



RespiteOnline

Delaware's connection to respite care information

Respite Care

Respite care provides temporary relief for caregivers from the ongoing responsibility of caring for an individual of any age with special needs of some kind. Respite care may be planned in advance, scheduled on a regular basis (such as weekly, monthly, etc.), or provided immediately if an emergency situation exists. Not all respite care providers offer emergency respite care, and each has their own requirements regarding advanced notice and documentation needed.

Respite is first and foremost a preventive strategy that strengthens families, protects family health and well being, and enables individuals with disabilities to remain with their family in their own home. It's been shown to prevent or delay more costly institutional placements, reduce the risk of abuse or neglect, and preserve the stability and health of all family members.

Respite care can often be provided right in the care recipients home, provided there is a friend or family member available who can provide appropriate care. Since caring for individuals with disabilities often requires special training, equipment, etc. there are community based care providers with trained staff and specially equipped environments who can offer respite care options:

Home Health Care Agencies recruit, hire and train individuals to provide various levels of skilled health care in a person's home.

Companion Services recruit, hire and train individuals to provide companionship, light housekeeping, meal preparation, etc. in a person's home.

Adult Day Care Programs offer programs, generally during the work day hours that provide social and recreational activities, meals and health monitoring services for adults who need to be monitored and cared for during the day.

Assisted Living Facilities provide a residential care option for adults who are disabled or elderly and need some level of assistance with their activities of daily living.

Nursing Homes provide a residential care option for adults who are disabled or elderly and in need of 24-hour skilled nursing care.

More...

If an organization offers a temporary or respite care option, they generally operate on a first come, first served basis, so it's always best to make arrangements as far in advance as possible. Since each facility or agency will have its own policies and procedures, admission practices and forms, payment procedures, etc. it's also important to interview potential care providers carefully, visit and tour facilities, check licensing status, and ask for and contact references. This can be time-consuming in the beginning, but pays off in the long run because you will know what to expect and can avoid surprises or bad experiences. If at all possible, the care recipient should also have an opportunity to review respite care options or plans and be actively involved in the decision-making process.

Additional Resources

National Respite Coalition 4016 Oxford Street, Annandale, VA 22003, www.archrespite.org/NRC.htm