



Did you know?

A **child with special needs** is a child with a mental or physical disability, delay or health disorder.

Child care, recreation and nursery school programs can **legally refuse children with disabilities** if they feel they're not set up to deal with their additional needs.



20% of CUPW parents of children with special needs pay between **\$1,000 and \$5,000 a year in travel costs** for their child's needs.



47% of CUPW parents of children with special needs say their caregiving responsibilities mean they **can't attend union meetings**.

The demands are even heavier.

Parents get more calls at work from health care professionals, and they need to call home or leave work more often to meet their child's needs.



A recent "report card" to the United Nations used stories and other information from CUPW's Special Needs Project to show **Canada is not living up to its responsibilities** to children with special needs.



Test your knowledge

Why is life more demanding when you have a child with special needs?

Try the quiz on the reverse side of this panel for some answers.



CUPW Special Needs Project

This Project provides help to the families of children with special needs:

- financial help to reduce the higher cost of appropriate child care and related services;
- personal support by phone;
- a regular newsletter;
- educational and resource materials.

Help for families

Participating parents say:

"The union just made it happen – it was such a nice surprise. Wow, someone is offering to help."

"It's very hard on the couple, on the family...If it weren't for the program, I don't know if we would still be a family."

If you have a child with special needs or want more information, call:

1-800-840-LINK

Information on CUPW parents of children with special needs taken from surveys of parents participating in the union's Special Needs Project.



...IT TAKES MORE TIME...MORE MONEY...MORE ENERGY...MORE...

life is more demanding...



...when you work and have a child with special needs

Are these statements about families with children with special needs true or false?

I don't know anyone who has a child with a disability or special need.

False: You probably do know someone who has a child with special needs. Between 7 and 15% of children have disabilities, delays or health disorders. Many parents just don't talk about it. But CUPW knows of over 345 members in 72 locals who have a child with special needs.

Parents of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) aren't strict enough.

False: It's common to blame the parents for this disorder characterized by inattention, distractibility, impulsivity and hyperactivity. It's often harder for parents of children with invisible disabilities, because others don't know they're coping with a lot more than meets the eye. Being blamed just adds to these parents' stress, guilt feelings and isolation.

Parents of children with special needs get lots of provincial government funding and services.

False: Government services and funding have always been inadequate for children with special needs. Cuts have made it worse, with 26% of CUPW parents having to spend even more money and time to get what they need for their children. In one province, teacher aides have been cut; in another, speech therapy for children over three.

Feeling overloaded is the norm for parents of children with special needs.

True: 88% of these CUPW parents say that's true. They're exhausted, and have little time left over for themselves, their spouse or their other children.

CUPW's benefits plan covers all the added expenses of a child with special needs.

False: Many necessities aren't covered: non-prescription drugs, vitamins, specialized food and supplies like diapers for older children. Some things like glasses and braces aren't covered frequently enough to keep pace with the changing needs of children with certain disabilities.

Most children with special needs are in child care while their parents work.

False: Not so for 61% in CUPW. While one parent works, the other is at home caring for the child. Many off-shift. This is because finding appropriate care for their children's additional needs is even harder to find than regular child care.

Getting permission to take Special Leave takes "a letter from God."

False: Special Leave is a right in our collective agreement. Parents of children with special needs have to use Special Leave more often because of their child's additional needs. But they feel very frustrated at the arbitrary way leave requests are handled.

CUPW parents of children with special needs want the union to do more member education on the challenges they face.

True: 79% would like to see more member education. Says one parent: "It's a real shuffle when you and your husband work full time and you have a child with a special need. We just want some support and understanding from our co-workers."

Why is life more demanding when you have a child with special needs?

...IT TAKES MORE TIME...MORE MONEY...MORE ENERGY...MORE...



Your support makes a difference. As a co-worker, your understanding of the demands faced by parents of children with special needs can mean a lot to them.

The Union is also helping. CUPW's Special Needs Project provides financial help and personal support as well as educational and resource materials to families of children with special needs. For more information call: **1-800-840-LINK**

