

PARENT RESOURCE / START HERE

Finding respite care for your child

Who to contact. What to say. What to do next.

Respite is a break from your usual caregiving responsibilities while someone else supports your child. Start with one conversation; you can work through the rest later.

Choose one contact

Already have a case manager or service coordinator? Ask that person how to request respite and whether your child needs a separate assessment or approval.

Starting from scratch? Find your state on pages 4-7, or open [Family Voices: Find help](#). Ask the listed family health information center to help you locate the children's respite intake contact. These centers help families navigate services; they do not necessarily provide or fund care. [1]

Say this by phone, email, or contact form

"I'm looking for respite for my autistic child, age [age]. We live in [county, state]. Can you help me find the right children's program, understand funding, and take the first application step?"

Share only details that fit your family. If your child is being evaluated, say that. You can ask about possible options before knowing which program fits.

Ask these three questions

- 1 Where do I apply?**
"Which program or intake office should I contact, and what is its application link or phone number?"
- 2 What do I need?**
"What are the eligibility requirements and the first documents I need to provide?"
- 3 What if there is a wait?**
"What other respite or family support options can we ask about while we wait?"

Leave with one next step: ask for the instructions in writing and a date to follow up. If you only save the right contact today, that is a useful start.

WHEN THE PROCESS STALLS

If you hear this, ask this

Use only the response that matches your situation.

"This is the wrong office."

"Who handles respite for children of my child's age in our county? Can you give me the direct contact or transfer me?"

Write down the new contact before ending the call.

"There is a waiting list."

"Can we apply or join the list now? How do we keep our information current, and what support is available in the meantime?"

Ask how to report an urgent change in needs and whether a priority process exists. Do not assume emergency respite is available.

"Your household income is too high."

"Was that decision for this specific program? Are there children's waiver options with different parental-income rules, or non-Medicaid funds we can ask about?"

Some Medicaid waivers use different financial rules. That does not mean your child qualifies; ask which rules apply. [2]

"Your child already has Medicaid."

"Does our coverage include respite, or do we need separate waiver enrollment, an assessment, or service authorization?"

Medicaid enrollment alone does not confirm that respite is approved.

"Services are approved, but no worker is available."

"Which approved providers can we contact? Is there an allowed self-directed option or a way to approve someone we already know?"

Confirm provider approval and payment rules before hiring. A funding approval is different from finding available care.

"The request was denied."

"Please send the reason in writing, the review or appeal instructions, and the deadline. Who can help us understand the notice?"

Certain Medicaid decisions can be appealed. Follow the notice and ask promptly about the correct process. Informal calls may not protect a deadline. Other programs have different rules. [3]

BEFORE CARE BEGINS

Make sure the arrangement fits

Finding a name is only the beginning. Confirm these three things before arranging paid care.

1 Payment and approval

Who pays, how much is covered, and is written authorization needed first? If you want to use a relative or someone you know, ask whether that person is permitted and must be approved. Check your specific insurance plan rather than assuming it covers respite.

2 Your child's needs and preferences

How will the person support communication, sensory needs, routines, and safety? Explain how your child asks for help, says no, or requests a break. Ask about relevant experience and required training or screening.

3 A plan you understand

Agree on the setting, schedule, tasks, how you will stay in touch, and what happens if care is canceled. Ask whether you and your child can meet the person and plan a gradual introduction.

If you still need a starting point

Call 211 or visit 211.org. Ask for children's respite, disability family support, and help finding funding in your county. Referrals do not guarantee openings or eligibility. [4]

Prefer to search yourself? Try:

[Your state] children autism respite family support

Look for the state's official children's or developmental-disability services page. Ask who handles intake for your child's age. Some adult services offices use similar names.

Keep just these notes

My contact	Name / program: _____
Next action	_____
Follow-up date	_____

You do not have to finish this process today. One useful contact and one clear next step are enough to begin.

General information for parents of autistic children. The organization administering a program determines eligibility, service approval, and funding. Sources and review details are on page 8.

OPTIONAL DIRECTORY / FIND YOUR STATE

Alabama to Idaho

These are children's family health information contacts, not a list of respite providers or funding approvals. Ask them to help you find the right local intake route. Names and numbers were checked against Family Voices state listings on October 21, 2026.

STATE	FAMILY INFORMATION CONTACT	LISTED PHONE
Alabama	Family Voices of Alabama Open contact listing	877-771-3862
Alaska	Stone Soup Group Open contact listing	877-786-7327
Arizona	Encircle Families Open contact listing	800-237-3007
Arkansas	Arkansas Disability Coalition Open contact listing	501-614-7020
California	Family Voices of California Open contact listing	415-282-7494
Colorado	Family Voices Colorado Open contact listing	855-877-1747
Connecticut	PATH CT Open contact listing	800-399-7284
Delaware	Parent Information Center of Delaware Open contact listing	888-547-4412
District of Columbia	Advocates for Justice and Education Open contact listing	888-327-8060
Florida	Family Network on Disabilities of Florida Open contact listing	800-825-5736
Georgia	Parent to Parent of Georgia Open contact listing	800-229-2038
Hawaii	Hilopa'a Family to Family Health Information Center Open contact listing	808-791-3467
Idaho	Idaho Parents Unlimited Open contact listing	800-242-4785

If a number or link has changed, use familyvoices.org/findhelp or call 211. The national directory also lists territory and tribal resources. Listed numbers have not been telephone-tested.

OPTIONAL DIRECTORY / FIND YOUR STATE

Illinois to Missouri

Ask for help finding the children's respite intake route. These contacts do not necessarily provide or fund respite. Family Voices listings reviewed October 21, 2026.

