SickKids | International Patient Program

# Information and Guidelines for Canadian Host Families

## The Herbie Host Family Experience

Thank you for considering being a Host Family and volunteering your time and resources to helping a child in need.

Becoming a Herbie Host Family is an opportunity to provide a support system for international patients and their parent/legal guardian. These families travel far from home for their child to receive specialized treatment at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) that is not available in their home country.

When patients and their parent/guardian request to be accommodated by a Canadian host family, they are seeking a home away from home during a very stressful and sensitive time in their lives. Most importantly, they are looking for a home that will make them feel safe and welcome, and to be treated as extended family.

Before accepting an international patient and their parent/guardian into your home, the following are factors that you should consider.

## Basic Expectations of Host Families

### a) Presence in Toronto

The Host Family must be available to host for the entire time that the international patient and parent/legal guardian will be staying in your home. For longer term placements, exceptions can be made upon consultation with the SickKids International Patient Program.

### b) Accommodations

The patient and parent/guardian require a clean, comfortable bedroom appropriate to the needs of the family. Ideally, the room should be private and not shared with other members of your family. If the room must be shared, please do so only in consultation with the SickKids International Patient Program.

### c) Transportation

The transportation needs of the patient and parent/guardian are the responsibility of the host family. This includes:

- To and from the airport in Toronto
- Regular scheduled appointments both before and after the surgery
- On the day of surgery – This may be very early in the morning (e.g. 6am at the hospital).
- On the day of discharge from hospital – While we will work with the medical team to do our best to provide as much notice as possible, discharge date/time may be dependent on the patient's condition and the exact time may be unpredictable and/or last minute
- In case of emergency, such as when there is a need to return to the hospital urgently

If you cannot personally transport the patient and parent/guardian, the Host Family is responsible for arranging a safe means of transportation based on their needs.

If the child is of an age and/or size where a car seat is required by Ontario law, the Host Family should consider assisting with ensuring one is available for use while here.

### d) Meals

The Host Family is expected to provide three healthy meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) a day for their guests. We would encourage you to engage your guests as family members surrounding meals. Upon their arrival, get to know your guests, including them where appropriate in discussions of allergies, food preferences, scheduled

mealtimes, sharing tasks such as shopping, preparation, and clean up. Some guests appreciate being involved, included, and helpful in meal preparation.

**Please Note**: If the patient is an inpatient at SickKids, all meals **for the patient** will be provided by the hospital. Meals will NOT be provided by SickKids for the parent/guardian. Accordingly, please plan with the parent/guardian to ensure that he/she has three meals per day during their stay at the hospital. You may also want to let the parent/guardian know about different places around SickKids where meals can be purchased.

### e) Linens & Toiletries

The Host Family is expected to provide clean linens (bedding, towels, and some toiletries), as well as soap and toilet paper. The patient and parent/guardian are expected to provide their own personal toiletries (shampoo, toothpaste, cosmetics, etc.).

### f) Supervision of the Child (Patient)

The Host Family is expected to provide support only for the patient and parent/guardian. The parent/guardian of the child is completely in charge of supervising their child during the time of their stay.

**Tip**: Communicate with the parent/guardian of the child about your daily schedule and what they can expect from you with regards to supervising the child.

## Household Routines/Rules

When a new patient and parent/guardian becomes a member of the Host Family, it is important to to explain all household routines and rules. Ensure that rules are clearly established at the beginning of their stay and are consistently applied.

### a) House Keys & Security

If the Host Family is comfortable, a house key may be provided. Show them which door to use. Explain how to lock the door and have them try the lock once or twice. If there is a security system, explain how it works and ask the parent to try it out in front of you. Make sure the parent knows to close windows and lock doors when everyone is out.

**Tip:** Explain to the parent/legal guardian that it is always a good idea to keep valuables out of sight – even at home

### b) Telephone Usage

The parent/legal guardian may want to make long distance phone calls to keep their families apprised of the patient's progress. Help them work out the time differences between Canada and their home country and discuss in advance the handling of expenses for these long-distance calls. The parent/legal guardian is expected to pay for their own long distance phone charges.

**Tip**: Encourage the use of internet calling using technology such as What's App. Help the family access wi-fi connection if possible. Otherwise, encourage the use of long-distance phone cards to avoid potential conflicts over telephone charges. Consider a pay-as-you-go cell phone for the parent/guardian, in case of emergencies when not at home.

