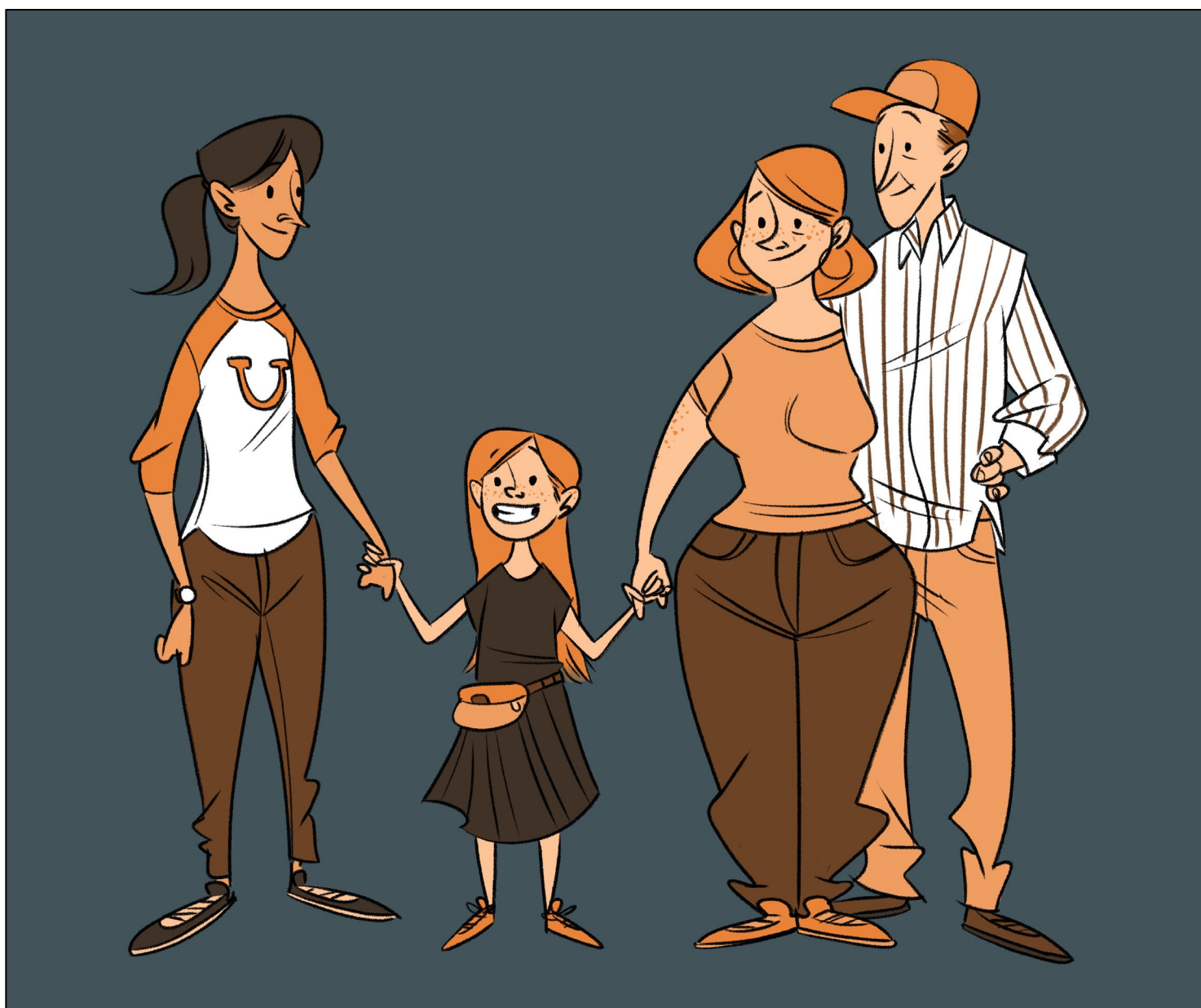




# Guide to implementing the OASIS + project



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asis

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# About the OASIS + guide

The logo for OASIS+ features a blue circle containing a white gear-like icon with four teeth, followed by the word "asis" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The "a" is blue, and "s", "i", and "s" are orange. A small blue gear-like icon is positioned to the right of the word.

