



Rest & Relaxation

Respite Care Guide:

A Guide to Colorado Respite
Opportunities & Creative Ideas to
Develop Respite in Your Own
Communities

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Definition

Respite is temporary relief provided to primary caregivers in order to reduce stress, support family stability, reduce the risk of abuse and neglect, and minimize the need for out-of-home placement. The service is provided to children with disabilities and other special needs, to children who have a chronic or terminal illness, and to those children at risk of abuse and neglect. Families receiving respite can include foster and adoptive families, kinship families, and other caregivers.

Respite can be offered both in-home and in settings outside the home. As a service to foster and adoptive families, respite can help to reduce disrupted placements and adoption dissolutions. Respite care services are planned and scheduled. Crisis care services are provided on an emergency basis. Respite Care is not babysitting or child care, which occur in typical families to allow parents to work or to schedule non-child related activities.

Types of Respite Care

- Respite care can range from a few hours to several days or weeks.
- Respite care can be in the child's home or in the provider's home or at another facility.
- Respite care can be individual or group care.
- Respite care can be very formal or use informal systems.

The Importance of Respite Care

Respite helps families and children lead healthier, happier lives and increases the quality of life for all family members.

Respite care increases:

- Feelings of well-being for families
- Community and peer contacts for children
- Social activities for families

Respite improves:

- Coping abilities of families
- Attitudes about caring for a child with challenges
- Families' ability to care for their children at home

Respite care reduces:

- Stress in families
- Risk of abuse and neglect
- Marital tension
- Feelings of depression and isolation

Most important outcome of respite is:

- Effective respite care reduces out-of-home placements, disruptions, and dissolutions so children can stay at home with their families.

Obstacles to Using Respite Care

- No services available
- Not understanding what respite care is
- Families' fear of appearing inadequate
- Confidentiality concerns
- Shortage of competent providers
- Services offered don't match family's needs
- Family doesn't know or trust respite provider
- Special needs of child are too demanding
- Previous negative experience with respite care

- Families fear that respite provider may blame them for their child's difficult behaviors
- Inability to pay for respite care

Goals of Respite Care

- Respite care allows both the adult and the child to take a break from the daily challenges of family life.
- Respite care allows caregivers to refresh and re-energize for the challenges of special needs children.
- Respite care allows parents to reconnect with each other apart from the responsibilities of parenting.
- Respite care can disrupt negative interaction patterns between parents and child, allowing both to come back together and start fresh with healthier interaction patterns.
- The purpose of respite care is not to punish or rescue a child.

Framework for Respite Care

- Respite care is best handled in a way that helps both parents and child feel secure in their family connections.
- Respite care is best handled in a way that communicates to children that their parents are capable of handling their behavior. Everyone is taking a break because they "need a break" not because the child's behavior is too difficult for the parents.
- Respite care is best handled as a break for both children and parents.
- The level of "fun" for a child in respite care can be contingent upon the child's behavior in his/her family.
- Respite care is best when it is not a "Disneyland" experience away from home.

- Respite care is most effective when it is a routine, scheduled event which occurs frequently enough to avoid tensions building to a crisis level.

Sources for Respite Care

In a 2007 survey of 223 adoptive families, when asked what their best source of respite care was,

- 50 families stated family and friends
- 6 stated other adoptive or foster families
- 12 stated social services, including those counties that provide “parents night out “

Others mentioned Developmental Services, private agencies, local babysitters, day care or summer camps.

Other places to consider:

- Ask other adoptive families what services they use for respite care.
- Ask other support group members if the group could consider “trading respite services”.
- Enroll your child in summer camps, wilderness weekends, structured after school activities, sport teams, etc. if your child can safely be in these environments.
- Faith-based youth programs may offer some structured, supervised activities.
- Recreation Centers may offer child activity programs that could serve a respite care need.
- Are any of your neighbors familiar with your situation and supportive of your need for respite care?
- Ask your child’s physician, therapist, teacher, or your pastor for recommendations. Make sure these people are adoption-competent so they understand your needs and can provide suitable recommendations.