If the parent/guardian does not have their own phone and will be using the Host Family's phone, please make him/her aware of any instructions/limitations so that they can advise family or friends on when to call.

If there is a landline with an answering machine, teach the parent/guardian how to use it correctly, should the need arise. If there is no answering machine, be sure your guests know how to take phone messages and where to put them if they are home alone.

### c) Bathroom Etiquette

*Times for bathing and showering*

Show the patient and parent/guardian which bathroom is for their use and explain the family's schedule. Discuss the best time to bath or shower, based on the family schedule. Any restrictions on length of time in the bath or shower must be clearly explained.

*Keeping the bathroom clean*

Explain expectations about cleanliness of the designated bathroom. It may be necessary to show the patient and parent/guardian how to tidy up the bathroom after themselves, including where cleaning products are kept and how to use them. Indicate where to keep their toiletries, and where to hang towels. Be sure that the patient and parent/guardian know how to dispose of feminine hygiene items.

### d) Laundry

Let the patient and parent/guardian know the laundry arrangements in your home. If their laundry will be done with the Host Family's, be sure to inform them of the drop-off location. If the patient and parent/guardian are expected to do their own laundry, explain how the washer and dryer are operated.

**Tip:** Many patients and parents/guardians prefer to do their own laundry, as they may be sensitive about having other persons handle personal clothing items, etc.

### e) Energy Conservation & Recycling

Be sure the patient and parent/guardian are aware of any energy conservation (turning lights out, keeping the thermostat turned down, etc.) or recycling programs. Make sure they are aware of the location of all recycling bins.

### f) Kitchen Appliances

Show the patient and parent/guardian where to find items in the kitchen, what they can use, and how to use all appliances.

### g) Household Chores

Discuss with your guest all expectations regarding acceptable household chores prior to their arrival. Recognize that they may not be able to undertake chores due to their schedule at SickKids.

***Note: The parent/guardian will not be expected to provide maid services or babysitting services to your family.***

### h) Emergencies

The patient and parent/guardian should know how and when to reach the Host Family at work in case of an emergency. All emergency numbers should be clearly identified and explained.

Please get detailed information for an emergency contact person for the patient and parent/guardian from their home country. It is also useful to know the names, addresses or phone numbers of any Toronto-area relatives that they may have.

# CANADIAN HOST FAMILY APPLICATION

## HOST FAMILY INFORMATION

Getting to know you will help us to provide support to you as the Herbie Host Family. This section will help us to get to know you and your family.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Host #1 Last Name | First Name | Middle Name | Date of Birth |
| Host #2 Last Name | First Name | Middle Name | Date of Birth |
| Home Address: | | | |
| City | Postal Code | Languages spoken at home: | |
| Contact Information | Tel: | Email: | |
| Are you applying to host a particular international patient? ☐ Yes ☑ No | | If yes, indicate name and home country of patient? | |
| Have you ever hosted and international patient before? ☑ Yes ☐ No | | If yes, when and for whom? | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Additional Household Members | Relationship | Date of Birth |
| Additional Household Members | Relationship | Date of Birth |
| Additional Household Members | Relationship | Date of Birth |
| Additional Household Members | Relationship | Date of Birth |

CONFIDENTIAL: FOR THE SOLE USE OF THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. UNAUTHORIZED REVIEW, USE, DISCLOSURE OR DISTRIBUTION IS PROHIBITED.

## HOUSEHOLD INFO

| |
|---|
| 1.Tell us about your connection to the family you are applying to host.<br>☐ Family<br>☐ Friend<br>☐ Connection through an organization<br>☐ Unknown to me previously |
| 2.Do you work or study outside the home? ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Do you have any concerns about being available to your family? ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Please explain/provide details: |

## FLEXIBILITY

We work to provide as much information to assist in preparing you to act as a host. However, we require you to understand that health and health care needs can change. As a result, the needs of the family may change after they arrive in Toronto, and may include issues such as delays to surgery, prolonged hospital stays, changes to travel arrangements, etc.

| |
|---|
| To understand how this may impact you:<br>Are you able to communicate by phone throughout the day? ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Are you able to adapt your daily schedule to meet the needs of the family? ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Are you able to adapt to evolving timelines such as extension to the anticipated hosting timeframe? ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Are there any challenges that you can anticipate that may prove difficult in hosting? ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Please explain/provide details: |

