

What is Respite Care?

Respite care provides temporary care for children with serious mental illnesses who live at home. The program gives families a much needed break while offering a safe environment for their children. Unlike traditional child care, respite cares for children overnight, for a few days or few weeks at a time and is designed specifically for children with serious mental health needs. Respite care can be provided in a family's home, foster home or licensed facility in the community and gives families a chance to reenergize and refocus.

How is Respite Care funded?

Respite care was initially funded through the mental health initiative which was a bipartisan effort between the Governor and the legislature to reform our mental health system, providing for earlier and more effective treatment and supports.

Who uses Respite Care?

Respite care services are provided to Minnesota families with children who live with a serious mental illness. Respite care is available in 62 counties through 42 state grants.

Why is Respite Care Important?

For families of children with serious mental illnesses, the physical, financial and emotional challenges of caring for their child can be overwhelming. Often times, these children need 24-hour care and attention and the stress this puts on families takes its toll over time. Despite these difficulties, families want to care for their child at home but need to be able to "recharge their batteries." Research has consistently shown that respite care drastically reduces the number of costly hospital visits and stays in residential treatment facilities for children with serious mental illnesses. Respite care has also been found to have a very positive impact on families, improving safety and stability and helping to increase a child's functioning. The short break respite care provides, even if it's just a few hours or a few days, is essential to help families relieve stress and maintain their own health and well-being. Respite care gives parents a chance to spend time with their other children or their spouse, catch up on work or take care of household chores. Respite care gives siblings a much needed break as well. By giving families a little time-off now and then, respite care allows them to keep their child with them at home. Without the support respite care provides, many families would be forced to admit their child to long-term stays in a hospital or treatment center (at a much higher cost), away from their friends, family and the community. Foster care, residential treatment and hospitalizations can cost between \$50 and \$1500 a day whereas respite care can be provided for as little as \$35 with the added benefit of keeping children at home. Respite care is an essential and cost-effective way to keep families together.