

If you are the primary caregiver for a loved one with a disability or chronic illness, chances are YOU NEED A BREAK!

Respite, a temporary break from caregiving duties, can make a world of difference in helping you maintain the stamina needed to continue the important work you do to keep your loved one at home.

Alabama Respite can provide information to you about choosing a quality respite provider. Please contact us for a copy of our *Hiring Respite Providers* Manual or visit our website at www.alabamarespite.org.

Alabama Respite maintains a database of respite programs for every county in Alabama. For your convenience, this database is available online (www.alabamarespite.org).

In some cases, we can offer voucher respite funding for families to pay a respite provider.

The family is fully responsible for contacting, checking references, and getting current drug or background checks for potential providers.

Alabama Respite has the following information available that may be helpful in finding a respite provider:

- ❖ Application for employment
- ❖ Written agreement
- ❖ Sample time sheet
- ❖ Possible interview questions
- ❖ How to ask for background checks
- ❖ Suggested locations to advertise for a respite provider
- ❖ Sample advertisements
- ❖ Checklist for training your respite provider
- ❖ Fair Labor Standards Act information
- ❖ IRS Regulations on employer record keeping and responsibilities
- ❖ Record keeping requirements
- ❖ Finding and keeping good respite providers
- ❖ Terminating an employee

For More Information
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Alabama Lifespan Respite
Resource Network ®

GIVE
ME
A
BREAK!!

**A Guide for Hiring and
Keeping Respite Providers**

Finding and Keeping Respite Providers

Caregivers always ask: "Who can I trust to care for my loved one while I am away from home?"

Try these actions to answer this question:

- Make a list of character traits, requirements and preferences.
- Determine what your specific needs are for a provider.
- Ask yourself: "What duties will I expect a respite provider to perform?"

***Trustworthiness * Honesty * Sense of Humor
Good Attitude * Good Health * Dependability
Good Communication Skills***

Advertise for a Respite Provider

Where do I go to look for a provider?

- Ask family and friends who have used respite care providers.
- Call local agencies where you receive other services.
- Post a flyer at family or disability-related organizations, school or doctor's offices.
- Contact churches, social service agencies, community health centers, colleges training nurses, teachers, and social workers, nursing homes or assisted living facilities.
- Place an ad in the Help Wanted section of your local newspaper, on Craig's list, etc.

Background checks and drug screening are highly recommended, so be sure to mention whether or not you will require current documentation.

Get All the Information you Need

How do I know if this respite provider will be the right one for our family?

- Have potential provider fill out an application.
- Select applicants to interview.
- Use your list of requirements to ask questions
- If you interview by telephone, use your instincts. If you feel unsure about someone, thank them for applying; tell them you will let them know if you decide to use them.
- If conducting a face-to-face interview, remember you are most likely interviewing a stranger so you may want to consider meeting in a place other than your home.
- Call to verify their information and references.

Share information about the job:

- Explain the disability or illness of your loved one, and review the job description.
- Ask about past employment.
- Keeping in mind your preferences and requirements, ask the person what he/she liked or did not like about their previous job.

Write an Agreement

When you feel confident about the respite provider you will choose to provide respite care for you to take a break, an informal written agreement can be helpful. An agreement gives the person you are hiring a clear description of your expectations. If either of you ever have questions about your expectations or requirements, you can consult the written agreement.

Record Keeping Responsibilities

Depending on how often and how many hours you use your respite provider, there are IRS regulations you may need to consider. Additional information is available on the IRS official website.

Take Care of your Respite Provider

- Good communication between the two of you is the key to a positive and lasting relationship.
- Let your respite provider know how valuable their services are to you and your family.
- Define their duties and responsibilities, and let them know what you expect from them.
- When giving praise, always be sincere and say "Thank You" often.
- If you have a problem, it is important to criticize the action, not the individual.
- Use criticism as a tool for sharing information with your respite provider. Describe the situation or event you disliked. Tell them what would make things better the next time.
- Be sure to talk about one issue at a time. Do not bring up past mistakes.
- Keep your work relationship private. Do not discuss your respite provider with other people.
- When the relationship is not working out, it may be time to terminate your working agreement. Remember to do it appropriately.
- Remember it is illegal to withhold payment of wages, no matter how dissatisfied you are with your respite provider's work. Simply give notice and terminate the agreement.

The information provided in this brochure is for educational purposes only. Please seek legal advice and search official websites for guidance.