



Respite Tip Sheet #003

Getting Ready for Respite Care

After you have interviewed and screened your potential respite worker you will want to make sure this person and your family member are truly a great match. Start small. If at all possible do not leave a new respite worker with your loved one more than a few hours for the first time. If you are planning a long respite over several days, it is a good idea to build up to it gradually with a few shorter breaks leading up to the vacation or hospitalization or longer break. In emergency situations you may be unable to do this preparation and that is why it is a good idea to have someone you know you can call on when an urgent need arises.

Make sure your respite providers knows all the great things about your loved one but also about the challenges they present. It is better that they are prepared before they are alone with your family member.

Also it is better that you know in advance if they are not going to be able or willing to handle all the care that may be required. Write down some information about your family member to leave with the provider so they are not relying on memory. Pony Bird has a *MyCare Respite Passport* and *Quick Summary* form available. These are forms you can complete with basic information about the care your family member requires along with other important medical and emergency information that might be needed.

Consider scheduling a get acquainted visit with your provider. This is time for you to train your provider on any care that may need to take place in your absence. You are the best person to teach the ways your family member likes or dislikes to be touched, held, positioned, fed, talked to, calmed, put to bed, and a variety of other

unique likes and dislikes they have. If your loved one needs a special diet or special equipment; has a special way to communicate; takes medication; has difficult behavior; or needs limited activity you will

need to teach these things to this respite worker. You need to go over a typical daily routine so while you are away your family member will at least have a comfortable routine to follow.

Other random things to think about to make a positive respite experience for you, your family member, and your provider:

- When possible plan ahead and give your provider advance notice of at least 3 to 5 days.
- MyCare families need to have the voucher they will need prior to using respite care and submit it

immediately after care takes place.

- If you have to cancel care that has been scheduled, let your provider know as soon as possible.
- Return on time and be sure to call if you have to be late.
- Leave emergency contact information each time and let the provider know where you will be.
- Provide written instructions for any medications including over the counter and prescription drugs.
- Be consistent—Make sure everyone giving instructions shares the same information.
- Have a back up plan—Things happen so talk about how to handle the unexpected where care has to



be taken over by someone else before you get home.

- Make sure all necessary clothes, spending money, and food are available.
- Be clear about what is expected and boundaries. Discuss if visitors are allowed; what food can be eaten; what appliances and equipment may be used; internet/WIFI access; etc.
- Be clear about “house rules” for the person being cared for—bedtime; routine; who may visit; when/where your child is allowed to play; any tools, appliances, or equipment that are off limits; Internet usage; etc.
- Discuss potential safety risks. Potential behaviors of your family member; physical risks like loose steps, faulty play equipment; pets that might bite or scratch; anything that could harm the care recipient or care provider.

HOUSE RULES



- Discuss any care around the home you expect. This might include pet care; sibling care; cooking; or cleaning. They are there to care for your family member but some of these tasks may need to be managed in your absence.
- If care is taking place in the provider’s home be sure to pack enough clothes, personal care items, and special foods. Take the provider’s name, address and phone



number with you. Consider packing something from home to make your family member more comfortable while you are away.

- If your family member has any scrapes, bruises, or cuts let your provider know so they will not have to worry that an injury happened while in their care.
- If your family member will need spending money let

your provider know what you are leaving; where it is; how it can be spent; and if you want unspent money returned with receipts.

- If you specifically want your provider to take your loved one out for meals or to a community activity, be sure to leave enough money for both of them .
- If meals will be prepared at your home be sure there is enough food and that it is food that the provider knows how to prepare. If you want them to go to the grocery store together, be sure to leave enough money.
- Review payment details. How much and when you will pay the provider and if you will pay in cash, check, or online service.
- Be sure to pay your provider in a timely manner and in the amount and manner discussed prior to the respite care.



This may seem like a lot of steps but thinking about these details can make a big difference. You may retain a good care provider and /or feel confident using respite care again. You will be able to enjoy this time away knowing that you have done your homework and that your respite provider is prepared, your loved one is prepared, and YOU are prepared.

So now it is time to relax knowing you are taking care of YOU! Enjoy your GOOD RESPITE, the gift of time.



Updated Oct 2022