STATE	FAMILY INFORMATION CONTACT	LISTED PHONE
Illinois	The Arc of Illinois - Family-to-Family Open contact listing	866-931-1110
Indiana	Indiana Family to Family Open contact listing	844-323-4636
Iowa	ASK Resource Center Open contact listing	800-450-8667
Kansas	Families Together Open contact listing	888-815-6364
Kentucky	Kentucky Family-to-Family Health Information Center Open contact listing	502-564-7107
Louisiana	Bayou Land Families Helping Families Open contact listing	985-447-4461
Maine	Maine Parent Federation Open contact listing	800-870-7746
Maryland	The Parents' Place of Maryland Open contact listing	800-394-5694
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Family Voices / Federation for Children with Special Needs Open contact listing	800-331-0688
Michigan	Michigan Family-to-Family Health Information & Education Center Open contact listing	517-324-7396
Minnesota	PACER Center / Family Voices of Minnesota partnership Open contact listing	888-248-0822
Mississippi	Mississippi Families As Allies Open contact listing	800-833-9671
Missouri	Missouri Family-to-Family Resource Center at UMKC Open contact listing	800-444-0821

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OPTIONAL DIRECTORY / FIND YOUR STATE

Montana to Pennsylvania

Ask for help finding the children's respite intake route. These contacts do not necessarily provide or fund respite. Family Voices listings reviewed October 21, 2026.

STATE	FAMILY INFORMATION CONTACT	LISTED PHONE
Montana	Montana Family-to-Family / Rural Institute Open contact listing	406-243-4570
Nebraska	PTI Nebraska Open contact listing	402-346-0525
Nevada	Nevada Family Navigation Network Open contact listing	833-427-1673
New Hampshire	New Hampshire Family Voices Open contact listing	800-852-3345
New Jersey	SPAN Parent Advocacy Network Open contact listing	800-654-7726
New Mexico	Parents Reaching Out Open contact listing	800-524-5176
New York	Parent to Parent of NYS Open contact listing	518-381-4350
North Carolina	Exceptional Children's Assistance Center Open contact listing	800-962-6817
North Dakota	Family Voices of North Dakota Open contact listing	888-522-9654
Ohio	Ohio Family-to-Family Health Information Center Open contact listing	Use online contact listing
Oklahoma	Oklahoma Family Network Open contact listing	877-871-5072
Oregon	Oregon Family to Family Health Information Center Open contact listing	855-323-6744
Pennsylvania	PEAL Center Open contact listing	866-950-1040

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OPTIONAL DIRECTORY / FIND YOUR STATE

Rhode Island to Wyoming

Ask for help finding the children's respite intake route. These contacts do not necessarily provide or fund respite. Family Voices listings reviewed October 21, 2026.

STATE	FAMILY INFORMATION CONTACT	LISTED PHONE
Rhode Island	Rhode Island Parent Information Network Open contact listing	401-270-0101
South Carolina	Family Connection of South Carolina Open contact listing	800-578-8750
South Dakota	South Dakota Parent Connection Open contact listing	800-640-4553
Tennessee	Tennessee Disability Coalition Open contact listing	888-643-7811
Texas	Texas Parent to Parent Open contact listing	866-896-6001
Utah	Utah Parent Center Open contact listing	800-468-1160
Vermont	Vermont Family Network Open contact listing	802-876-5315
Virginia	Family to Family Network of Virginia / Center for Family Involvement Open contact listing	877-567-1122
Washington	Washington PAVE Open contact listing	800-572-7368
West Virginia	WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities - Family-to-Family Open contact listing	304-293-4265
Wisconsin	Family Voices of Wisconsin Open contact listing	608-512-0217
Wyoming	Wyoming Institute for Disabilities - Family-to-Family Open contact listing	888-989-9463

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SOURCES & REVIEW DETAILS

What this guide checks

Prepared by Aaron Martin for Autism Scout. Updated October 22, 2026.

The directory identifies family information centers serving children and youth with health care needs. Each of the 50 state listings and the District of Columbia listing was retrieved and reviewed. This is not a 50-state review of respite eligibility, funding, wait times, or provider availability.

Phone numbers are those published in the source listings; they were not called. Each directory row links to its source so you can check current contact details. Some names are shortened for readability. Ask the organization to confirm the right contact for your child's age, county, and needs.

1. Family information centers

Family Voices state directory and individual state listings; HRSA's description of Family-to-Family centers. Supports the directory and navigation route on page 1.

[Family Voices: Find help](#) | [HRSA: Family-to-Family centers](#)

2. Medicaid waiver basics

CMS explains that waivers can serve defined groups, apply program-specific criteria and financial rules, and limit enrollment. Waiver services may include respite. An autism diagnosis alone does not establish eligibility.

[CMS: Home & Community-Based Services 1915\(c\)](#)

3. Medicaid decisions and appeals

CMS explains fair hearings for certain Medicaid decisions and the importance of state-specific notices, instructions, and deadlines. Other funding programs may have different review procedures.

[CMS: Understanding Medicaid Fair Hearings](#)

4. Another referral route

211 describes help finding local caregiver and respite resources. A referral does not establish eligibility or availability.

[211: Caregiver resources](#)

How to use this guide

Start with page 1. Use page 2 only if you hit a barrier, and page 3 before arranging care. The state directory is optional. You do not need to read every page before making a call.

This guide provides general information. It does not promise eligibility, payment, or a suitable provider. Confirm requirements with the program responsible for the service.