Many families caring for loved ones with special needs are hesitant to have others provide care for a variety of reasons:

How will someone else know what to do?
Where can I find someone who understands my loved ones needs?

Although these are common worries, studies show using respite can temporarily relieve stress and fatigue experienced by many caring for a child or adult with special needs.

Do you have difficulty finding time to run errands or get household tasks completed?

Does caring for your loved one interfere with scheduling appointments for yourself or with personal projects?

Is it difficult to find time to spend with your spouse or friends without caregiver responsibilities? Do you avoid going out because you feel you would be imposing on the family and friends who care for your loved one?

Do you need appropriate care for your loved one with special needs so you can also devote 1 to 1 time with your other children?

Are you concerned in the event of a family emergency there is a need for a person with whom you would feel secure leaving your loved one with special needs?

Do you think you would be a better parent if you had a break every now and then? Do you need time to relax and refresh so that you will be better able to meet the care needs of your loved one with special needs?

Parenting is a difficult job and every parent can benefit from time away from the responsibilities of proving care. Being the best parent possible requires getting the rest and relaxation that you need. Caring for an individual with special needs presents additional challenges that go beyond the everyday stresses of being a parent. As a result, you may need longer rest periods or more down time.
Remember to keep in touch with yourself. If you are sick, exhausted, or overworked, you can’t provide good care for anyone.

Caregiving is an act of love, but is also a demanding, challenging job.

No one can handle it alone.

Getting help for yourself is one of the best things you can do for your loved one, and it will enable you to keep giving top-quality care.

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**Considerations when hiring a care Provider**

**Before interviewing, make a list of duties you require the worker to carry out. Your list may include items such ...**

- Assisting with bathing, toileting, and personal hygiene activities
- Assisting with grooming, dressing, personal care tasks
- Assisting with transfers or other mobility requirements
- Assisting with preparing meals and feeding
- Assisting with daily living tasks (cleaning, making bed, laundry)
- Assisting with recreation activities
- Supervision and Safety
- Following a Behavior management treatment plan

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A good respite provider should ...

- Be able to lift someone the weight of your loved one.
- Have experience working with individuals with special needs or willingness to learn more
- Have a working knowledge of first aid and safety
- Have a record of being at work consistently and on time
- Have the ability to follow written and oral instructions
- Pass background and drug screening
- Be able to provide at least two references
- Have reliable transportation
Questions and Considerations When Interviewing In-Home Care Providers

- Define or describe your expectations of the worker and ask the worker to define his/her expectations of the position.
- Ask potential workers to describe themselves and any interests (e.g. art, sports, music etc) that might be of benefit to your child/adult
- Ask about their experience working with or willingness to learn about caring for an individual with special needs. Will the care providers need additional training to meet specific family needs? (ex. CPR/First Aid, Behavior Management, Special Medical Issues, Child Development, Disability Awareness, Abuse/Neglect Awareness, Universal Precautions)
- Ask about experience with particular procedures (ex. lifting/transferring, G-tube feeding, medication administration, personal and attendant care, seizures)
- Look for creative and energetic workers. Ask the applicant about ideas for activities
- Schedule part of the interview when your loved one will be there, and keep an eye on how the potential worker relates and interacts with him/her.
- Discuss the rate of pay and invoicing procedures with the worker you are going to hire.
- How flexible is the care provider? (day hours, night, weekend, overnight). Ask about availability at short notice for emergencies
- Ask about their experience or methods for handling difficult behaviors. Think about how you need the worker to respond if your child is uncooperative or “difficult,” and what is and isn’t acceptable discipline for you.
- Will the care provider give care in ways that support the individual’s physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and social well-being?
- Do you need a care provider who can attend programs with your loved one and are they able to provide transportation?
- How do the caregivers handle emergencies? What instructions do they receive to prepare them for unexpected situations (being snowed in or losing power during a thunderstorm, for example)?
- Be clear about areas of the house which are off-limits and what the rules are for the use of the phone, T.V. or other household resources in your home.