The next section covers the following topics:

- Introduction
- What is OASIS+
- Research project
- How to use this guide?

# Introduction

- In Quebec, the **need** for respite and support for the social participation of parents living with a child with a disability remains **considerable and persistent**.

Research (1-9) shows that these parents...

- Live with high levels of stress;
- Are particularly at risk of burnout and psychological distress;
- Experience weakened physical and mental health due to the weight of their responsibilities;
- Have a precarious relationship with their partner;
- Have difficulty reconciling their different roles and responsibilities;
- Feel guilty because they don't have enough time to look after their other children or participate in family activities;
- Often lose contact with close friends and relatives, as they must constantly decline proposed activities.

Such a situation can also lead to significant restrictions in carrying out daily tasks (e.g., grocery shopping) and participating in social and recreational activities (e.g., playing sports, seeing friends) (4).

The OASIS+ project was **developed to support the families** of people with intellectual disabilities or autism but can be applied with other population groups as well.

# What is OASIS+?

- A home and community **respite** service...
- Offered by **students** in fields of training that could lead them to work with the target population (e.g. occupational therapy, social work, special education);
- For **families** of people with disabilities...
- Focusing on **training** and **support** for students through the provision of services.

## Types of services offered

**Care giving:** Ensuring the care or supervision of the person with disabilities (with or without siblings) in the absence of the parents.

- Examples: babysitting on weekday evenings before the parents return from work, babysitting for a day on weekends.

**Home assistance:** Providing support to the person with disabilities or his or her family in carrying out certain routine tasks.<sup>1</sup>

- Examples: Help with homework, bedtime routine, hygiene care (bathing, brushing teeth, etc.).

**Assistance in the community:** Providing support to enable the person with disabilities to participate fully in social, sporting, and leisure activities outside the home<sup>1</sup>.

- Examples: taking a walk, going to the cinema, running errands, going to a museum, going to the swimming pool.

<sup>1</sup>With or without their parents.

# Research project

**OASIS+** was conceived as part of a participatory research project that drew on the valuable contributions of a Université Laval research team, parents, individuals from CIUSSS de la Capitale Nationale, and community partners.

The aim of **phase 1** of the project was to **co-develop** a range of services provided by social work and occupational therapy students, equipped to offer respite and to support social participation for families living with autism and intellectual disabilities in Quebec City.

The aim of **phase 2** of the project (September 2019 to March 2020) was **to document the impact** of implementing OASIS+ with parents and students.

The project documented, with **parents** (n=17), the reduction in their sense of overload; improvement in their social participation; the reconciliation of family, social, and professional roles; and the impact on their child with autism or an intellectual disability, as well as on their siblings.

“During the project, I took a pottery class and it felt terrific. What's more, I saw a friend there, so that did me a world of good too.”

(Parent)



## Research project - Continued

In the case of the **students** (n = 10), the project documented their involvement with the families, as well as the framework put in place to develop their professional skills.

The students mentioned that they had acquired a great deal of **knowledge** about the reality of the target population. They appreciated their work experience, as well as the **support** they received.

“The OASIS+ project has enabled me to further develop my skills in working with clients with autism or ID. These skills will be very useful for my future work as an occupational therapist.”

(Student)

“I'd like to thank you for the guidance and support you gave us throughout the project. It really helped me feel more at ease.”

(Student)

# How to use this guide?

The **purpose** of this guide is to **equip** people representing organizations interested in setting up OASIS+ to offer **respite to families** of people with disabilities, relying on the **commitment of trained and supported students**.

For each stage in the creation of an OASIS+ service offering, the guide includes



**Suggestions** for further reflection.



**Examples** from the implementation of the OASIS+ project.



An invitation to **describe your ideas** for your own project.

Space has been provided for you to take notes if you wish.

# Preparing your service offering



The next section outlines the steps involved in creating your service offering :

1. Defining your service offering.
2. Creating management and coordination tools.
3. Recruiting families.
4. Recruiting students.
5. Training and support for students.
6. Matching students with families.

