-based options were created to support people in their own communities
- Services became more personalized, offering more choice and flexibility

Offering supports for people in their home community is still important to Aspire today. We continue to grow, listen to families, and build high-quality services using the best available knowledge and practices.

Our Board of Directors

Aspire is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board is elected by our members each year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and includes family members of those we support, self-advocates and other community members.

The Board's role is to:

- Protect and promote Aspire's vision, mission, and values
- Provide leadership and direction for our programs and services
- Make sure Aspire is doing its best for the people and families we support

To help with its work, the Board has special committees, including:

- The Executive Committee
- The Finance Committee
- The Inclusive Education Committee

Our Staff and Volunteers

Aspire’s Board of Directors gives overall direction, but the day-to-day work is managed by our Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The CEO is responsible for:

- Hiring staff
- Managing the budget
- Running programs
- Building relationships with families, staff, funders, and others
- Creating policies for daily operations
- Reporting to the Board

Our staff report to the CEO and are the people you’ll see most often in our programs. Many of them are part of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). They are supported by our volunteers, and in some programs, by contracted caregivers.

Everyone—staff, volunteers, and caregivers—follows a Code of Ethics. This means you can expect to be treated with respect, dignity, courtesy, and fairness. And you can trust that our policies and expectations are followed.

An Organization Chart of Aspire’s leadership and staff is available at www.aspirerichmond.com.



[Resources on the
Aspire Richmond
website](#)

What We Do

Community Inclusion

At Aspire, we believe that everyone has the right to be part of their community—to participate, contribute, and feel like they belong. Helping people be included in their community is one of our main goals. We support individuals and their families or support networks to make this happen.

In all our programs, we:

- Focus on community inclusion
- Use person-centered planning to set goals based on each person’s interests
- Create activities that are meaningful and tailored to each individual
- Help people find ways to get involved, make friends, and give back to their community

Our staff and contractors plan activities that meet people’s interests. We want everyone to take part in community life.

Advocacy

Advocacy means standing up for your rights and helping you get the support you need. We believe that everyone deserves a good life and a chance to be fully part of their community—and we’re here to help make that happen.

Advocacy can include:

- Going with you to meetings (like at schools or other agencies)
- Helping you understand and access community services (like health care)
- Supporting you in finding resources or talking to decision-makers
- Working with you to improve services and create positive change

We also help you and your family build your own advocacy skills, so you can speak up for yourself and support others.

Aspire promotes public education and awareness, including events during Community Living Month in October. These activities help families and the community learn more and become stronger, more confident advocates.



On a larger scale, Inclusion BC supports individuals, families, and organizations like Aspire. They help with:

- Advocacy and networking
- Conferences and training
- Sharing information and resources
- Public awareness and lobbying for change

Advocacy is one of the most important things we do—and we're proud to stand with you.

Supporting Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy means standing up for yourself and your rights. The self-advocacy movement is happening around the world – people with developmental disabilities are speaking up. People are taking leadership as self-advocates on issues that matter to them. Leaders in the movement talk about self-determination. This is the right to control your own life and make your own decisions.

Self-advocates have helped bring big changes in B.C., like:

- Moving from institutions to community living
- Changing how we talk about and describe people with disabilities
- Creating easy-to-understand information
- Helping shape the kinds of supports and services available

There are self-advocacy groups across B.C., including one here at Aspire! These groups:

- Share ideas and support
- Organize training and speaking events
- Work together to create change
- Have fun and make new friends

We encourage youth and adults with developmental disabilities to join our self-advocacy group and be part of the movement.

Aspire also supports families in helping their loved ones build self-advocacy skills.

We promote public education and awareness, including events during Community Living Month in October. These activities help everyone learn more and become stronger advocates.

At the provincial level, Inclusion BC supports advocacy for individuals, families, and organizations like Aspire. They offer:

- Conferences and training
- Information and resources
- Support for self-advocacy groups
- Public awareness and lobbying efforts

Planning

Everyone is unique. We all grow and learn at our own pace, with different strengths, needs, and dreams. Families are unique too—with their own cultures, values, and experiences.

At Aspire, we use Person-Centred Planning to support individuals and families. This means:

- We focus on your strengths, interests, and goals
- We work with you and your support team to create a plan that fits your life
- We celebrate who you are and help build a vision for your future

Depending on your needs, you may have more than one type of plan. Together, these make up your service plan—and no two plans are exactly the same.

Some plan types include:

Person-Centred Plan

A Person-Centred Plan is a personalized document created with your input—and, when possible, with help from your family and support network. It's designed to reflect your needs, preferences, and dreams, and guide the services and supports we provide.

Your plan helps you:

- Set goals for your future
- Explore your interests
- Create a clear path to reach those goals

Before we create your plan, we take time to get to know you—this is called the discovery process. We encourage families, friends, and professionals to be part of the planning. We'll help make sure everyone can participate in a way that works for you.

