

Interviewing Potential Caregivers

Interviewing is an important step in choosing a caregiver or care-giving program. Take some time to think about your respite schedule and care giving needs before you begin to interview caregivers or community programs.

Many families have told us that selecting a good care provider is sometimes hard for them to do.

1. Be prepared.

One key to a more relaxed interview is to be prepared. Prepare yourself by reviewing the caregiver information. Prepare a list of questions ahead of time that will provide you with information about their education or training in CPR, first aid or other certifications they may hold. Ask the potential caregiver to describe why they are interested in providing care.

Make notes as you review the caregiver's information. What else would you like to know about the person? Do you want to know more about their experiences with children with special needs or working with older adults? You might also like to ask when a caregiver would be available to provide the care.

2. Decide how to conduct the interview.

Some parents are more comfortable doing a telephone interview first to screen potential caregivers. If, after the initial contact, you decide you want to consider a person to provide care,

You can schedule a meeting time for a face-to-face interview. You might also consider whether you would like to have your loved one present at the interview.

3. Break the ice.

A good way to begin the interview is to ask potential caregivers about their interests and experiences.

4. Ask open-ended questions.

Another good way to gain more information is to ask open-ended questions. For example, if you ask a person "Do you believe in punishing a loved one," you are asking for a response of yes or no. But, if you ask, "How do you handle difficult behavior," the person can give you much more information on their feelings and specific examples. Some sample interview questions are included on the following pages.

5. Take notes.

As a potential caregiver begins to share information, jot down some notes. Taking notes will help you to ask follow-up questions. It will be helpful to review your notes when you consider potential caregivers later. You might decide ahead of time that your spouse or partner will take notes while you ask questions or vice versa. You may want to tape the interview instead.

Sample Interview Questions

Sample Interview Questions

You may wish to ask several of the following questions when you interview potential caregivers.

- Tell us about your education and/or experience in working in care giving
- Discuss your experience working with respite.
- Why are you interested in providing care services?
- Describe your strengths. How would you describe yourself?
- Why are you the right person for the job?
- What are your thoughts about families who have children with disabilities or aging adults?
- What would you do if we disagreed about something?
- If my loved one had to be taken to the hospital for an emergency, what steps would you take?
- How do you believe difficult behaviors should be managed?
- What would you do if you found a loved one with an open bottle you suspect is poison?
- Are you willing to take my loved one out on activities?
- Describe a difficult problem you've had to handle with a loved one. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about any special training or experience you might have/
- How would you know if my loved one likes a particular food or activity if he cannot speak?
- Are you willing to have a criminal background check done?
- Do you have CPR, first aid, and/or medication administration training?
- Do you have a valid driver's license?

Answering Caregivers Questions

Questions Caregivers Ask

Caregivers may ask these questions about what will be expected of the. Families should be prepared to answer them during the interview.

- Will I be expected to care for siblings as well?
- Will the parent be at home or away while I am providing care?
- If I receive a fee for my caregiver service, how will I be paid?
- How much will I be paid?
- What kind of training will I receive?
- How often will respite be needed?

After the interview

1. Reference checks

It is a good idea to check the references of potential caregivers. The respite caregiver is to provide the names of two people. You may choose to ask for more references.

2. Criminal record checks

To obtain a criminal record check on a potential respite caregiver, you can contact your state police. There may be a charge for the service. Criminal record checks are limited in the information they provide.

3. Follow-up

Be sure to thank potential caregivers for their time and explain how and when you will decide. You may say,

- We have decided to interview three people and do reference checks for each
- We hope to have a decision in one week and will let each person know of our decision by phone or by a note in the mail.

4. How to say no

Sometimes it is difficult to say no to a person. If you decide a potential caregiver is not the best person, be honest and direct, you might say,

- I was fortunate to have interviewed several qualified caregivers such as yourself and we have selected another person that we think best meets our needs.
- Thank you for your time and interest, but I don't think this would be the best match for us.

You may feel more comfortable telling a caregiver in a note, rather than over the phone.

Additional Things to Consider

Most people who want to care for your loved one are responsible and love this work. Others may not be good choices to work with your loved one.

Trust your instincts! If you are uncomfortable with a caregiver, he or she is not the right caregiver for you. Please use the following to help guide you in selecting a caregiver. There are a few things to look for when talking to caregivers that might alert you to some concerns.

This document and other tools can be found at:

www.familyconnectionsc.org under >Programs >Respite

Or contact wchoecke@familyconnectionsc.org

1-800-578-8750