# 1. Defining the service offering

Defining your service offering is an essential step that will guide your entire process.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself at this stage.



1.1 What **population group** will be served?

1.2 Will **siblings** be included in the service offering?

1.3 Who will be the students (e.g. high school, CEGEP (junior college), or university students, specific programs)?

1.4 Will a **partnership** be necessary (school program, specific community organization)?

1.5 If this is not volunteer work, how will students be **compensated** (salary, scholarship, university credits)?

1.6 If students are paid, what will their hourly **wage** be?

1.7 If students are paid, who will be their **employer** (the organization or the parent)?

# 1. Defining the service offering

Defining your service offering is an essential step that will guide your entire process.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself at this stage.



1.8 Will the employer have the **financial means** to pay the students?

1.9 Will it be necessary to seek external **financial support**?

1.10 How many **hours** of service will be offered per week (e.g., a limited number; at the discretion of families and students)?

1.11 **How long** will services be offered (e.g., year-round, summer-only, during the school year, available during the Christmas holiday season)?

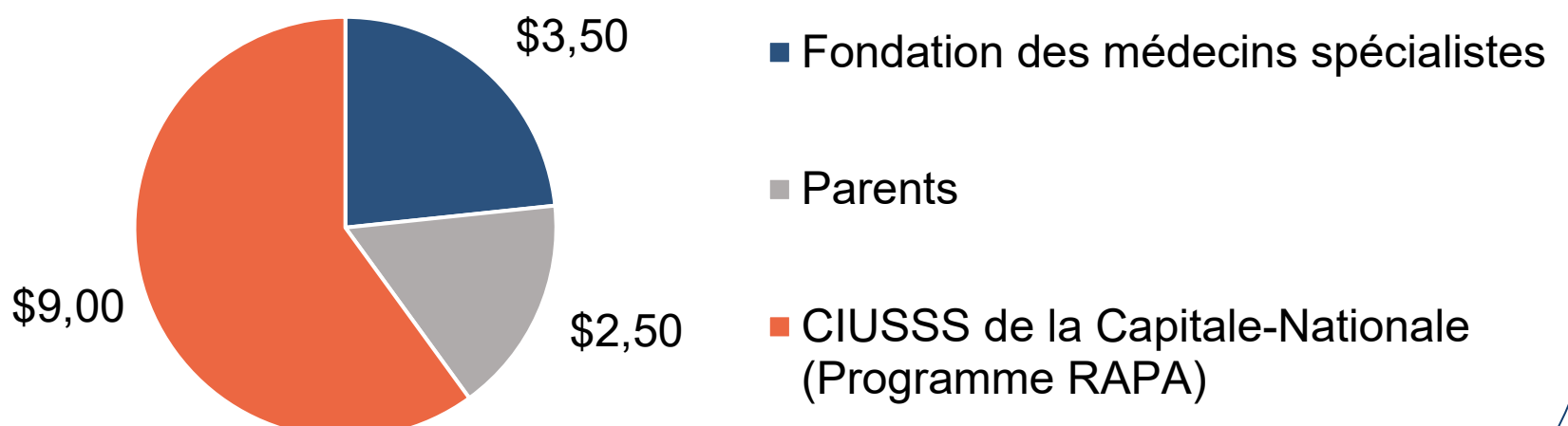
1.12 **When will services be available** (e.g., day, night, weekend, depending on students' availability)?

# 1. Defining the service offering

## OASIS+ example for inspiration



- 1.1 The **population served included** children, adolescents, and adults with autism or an intellectual disability without behavioral disorders living in Quebec City.
- 1.2 The inclusion of **siblings** was at the parents' discretion.
- 1.3 **Students** came from the undergraduate occupational therapy and social work programs at Université Laval.
- 1.4 A **partnership** with these programs was therefore created.
- 1.5 Students received **monetary compensation**.
- 1.6 Students received a **wage** of \$15/hour.
- 1.7 The **employer** was a community organization in the Quebec City region whose mission was to promote the well-being and quality of life of people with autism or intellectual disabilities and their families.
- 1.8 The organization did not have the **financial means** to pay the students.
- 1.9 External **financial support** was requested. Here is the breakdown of the financial contributions of each partner and of the parents for the hourly wages of the students:



# 1. Defining the service offering

## OASIS+ example for inspiration



1.10 A maximum of twenty **hours** per month was offered to each family.

Service hours were reduced during exam periods to support the academic success of students.

