



# Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.

The Parent Training and Information Center for the District of Columbia

## Respite Care: What Parents Should Know

### What is respite?

Respite is defined as “an interval of rest or relief.” Respite care is a temporary relief care designed for families of children or adults with special needs. Respite care can range from a few hours of care provided on a one-time basis to overnight or extended care sessions. It can be provided by a family member, friend, or a skilled care provider.

### What are the benefits of respite?

There are many benefits of using respite care. Caretakers of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) often experience challenges and stress as a result of balancing the needs of their child with the needs of other family members. The breaks that respite care can provide allows caretakers time to tend to the needs of their other children, spouse, family members, friends and themselves. The relief given to both the child and family can alleviate stress and fatigue.

### How can you tell if your family could benefit from respite care?

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is finding temporary care for your child a problem?
2. Is it important that you and your spouse enjoy an evening alone together, or with friends, without the children?
3. If you had appropriate care for your child with special needs, would you use the time for a special activity with your other children?
4. Do you think that you would be a better parent if you had a break every now and then?
5. Are you concerned that in the event of a family emergency there is no one with whom you would feel secure about leaving your child?
6. Would you be comfortable going to a trained and reputable respite provider to arrange care for your child?

If you have answered “yes” to several of these questions, you and your family could benefit from respite care.

### What are the types of respite care?

Respite care services can be provided to families either in-home or at a “drop-in” program. Caregivers have the option of having a skilled worker come into their home and care for the child, while the parent can leave the premises. Participating in “drop-off” respite care varies depending on the organization providing the services. Typically for “drop-in” respite care an organization will provide services for an allotted time for either the child with the special health care need and or their siblings.

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**Children with  
Special Needs,  
need Parents  
with Special  
Skills!**

## **Paying for Respite**

Some organizations may provide free or low cost respite services to families of individuals with developmental disabilities. Others may have a sliding fee scale that is dependent on income. While other providers may charge a flat rate per hour or overnight.

Respite services can also be provided as a service for eligible children through the TEFRA/Katie Beckett Waiver which allows eligible children with long-term disabilities or complex medical needs to receive health care coverage through a state provided Medicaid Health Plan. Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN), is the District of Columbia's dedicated Medicaid health plan for these families and coordinates all aspects of physical, mental, behavioral, and developmental care and services for its members; including respite care services. Families interested in applying for or learning more about the Katie Beckett Waiver should contact the D.C. Department of Health Care Finance's Division of Children's Health Services for more information: (202) 442-5957.

Below is a list of local organizations that provide respite services in the Washington DC Metropolitan area. Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc., (AJE) does not endorse any individual care provider. Information on this page is for reference purposes only and is not a comprehensive list.

## **Local Respite Care Providers**

Easter Seals serving DC/MD/VA

(301) 920-9712

[www.easterseals.com](http://www.easterseals.com)

Jill's House

(703) 639-5660

[www.jillshouse.org](http://www.jillshouse.org)

Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN)

(202) 467-2737

[www.hscsn-net.org](http://www.hscsn-net.org)

McLean Bible Church- Tyson Campus

(703) 770-8654

[www.mbctyson.org](http://www.mbctyson.org)

Amos Associates, LLC

(301) 315-6374

[www.amosassociates.org](http://www.amosassociates.org)

*This fact sheet briefly discusses the benefits of respite care for families of children with disabilities or special health care needs, and provides resources available in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area.*

*If you need additional guidance and resources to access respite care services, please contact AJE at (202) 678-8060.*