



Tips for Finding a Respite Provider

• Strategies for finding a respite provider:

- Network among co-workers, family, friends, neighbors, and professionals you come in contact with to get suggestions.
- Contact local colleges and universities. St. Louis has many schools in the area. Undergraduate and graduate students are great candidates for respite providers and might have availability during days, evenings, weekends or part-time. Contact the department of the University for suggestions or see if you can post a “help wanted ad”. Inquire about job-boards where you can post a help-wanted advertisement or student groups that provide in-home care services.
- Contact state employment services such as the Missouri Employment Services where you can advertise hiring needs, write job descriptions and match up with qualified applications for free!
Go to <http://jobs.mo.gov/employer/recruitment-assistance/job-posting-options>
- Ask teachers and/or day program staff for suggestions. Many times the school staff is not allowed to provide respite care, but they might have student interns or others who might be interested in working with individuals with special needs.
- Contact your local high school. There are often community service clubs and National Honors Societies in each school. Ask to speak to the club’s advisor to get suggestions.
- Place an ad in your neighborhood newspaper. Be prepared to sift through and discard numerous candidates. Be as specific as possible in the ad regarding ages of your child, hours of care, area of residence, and transportation and references.
 1. Finding a provider arrangement through the classified advertisement section of the newspapers is often a time-consuming, frustrating job, but the results can make the effort worthwhile. Many families locate satisfactory in-home care through this method.

• Screening and Interviewing:

- An initial telephone interview can help you decide if the candidate is someone you’d like to interview in person and have them meet your family member.
- Ask basic questions:
 - Have you worked with children/teens/adults before?
 - How long and in what capacity did you work?
 - What other kinds of work experience have you had?

- Have you had any training or certification pertaining to in-home care and safety issues (i.e. CPR, First Aid, specific experience with your child’s disability or age)?
- What was your last job and reason for leaving?
- Why are you interested in this type of job?
- Is the hours/salary/location of my home acceptable?
- Is the person registered with the Missouri State Family Care Safety Registry?
 - If no, providers can become registered by filling out a simple form on paper or online and sending it to Jefferson City with a \$14 fee. Providers can go to <http://www.health.mo.gov/FCSR/> or call toll free 866-422-6872.
 - Someone can also check to see if they are registered by entering their social security number by going to <http://www.health.mo.gov/FCSR/>
 - If yes, they should have a letter that they received from the registry that they can share with you.

- A police background check with arrest and conviction information for St. Louis City and/or County can be requested by the family or the provider by calling the St. Louis County Bureau of Central Records at 314-615-5317 to get the specific information you need to complete the back ground check. The cost is \$4.50 for St. Louis City or St. Louis County areas. The cost is \$9 for both.

- Feel free to ask for names and phone numbers of references. Questions to ask references may include:
 1. How do you know this person?
 2. How long was the person employed?
 3. Was she/he reliable?
 4. Why did she/he terminate as a caregiver?
 5. Would you hire her/him again for your child?
 6. Did you experience any problems with her/him as a caregiver, such as a frequent tardiness or disagreement over methods of care?

- Steps to an effective hiring process:
 1. Phone interview
 2. Home interview
 3. Allow short visit while home
 4. Allow longer visit while away and return early
 5. Hiring process

- When interviewing in person, observe the “chemistry” between the candidate and your family member. Give the caregiver the basic information about your family member – be sure to give positive information as well as any challenges he or she has. Ask specific questions that will prompt the candidate to describe how they would respond to your family member’s needs.

• **Information to share with respite providers:**

- How your family member communicates and lets people know his/her needs *and feelings!*
- How your family member moves around
- Any special equipment (if any) your family member uses, *and how it is used*. Make sure the provider has watched you use the equipment and that you have watched them practice as well.
- Any assistance your family member needs with self-help activities like dressing, eating, toileting, etc.
- Any special dietary concerns.
- Any medication your family member takes – be sure to leave written instructions that include dosage amounts, times given, and possible side effects if the provider will be administering medication
- Any allergies and what they look like and how they are dealt with if they occur.
- Any behavioral concerns or challenges your family member has *and how you deal with these at home*. Share if your family member has any particular ways of expressing when they are frustrated, tired, over-stimulated, etc.
- Emergency contacts: doctors, therapists, neighbors, local police, etc.
- Contact information where you can be reached – cell phone, number of restaurant, etc.
- Do a thorough orientation to your home – give the provider a tour of the home and point out where food, clothing, personal items, favorite toys, extra diapers, etc. can be found when you are away. Be sure to explain how to work a DVD player, the alarm system, the TV remote or anything else that might be useful when caring for your family member.

• **Information to discuss between providers and family:**

- Will you be covering the cost of meal(s) if the provider is supplying support during meal time?
- Will you be covering the cost of mileage for any reason?
- If the provider will be taking your family member out into the community, is there a cost for admission fees? Will you be providing the cost of admission fees for your family member and the provider?
- If the provider received cash from you for expenses up front, is there a limit on spending? Do you expect receipts?
- What is your feeling about providers having friends involved when providing support for your family member?
- What is your preference regarding use of phone, computer or television during care?
- If the provider will be providing overnight care, what are your preferences regarding sleep for the provider?