

Children with special needs and their families can benefit from having help at home. This can include hiring someone outside of immediate family members to give parents much needed “time off” from direct caregiving.

However, even if your family has funding through Medicaid or a Children’s Long-Term Support Program to pay for these workers, finding workers may be a challenge. (To learn more about getting Medicaid Personal Care and Respite Services see the Family Voices of Wisconsin factsheets on our website.)

Before starting the recruitment process, think about your needs, such as what time of day your family needs help most and what type of caregiving or activities are needed. Being as specific as possible will help you find the right workers.

## Where Do I Find a Worker?

- **Word of Mouth:** Let friends, neighbors and people you work with know that you are looking for a direct care worker. If you are part of a faith community, neighborhood group or parent support group, let those members know as well.
- **Your Child’s School:** Let teachers, therapists, and paraprofessionals at your child’s current and former schools know that you are looking for workers.

- **Colleges and Technical Schools:** Connect with local colleges or programs for students interested in health care, education, nursing, social work or related fields. Schools often have “job boards” where notices can be posted electronically.

- **Other Job Boards:** There are both online and physical job boards available where a position description can be posted. Libraries, grocery stores and community centers may have job boards. Respite programs or personal care agencies can also help you locate job boards.

- **Community Programs:** Contact local programs that serve children, like the YMCA, summer camps, after-school programs or babysitter services to let them know you are looking for workers.

- **Ads in local newspapers:** Place an ad in local or neighborhood newspapers, or on a neighborhood Facebook page.

## Hiring Family Members:

If your child is under age 18, you may be able to hire a relative to provide personal care covered by Wisconsin Medicaid. For youth over age 18, a parent can be hired to provide personal care services. Respite programs may also be willing to hire relatives, including an older sibling.

## Interviewing Potential Direct Care Workers

Once you have successfully found a potential worker for your child, it is important to invite him or her to your home and make sure he or she will be a good match for your family.

Consider using the following guidelines as you interview potential candidates:

### Start by:

- Explaining your child's health, medical and/or behavioral conditions.
- Let them know what days and times of day you need help.
- Describe what you are looking for in a worker and what their time with your child will look like.
- Discuss any special rules or expectations you have for any worker. For example, you may want the worker to always call when he/she is running late or ask that he/she call you and not come over when they have a cold.

### Questions You Could Ask:

- Do they have experience working with children with special needs? If not, have they been a babysitter or a caregiver for a sibling?
- How much time do they want to work? Do they have flexibility to work with your family more often or on short notice? Will their availability change each semester (if they are a student)?
- Do they have reliable transportation? Will they need a car or are you on a bus line or close enough to walk or bike?
- Are they comfortable with all the duties of the position? For example, are they willing and able to use equipment, change diapers, prepare a meal or appropriately react to behaviors?

If you will be hiring the worker to provide respite or personal care services, contact the agency. The worker will likely have to complete an application, participate in training, and have a background check which could take several weeks.

If you have additional questions, or need help finding services, contact the following organizations:

- **Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs** - [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/cyshcn/index](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/cyshcn/index)
- **Well Badger Resource Center** - [wellbadger.org](http://wellbadger.org) or 1-800-642-7837