- Check with local college or university programs for mature students in the social work, human development, child development, and special education departments who might be interested in providing care.
- Ask your County Department of Social Services for recommendations. Child Placement Agencies or Child Care Centers might be able to recommend someone.

Organizations that provide respite care

- **Kid's Crossing Child Placement Agency**, Colorado Springs, will provide respite care for adoptive families if referred through COCAF or COPARC.
- **Maplestar Child Placement Agency**, El Paso County, will provide respite care for adoptive families if referred through COCAF or COPARC.
- **Autism Society of Colorado** trains respite care providers to provide specialized care for this population. Give Me a Break Respite Program provides funding and training for both families and respite providers. Details about the payment of providers and program rules will be explained. Contact Information: Lorri Park: lorri@autismcolorado.org www.autismcolorado.org
- Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs. HCP can answer your questions about respite care and connect you with a variety of services and supports through other state agencies, non-profit organizations, support and advocacy groups. Contact Information: 303-692-2370 or www.hpcolorado.org.

- Developmental Disabilities Resource Center has a list of Respite Resources compiled by the Colorado Respite Consortium. Contact Information: 303-233-3363
- Mesa Developmental Services (For Mesa County residents only). Eligibility: a child who has any disorder, including ADHD, ODD, physical problems, etc. is eligible for up to 32 hours a month of respite. Call and ask for an application. This is a free service, covered by a grant. Providers are trained by Mesa Developmental Services. Contact: Stacie Cox 1-970-243-3702
- **ARCH National Respite Locator:**
<http://chtop.org/ARCH/National-Respite-Locator.html>
- www.care.com is a website that has capabilities to do an on-line search for local care providers. Individual care providers are background checked. The ability to search for care providers with particular skills is also possible. Respite Providers can be encouraged to register with this service to get their background checks completed and to be listed in this location so adoptive families can locate them.

Selecting Respite Care Providers

- Determine the level of care required for your child.
- Determine the type of care provider with whom you are the most comfortable.
- Determine the specific skills that are needed to successfully care for your child. Develop a job description.
- Develop an application and interview process and make sure you are comfortable with what you learn during the interview. (see www.alabamarespite.org/caregivers.htm Click on Hiring Caregivers)
- Ask for references.

- Select someone with the maturity level to safely care for your child.
- Find out what training and experience the individual has related to your child's needs. If they don't have special training, are they willing to learn from you?
- Make sure the care provider is someone you feel would follow through with your family's structure and routine.
- Have the care provider spend time together with you and your family to watch interactions.
- Check to make sure the person is not listed on the Colorado Government page as a sex offender. Go to www.colorado.gov under Services, click on Map Sex Offenders Near an Address. Type in the address or city where your potential respite care provider lives, click on the symbols that show up on the map to identify the names of offenders.
- Ask the provider to have a criminal background check Completed.

Individuals who are adoptive parents or foster parents, who work in child placement agencies or child care centers have all undergone background checks to work in those facilities or to finalize an adoption. You might check with other agencies whose staff you might consider using to find out if their staff have been background checked and what type of checks were run. While some of the background checks are not current, it does provide some indication of the person's character.

Training Respite Care Providers

- Attend one of the COPARC/COCAF sponsored “Take a Break” trainings for families, respite care providers and groups interested in providing respite care.
- Have your selected respite care provider attend a “Take a Break” respite training.
- Utilize Forms for Respite Care to educate your respite care provider about the structure, discipline, family rules, etc. for your family.
- Ask your respite provider to take any specialized training they might need to deal with the special needs of your child. Does your provider need first aid/CPR training? Do they need to understand particular behaviors? Do they need to have a nursing background for medically fragile children?

Forms for Respite Care Use

COPARC has forms available for your use to communicate with your respite care provider on the needs of your child.

Other forms can be found in *Taking a Break: Creating Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Respite in your Community* book by AdoptUsKids. See contact information under Resources.

Transitions Between Home and Respite Care

Take the time to communicate with the respite provider both before and after respite to share any important issues, concerns, or feedback about activities and successes. Remember you are a team working together to care for your child. The closer you work together, the more successful respite can be for your family. If you have concerns about this respite experience, identify those concerns to see if they are ones that can be effectively addressed through communication and training or if you need to choose another respite provider.