Whether your care provider is a friend, relative, or someone you just discovered, make sure you feel comfortable talking to him or her and are confident your instructions will be followed.
Your Responsibilities to your Care Provider:

- Make sure all agreements about hours of care and payment are clearly understood, in writing, and agreed on in advance.
- Provide information about health conditions and allergies and specific, detailed information about how to address medical conditions.
- Make sure your care provider has a list of emergency numbers including yours and your doctor’s.
- Demonstrate and provide instruction in how to perform personal care and daily living tasks with your loved one. (Ex. Grooming, bathing, dressing, feeding, lifting/transferring, operating wheelchair and equipment)
- Tell your worker as much as you can about your loved one’s routines for sleeping, eating and play including what food to serve, any special sleep needs, and what activities are fun for your loved one.
- Let your respite worker know what kind of a day your loved one is having, if there was any event that made your him/her feel especially good or bad. Discuss, discuss and demonstrate how to address behavioral issues and comforts your loved one.

Taking Care of Your Care Provider

Care providers are usually not highly paid nor do they receive benefits. Do what you can to communicate your satisfaction with his/her work. Give sincere praise. Let them know how valuable their service is to you and your family.

You may want to consider staying with your caregiver the first several times they provide services in your home to support them in getting to know you loved one and how to support your loved ones needs. Continue to define the caregiver’s duties and responsibilities and let them know what you expect from them and what support they can expect from you. Don’t let small irritations build up. When it is necessary to point out any displeasure with something the care provider has done, it is important to criticize the action, not the individual. Use criticism as a tool for sharing information with your care provider. The whole idea is to help him/her know how to serve your loved one better. 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 (another reason for dealing with problems as they occur). Don’t bring up past mistakes, but instead only talk about the present situation. Stay with the point you wish to make and be brief. Keep your working relationship private. Do not discuss your respite provider with others. When the relationship is not working out, it may be time to terminate your working agreement. Remember to do it appropriately. Simply give notice and terminate the agreement.

Good communication with your care provider is the key to a good and lasting relationship. Finding a good respite provider that will stay with you and your family is invaluable.
RIL works with individuals and families who need to hire personal assistants to help with daily living skills (bathing, grooming, transportation, laundry...) teaching them the skills to recruit, interview, hire and manage the Personal assistants.

Locate local in-home care for a senior loved one

https://www.carefamily.com

http://www.sittercity.com/
Who Can Apply:
Virginia families who care for a loved one with disabilities or chronic conditions

What Services are Considered:
**Respite**: Respite is short-term, temporary relief for those who care for family members, which can help reduce the strain on caregivers so they can continue to provide for their loved ones.

Examples: in-home program where services are provided in the family's home or a care provider’s home, A center-based program where family caregivers bring the care recipient to a facility to receive respite care, A child or adult care center, a **summer or weekend camp**, family day care home, or adult family home which provides temporary care in addition to regular child or adult care services, Assisted living or nursing home respite programs.

Amount of Reimbursement:
Those who qualify and are approved may receive up to $400 reimbursement. The program will distribute vouchers for reimbursement from a federal grant limited to $179,079, which closes by July 31.

How to Apply: Caregivers may apply to the Lifespan Respite Voucher Program, which will distribute vouchers to qualified and approved families for reimbursement from a federal grant. For application: [www.vadars.org/services.htm](http://www.vadars.org/services.htm).
In accordance with the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement, Department of Behavior Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) is in the process of creating the Individual and Family Support (IFS) Program to assist individuals and families access short-term person/family-centered resources, supports, and services.

Who is eligible: IFS program is designed to assist individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities on the waiting list for the Intellectual Disability (ID) or Developmental Disability (DD) Waiver (and their families).

How much funding can be requested: annual maximum of $3000.00 per individual per fiscal year may be provided to individuals or family members in varying amounts, as requested and approved by DBHDS.

How to Apply: Applications will be considered by DBHDS on a first come, first serve basis until the annual allocation by the General Assembly for the applicable fiscal year has been expended and will ONLY be accepted by USPS mail. ONLY 700 families are to be funded in the first year or the program. DBHDS is currently in the process of creating an on-line application system. All individuals who are currently on the waitlist for the ID or DD Waiver will be receiving letters of notification explaining the program and how to apply in the early spring. http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/ODS-default.htm (scroll down to announcements)

What Services/Items may be funded:

- Respite
- Transportation services
- Behavioral consultation and behavior management
- Assistive technology
- Home modifications
- Goods or products that directly support the individual
- Temporary rental assistance, deposits or utilities
- Fees for summer camp and other recreation services
- Dental or medical expenses of the individual
- Family education, information, and training
- Peer mentoring and family-to-family supports
- Emergency assistance and crisis support
Get regular physical activity. Regular, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity is a good energizer that reduces stress, helps keep blood pressure and cholesterol at heart-healthy levels and helps maintain a healthy weight. Aim for 30 minutes a day on most, if not all, days. You can break it down to 10- or 15-minute sessions. Walking is a great way to get started, even if you only walk around the yard.