1.11 **The services lasted** from September 2019 to March 2020, with a two-week pause during the Christmas break.

1.12 The **time slots** offered were day and evening, during both weekdays and weekends. Students preferred not to offer services during the night.

---

## Lessons learned from the research project

Given the concern for equity among all the families included in the research project, the **search for funding** proved **complex**. The partnership with CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale covered a large segment of the associated costs.

In addition, the search for **recurrent** funding is an avenue to be considered in order to promote the sustainability of the service offering and lighten the associated procedures.

Moreover, the service offering was subject to certain restrictions to ensure **fairness**, given the specific nature of the research project and the small number of students involved. For example, no services were offered during the Christmas holiday period. Some families had expressed a **desire** for services at this time, but too few students were **available** to meet the demand.

# 1. Defining the service offering



How would you describe your service offering?

1.1 What **population group** will be served?

1.2 Will **siblings** be included in the service offering?

1.3 Who will be the **students** (e.g. high school, CEGEP (junior college), or university students, specific programs)?

1.4 Will it be necessary to create a **partnership** (school program, specific community organization)?



# 1. Defining the service offering



How would you describe your service offering?

1.5 If the work is not voluntary, how will students be **compensated** (wage, bursary, university credits)?

1.6 If students are paid, what is their hourly **wage**?

1.7 If students are paid, who will be their **employer** (the organization or the parent)?

1.8 Will the employer have the **financial means** to pay the students?

# 1. Defining the service offering



How would you describe your service offering?

1.9 Will it be necessary to seek external **financial support**? If so, which partners could be approached?

1.10 How many **hours** of service will be offered per week (e.g., a limited number; at the discretion of families and students)?

1.11 **How long** will the service be offered (e.g., year-round, summer-only, during the school year, during the Christmas holiday season)?

1.12 What **time slots** will be offered (e.g. day, night, weekends, depending on students' availability)?

## 2. Creating management and coordination tools

The creation of management and coordination tools prior to the implementation of the service offering is necessary to ensure efficient management. This will save you time.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself at this stage.



2.1 How will **service hours** be defined (management by a member of the organization; family autonomy in this regard)?

2.2 How will hours be **tracked**?

2.3 Will management and coordination **tools** need to be created?

2.4 What **rules** will govern your service offering?

## 2. Creating management and coordination tools



### OASIS+ example for inspiration

2.1 **Schedules** were defined by a member of the research team. Students and families registered their availability on a bi-monthly form.

2.2 The hours were **recorded** in an Excel file by the project coordinator.

2.3 Several **tools** were created, which can be found in the appendix to this guide.

2.4 The team had previously clarified **rules** with families and students via a guide (see Appendix F).

---

### Lessons learned during the implementation of the project

Parents found that there were **too many forms** to fill out, possibly because questionnaires specific to the current study were also included. It was felt that the forms should be **simple and quick** to complete.

The use of a **web portal** or **software** could have been a way of facilitating scheduling. More autonomy could also be offered to families and students to plan their **schedules** together. However, in the context of the research project, given the time allotted for the experiment and the reporting requirements of the funding partners, it was not possible to proceed in any other way.

## 2. Creating management and coordination tools

 What are your management and coordination tools?

2.1 How will **service hours** be defined (management by a member of the organization, family autonomy in this regard)?

2.2 How will the hours be **recorded**?

2.3 Will management and coordination **tools** need to be created? If so, which ones?

Other information worth noting

## 3. Recruiting families

Recruiting families is an important step. The reality may not match your expectations (e.g., more or fewer families than expected).

Here are a handful of questions to ask yourself at this stage.



3.1 How will families be **informed** of the service offering (direct invitation, publication on social networks, word of mouth)?

