

ACTRA
MONTREAL

PARENT'S GUIDE

Brought to you by
ACTRA Montreal Parental Subcommittee

October 2025 Edition





WHETHER YOU ARE ALREADY RAISING CHILDREN OR ARE PREPARING
FOR A CHILD, THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED TO INFORM YOU OF YOUR RIGHTS,
OFFER YOU RESOURCES AS A PARENT, AND SUPPORT YOU IN NAVIGATING
CHALLENGING SITUATIONS YOU MAY FACE AS A PERFORMER WITH CHILDREN.

This is a resource guide created by members of the Parental Subcommittee
who themselves are parents and performers, not legal or health experts.
This guide does not provide legal or medical advice, please refer to experts for details.



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PART 1

Planning for a child and/or pregnancy



- Information on parental leave in Quebec. You have options! [QPIP](#)
- Can AFBS help? Yes. Read section: [“Special Information for Parents-to-be, Expectant & New Mothers”](#) for all Benefits you might be eligible for including disability benefits, fertility drugs, pelvic floor physiotherapy, \$350 lifetime reimbursement and call their Help Desk if you have questions: 416-967-6600 or 1-800-387-8897
- Weekly Disability pay is available for qualifying members (6 weeks for vaginal birth, 8 weeks for C-section) under [certain conditions](#) (scroll down to special considerations)
*a claim must be initiated within 90-days of the birth
- Members Assistance Program offers some resources to full-members (from counseling, to legal to resources when you are expecting or having challenges as a parent) 1-844-880-9142
- Pregnancy and Parenthood <https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/pregnancy-parenthood>

PART 1

Planning for a child and/or pregnancy



TIP 1

If you are eligible for AFBS Disability pay and QPIP, stagger them so you are not receiving both at same time. If you receive QPIP while receiving disability from AFBS, they could deduct the amounts from what the other is sending you as it counts as income.



TIP 2

You can pause QPIP at any time (online or by phone) if you book a gig and don't want to owe them money back. You are only allowed to earn a nominal amount while receiving a benefit week.



TIP 3

You can start parental leave (QPIP) while pregnant. Keep in mind you have 6 months to use non shareable weeks. Whereas shareable weeks you have 1.5 years.



TIP 4

If you are planning to have a child, speak with your accountant to make sure that your income tax will support you in receiving the highest QPIP + AFBS Disability for the following year. For example, if you want to have a baby in 2026, plan your 2025 accordingly with the help of your accountant. (Note for Ontario: they do not have parental leave in the same way, you must opt to pay into Unemployment Insurance prior to having children when you file your taxes, in order to access it as a parent).

PART 1

Planning for a child and/or pregnancy



TIP 5

If you are a UDA member, contact them regarding your parental leave. They can count your QPIP Prestations towards your income to help preserve your insurance benefit level.



TIP 6

Important note regarding Insurance Coverage: Quebec requires you to put your children onto your private insurance. Beware that adding dependents to your AFBS can drain your Insurance Reserves very quickly. If your partner/spouse has insurance coverage through work it is worth comparing plans and premiums. *UDA allows you to add your child dependents for free to your plan! (Bronze level or above).*



TIP 7

If you are double-carded you can get insurance reimbursements from both unions. If you joined AFBS first, you can make an insurance claim with them as your primary insurer. Once you've received reimbursement, you can then submit a claim for the remaining balance through DSF (UDA Insurance Collective) as your secondary insurer.



TIP 8

Don't forget to renew your insurance level before March 31st of every year.

PART 2

Your breastfeeding/ chestfeeding rights and resources



? Did you know?

- Breastfeeding/chestfeeding at work is protected under [The Canadian Human Rights Commission](#).
- Breastfeeding/chestfeeding in public spaces is your [legal right](#).
- Our IPA Collective Agreement includes the following language: A20XX A Performer may request suitable private space for lactation or pumping by giving reasonable advance notice of the Performer's need to the appropriate individual designated by the Producer for the receipt of such requests. Upon receiving the Performer's request, the Producer shall make best efforts to accommodate the Performer's request by providing a suitable private space. It is understood that the availability and type of spaces that may be used to accommodate the Performer's request may vary depending on factors such as the location at which production is operating.
- There are [Breastfeeding/chestfeeding friendly spaces](#) along The Route du lait.
- In Ontario: Employers have a [Duty to Accommodate: Ontario Human Rights Commission](#).