A Person-Centred Plan is created within 3 to 6 months of starting services at Aspire and it is reviewed and updated at least once a year. We keep a copy of your Person-Centred Plan and, with your permission, share it with others who helped create it.

Person-Centred Plans follow a variety of formats, depending on what Aspire services you participate in:

- The F-Words Framework is used in Children Services
- PATH is used in Adult Services and for youth transitioning to Adult Services
- Lifestyle/Gateway Planning is used in Adult Services
- Vocational Plan is used in Employment Services

All of these plans lead to an action plan, or what we call measurable goals to help you live the life you want. These goals may be related to:

- Reaching developmental milestones
- Recreation and hobbies
- Education and learning
- Relationships and social life
- Work or volunteering
- Home and living arrangements

Care Plan

A Care Plan is a document that explains the help and support a person needs in their daily life. It's made just for you and includes important details like:

- Emergency contact information
- Your daily routines and personal preferences
- Support for daily activities (like eating, bathing, dressing)
- Help with getting around in the community
- Any behavioral supports you may need

The Care Plan helps our staff understand how to support you in the best way, every day. It is made before you start receiving services at Aspire and it is reviewed and updated at least once a year, or sooner if your needs change.

Health Care Plan(s)

Some individuals may need extra help with their health. A Health Care Plan is created for each serious or complex medical need. Medical Professionals are involved in creating Health Care Plans and they may include:

- Medical procedures
- Training for staff or caregivers
- Emergency instructions
- Details about the person's health needs and supports

Examples of Health Care Plans are:

- Nutrition Plans
- Guidelines for Medications
- Seizure Plan
- Allergy Plan
- Asthma Plan
- Bowel/Bladder Plan
- Or other Plans related to acute or chronic conditions

Health Care Plans must be ready before services begin at Aspire. They are reviewed and updated every year, or sooner if the person's health changes. They help keep individuals safe and ensures they get the care they need every day.

Other Reports or Plans from Professionals

Depending on an individual's needs, they may have other plans developed by professionals. These may include Communication Plans, Behaviour Support Plans and Safety Plans.

Programs, Supports and Services

We support individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and at many life stages. Here's a quick overview.

Services for Children, Youth and Families

- **Infant Development (IDP)** provides consultants who work with families. Giving resources, referrals, and support for children up to age three who have developmental delays or risk factors for later diagnosis.
- **Supported Child Development (SCDP)** is a community based early intervention program for families and child care centres. Giving practical information, resources, and strategies for the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care settings. SCDP consultants assist families to access child care in their community.
- **Child Care Programs (Seedlings and Treehouse)** are for children from birth to grade 7. Staff support developmental and personal growth in children to increase skills and independence. Staff support children needing additional support and typically developing children with age-appropriate activities.
- **Youth Connections** is an after-school program for youth with disabilities to attend recreational and social activities.
- **Family Respite** is support for parents with the daily responsibilities of caring for children or adults who have a developmental disability.

Services for Adults

- **LIFE - Learn, Involve, Focus, Employ** - are supports and services for people to achieve their individual goals. Supports are provided in the community and at Aspire program locations. LIFE services include an Employment program for people who wish to seek employment.
- **Housing Options** include 3 different models of support
 - **Supported Living** is 24-hour staffed support for people who live in their own home with others.
 - **Independent Living** supports individuals to live independently with identified needed supports to ensure life-long success.
 - **Home Share** is community caregivers sharing their home and life with an individual who has a developmental disability. Matches are based on people feeling as they are valued member of a family.
- **Family Resources** provides information, resources, or support to family members who face the needs that come with having a family member with a disability.

Rights, Risks, and Responsibilities

Rights

People using our services enjoy the same rights as all Canadian citizens. These rights are set out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *BC Human Rights Code*.

In 2010, Canada ratified the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Ratifying the Convention means we agreed to follow what it says. It is about human rights and changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Everyone has the right to make decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent. Everyone has the right to be an active member of society.

The basic ideas of the convention are that:

- People are free to make their own choices.
- No one will be discriminated against.
- Disabled people have the same rights to be included in society as anybody else.
- Disabled people are to be respected for who they are.
- Everyone should have equal opportunities.
- Everyone should have equal access.
- Men and women should have equal opportunities.
- Disabled children should be respected for who they are as they grow up.

At Aspire, we believe in these rights and work hard to make sure they are respected. Together with our Self-Advocacy group, Aspire created our own Rights Statements. These are reviewed every year with you and/or your family to make sure you understand your rights and feel supported.

These statements below are available at www.aspirerichmond.com.

Children Rights Statement:

I have the right ...



TO BE SAFE

- to be healthy
- to kindness and peace
- to be helped and informed
- to feel safe and be protected from harm and danger



TO BE ME

- to have choice
- to learn and make mistakes
- to understand and be accepted
- to say what I think and feel



TO BE IMPORTANT

- to love and be loved
- to be heard and understood
- to be valued and honoured
- to be cared for with dignity and respect
- to be as independent as I can



TO PLAY

- to have friends
- to use my imagination
- to learn new skills
- to belong and be included in community



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Adult Right Statement:

RIGHTS ARE RULES THAT MAKE PEOPLE EQUAL.

