

Finding a Respite Caregiver

Respite is temporary relief for caregivers and families who are caring for those with disabilities, chronic or terminal illnesses, or the elderly. Respite is a vital part of the continuum of services for your family. It reduces family stress and helps preserve the family unit and supports its stability.

The military lifestyle can add extra challenges through relocations or deployments. Unfortunately the service providers do not always understand these needs. If you have just relocated, you may not be eligible for services in your new community yet. If your spouse is deploying, talk to your existing care team about whether you would qualify for more services for the short period you will be single parenting.

If formal respite services are not available, look to your own resources and contacts. You may have to find your own caregiver but you are not alone. Speak with your care team. Approach your local MFRC. Talk to other parents. All ideas are welcome.

Finding a Caregiver

Finding a caregiver can be a difficult task under the best of circumstances. In a respite care situation, it is especially important that the right caregiver be found. The following page outlines a range of caregiver options. It starts with family and friends. Situations where trust has already been established are ideal.

The decision to seek respite care and the source of that care is based on two questions.

1. What support do you need right now?
2. What systems and supports do you already have in place?

Most of the options listed below can be applicable for both children and adults with special or support care needs.

Exploring Respite Care Options

Do you have a friend or family member you could call to give you a break?

- Is there a trusted individual/family member that is able to assist you? This is a quick and easy option for care

Do you have a caregiver that already works with your family member?
Consider teacher's aides and assistants as well.

- Approach that organization to explore increased levels of care
- Is there a option to make a private arrangement with this caregiver for additional hours?

Are there community supports that your family is eligible for?

- Is there an existing respite, day program or other inclusive program that you can access?
- If so, get on roster/waiting list.

Are there community programs that your family member could participate in with an aide?

- Call local recreation centres
- Call local recreation integration agency.
- Call the MFRC Navigator

Is this a child whose needs mild enough that a traditional babysitter or nanny arrangement could work?

- Your MFRC may have a list of babysitters and/or a nanny agency that you could start with. Ask friends and other parents who they use.

Are your family member's needs more intense?

- Is a private arrangement with a formal respite caregiver a more appropriate option?

You are the best judge of what care situation will be right for your family. Accept suggestions from others but evaluate them for yourself. Several resources are available to you to help you choose a caregiver. The two below both relate to children. Speak to your local Caregivers Network or long term care support centre about choosing a caregiver for adults.

“Choosing a Caregiver for a Child with Special Needs” from Community Respite Care Committee, Victoria, British Columbia.

“Parents’ Guide to Selecting Childcare” from Ministry of Children and Family Development, British Columbia.