PART 2

Your breastfeeding/ chestfeeding rights and resources

Resources

- [Information on everything breastfeeding/ chestfeeding related](#) through Nourrisource
- List of [Certified Lactation Consultants in Quebec](#)

- Determine whether you can pump your milk and have your baby be bottle fed while you work or if you need to nurse your little one while at work
- If you know in advance when you will be returning to work, you can plan to start introducing the bottle to your baby well before (wait until breastfeeding/chestfeeding is well established, ideally not in baby's first 4-6 weeks of life to avoid nipple confusion)
- Communicate with your agent about your pumping/nursing needs and have them include it in your contract (i.e. Whether partner/childcare provider must bring baby to set for feedings, private room, proper seating, access to electricity if your pump needs to be plugged in, access to running hot water for cleaning pump pieces, access to fridge for storing milk, how *often* you need breaks to pump)
- *Note: how often you pump will correspond to how often you would normally feed your baby. Waiting longer than that can lead to issues: engorgement, leaking, clogged ducts, mastitis)
- Communicate with the appropriate people to facilitate the process and avoid delays (Talk to the ADs on set about finding the optimal moments: "I will need to pump within the next hour and a half. Please let me know when the best moment is.")



PART 3

Navigating Childcare



- Please take note of childcare [tax credits](#) available in Quebec.
- Quebec has a new portal (replacing Place-05) to get on daycare waitlists. You can sign up once your child is born or has arrived if adopted: [Québec.ca/futur-portail](https://quebec.ca/futur-portail)
- Check out [Kiid](#) for last minute childcare bookings: If you are a UDA member, you already have access to the Kiid services at a discount.

PART 3

Navigating Childcare

Online resources for babysitters in Quebec

- [NannyServices.ca](https://www.nannyservices.ca): An online database of nannies and caregivers
- [Babysits.ca](https://www.babysits.ca): A website that lists babysitters in Quebec
- [Care.com](https://www.care.com): A website that lists babysitters in Quebec
- [CanadianNanny.ca](https://www.canadiannanny.ca): A website that lists babysitters and nannies in Montreal

*It is so important to cultivate your village and be able to lean on them for help with your children. If you have family in the city, involve them in childcare. If your family isn't here, you can foster community with friends, neighbours, peers and parent groups.

PART 4

Challenging situations and some thoughts from our committee members



When should I tell my agent I'm pregnant?

- *I told my agents at around 12 weeks. We only started including a note about my pregnancy on audition submissions once I started really showing.*
- *I told my agent as soon as I got pregnant since he knew about my history with IVF and miscarriage. When I was in my 2nd trimester, for future projects, he would inform productions that I may be showing in a few weeks.*

When should I tell my employer/production I am pregnant?

- *My doctor advised me not to mention anything prior to 12 weeks, once the risk of miscarriage has heavily decreased.*

Can I ask my agent to negotiate childcare into my production contract?

- *You can ask. It is probably more likely they will agree for larger/leading roles.*

PART 4

Challenging situations and some thoughts from our committee members

Can I bring my baby on set with me?

- Yes. *This should be communicated with your agent who will coordinate with production in advance. Most people find it easier to have their babies bottle fed by their partner or another caregiver while they are working, however this is not always possible. At one point while I was filming, my infant who was about 4 months old, went on a total bottle strike, so my agent told production and we arranged for him to come to set and nurse.*
- *Production will almost always allow you to have baby and a chaperone with you on set. Just be aware that your set may be a several minute drive away from basecamp or trailer where your baby and chaperone will likely stay. Having said that, every production I have worked on including, film/tv/commercial/voice have been more than happy to have me bring my baby with me as long as I had childcare. I have never, however, asked to negotiate childcare costs with productions.*

Can I bring expressed breast milk on a plane?