I have the right to be viewed as a person first.
I have the right to feel safe wherever I go.
I have the right to be heard and understood in my own way.
I have the right to be asked about the help I need or want.
I have the right to share how I feel and think.
I have the right to receive information in plain language.
I have the right to be spoken to directly in a way that shows respect.
I have the right to make decisions about my life.
I have the right to decide what information is public or private.
I have the right to make mistakes and learn from them.
I have the right to good healthcare.
I have the right to have relationships.
I have the right to access skilled supports in the community.
I have the right to vote.
I have the right to receive legal support if I need it.
I have the right to have my ideas supported and valued.
I have the right to give feedback about Aspire Services.



A RESPONSIBILITY IS SOMETHING I AM EXPECTED TO DO.

I have a responsibility to care for myself.
I have a responsibility to care for others.
I have a responsibility to ask for help when I need it.
I have a responsibility to follow the law.



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Risks and Responsibilities

Having rights also means having responsibilities. At Aspire, we ask individuals and families who use our services to:

- Respect the rights of others
- Follow our policies
- Take part in planning
- Make choices and decisions about their own lives

We're always here to offer support and guidance. We know families and support networks play a big role in helping individuals grow and make decisions.

Making choices sometimes involves taking risks—and that's okay. Everyone is different, and each person or family may find their own balance between safety and independence. We believe it's important for people to:

- Think for themselves
- Make their own decisions
- Learn from mistakes
- Ask for help
- Change their minds
- Try new things

Sometimes, individuals may make choices that are different from what their families would choose. When this happens, we listen to everyone's views and work together to find the best solution. We are committed to:

- Keeping individuals safe while they use our services
- Respecting family values and customs as much as possible
- Working with families to plan for and respond to situations that may involve risk

Aspire has processes in place to support individuals and families when facing challenges or behaviours that may involve risk.

Supporting People Who Communicate Using Behaviours

Sometimes, people show behaviours that are hard to understand or respond to. At Aspire, we believe these behaviours are a form of communication, and we respond with respect, care, and understanding.

Our staff and caregivers are trained to use Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). PBS is a proven approach that helps us:

- Understand why a behaviour is happening
- Find ways to prevent challenging behaviours
- Teach new skills to help individuals express themselves
- Support people in a way that respects their rights, safety, dignity, and independence

The PBS Process includes:

- Assessing the need for a Behaviour Support Plan
- Building a Behaviour Support Team: We bring together the people who know the individual best—family, friends, caregivers, therapists, and staff.
- Person-Centred Planning: The team listens to the individual’s goals and dreams to help guide the support plan.
- Functional Behavioural Assessment (FBA): We collect information to understand what triggers the behaviour and why it happens.
- Behaviour Support Plan Development: Based on the FBA, we work with psychologists or behavioural consultants to get a Behaviour Support Plan in place to help everyone stay safe and supported. The plan may include:
 - Strategies to teach new skills
 - Safe and respectful ways to respond
 - Goals for improving the person’s quality of life
 - Safety Plan or De-escalation Plan
- Approval of the Behaviour Support Plan includes the individual, their family or legal representative, the Aspire Program Manager and Director.
- Monitoring Progress: We track changes in behaviour and progress toward goals. Plans are reviewed every year, or sooner if needed.

Service Quality

At Aspire, we're always working to get better at what we do. We call this Continuous Quality Improvement—it means we listen, learn, and make changes to improve our services. Here are some of the ways we monitor our work:



Listening to You

You and your family know best how our services are working. We value your suggestions and take your feedback in many ways:

- We have an open-door policy. This means we welcome you to let us know when something isn't working.
- We send you surveys on a regular basis so we can make our programs better as a result of your feedback. This includes sending a survey to you after leaving Aspire, so we can check in and offer help if needed.
- We interview the people we support about how they feel about our services.

If you have any concerns, please tell us. We promise to listen and do our best to help.

Focusing on Results

We want to know if our programs are making a difference. Each program has goals, and we measure how well we're doing in four areas:

- Effectiveness – Are we achieving the results we planned?
- Efficiency – Are we using our resources wisely?
- Service Accessibility – Is it easy for people to get the help they need?
- Experience of Service – Are people happy with our services?

We share our progress in an Annual Outcomes Management Report, available on our website: www.aspirerichmond.com. We also summarize the results from the perspective of Quality of Life; this is called the Quality-of-Life Report Card.

Meeting Standards and Regulations

Aspire follows rules and guidelines from:

- Government ministries
- Licensing bodies
- WorkSafe BC
- Accrediting organizations

We must follow these rules and guidelines in order to receive funding from the government. Aspire goes through a formal review, called Accreditation, that checks we meet high standards in areas like:

- Health and safety
- Individual planning and support
- Community inclusion
- Accessibility
- Financial responsibility
- Quality of services

Aspire was first accredited by CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) in 2005, receiving the highest level: 3-year accreditation. We've continued to earn this top rating ever since.

