



UNDERSTANDING RESPITE CARE

What is Respite?

Respite is a break for parents and primary caregivers so they may get relief from the responsibilities of providing care to their loved one with a disability. During this period of respite, the person with a disability receives care from another trained provider while the primary caregiver can rest and rejuvenate. This intermittent relief is a necessary component of caregiving; it helps prevent burn out and maintain stability by allowing the caregiver and the care recipient to get a break from one another. Most importantly, respite helps people with disabilities avoid out-of-home placement when their caregivers become overwhelmed. *There are two primary forms of respite: community-based respite and out-of-home respite.*

Community-Based Respite

Community-based Respite can be for a few hours at a time, it can be overnight, or it can take place over a period of several days. It can be provided by a 1:1 caregiver in your home and in your community. Respite can also take place in the community in group settings through organizations that provide services to people with disabilities, like after-school care, summer camps, adult day centers, specialized classes, or weekend activities. The terms “respite” and “personal care” are sometimes used interchangeably, however they are two distinctly different services. See The Arc of King County documents “Understanding Personal Care for Children” or “Personal Care for Adults” here: <https://arcofkingcounty.org/resource-guide/care-respite/overview.html>

Accessing Funding for Community-Based Respite

You can get respite services if you or your loved one is a client of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). To access community based

respite, you must have a DDA Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver.

Respite is offered through the Individual and Family Services waiver, the Basic Plus waiver, the Core waiver, and the CIIBS waiver. You can learn more about these different waivers from the Informing Families Building Trust website by clicking [here](#). The Individual and Family Services waiver (commonly referred to as IFS) is the most accessible waiver to DDA clients—if you are in DDA and want to apply for IFS, call DDA’s Service Request Line for King County at 800-974-4428. This is a message line and you leave the full name and birth date of the DDA client, your contact information, and what specific services you need. An example of a specific service could be “I need respite because I am the sole caregiver and need a break.”

DDA will perform an assessment, regardless of the waiver or services they may offer you. The assessment determines the amount of funds based awarded to the person based on their need; these funds may be used for respite and/or other services. Those receiving the IFS waiver could receive \$1200, \$1800, \$2400, or \$3600; the funds are to be used over the course of a year. The other waivers offered by DDA may provide more funding for respite services.

If you want to use DDA respite funds, you must receive the actual respite service from an individual or an organization that is contracted with DDA, like the YMCA or your local Parks and Recreation department. Essentially, DDA pays for the service, but you decide where you want to spend the money. You can find some of these organizations on The Arc of King County’s [Resource Guide](https://arcofkingcounty.org/resource-guide/overview.html) (<https://arcofkingcounty.org/resource-guide/overview.html>) or you can contact your DDA Case Manager. It is important to note that respite is NOT childcare, rather it is an opportunity for the caregiver to rest and recharge.

Finding a Community-Based Respite Provider

Once you or your loved one has a DDA waiver that offers respite, you’ll need to find a care provider. If you are looking for a 1:1 respite provider, you can ask your DDA Case Manager for a list of providers or you can refer to Consumer Direct Care Network Washington (CDWA), who can give you a list of individual providers you may contact for availability. If you or your loved one have a friend, family member, or community member who is not the primary caregiver, and they would like to be paid to provide respite care, they may contract with DDA as an “Individual

Provider”. The respite provider must be authorized to work in the United States, pass a criminal background check, and they must not be a parent or spouse of the person with a disability. You can learn more about becoming an individual provider through the Informing Families Building Trust article here:

https://informingfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IP_Contracting.pdf

If you are looking for organizations that are contracted with DDA to offer respite in a group setting, you can ask your DDA Case Manager for a list of organizations or you can check out The Arc of King County’s Resource Guide.

Out of Home Respite through DDA

Out of home respite is overnight respite that generally lasts a period of several days and is intended for situations in which the caregiver will be unable to provide for the individual with a disability. This could be for many reasons, including a planned occurrence like a vacation or family event, or because they are currently overwhelmed with caregiving and need a longer relief period than their waiver offers.