Transitions are difficult for children who have already experienced multiple moves while in foster care. It will tend to raise all of the grief, loss, abandonment, and rejection issues they have partially dealt with. Be sure to take the time to provide reassurance to your child before respite occurs. Encourage your child to have a transitional object (special blanket, toy, family photo) with him/her during respite.

Make sure you have some time following respite to reconnect with your child, talk to him/her about his/her experience and tell him/her how much you missed being together.

Group Options for Respite Care

Several regions of the state provide day or evening group opportunities for respite care. Check to see if your region is one of those listed below. If not, is this something you could encourage your county, recreation center, resource center or faith-based group to start for adoptive and foster families in your area?

Good questions to ask regarding any group respite care programs include:

- What is the counselor to child ratio?
- What childcare experience and background checks do the counselors have?
- What age groups are the children divided into?
- What types of activities are offered?
- How do they accommodate children with special needs?
- How do they handle behavior issues or specific behaviors your child has?
- What is their policy regarding safety, food allergies, etc.?

- Fundango - Larimer County. This is a faith-based initiative that has formed a non-profit ministry called Kids At

Heart. They provide a drop-in evening monthly at two locations for foster and adoptive families. They train and background check volunteers who provide planned activities for children of all ages. They offer consultation and training to other groups who are interested in providing similar services. This is partially funded through a COPARC county mini-grant. Contact Information: Erica Wharton, 970-223-1230 or director@kidsatheartfundango.org

- Parent Night Out – LaPlata County. This is a county-led monthly evening out for parents. The county collaborates with a family resource center that provides the space for supervised activities for children. Parents are provided with “Durango Dollars” which can be spent at local establishments. This is partially funded through a COPARC county mini-grant. Contact Information: Martha Johnson, 970-382-6146 or johnsonmd@co.laplata.co.us.
- Respite Care at Adventure Center – Alamosa. This is a county-led day of activities for children. The county collaborates with a local “Adventure Center” to provide this service monthly. The program operates 8 months of the year, every 3rd Saturday from 1:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Alamosa Boys and Girls’ Club. This is partially funded through a COPARC county mini-grant. Contact Information: Kelli Robinson, 719-587-3099
- Family Fun Adventures – Mesa County. This is a county-led program that takes advantage of local recreational resources to provide fun for the entire family. Mesa County also does a camp for both parents and children that provides separate activities. This allows families to have respite but they are close enough to be available if children need parental care. This is partially funded through a COPARC county mini-grant. Contact Information: Lori Rienstra 970-248-2844 or lori.rienstra@mesacounty.us

- **Discovery Club** – A monthly day for children and youth to explore and learn in a friendly social setting. Parents discover time for themselves, their spouses, family and friends. A staff of professionals and trained volunteers can provide care for children who need help with mobility, eating and other care needs. A nurse is on staff at all times. Now in four Denver Metro Locations: Mt. St. Vincent's, Boulder Valley Christian Church, St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Highlands Ranch, and Steve Vestal Center in Lakewood. There is an annual \$25 Registration fee. Cost is \$20 per person each session or \$15 per person for 3 or more kids from the same family. Walk-ins are \$25 per person. Financial Assistance is available. Contact Information: Call Jenn Barta 303-569-2333 ext. 312 for reservations or more information http://co.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=CODR_Discovery_2008
- **Kidz Night Out (KNO)** – Jefferson County. This program was developed to help support foster, adoptive and kinship care providers. KNO provides a safe and fun option for respite care for providers who supply 24-hour care for kids involved with Jefferson County Division of Children, Youth and Families. The program is typically offered every 3 months at Light and Life Community Church in Lakewood. A similar day time program is offered on a Saturday afternoon at Foothills Community Church in Arvada. Cost is \$2 per child or \$5 per family. Contact Information: Korina Keating at 303-271-4103 or kkeating@jeffco.us
- **Night Owls** – Fisher Early Learning Center, University of Denver. One Friday night each month, trained volunteers provide an evening of individualized care and fun for children with special needs and their siblings, ages 1 month to 12 years. They participate in pre-planned activities and events according to each child's interests. Nurses are there to assist with any medical needs. The evening is free of charge to families. Attendees may be children with special

needs and their siblings from the greater Denver community. Families must pre-register. Contact Information: call 303.871.2095 or NightOwls@du.edu.