Eat heart-healthy foods. They give you more energy, keep your brain fed (which helps combat depression) and help prevent other health problems. If you've got to “eat on the run,” choose nutritious snacks.

Take time for activities you enjoy such as reading, listening to music, crafts, cooking — whatever makes you happy and relaxes you. Visit the local coffee shop, attend church events, take a class, visit a friend or just wander around the mall or a park. If your loved one needs constant attention, ask for help.

When people offer to help, accept the offer and suggest specific things they can do.

Keep humor in your life. Find the humor in your situation when possible. Find things to laugh about with your loved one. Laughing quickens the pulse rate, stimulates the blood circulation, activates muscles, increases oxygen intake and helps you relax. Did you know? Medical studies show that laughter boosts levels of endorphins, the body's "feel-good" hormones. Laughter may even boost the immune system. A good attitude and exercising your sense of humor may reduce stress, lower depression and help your body and mind to heal.

Treat depression and stress. Recognize signs and symptoms and do something about it as soon as it starts. If you think you may be depressed, get professional help. Talk it out. Admit your feelings.

Take care of your business. Keep your checkbook balanced, work when you need to, spend time with friends and family and don't stop planning for the future. It's out there waiting for you. Don't live totally "in the moment" of your caregiver responsibilities all the time.

Keep all your medical and dental appointments. Do all you can to keep from getting sick. If you're sick, you won't be able to do what your loved one needs. Ask for help when you need it to get away and take care of your health.

Think positive. Take time every day to refresh your mind. Admit your limitations. Let go of guilt. Admit that you're angry. Pat yourself on the back for the job you're doing. If you're feeling guilty or angry, take a break. Choose to take charge of your life, and don't let your loved one's illness or disability always take center stage. Remember to be good to yourself. Love, honor and value yourself. You're doing a very hard job and you deserve some quality time just for you.

Stay connected with others even if it's just by phone or online. Don't isolate yourself. Talk to friends about something other than your situation. Stay interested in what would be going on in your life if you weren't caregiving. It's still there and you're still a part of it.
It’s that time again...

BINGO @ Pop’s

Tuesday, March 12, 2013
6:30 - 8:30 pm

Pop’s Bingo World
210 Giant Drive
Richmond, Va 23225

Contact your Chesterfield DMHSS Case Manager with questions 748-1227.
Get your tickets for a great event to benefit the Autism Grant for the Dominion School for Autism, a program of Commonwealth Autism Service. The Autism Grant was established by a Dominion School parent and board member to provide scholarships to financially disadvantaged preschool aged children with autism in Central Virginia to ensure they can receive ABA therapy.

The Leon Milmore Reunion Benefit Concert

When: Saturday March 2, 2013 8 PM
Where: Canal Club Richmond, VA
Admission: $8 in advance, $10 at the door
Tickets available online http://www.thecanalclub.com/
or at the main campus of the Dominion School, 6818 W. Grace Street

August 17th
Virginia Beach, VA
info@surfershealing.org

Surfers Healing was founded by Israel and Danielle Paskowitz. Their son, Isaiah, was diagnosed with autism at age three. Like many autistic children, he often suffered from sensory overload -- simple sensations could overwhelm him. The ocean was the one place where he seemed to find respite. A former competitive surfer, Israel hit upon an idea--with Isaiah on the front of his surfboard, and Izzy steering from the back, the two spent the day surfing together. Surfing had a profound impact on Isaiah. Israel and Danielle decided they wanted to share this unique therapy with other autistic children. They began to host day camps at the beach where autistic children and their families could be exposed to a completely new experience of surfing.
Come DANCE with J’adore

ADAPTIVE DANCE PROGRAM

Welcome to J’adore DANCE, Central Virginia’s Premier Studio of DANCE!!

Started in 2010, we are proud to provide the area’s first dance program for children with special needs and the only program supported by Autism Speaks!