We also have a strong internal structure to keep things running smoothly:

- Staff report to Program Managers
- Managers report to Directors and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- The CEO reports to the Board of Directors
- We have a Director of Quality Assurance to oversee service quality
- We follow written policies and respond to feedback and complaints

Privacy and Confidentiality

At Aspire, we take your privacy seriously. We follow provincial laws to keep your personal and family information safe and confidential.

Confidential information is anything personal or sensitive, such as:

- Medical, educational, financial, or psychological details
- Names, meeting notes, emails, reports, videos, or photos

We keep this information secure and up to date.



Collecting Personal Information and Keeping it Safe and Accurate

When we receive a referral for services, we ask for some basic information. Once your application is accepted and we begin planning services, we may ask for more detailed information, such as:

- Medical and psychological reports
- Educational assessments
- Information from therapists or other professionals

We use this information to understand your family member's needs and strengths, so we can provide the best possible support.

We do not share your information with anyone outside Aspire without your permission. Sometimes, we are required to share certain information with government agencies that fund and oversee our services, like Community Living BC (CLBC) or the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). However, we only share what is required by law. If you have questions about how your information is used, please contact Aspire's Director of Quality Assurance.

You may ask to see the information we have on file at any time. It is important to keep your information current; we do our best to include you when we review the information we have on file. This gives you the opportunity to provide updates if anything changes or correct anything that is not accurate so we can adjust our services to meet your changing needs. Please be sure to give us copies of new reports or information that may impact the services you receive.

Consent

At Aspire, we respect your right to make decisions. That's why we ask for your consent for many things, including:

- Consent to provide service.
- Consent to share information.
- Consent for program field trips (for child care).
- Consent to photograph or video (depending on the program).
- Consent for Communication and Information Technologies.
- Consent for Safe Release (for Out of School Care)

We will always explain what we're asking and why. You can say yes or no. You or your family member can withdraw consent at any time. Just let us know, and we'll explain what that means. In some cases, withdrawing consent may affect the services we can provide, but we'll talk with you about it.

As part of making decisions for themselves, we support adults to give their own consent. Under B.C. law, adults are assumed to be able to make decisions unless proven otherwise. How someone communicates does not affect their right to make choices.

Some adults may have a Legal Representative, Guardian, or Committee who helps make decisions. If you're unsure about this, talk to your Program Manager.

We make sure our staff and caregivers understand each person's legal status and respect their rights when it comes to decision-making and consent.

Health, Safety and Well-being



At Aspire, your health, safety, and well-being are very important to us. Everyone has the right to a safe and supportive environment—physically, emotionally, and mentally. Here are some of the ways we make sure that happens:

Emergency Preparedness

Every program responds to emergencies, such as a fire or earthquake, in ways that meet the needs of the individuals being supported.

Medication Safety

We make sure the staff and caregivers who give medications are trained. Medications that go with an individual to their program must follow safety protocols. The Program Manager will share these protocols, when needed.

Standard Precautions

Staff, volunteers, and caregivers are trained to protect themselves and others from risks related to blood and bodily fluids. We work with families to reduce these risks.

First Aid

All staff and contracted caregivers are trained in First Aid.

External Monitoring

We are regularly inspected by:

- The local Fire Department
- Building inspectors
- Community Care Facilities Licensing (for licensed programs)

We also report to WorkSafe BC and to provincial government ministries for following provincial health and safety rules.

Planning for Safety

We work with individuals and families to plan for health or safety risks and come up with ways to address them. We update and revise plans as individuals' situations and needs change over time. We make sure all staff and contractors know about changes so they can respond.

Reporting Abuse

If we suspect a child or youth under 19 is being abused or neglected, we are legally required to report it. If we suspect an adult is being abused or neglected, there is not a legal duty to report, but we believe it is our moral responsibility to report it.

We have many policies and procedures in place to follow in the event a report is needed. If this happens, we take direction from:

- Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
- Community Living British Columbia (CLBC)
- Community Care Facilities Licensing (Child Care or Supported Living, where applicable)
- Police

We also use the following resources:

- BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers
- Adult Guardianship and CLBC information on the CLBC Website
- Community Care Facilities Licensing: Child Care or Residential Care

Your Relationship with Aspire

Just like any community, people have different roles. Things work best when everyone helps out in ways that feel right for them.

Most of our programs are funded by the government, but we wouldn't be able to offer the same level of service—or many of the extra supports—without help from volunteers, community support, and fundraising.

Each year, we host fundraising events and also receive support from others who organize their own events to help us.

Getting Involved

There are many ways you can be part of our community—if you'd like to!