- **Respite Care Inc.** A facility in Fort Collins which provides respite care to families with children with disabilities. The organization was established in 1981 and they offer respite care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (the 24/7 program).
<http://www.respitecareinc.org/index.html>
- **Kid's Nite Out Across America.** A Kids' Nite Out Across America® program is a partnership between a community facility (recreation center, school, church, etc.) and a Kid's Nite Out Across America® franchisee. Programs usually run from 7 pm to 10:30 pm on either Friday or Saturday nights throughout the school year, and are open to kids ages 8 to 14. Admission at most locations is between \$10-\$15 per child, and kids may purchase food, beverages and snacks. There are a wide variety of activities to choose from, most take place in the gym area and in the dance room. All of the counselors at KNO are subjected to a criminal and sex-offender background check prior to being hired and trained. The program includes providing a maximum staffing ratio of 20:1 (kids to counselors), and having a uniformed police officer on duty at all times. KNO is offered in locations throughout the Denver metro region, including Longmont, Loveland, Brighton and Castle Rock. For additional information, please visit: www.kidsniteout.org
- **YMCA Programs** may offer programs for kids to participate in YMCA center activities while parents go out. Each YMCA branch is independently operated. If you can get your child involved in programs through your YMCA and he/she can build a rapport with some of the staff, this may be an avenue for the staff to work

with your child's particular needs. Developing a relationship with the Youth and Family Coordinator can also open more avenues and help to better accommodate your child's needs. Getting to know different individuals with child care experience may lead to an opportunity for someone to provide respite care specifically for your child, outside of the organization they work for. Contact your local YMCA

www.ymca.net

and ask for the Youth and Family Coordinator to see what types of programs they offer like this.

Funding Resources for Respite Care

- **Counties.** Most counties will arrange respite care for your foster child when needed. If your child is adopted and his needs have increased since your adoption, one avenue might be to try to renegotiate your subsidy for this child based on increased needs to cover the cost of respite care. You might also ask if the county has a certified foster home that could provide respite care services if this was paid by another source.

Core Services. This program is required in each county. It is prescriptive for home-based family services including reunification, life skills, intensive therapeutic intervention and aftercare services, psychiatric residential and day treatment, sexual abuse treatment, special economic assistance to families up to \$400 per year, mental health services and substance abuse treatment. In addition to these statewide services, each county has the option to develop its own design using Core Services dollars in order to prevent the out-of-home placement of children, facilitate reunification or another form of permanence. Families should access the services through their current

county of residence.

PSSF Sites. Promoting Safe and Stable Family sites may also be able to help preserve your family stability by offering respite care services. PSSF sites are guided and funded by the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act, Title IV-B, Sub-Part 2. PSSF Projects in 34 counties and one Indian Reservation in Colorado are operated by local community-based agencies. They are designed based on the needs of their particular communities, and so services vary from place to place in the state. They support all types of families. When you contact a PSSF site you will be connected with a Family Advocate who can help you get involved in services that fit your family's particular needs. 303-866-5932

www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare/SafeAndStableFamilies.htm.

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Each County in Colorado has its own TANF plan designed to meet the needs of their own community. These are known as Colorado Works or Workforce programs. Depending upon the county, funds may be available to assist families with a variety of services, including child care or respite. Contact your local Workforce or Colorado Works center to find out what programs might be available to assist your family.
- Area Agency on Aging. In some states, Area Agencies on Aging provide respite funds to grandparents raising grandchildren. Check your local Area Agency on Aging to determine if this is a service they provide.
- Community Centered Boards (CCBs). CCBs are private non-profit organizations designated in statute as the single entry point into the long-term service and support system for persons with developmental disabilities. The