Unlike most, children with special needs are often limited in activities available to them. J’adore DANCE welcomes you and your family to experience the joys of music, dance, creativity and performance. With our yearlong program, your child is sure to find the perfect outlet to meet their “dancin needs”

Our Adaptive Program is perfect for children with all types and spectrums of special needs such as Autism, Down Syndrome, Prader-willi Syndrome, learning/mental disabilities, physical handicaps, and more.

To find out more about this program, please contact program director, Katie Hundley at katie@jadoredancestudio.com

Register NOW

Adaptive DANCE
Fridays 5:00-5:45
@ Crossings Location

DANCE Therapy:
therapeutic use of dance and movement to promote
cognitive, emotional, social, and physical health.

*Enjoy the joys and creativity of dance while improving
motor skills including enhanced coordination, increased flexibility and improved muscle strength

*Improves the mood of your dancer with the release of endorphins through physical exertion

*Increase confidence and reduce anxiety with breathing techniques

*Contribute to their creative expression

*DANCE IS FUN!

J’adore DANCE

Main Office:
5000 Commonwealth Centre Parkway
Midlothian, VA 23112
804-744-0400
info@jadoredancestudio.com
www.jadoredancestudio.com

Crossings Location:
12251 Chattanooga Plaza
Midlothian, VA 23112
804-744-1125
CALL FOR ART ENTRIES
SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN K-12
WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER
show what love looks like to you.

In partnership with Art 180 and the Autism Society of Central Virginia

Art will be showcased in the Atlas gallery in downtown Richmond. Following a gallery opening, the art will then be on display for two of Richmond’s First Friday events.

**medium:** any—painting, drawing, photograph, sculpture, etc.
**theme:** love
**timeline:** art needs to be submitted by March 16th.

**How to enter:**
Please email artist’s name and age to: artperspectives13@yahoo.com

**How to submit art:**
Where to submit artwork will be communicated closer to submission deadline of March 15th. Please include the following with artwork—on a separate piece of paper:
- Artist’s name
- Age as of March 15th 2015
- Medium (acrylic paints, photography, textile, etc.
- Title of artwork
- Contact info for returning artwork

**please email your interest in participating to:**
artperspectives13@yahoo.com

love
through the eyes of children
with autism spectrum disorder

going exhibit: friday, april 19th 7 - 9 pm
ongoing exhibit through may

Atlas 114 w marshall street richmond va
Everyone hits. Everyone gets on base. And everyone crosses home plate.

REGISTER TO PLAY TODAY!

Be Part of the Miracle!
The Miracle League is the first of its kind, providing safe, recreational play... baseball designed exclusively for children with physical and emotional challenges.

Friday Nights @ 6:30 pm
Saturdays @ 9 am, 10:30 am and 12 noon

Spring Season – April to June
Fall Season – September to October

FIELD LOCATION:
L.C. Bird High School Sports Complex
10301 Courthouse Road • Chesterfield, Virginia 23832

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Karen@MiracleLeagueOfRichmond.com
or call (804) 229-4966

BE A VOLUNTEER!
Volunteers are vital in making this program a success and most importantly, they help ensure the safety of our players. While we call them Buddies, many people refer to them as the “Angels in the Outfield”.

Player/Volunteer applications and Sponsorship Opportunities available on our website:
www.miracleleagueofrichmond.com
Check out the latest exhibits at the Chesterfield CMOR:
United Athletics was founded in 2012 with the intention of bridging the gap between individuals who require physical assistance to race and the local sporting community. The mission of United Athletics is to pair local athletes and individuals who require physical assistance to participate in a variety of events – swimming, biking, running, and triathlon races. Participation in sporting events promotes both social inclusion and fellowship in a healthy athletic environment.