- **Become a member of Aspire** – Membership is low-cost and gives you a voice at our Annual General Meeting (AGM), where you can vote for board members and help shape our future. Visit our website at www.aspirerichmond.com for the membership application.
- **Volunteer in our programs** – Help out with open houses, picnics, training sessions, meetings, and more. Talk to your Program Manager to learn how.
- **Donate or help fundraise** – You can make a tax-deductible donation, choose where your gift goes, or donate equipment or services. Visit our website at www.aspirerichmond.com for ways you can give.
- **Join our Board of Directors** – Help lead and guide our organization. Talk to your Program Manager if you are interested.
- **Attend Aspire Events** – we host special events throughout the year where families, individuals we support, staff, and volunteers can connect in a relaxed and friendly setting. Attending these events provides opportunities to connect with other families.

Some of these activities take a bit of time and effort, but they come with great rewards. You'll meet other families, build a support network, learn new skills, and share your own experiences. You'll also help strengthen community inclusion and support the services your family member relies on.



We hope you'll get involved in whatever way works best for you!

Ongoing Communication

Just like any strong community, good communication helps everything run smoothly. When people stay connected, they know what's going on, feel heard, and know what to do if they have questions or concerns.

We know life can get busy, and things can change quickly. That's why we make a real effort to keep in touch with you.

We're committed to keeping families informed. Here's how we share updates:

- **Website** – Visit www.aspirerichmond.com for news and information.
- **Newsletter** – We send out regular updates with stories, events, and more.
- **Social Media** – Follow us to stay connected.
- **Email Updates** – You may receive occasional messages with important news.

We share updates about our programs, training opportunities, upcoming events, and activities. You'll also hear stories from the people we support, families, staff, and community partners.

As technology changes, we'll keep exploring new ways to stay in touch—and we'd love to hear your ideas and feedback too!

Expectations

Good relationships work best when everyone knows what to expect.

As a family member, here's what you can expect from our staff, caregivers, and volunteers:

- You and your family will be treated with respect, dignity, fairness, and courtesy.
- We will follow our mission, values, and Code of Ethics.
- We'll provide planning and support that fits your needs.
- We'll communicate openly and regularly with you.
- Our team will keep learning and improving through training and professional development.
- We'll meet or exceed government and accreditation standards and always work to improve our services.

Here's what we ask from you:

- Share with us the information we need to support your family member well.
- Follow the program policies.
- Treat staff, other families, and individuals with respect, dignity, fairness, and courtesy.
- Take part in orientation and training, if appropriate, to help staff and caregivers understand your family member's needs.
- Communicate openly with us and let us know if you have concerns.
- Be involved in planning for your family member.

Some programs may have additional expectations, like specific staff qualifications or levels of parental involvement.

Problem Solving and Complaints

We work to prevent and manage concerns or problems as they happen. We believe good communication is the best way to solve problems. Our staff are trained to handle concerns respectfully and effectively, and we work hard to stay connected with families, caregivers, and the people we support.

If you have a complaint, we want to hear about it. We'll do our best to resolve the issue quickly and make sure you're getting the support you need.

Your privacy is protected, and making a complaint will not affect your access to safe services.

Who Can Make a Complaint?

- Anyone using our services
- A family member or representative
- Anyone concerned about the services we offer

If you would like help filing a complaint you can ask a family member, staff member, or anyone you feel comfortable with to help you. We can also support you to find someone to help. A person assisting you in this type of situation is called an advocate.

How to Submit a Complaint

We encourage you to speak up as soon as a concern comes up. It's best to try to resolve things directly with the people involved.

We'll go over our complaint policies with you during your orientation, and you can ask for a copy anytime.

If you have a concern, please talk to your Program Manager. If it's not resolved, you can find more information about our complaint process at www.aspirerichmond.com in the Feedback section. You'll also find links to the complaint processes for our funding agencies and the Richmond School District.



[Aspire
Richmond
Feedback Page](#)

Resources

We know your role can sometimes feel overwhelming. Your Program Manager is a valuable Resource if you have any questions.

Aspire Family Resource

The Aspire Family Resource Manager is available to support you as you navigate everyday challenges and explore available services. Here's how the Family Resource Manager can help:

- Share information about local and provincial services and supports
- Assist with transitions, like starting kindergarten, moving from child to adult services, or when an adult child leaves home
- Help you connect with other families and support networks
- Provide advocacy when needed
- Offer books, articles, and other helpful resources

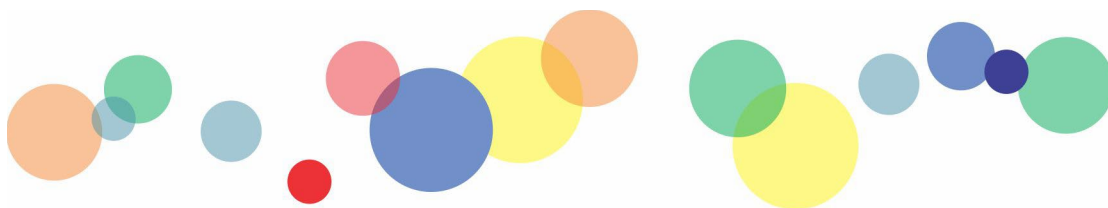
If we're not able to provide the support your family member needs, we'll work with you to explore other options and refer you to other community organizations that may be able to help.