3.2 How many **families** will benefit from the service offering?

3.3 Will a **selection** process be required?

3.4 If so, what are the **criteria** (diagnosis, age, region)?

3.5 Will parents have to register for a government **program** (Répit aux Proches Aidants, Chèque Emploi Service, Soutien à la famille d'enfant handicapé) to benefit from the proposed services?

3.6 How will families indicate their **interest** in receiving the services?

## 3. Recruiting families

OASIS+ example for inspiration



3.1 Families were **informed** via community organizations and the local CIUSSS, which recruited families using their services.

3.2 In total, there were 17 **families**.


3.3 No **selection** was made. Volunteer families, up to a maximum of 18, were selected.

3.4 The **selection criteria** were as follows: the children had to have a diagnosis of intellectual disability or autism, with no serious behavioural problems, and no age limit.

3.5 Families were required to register with the **government program** Répit aux proches aidants (RAPA) in order to contribute to the remuneration of the students.

3.6 Families indicated their **interest** using the service request form (available in appendix).

## 3. Recruiting families

 And how are you going to recruit families?

3.1 How will families be **informed** of the service offering (direct invitation, publication on social networks, word-of-mouth)?


3.2 How many **families** will be able to benefit from the service offering?

3.3 Will a **selection** have to be made?

3.4 If so, what are the **criteria** (diagnosis, age, region)?



## 3. Recruiting families

 And how are you going to recruit families?

3.5 Will parents have to register with a **government program** (Répit aux Proches Aidants, Chèque Emploi Service, Soutien à la famille d'enfant handicapé) to benefit from the service offering?

3.6 How will families indicate their **interest** in receiving the service?

Other information worth noting

## 4. Recruiting students

Student recruitment will be based on your previous decisions.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself at this stage.



4.1 What means will be used to **inform** students (publications on social networks, classroom presentations, emails)?

4.2 What will be the **selection** process (interview, written exam, cover letter)?

4.3 What will be the **selection criteria** (up-to-date CPR course, advanced babysitter course, access to a car, spoken language proficiency)?

## 4. Recruiting students



### OASIS+ example for inspiration

4.1 Students were **informed** in several phases:

- a. Presentation of the project in undergraduate social work and occupational therapy courses.
- b. Invitation to students to contact the coordinator.
- c. Sending of a formal email containing the information needed to apply.
- d. Publications on the social networks of the social work and occupational therapy programs with recruitment posters.

4.2 The **selection** process was based on a screening and selection tool created by the research team.


4.3 The primary **selection criterion** was being enrolled in an undergraduate program in social work or occupational therapy at Université Laval. Experience working with people with autism or intellectual disabilities and access to a car were also considered assets.

---

### Lessons learned during the research project

Students rarely check their university email during the summer period. Thus, recruiting via **social networks** in the fall or winter semesters seems to be more effective.

# 4. Recruiting students

 How do you go about recruiting students?

4.1 What means will be used to **inform** students (publications on social networks, classroom presentations, emails)?

4.2 What is the **selection** process (interview, written exam, cover letter)?

4.3 What will be the **selection criteria** (up-to-date CPR course, advanced babysitter course, access to a car, spoken language proficiency)?

Other information worth noting

## 5. Training and support for students

To ensure quality service, training and support for students will be required. These key elements will better equip them to feel competent and respond more appropriately to families' needs.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself at this stage.



5.1 Will **training** be offered to students?

5.2 If so, what training **format** will be used (online video capsules, face-to-face training, real-time online training)?

5.3 What **content** will be covered?

5.4 Will a **support formula** be set up (discussion group on social networks, group meeting)?

5.5 Will a **resource person** be assigned to answer students' questions?

## 5. Training and support for students



### OASIS+ example for inspiration

- 5.1 **Training** was offered to students when they were hired, i.e. before they began offering services.
- 5.2 The preferred **training format** included video capsules and a training guide. CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale had planned to offer OMEGA training on aggressive behavior but was unable to do so due to staff shortages.
- 5.3 The **content** of the capsule vignettes included explanations of the characteristics of the population targeted by the service offering, the skills required for support, and the importance of an optimal relationship with families.
- 5.4 As a **form of support**, three discussion workshops were held during and after the implementation of the service offering, to enable students to share their experiences, challenges, learning, and questions. Individual meetings with each student were also held when necessary.
- 5.5 The OASIS+ coordinator acted as a **resource person** to support the students.

