

Preparing Your Child Care Provider

Quality child care is important to the well-being of all children.

Having your child with a disability in child care gives her a chance to be with other children. She has an opportunity to have similar experiences as others.



Look for a child care provider who accepts and values caring for children with a variety of needs.

You may have to help the child care provider understand the needs of your child.

Be honest about what your child's needs are.

- Describe what your child does during the day.
- Explain what you do to meet your child's needs.
- Describe how your baby is fed.

You may need to supply or help your provider find supplies and equipment that your child needs to use.

To help you find a child care situation that will meet your needs, ask other people for suggestions.

The professionals that are working with you and your child — the nurses, therapists, and counselors — may have suggestions. They may know of child care providers who are working with or have worked with children like your child. Other parents in

similar situations may be another good source.

You may need child care for a few hours.

You may need to make an appointment or enjoy an evening away from your family. For these times, you may call on a family member or a good friend.

There are some people that would like to help you in some way.

Ask several people to tell you when they could come to stay with your child for a few hours. Make your appointment for that time or plan to do something fun during that time.

Show the people who will be caring for your child what you do.

The easiest way to do this is to have them visit you at a time when you are feeding, playing, and caring for your child. They can see what you do and ask questions.

It is good to have more than one person you can ask to care for your child. This way, if one person is not able to do it, you can ask someone else.

Leave notes. This information would be helpful to your sitter:

_____ the telephone number of where you will be.

_____ the name and telephone number of someone else that can be called in case you are not available.

_____ the name and telephone number of the child's doctor or nurse.

_____ when you expect the child to need to eat or have other needs met.

Respite Care is an Option

One mother said, "I was reluctant to leave my child, but I feel so much better now - I have my sense of humor back!"

Respite care is short-term child care provided by people familiar with the needs of children with disabilities.

Short-term child care can range from an hour to several weeks, depending on the needs of the family.

Respite care providers are trained.

These people are trained to care for children who need to be closely supervised or require medical care.

This care is usually arranged through a home health care agency. Agencies that provide this care will want to meet with you and your child before



the first time you need care. Each agency has different requirements and fees. Some agencies have a sliding scale that is based on your ability to pay.

If you have other children who will need supervision, ask if the respite provider can care for the other children, too. Some agencies only allow the respite provider to care for the child with special needs.

To find out more about the respite services available to you, ask others.

- Ask your child's doctor, nurse, or therapist.
- Call the Parent Information Center at (302) 366-0152 (TDD (302) 366-0178) for agencies that provide this service.
- Ask another parent you know in a similar situation.

Updated with assistance from Brooksie Pruden, Extension Assistant, and La'Shawn Waters, student in Individual and Family Studies, University of Delaware. Adapted from *The Unplanned Journey: When You Learn That Your Child Has A Disability*, by Carole Brown, Samara Goodman, and Lisa Kupper, published in the **NICHCY News Digest**, Vol. III, Number 1. This issue was initially prepared by Debbie Amsden for University of Delaware Extension. Cooperative Extension Education in Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Delaware, Delaware State University and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Janice A. Seitz, Director. Distributed in furtherance of Acts of Congress of March 8 and June 30, 1914. It is the policy of the Delaware Cooperative Extension System that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, disability, age or national origin. For more information, contact Pat Nelson, 105 Edward R. Wilson House, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19717-1303. 5/2003 Find us on the web at <http://ag.udel.edu/extension/fam/>