Other Helpful Resources

There are many other services available to support you and your family. Here's a short list of some key organizations:

- **[Ministry of Children and Family Development \(MCFD\)](#)**
Provides funding and decides eligibility for children's programs like Infant Development and Supported Child Development. Also offers childcare subsidies and support for childcare spaces.
- **[Community Living British Columbia \(CLBC\)](#)**
Supports adults with disabilities through programs like LIFE Services, Respite, Supported Living, and Home Share. CLBC also offers planning support through its Richmond office.
- **[Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction](#)**
Offers income assistance and BC Disability Benefits for people 18 and older. Benefits may include monthly financial support, medical and dental coverage, and bus passes.

- **TransLink HandyDART**
A door-to-door transit service for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, or need help using public transit.
- **Advocate for Service Quality**
Helps individuals and families who are unhappy with services provided by the provincial government or funded agencies.
- **Representative for Children and Youth**
Supports young people (up to age 24) by making sure their voices are heard and their rights are respected during important decisions.
- **Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC**
Offers guidance on guardianship, health care consent, and Representation Agreements for adults who can't make decisions on their own.
- **Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre**
A non-profit that provides information about personal planning, including Representation Agreements.
- **Family Support Institute (FSI)**
A province-wide organization led by families, offering support, training, and networking for families who have a member with a disability.



LIFE Community Inclusion Services

What We Do in LIFE Services

LIFE (Learn, Involve, Focus, Employ) — provides supports and services that help adults work toward personal goals.

LIFE supports are offered in a variety of settings, including the community and Aspire program sites. Each person is connected to a program site that focuses on different areas of learning, skill development, and personal growth. While people have a program site, they also travel to other Aspire locations and community spaces to take part in activities that support their goals.



Our Approach

We support adults with developmental disabilities of all ages to reach their own level of personal growth and fulfillment. We do this by encouraging and supporting people to:

- Try new things and take positive risks
- Explore interests and solve problems
- Accept themselves and others
- Celebrate diversity
- Discover personal goals and direction

By offering person-centred, individualized supports, we help people build confidence, skills, and independence in ways that are meaningful to them.

Respecting Diversity

Richmond is a diverse community, and the people who participate in LIFE come from many cultural, ethnic, and family backgrounds and have a wide range of abilities. We respect and honour these differences when planning and adapting services, and we work closely with individuals and families to reflect their values, strengths, and priorities.

Community Inclusion and Connection

LIFE focuses on personal development, community involvement, and building social connections. Our goal is to support adults to increase their independence and feel included and valued in their community.

We aim to maximize community involvement and meaningful contribution through activities that may include:

- Learning daily life and social skills
- Fitness and recreation
- Arts, crafts, and creative activities
- Cooking and meal preparation
- Computer skills and technology use
- Literacy and learning opportunities
- Volunteering and community participation
- Exploring and preparing for employment

Employment Supports

We believe that meaningful employment is an important part of inclusion. People with developmental disabilities want to work in jobs they enjoy, earn real wages, and be respected and valued in their workplaces and communities.

Our Employment Services support people to find and keep jobs in the community. Supports may include:

- A discovery process to identify strengths, skills, interests, and goals
- Job exploration and career planning
- Support with resumes and interview preparation
- Connecting with potential employers
- On-the-job training and ongoing support for as long as needed

We also support participation in the Richmond HandyCrew Cooperative.

To learn more, visit www.handycrew.ca.

Where and When

LIFE activities are offered throughout Richmond at a variety of program locations. Most LIFE programs operate between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Whenever possible, we encourage and support people to take part in existing community programs and learning opportunities. We also provide activities and supports at Aspire home site locations.

Our goal is to offer flexible, meaningful experiences in both community settings and Aspire sites, based on each person's goals, interests, and support needs.

Our Staff

LIFE programs are supported by dedicated and qualified staff who are committed to providing respectful, person-centred supports.

Program Managers are responsible for the overall operation of the program and for supervising staff. LIFE Managers work directly in program and activity locations to support daily operations and ensure quality services.

All staff have a Community Support Worker qualification or an equivalent background. In addition, staff receive ongoing training in:

- Person-centred planning and goal setting
- Aspire values and ethics
- Behaviour support and management

Individual staff members may also receive specialized training related to the specific support needs of the people they work with.

We work carefully to match the skills, interests, and personalities of staff with the preferences and support needs of each person. We are open to making changes when needed to ensure positive and supportive relationships.

Learning and Teaching Together

We believe LIFE is a strong learning environment for people entering the field of community support work. We also recognize that the individuals who participate in LIFE are excellent teachers and guides. For this reason, we welcome practicum students into the program and provide opportunities for them to gain meaningful, hands-on experience while learning from the people they support.