---

### Lessons learned from the research project

Training alone, with no opportunity for discussion before and during the service offering, would not have been sufficient. Although viewing the proposed capsule vignettes is worthwhile, it's crucial to provide opportunities for exchange before and during the service offering.

# 5. Training and support for students

 What will your training program entail?


5.1 Will students receive **training**?

5.2 If so, what **training format** will be used (online video capsules, face-to-face training, real-time online training)?

5.3 What will be the basic tenets of the **training content**?

5.4 Will a **support formula** be put in place (private discussion forum on social networks, group meeting)?

# 5. Training and support for students

 What about you? What will your training program involve?

5.5 Will a **resource person** be assigned to answer students' questions?

Other information worth noting



## 6. Matching

The final step is to match students with families.

Here are some questions to ask yourself at this stage.



6.1 How will the **matching** be decided (based on availability, experience, preferences, location, luck of the draw)?

6.2 How many students will be **assigned** to each family?

6.3 Will **stable matching** be prioritized?

6.4 Who will be in charge of **matching** (community organization, choice of families)?

6.5 Will a **get-together** be organized before services are provided?

# 6. Matching

## OASIS+ example for inspiration



6.1 **Matching** was decided based on the following factors:

- The number of hours requested by the family and the availability of the students.
- The level of support required by the person being cared for and the previous experience of the students involved.
- The students' place of residence and preferred means of transportation.

6.2 Two students were **assigned** to each family.

6.3 **Stability** in the matching was desired so as to foster a relationship of trust with the family. A second student was on hand to help out in the event of an incident.

6.4 **Matching** was carried out by the coordinator, taking into consideration the preferences of the families and students where possible.


6.5 A festive, family-style, afternoon **get-together** was organized following the matching and before the services were provided.

---

### Lessons learned from the research project

Matching is an important step in fostering long-term commitment and motivation among students. Indeed, the match between each person's interests, the distance to be covered for the student, and the mastery of certain skills pertaining to the family's needs are essential elements to be taken into consideration.

## 6. Matching

 What about you? What will your training involve?


6.1 How will the **matching** be decided (based on respective availabilities, the experience of the students, the match between their preferences, the place of residence, by luck of the draw)?

6.2 How many students will be **assigned** to each family?

6.3 Will stable **matching** be prioritized?

6.4 Who will be in charge of **matching** (community organization, choice of families)?

## 6. Matching

 What about you? What will your training involve?

6.5 Will a **get-together** be organized before the services are rolled out?

Other information worth noting

# Evaluating your experience

**You now have everything you need** to set up your OASIS+ support, assistance, and care-giving services.

Once your service offering is up and running, we suggest that you evaluate the satisfaction of the students and families who have taken part in your services, with a view to **ongoing development**.

To this end, we've included two questionnaires in the appendices.

---

It may also be useful for the person coordinating the service to keep a **logbook**, to identify elements to be retained and those to be improved.

# Conclusion

We hope you have found this guide helpful in identifying ways in which you can :

- **Support families** who have a member with autism or an intellectual disability.
- **Contribute to the training of future professionals** who are open-minded, curious, empathetic, and committed.

Don't hesitate to share your **experiences** with us, so that OASIS+ can reach more people.



## To find out more

For further details on the research project, please consult the following references:

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# Appendices

The logo for 'asis' features the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The 'a' is blue, 's' is orange, 'i' is blue, and 's' is orange. There are blue cross-shaped icons on either side of the word.

The next section includes all appendices:

- Appendix A: Service request form
- Appendix B: Confirmation of hours received form
- Appendix C: Student information
- Appendix D: Student evaluation questionnaire
- Appendix E: Parent/family evaluation questionnaire
- Appendix F: Guidelines for rules of conduct

These are available at the following link:

<https://communautesinclusives.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/annexesguideoasis-english.docx>