- Yes. [Breast milk - CATSA \(catsa-acsta.gc.ca\)](https://www.catsa-acsta.gc.ca/Breast-milk-transportation/Breast-milk-transportation) A: *After having to fly for work with my expressed milk and having my pump bag screened by security every time, I started asking the officers to put on a fresh pair of gloves prior to inspecting it as not to contaminate the sterilized pump pieces, etc.*

PART 4

Challenging situations and some thoughts from our committee members

Can I have breaks to pump breast milk?



- *Yes. Employers are legally obligated to accommodate this. Again, it should be communicated in advance. I had to return to work 3-4 months postpartum and was nursing my baby every 2-3 hours at that point. I spoke with my agent while my contract was being negotiated and explained that I needed a trailer or a private room to pump approx every 3 hours. I requested breaks of 20 minutes to do so. I worked with a lactation consultant to make a 'return to work plan.' She taught me how to optimize pumping by doing simultaneous manual compressions and to fully drain my breasts by doing a second round of simulation and pumping following the first round. I could also put my used pump pieces in a clean ziplock bag and pop them directly in the fridge to avoid having to wash the pieces every time. Keeping the pieces cold prevents bacterial growth. There wasn't always fridge access and in those instances I would wash the pieces with hot water and soap. I kept a small bottle of dish soap with me in my pump bag. I always kept a freezer bag with ice packs in case a fridge wasn't immediately available and would then refrigerate the milk as soon as possible. On set, I always communicated with the ADs to find optimal moments to pump. I used a small portable pump that I could hide under a loose shirt/bathrobe and even pumped in the hair and make-up chair- the hair and makeup team were the ones to suggest it! Other things you can request include access to a plug (if your pump isn't portable), access to a fridge, running hot water to wash pump pieces etc.*
- *Speak to the 2nd AD and let them know you will have to pump and will need a quiet, private room and ideally a fridge.*

PART 4

Challenging situations and some thoughts from our committee members

I need to arrange for childcare; how can I find out my Calltime earlier than the night before I'm working?

- *Explain early on to the AD you are in contact with, that you have children and need an idea of when your approximate Calltime will be so you can plan appropriately for childcare. You can mention that you are aware that it is subject to change. (That usually puts them at ease to share it, before it is official)*

What do I do: my child is sick and I cannot make it to studio?

- *That is so so tough. Health and safety come first of course, but we all want to be hired again. The best preventative measure you can take here regarding these types of last minute unexpected situations is to really cultivate your village. Have as many family and friends involved (or hired help) in caring for your child so that you have people you can lean on in these situations.*

I have a fitting coming up but my body looks so different!

- *Yes, this can be so vulnerable. In my case I asked to speak to the wardrobe department before my fitting and explained that I was a few months postpartum and still nursing. They suggested I go bra shopping on my own to figure out my new size (I had no idea what my size was anymore!) and they refunded me.. I also explained to the wardrobe team that I would need costumes that accommodated pumping. I think speaking to them in advance over the phone allowed everyone to prepare better.*

PART 4

Challenging situations and some thoughts from our committee members

What do I do when an audition is running late and I have to feed my child?

- *Plan in advance to have pumped milk ready for the caregiver on duty, including an extra feed available for your child in case things run late.*
- *If it's an in-person audition, you may want to advise the person checking people in that your child will need to feed if you are running late and they might let you go before someone else.*

How do I audition in person with a child?

- *I use a team of caregiver artists who have flexible schedules. I prep my child with what is going to happen from travel to toys to caregiver and mama working. I offer to pick the caregiver up, pay for their parking, buy a coffee or straight up payment.*

I can't submit my self tape on time because my childcare fell through!

- *Ask for an extension through your agent. In a pinch services like Kiid can offer last minute bookings for childcare.*

Postpartum Depression and Postpartum Anxiety Resources

[Mental Health Support](#)

[Montreal Therapy Center](#)

[Postpartum Depression](#)

Post Partum Care Underwear + Diapers

[Different boroughs in Montreal](#) subsidize purchases of sustainable menstrual products and sustainable baby diapers, with an incentive to purchase local. This company was covered for their [post partum underwear](#) that can also be used during perimenopausal heavy bleeding.

Please join our [Facebook group](#) where we will continue to share, tips, resources and personal experiences.

Do you have tips or an experience you'd like to share? Write to us at:

montreal@actra.ca
(Subject line: Parent's Guide)