Eligibility and Entering LIFE Services

Eligibility to participate in LIFE Services is determined by the provincial government. The government also sets service priority and provides funding. To access LIFE Services, an individual must have a referral from the appropriate government ministry.

There is usually a waitlist for LIFE Services. The referring government agency will let you know when space becomes available in one of the programs.

The Intake Process

Once a referral is received, Aspire begins the intake process. This includes:

- Meeting with the individual and family or support network to explain our philosophy, services, policies, and eligibility
- Gathering information about the individual's strengths, support needs, and health considerations
- Discussing the services and resources the individual is looking for, and how these align with what Aspire can offer
- Completing an Aspire Intake form
- Beginning parts of the care plan
- Completing required consent forms

After this process, we review how well we can meet the individual's needs and goals, and whether our services are a good fit. At the same time, the individual decides whether they would like to join LIFE Services. This is a shared decision-making process involving the individual and Aspire. Family members and support network members are encouraged to be part of this discussion.

If Services Are Not a Fit

If the individual chooses not to join LIFE Services, Aspire will provide information about possible alternative resources when available.

While we are committed to supporting eligible individuals, there may be times when services cannot be offered due to funding limits, space availability, or other circumstances. Individuals may choose to remain on a waitlist until appropriate services or funding become available.

Assessment Period

If the individual chooses to move forward with LIFE Services, an assessment period begins. During this time, the individual:

- Visits the program
- Meets staff and other participants
- Learns more about LIFE Services

At the same time, Aspire learns more about the individual's support needs. The care plan is completed, and planning begins for how and when the individual will start the program.

Starting a new program, meeting new people, and adjusting to a new routine can be a big change. This can be an exciting time, but it can also bring feelings of anxiety or uncertainty for both the individual and their family or support network.

The assessment period is flexible and may take up to six months. At the end of this period, both Aspire and the individual make a final decision about moving forward.

Transition Into the Program

If services continue, Aspire begins the transition phase. This includes final planning for entry into the program and may involve:

- A gradual or phased start
- Staff training related to specific support needs
- Planning for health, communication, or behaviour supports

We work carefully to make the transition as comfortable and positive as possible for the individual, their family or support network, and others already participating in the program.

We are committed to adapting and developing our services to make the best use of available resources while meeting the needs of the people we support.

Family Involvement

Families and other support network members play an important role in the lives of adults with developmental disabilities. We value your involvement and welcome your participation in planning and major decisions, such as beginning a new program. As a family member, you may also help monitor services and act as an advocate.

At the same time, it is important to support the independence of the individual. This includes encouraging them to make their own choices, build self-advocacy skills, and take an active role in decisions about their life. This can sometimes be challenging, especially when it involves adjusting to growing independence in someone you have always supported and protected.

Supporting independence may mean setting new boundaries, allowing room for learning, and accepting that mistakes are part of growth. It is a balance between the care and love you will always provide and the process of supporting your family member to become as independent as possible. Aspire is here to support you and the individual through this process.

Our Family Resource Manager can provide information, resources, and connections to other families who are experiencing similar transitions.

In addition to supporting your family member, we encourage families and support network members to become involved in Aspire activities. This is a meaningful way to learn more about community living, advocacy and self-advocacy, and to connect with others who share similar experiences.

Fees

LIFE Services are provided at no cost to participants. These services are funded primarily through Community Living BC (CLBC).

LIFE Services has a small budget to support activity costs. When the cost of an activity goes beyond this budget, individuals may be asked to contribute toward the cost of participating. Any additional costs will be shared in advance, and participation in fee-based activities is always optional. Whenever possible, we support individuals to plan ahead, explore affordable options, and make informed choices about community participation costs.

Health and Safety

The health, safety, and well-being of the individuals we support is always our top priority. People supported through LIFE have the right to a safe environment that supports their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

We work to protect health and safety through a range of safeguards, including:

- Staffing levels that are planned based on the individual support needs of participants
- Staff training in First Aid, CPR, abuse recognition, and responding to emergencies and critical incidents
- Fully stocked First Aid kits at all LIFE program locations and in vehicles used for transportation
- Criminal record checks completed by all staff, practicum students, and volunteers
- Use of standard precautions by staff when providing personal care
- Encouragement for staff, practicum students, and volunteers to maintain up-to-date vaccinations, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Influenza

- Clear policies, procedures, and ongoing staff training related to violence prevention, accident prevention, emergency response, and workplace health and safety
- Regular fire and earthquake drills at program locations
- Careful documentation of medication administration during program attendance
- Availability of casual staff so employees do not work when they are unwell
- Individual care plans that address specific safety needs, including missing-person responses and behaviour support in vehicles
- Appropriately licensed drivers, including Class 4 licences where required
- Business-class insurance on staff-owned vehicles used to transport individuals

In the event of an emergency, accident, or a 911 call, we respond immediately and appropriately. Reports are completed for relevant government funding agencies, and families or support network members are notified as soon as possible.

