



*"Respite did help keep my family together... really...a lot better than I could by myself."*

**G  
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*Temporary*

*Relief*

*for*

*Family*

*Caregivers*



# Respite Is...

*...short-term, temporary relief that can make a world of difference*

*...a service to the family caregivers of both children and adults —*

- *who have disabilities and other special needs*
- *who have chronic or terminal illnesses*
- *who are at risk of abuse or neglect*

*...either planned or in response to an emergency*

Respite and crisis care programs may provide more than just care and supervision. Some may also offer a variety of additional services, such as information and referral, case management and support groups.

Crisis care is a unique form of respite. It is provided to children who are at risk of abuse or neglect or whose families are in crisis. When crisis care is provided to children or adults with disabilities, it is sometimes called emergency respite.

For caregivers in stressful situations, respite provides temporary relief from the ongoing responsibilities of caring for a loved one in the home.

Respite and crisis care may take place in —

- the family's home
- the respite care provider's home
- churches
- camps
- child or elder care homes or centers
- special respite homes
- hospitals, nursing homes and residential facilities
- hotels (under an arrangement called "respitality")

Respite and crisis care providers may be —

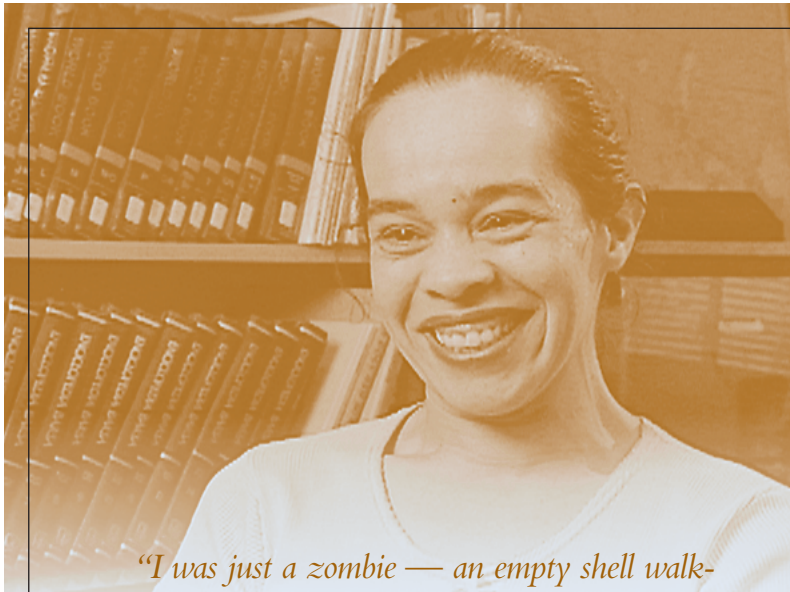
- respite/crisis care agencies
- other family members
- friends and neighbors
- community recreation programs
- child or elder care providers
- home health aides
- family resource centers
- community human service providers



*"You marry someone for better or for worse, right? This is the worst part of it, and so you stay by them, until death do you part. I just feel that this is my job, because I love my husband. We've been together 29 years. I'm not going to put him in a nursing home now and just forget about him. The only way that I can keep my sanity is to have outside help. You have to have respite care."*

*— Wife caring for husband with Alzheimer's*





*“I was just a zombie — an empty shell walking around — just trying to survive day by day. Oh, I made sure the children were clean, they were fed, but I forgot about the loving, the nurturing, the teaching. Thanks to the crisis nursery, I made it. I survived!”*

— Victim of domestic violence

## Respite: Why It's Needed

**One woman's father, paralyzed and bedridden by a stroke, cannot use his hands. She often needs to get up with him two or three times during the night. Her adult daughters take turns caring for him to give their mother time to sleep... Another woman, caring for her husband and mother who both have Alzheimer's, reports that she would not be able to continue without the extra help respite provides.**

Respite is one of the services most often requested by family caregivers. Yet it remains in critically short supply.

- By some estimates a third of all adults in this country are caregivers for a family member.
- Over six million children have disabilities or chronic illness, with special needs that can increase family stress.

- Children with disabilities face a higher risk of abuse and neglect, and their families face a higher divorce rate.
- Almost 4 million children are being reared by their grandparents, who are 60% more likely to live in poverty than others their age.
- In one year there are over 900,000 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect, and over 3% of all elderly people may be victims of abuse.
- Respite programs turn away almost 3,500 children weekly because of lack of resources. Options for the elderly and for adults with disabilities are even fewer.
- Among caregivers of the elderly with disabilities, mortality risks are almost 63% higher for those experiencing strain.
- More than seven million family caregivers are helping older adults remain at home. Studies suggest the value of this assistance may be nearly \$200 billion per year.

*“Should other communities get involved, start their own programs? Absolutely. Should you approach your local politicians to seek funding? Absolutely. Because this is something that makes a difference.”*

— Father of child with developmental disabilities



*“When you are constantly in crisis without ever having the opportunity to step back, just five minutes, the whole family lives in crisis. Respite saved our family.”*

— Parents of child with developmental disabilities

## Respite: Why It Works

**The parents of a 7 1/2-year-old daughter with autism were at the breaking point before respite helped them regain their peace of mind. Better still, seeing someone else enjoy their child helped them enjoy her even more. Parents often tell respite caregivers: You don't know what your two hours have done for me!**

Respite helps preserve families. It reduces stress, supports stability, prevents situations that can lead to abuse and neglect, and reduces the incidence of divorce and out-of-home placement. With respite, families function better and say they are more satisfied with life. Respite is a simple, cost-effective solution for situations that can otherwise devastate families.

In high-risk families, children tend not to need protective services when respite is available.

- In Iowa, the reported incidence of child abuse and neglect in the counties served by crisis care programs decreased 13%.

- In California, more than 90% of the families in a respite program for children at risk of abuse or neglect reported less stress and better family relationships, including more positive attitudes toward their child.
- In Oklahoma, as the use of respite increased, both hospitalizations and medical care claims decreased.

For families of children with disabilities, studies show that —

- without respite one-third of the families would have considered out-of-home placement for their child;
- when respite is used, there is a significant decrease in foster care placement;
- with respite, families' attitudes toward their children improve and they are better able to cope with stress.

Respite is one of the services that caregivers of people with Alzheimer's say they need most.

- Nationwide, delaying nursing home placement of people with Alzheimer's by as little as one month can save more than \$1 billion annually.

*“It's a total job to watch her. You get to the point where you can't think anymore. You feel like you don't have your own life anymore. Respite is a chance for a breather.”*

— Father of child with autism