State contracts with twenty Community Centered Boards to deliver community-based services. Each CCB has a non-overlapping geographic service region of one to ten counties serving from 70 to 1,600 individuals each. CCBs are responsible for intake, eligibility determination, service plan development, arrangement for services, delivery of services (either directly and/or through purchase), monitoring, and many other functions. Additionally, CCBs are responsible for assessing needs and developing plans to meet those needs of their local service area. CCBs play a vital role in managing limited resources at the local level to meet the individual needs of its citizens and to address the overall needs of the local service area. Contact: Information: www.cdhs.state.co.us/ddd/CCB_Main.htm

- Adoptive Families Initiative (AFI). Grant funded counties may have funds to help pay for respite services. If you live in one of these counties, contact their local representative for information about applying for assistance.
Jefferson: Nancy McGinnis, 303-271-4423 or nmcginni@co.jefferson.co.us
Broomfield: Ronda Burgin, 720-887-2238 or rburgin@broomfield.org
Mesa: Lori Rienstra, 970-248-2844 or Lori.Rienstra@mesacounty.us
Denver: Linda Trantow, 720-944-2484 or Linda.trantow@denvergov.org
Delta/Montrose: Donna Rose, 970-240-8655 or dolphinhouse@gwe.net
Boulder: Suzanne Daniels, 303-441-1533 or sdaniels@co.boulder.co.us
If you have additional questions about this resource, call
Kate Trujillo at 303-562-9864 ext. 4.

- Autism Society of Colorado. Through the “Give Me A Break” program provides funding for respite care. Contact Information: Lorri Park lorri@autismcolorado.org
- Colorado Post-Adoption Resource Center. Families who have adopted through the child welfare system may request up to \$500 per child per grant year for services related to special needs or adoption issues, including respite. Contact Information: 1-800-451-5246 or postadopt@adoptex.org.
- Mesa Developmental Services (For Mesa County residents only). Eligibility: a child who has any disorder, including ADHD, ODD, physical problems, etc. is eligible for up to 32 hours a month of respite. Call and ask for an application. This is a free service, covered by a grant. Contact Information: Stacie Cox 1-970-243-3702 or www.mesadev.org
- Respite Care of the Yampa Valley. It is operated through the Visiting Nurse Association and serves all children who have an Individualized Education Plan in Moffat and Routt Counties.
Moffat County: call 970-824-8233
Routt County: call 970-879-1632
www.autismcolorado.org/old/resfam.htm
- Mental Health. Contact your local Mental Health Center. Many of these do offer respite services for families who are utilizing other mental health center services.
- If funds are not available, consider trading respite care services with another adoptive family.
- Perhaps a barter system could work – families could pay each other with food, favors, skilled labor, etc.

- Hold a garage sale to raise funds to pay for respite. Perhaps your family and friends would organize this event to help you. Many people who are unable to provide respite care themselves would be agreeable to helping in this way.

Cost of Respite Care:

In a 2007 survey of 223 adoptive families in Colorado, the typical rate paid for one 24 hour day ranged between \$10 to \$240. The average rate was \$67.60 per day.

The typical rate paid per hour for respite care ranged between \$3 to \$32 per hour. The average rate was \$10.45 per hour.

The wide variation in cost may have to do with very special needs and the need for skilled care.

According to a Factsheet developed by the National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse and Prevention grant program, respite care is cost effective. Agencies providing planned respite care charge an average of \$10 per hour “which is less costly in both financial and social terms than placing children in out-of-home care.”

National Resource Center for CBCAP, Friends Factsheet #14)

Information Resources

- North American Council on Adoptable Children in collaboration with AdoptUsKids recently co-facilitated a multi-day training on creating respite care services. The

Collaboration to AdoptUSKids also released “Taking a Break: Creating Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Respite in Your Community,” a comprehensive manual funded through a federal Children’s Bureau Grant. The manual is available for your use. You can call 1-888-200-4005 to order a copy, with a charge of \$20.00, or go to www.adoptuskids.org to download and customize forms. You can download the entire manual in PDF by going to: <http://www.adoptuskids.org/resourceCenter/publications/respiteManual.aspx>