Transportation

People get to and from LIFE programs in a variety of ways, depending on their needs and preferences. Some individuals travel independently using public transportation. Others may use HandyDART if they use a wheelchair or require additional assistance or may be driven by a family member or caregiver.

For program activities, transportation may include public transit or the use of Aspire vehicles or staff-owned vehicles when needed. We also support individuals to purchase bus passes where appropriate.

Our goal is to support safe, reliable transportation that promotes independence and community participation as much as possible.

Individual Records

Once an individual's referral to LIFE Services has been accepted, Aspire creates a record that includes:

- A paper file
- An electronic file in a secure system called ShareVision

These records are used to support the individual and guide staff in providing consistent, person-centred services. The records may include:

- Care Plan and other support plans
- Person-Centred Plan and Goal progress notes
- Emergency and health information
- Activity schedules
- Daily documentation completed by staff

Records are updated regularly and are accessible only to staff who need the information to properly support the individual.

We work hard to ensure each file is complete, accurate, and up to date. Families and support network members are encouraged to share any new or updated reports, plans, or assessments so records remain current.

Confidentiality and Privacy

We are committed to treating all personal information as confidential and keeping it secure, even after an individual leaves Aspire.

- Paper files are stored in locked filing cabinets
- Electronic files in ShareVision are protected by security controls and access permissions
- Records are only available to authorized staff

Family members or support network members may request to review an individual's file by contacting the Program Manager. If you believe any information is incorrect, you may ask for it to be reviewed and corrected.

We also meet all reporting requirements outlined in our funding contracts. Individuals receive copies of required reports and may choose to share them with their families or support network members.

When an individual leaves Aspire, records are stored securely according to government requirements for at least seven years. Records remain accessible if needed after services have ended.

Critical Incident Reporting

A critical incident is any event that may cause harm, pose a serious risk, or affect the rights or well-being of an individual. This may include:

- Injuries requiring medical attention

- Allegations or incidents of abuse
- Aggressive or unusual behaviour
- Medication errors
- Unusual illness
- Missing person situations
- A 911 call or emergency response
- Unexpected death

It is an expectation that critical incidents are reported to the appropriate government funding agency within required timelines and documented in the individual's file. All critical incident reports are reviewed annually by the Program Director to identify patterns or areas for follow-up and improvement.

Keeping in Touch

Good communication with families and support network members is very important. Strong communication can enrich an individual's life while supporting their growing independence.

We recognize that communication needs and preferences vary. Some people and families prefer frequent contact, while others prefer less. We aim to communicate in ways that respect these preferences and support the individual's wishes.

We encourage ongoing, two-way communication and offer several ways to stay connected:

- We share important updates and changes as they arise
- We invite families and support network members to participate in planning meetings
- We contact you promptly in the event of an emergency or critical incident
- We invite your feedback through our annual satisfaction survey
- We maintain an open-door approach and encourage you to raise any questions, concerns, or ideas
- We provide conflict-resolution support if concerns involving the individual, staff, or family cannot be resolved directly

Our goal is open, respectful communication that supports positive relationships and the well-being of everyone involved.

LIFE Continues

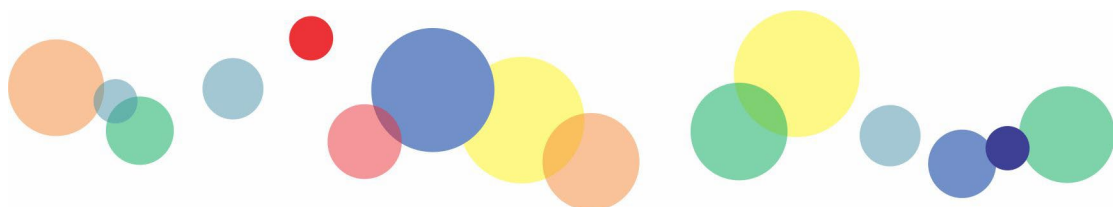
When an individual feels they no longer need the supports provided through LIFE Services, they may choose to move on. People leave LIFE for many positive reasons, such as starting college, finding a job, or exploring new ways to be involved in and contribute to their community.

No matter the reason, Aspire is committed to supporting a thoughtful and positive transition. We work with the individual, their family or support network, and other agencies as requested to plan for the move to the next stage.

As part of this process, we prepare a detailed exit summary that reflects the individual's experiences, strengths, and progress while in LIFE Services. With consent and when appropriate, this information may be shared with new service providers to support continuity.

After your family member has left LIFE Services, you may be contacted to complete a short feedback survey. This gives families an opportunity to reflect on their experience with Aspire and helps us continue to improve our services.

We also welcome staying in touch. We enjoy hearing how individuals and families are doing and are always glad to see past participants stop by or reconnect with us.



Notes



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