**ACCOMMODATION-** Please tell us a little more about your household.

| |
|---|
| If your guests have mobility restrictions would there be any safety or accessibility concerns that we should be aware of? ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>If applicable, please briefly describe: |
| Do you have a separate bedroom for your guest? ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>If, no, with whom will guests share a room? |
| Family pets? ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>If yes, please list: |

| In the home, do you or any other household members? |
|---|
| Smoke ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Consume Marijuana ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Consume Alcohol ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Would you allow your guests to? |
| Smoke ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Consume Marijuana ☐ Yes ☐ No<br>Consume Alcohol ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Do you have any household guidelines that you would like your guests to respect? |

## MEALS

Do you acknowledge your responsibility to ensure the family is provided with 3 meals a day throughout their stay? This includes providing meals for the parent while the child is admitted to hospital. Please initial ____

## TRANSPORTATION

| Do you accept responsibility to provide transportation that meets the needs of the family in the following situations? |
|---|
| ☐ To and from the airport |
| ☐ Regular scheduled appointments both before and after the surgery |
| ☐ On the day of surgery - which may be very early in the morning |
| ☐ On the day of discharge from hospital - which may be at an unpredictable date and time and even last minute |
| ☐ In case of emergency, where there is a need to return to the hospital urgently |

## ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

To meet Herbie Fund criteria, families need to demonstrate financial need. As a result, these families are coming to Toronto with limited means to support themselves while receiving care at SickKids, and this is one of the reasons that having a host family in place is a mandatory criterion for Herbie Funding acceptance. The family may need additional financial support with diapers, formula, etc. Do you have any concerns with the possibility of providing this additional financial support? ☐ Yes ☐ No

CONFIDENTIAL: FOR THE SOLE USE OF THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. UNAUTHORIZED REVIEW, USE, DISCLOSURE OR DISTRIBUTION IS PROHIBITED.

## HOSTING TIMELINE

At this time the surgery has not yet been booked. To consider your schedule please provide the following information:

| |
|---|
| Will you be present and available in Toronto for the next 6-9 months? ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Are there any limitations to your time that could impact your ability to host this family? ☐ Yes ☐ No (i.e., travel, personal medical concerns, etc.) |
| If yes, please indicate the dates we should avoid scheduling the patient |

## MAINTAINING HERBIE PROGRAM INTEGRITY

The intent of the Herbie program is to provide world class health care to children who otherwise would not have access. To maintain the integrity of the program, it is important that families return to their home country following completion of their treatment. All families are informed of this expectation upon acceptance.
Will you support us to ensure that the patient and parent/guardian will uphold this guiding principle? Please initial _____

## CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS

The International Patient Program always strives for excellence and continued improvements on how we provide service. Once the family has returned home, would you be willing to provide feedback on your experience agree? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is your preferred method to provide this feedback?
☐ Telephone call
☐ Online survey

## Outcomes:

What are your hopes/ideal outcome for this experience of being a Herbie Host Family?

| |
|---|
| Please explain / provide details: |

Since the process from application to the Herbie Fund to arrival in Canada can take a long time, we ask that you keep our contact information to hand and please update us at any time should anything change your ability to host by contacting internationalpatient.program@sickkids.ca or (416) 813-7654 ext. 428917 or your specific Case Coordinator.

CONFIDENTIAL: FOR THE SOLE USE OF THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. UNAUTHORIZED REVIEW, USE, DISCLOSURE OR DISTRIBUTION IS PROHIBITED.

In order to maintain a safe and secure environment for the Herbie patients and families, the following information is required:

☐ I/We declare that I /We have not been convicted of a criminal offence.

☐ I/We consent to a background check via Triton Canada if required.

I hereby certify that the information above and enclosed is true and correct.

| Printed Name | Signature | Date |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

**The host family must:**

1. Complete a background check via Triton Canada
2. Provide a Letter of Good Standing
    - Be written by a recognized community or religious leader, employer, doctor, or lawyer who has known the candidate for a minimum of two (2) years. The letter cannot be written by a family member or friend.
    - Be on letterhead (or stamped)
    - Be dated
    - Have a phone number listed
    - Detail the relationship, speaking to the individual's character and that the candidate is in good standing
    - Detail the length of time of the relationship (in years)

*Click here for link to Triton Canada*

CONFIDENTIAL: FOR THE SOLE USE OF THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. UNAUTHORIZED REVIEW, USE, DISCLOSURE OR DISTRIBUTION IS PROHIBITED.