- Child Welfare Information Gateway has a manual entitled “Respite Care Services for Families Who Adopt Children with Special Needs – Synthesis of demonstration program final reports, April 2002.” It is available online at www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/h_respite.cfm
- National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) www.friendsnrc.org
- Chapel Hill Training-Outreach Project, Inc. ARCH Respite and Respite Locator Service. www.chtop.org

Encouraging Your Community to Help

There are many types of organizations that could be encouraged to work together to make respite care available and affordable in your community. Think about faith groups, child care centers, recreation centers, resource centers, county departments of social services, child placement agencies, activity centers, area service clubs, and area universities as possible respite care provider groups. If a group of adoptive parents approached these groups with the need for respite care services, perhaps they would take this on as a project. County departments of social services can apply to COPARC for a mini-grant of up to \$5,000 to help fund such projects. CO-

PARC encourages collaboration with other community groups and gives priority to those that provide respite care or support groups. Four of the group options listed above are recipients of such funds.

Contact Information: 1-800-451-5246 or paula@adoptex.org

Planning Groups for Respite Care

Colorado Respite Care Coalition: There is an unmet need for respite for families of children with special health care needs (CSHCN). The Colorado Respite Coalition (CRC) is a group of parents and professionals who have joined together to facilitate an ongoing dialogue that explores, connects, and supports community organizations and individuals interested in creating a variety of respite programs. The CRC also will provide information about respite to communities in Colorado. Some CSHCN may be at a higher risk for abuse and neglect than the typical population of children. The CRC has been meeting for over a year, and wants to take this opportunity to update their list of over 150 people around the state who are interested in bringing more respite programs to communities in Colorado. The CRC will also serve as a statewide repository of information that communities can access for their respite needs. If you would like to be more involved, or have suggestions, please contact them. They will be updating this list on a quarterly basis. If you wish to receive information more often, please contact: Val Saiz, Co-chair: Saiz@comcast.net or Janis De Baca, Co-chair: jdebaahcp@aol.com

Special Needs Advocacy Group (SNAG) is a Denver Metro based nonprofit with a focus on the well-being and success of adoptive families of special needs children. As part of that focus, SNAG is working to develop a series of respite houses in the metro counties suitable for children with mild special needs and able to bill Medicaid for the service. Longer term goals include respite services for children with more severe special needs, after school programs and summer camps.

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The *Colorado Department of Human Services* provides administration and public oversight for all adoption programs in the state, as well as specialized services for children with developmental disabilities. Call 303-866-4629

www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare

www.cdhs.state.co.us/child_welfare

Since 1983, **The Adoption Exchange**, a private, non-profit organization, has connected over 5500 children with special needs with a permanent family. Core services of recruitment, training, and advocacy are provided through a central office in Aurora, CO, which has field offices in Salt Lake City, UT; Albuquerque, NM; St. Louis, MO; and Las Vegas, NV for its eight member affiliates. A library of adoption related books and videos is available to the public, as well as a variety of other resources. Contact Information: 303-755-4756 (toll free 1-800-451-5246) or www.adoptex.org.

The **Colorado Post-Adoption Resource Center (COPARC)**, is funded by the Colorado Department of Human Services through The Adoption Exchange as a five year contract. A variety of resources are available to families who have adopted through the foster care system, including Regional Resource Coordinators to assist families in finding needed services. Other services include: newsletter, lending libraries, educational seminars, respite training, funding for services to meet the special needs of children, funds for support group start-up, funds for county projects that directly benefit adoptive families. www.adoptex.org (click on Colorado/Programs/Post Adoption).

The **Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families (COCAF)**, is a statewide, non-profit, advocacy group for Colorado adoptive, foster-adopt, and kinship families. COCAF maintains a web site containing information on all aspects of adoption, including a comprehensive links section. They provide workshops, develop innovative programs designed to support and celebrate our families, interface with statewide and national organizations dealing with family and children's issues, advocate for pre- and post-adoptive families, and sponsor an annual conference. Email: cocafcave@yahoo.com or 303-562-9864 www.cocaf.org



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