United Athletics recognizes the financial hardships that these families face due to extensive medical bills. United Athletics will establish a medical fund where these special athletes and their families may apply for assistance with these medical bills.

http://www.unitedathleticsrva.com/  
Please email us at - unitedathleticsrva@gmail.com  
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/unitedathletics?fref=t
VCU-ACE offers many on-line webcasts, courses and seminars that are free to Virginia Residents

Using iPads to Promote Access and Learning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

**Presenter:** Teresa Lyons

**Date:** 5/14/2013, 3:30pm Eastern

In this webcast, participants will learn about ways in which the iPad can be used within classroom instruction and everyday routines to support communication, routines, social skills, academics and self-management for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

2 Part Webcasts Meltdowns: What to do - Prevention, Intervention, And Post-Vention

**Presenter:** Kathy Morris

Many individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience “meltdowns” that appear to come “out of nowhere”. The meltdown appears as a moment where the person has lost control of their ability to cope or regulate their behavior. Difficulty regulating during the peak of a meltdown is usually due to a series of unfortunate events that happened throughout the day, and the fifth unfortunate event was the ‘straw that broke the camel’s back.’ This two part Webinar presentation addresses preventative techniques, intervention strategies to teach coping skills prior to meltdown, practical strategies to use throughout the meltdown cycle, and post-vention strategies.
Sometimes it can be hard to keep up with all of the recent discoveries and changes in the field of autism. Autism Speaks does a wonderful job of creating a top 10 list each year of significant research that has been conducted in the field. For more information visit:


The Riot! is an e-newsletter for self-advocates. Self-advocates are people with disabilities who speak up for themselves and others. Self-advocates speak up with spoken words, sign language, language boards or in ways unique to each person. The Riot offers a newsletter, a blog where self-advocates can share opinions, an online art gallery, toolkits, games and services to help individuals become stronger self-advocates. http://www.theriotrocks.org/
Workshop

Join us for an in-depth sequel to Dr. Carol Schall’s February DSAGR Educational Conference breakout session!

| Presenter: Carol Schall, Ph.D., Director of the VA Autism Resource Center |
| Date: Saturday, March 23, 2013 |
| Time: 9am-12pm |
| Where: River Road Church, Baptist (8000 River Road, Richmond) |

Sponsored By: The Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond
http://www.dsagr.com/

DASGR Monthly Meetings are generally held on the third Friday of each month. Dinner 6-6:45pm & Presentation 7-8:30pm. Location and additional meeting details will be announced in advance. Dinner and childcare are generally provided and a small donation will be collected. Meetings are open to DSAGR members in addition to the general public, including educators, physicians, providers, friends, etc.

Please RSVP rsvpdsagr@yahoo.com with the number of adults, children, and children's ages at least 2 days before the meeting so we can provide adequate food and childcare. You MUST make a reservation for childcare for children age 5 and under.
Become a Partner in Policymaking
Partners in Policymaking accepting applications until April 30

Only 30 people (from across Virginia) will be chosen to be Partners. Classes (on Friday evenings and Saturdays) begin in September 2013 and will conclude in May 2014. Eight sessions are held; lodging, meals, training, and transportation (plus individual accommodations such as personal care attendants and interpreters) are paid for participants in Partners.

Topics covered in the sessions include independent living, assistive technology, supported employment, and history of the disability rights movement. Partners practice presenting testimony and learn about impacting the legislative process.

Download the application at [http://www.vaboard.org/policymaking.htm](http://www.vaboard.org/policymaking.htm) and be sure to include three (3) letters of recommendation. Materials are accepted electronically, by fax, or by mail. If you have questions, please contact Rachel Loria at 1-800-846-4464 or Rachel.Loria@vbpd.virginia.gov for more information.

Videos about PIP are available on the Board’s web page and on YouTube through these links, which you can share to your own Facebook page or group:


Are you the parent (or guardian) of a young child with a developmental disability (DD)? Or are you a person with DD?

If you are, or know someone who is, now is the time to apply for a free training program called Partners in Policymaking (PIP).
Vehicle Manufacturer Mobility Rebate Programs
http://www.usmedicalsupplies.com/Mobility-Rebates.htm
If you have purchased or leased a new vehicle you may be eligible for up to $1200 in rebates for after-market adaptive equipment and installation costs. This website lists and provides links to each manufacturers reimbursement program.

First Hand accepts applications from anywhere in the world. Expenses covered include Vehicle modifications: Lifts, ramps and transfer boards. https://applications.cerner.com/firsthand/

Automobile Loan to purchase a modified van or car, or to make necessary modifications to an existing vehicle. SunTrust auto loans offer low, competitive interest rates and generous repayments terms http://www.atlfa.org/

AMS Vans works with a large network of handicap van loan programs to help you finance a wheelchair van http://www.amsvans.com/financing-handicap-vans/loans