Overnight Planned Respite is for DDA clients aged 18+. This is for folks who live with a caregiver (paid or unpaid) who requires temporary relief from their caregiving responsibilities due to a foreseen event. This is **not** a service for emergencies. This service is often used when caregivers have an event, vacation, planned surgery, or another occasion in which they cannot bring their loved one with a disability. This respite is offered in a community setting, and can be up to 14 days per year. In King County (and the rest of DDA Region 2), DDA offers a similar respite program called Dedicated Planned Respite, for folks under the age of 18. You do not need a DDA waiver for either of these services.

Enhanced Respite is for DDA clients aged 8-18. This is a service for youth who are at immediate risk of out of home placement due to challenging behaviors. This form of respite can last up to 30 days. Placement is based upon availability, so your loved one may be placed in a residential home in a community setting anywhere in Washington state, and this service has a wait time that can be several months long. This is for families and caregivers who are overwhelmed with their duties to the point that they may no longer be able to care for the person with a disability in their own home.

Unplanned (Emergency) Respite is for DDA clients aged 16+. This is intended for unexpected crises and urgent emergencies such as out-of-town funeral, caregiver medical emergency, etc. The individual with a disability can have a short term stay at a Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) for up to 30 days. This is considered a short-term solution and can be used for unexpected caregiver crisis.

Accessing Out of Home Respite

You do not need a waiver to access overnight respite services, but you must still be in the DDA system. To access emergency respite, enhanced respite, or planned respite, contact your DDA Case Manager or DDA's Service Request line at: 800-974-4428, and request an application. This is a message line, where you will leave the DDA client's full name and birth date, and you will get a call back. This is not an immediate service and should not be treated as an emergency line.

Additional Notes on Unplanned & Emergency Respite

The Case Manager will conduct an in-home assessment to determine the likelihood for out-of-home placement; if the person with a disability is approved for unplanned or emergency respite services, the caregiver will work with DDA to create an Individualized Support Plan (ISP) that will lay out the individual's care needs for on-going support.

When requesting overnight respite services, it is important to make it clear to DDA that your family is in need, and that without respite the person with a disability may no longer be able to continue living at home. DDA will want to see what strategies for coping and behavior management your family has used to show that you need this support. After you request this service, DDA will conduct an in-home assessment to determine your family's needs regarding respite.

Non DDA Respite

If you or your loved one does not qualify for DDA services, there are other ways to access community-based respite:

Lifespan Respite provides "respite vouchers" to Washington families. To

qualify for this program, the caregiver must provide 40 hours of unpaid care each week, they may not be receiving respite services paid by another organization, and they must be otherwise unable to afford respite. Caregivers may use these vouchers at a pre-approved community-based setting.

Gift of Time, a program of Washington Autism Alliance and Advocacy has a biannual half-day respite program for kids aged 5-10 called Gift of Time. This program is free, and it requires an application that must be submitted several weeks before the event.

The Department of Health (DOH) offers respite funds for youth under 18 with special health care needs that are not eligible for DDA or other respite programs. To qualify for these respite funds, the family must be low-income as evidenced by being eligible for Medicaid. These DOH funds can cover respite at some day camps and overnight camps, but not with an individual provider or agency in the home. You can ask about these respite camps at your local health department.

Lastly, you can private pay for a respite provider, either to an individual or to a community agency. You can find a list of agencies that provide respite on The Arc of King County's Resource Guide, and you can find individuals to provide respite on caregiving website like and Consumer Direct Care Network Washington (CDWA).

Need more Information?

For additional information or to discuss your situation contact our Information and Family Support team at: (206) 829-7053 or ask@arcofkingcounty.org. To connect with a Spanish-speaking member of our team please call (206) 829-7030 or email: preguntas@arcofkingcounty.org

