

A New Experience

It is natural to feel nervous and unsure about having someone you may not know come into your home to provide care or other services for your child with special health care needs. To ease your fears and to help you get a good start in your relationship with your child's in-home caregiver, here are some steps to take *before* services begin:

- ♥ Learn as much as you can about the scope or description of services to be provided, and about the agency that employs the person who will be your child's caregiver.
- ♥ Be open and honest about your expectations and discuss them with the agency management. Find out what the agency expects of you.
- ♥ Ask about your rights and options in case you are not satisfied with the care or services your child receives. You may want to ask the agency for a different caregiver or switch to another agency altogether.
- ♥ Talk with other families who use in-home caregivers and learn from their experiences.

Remember.....

Always make sure the caregiver knows where you are, how to reach you, what time you plan to return home, and what to do in an emergency.

You, not the caregiver, are responsible for all other children or family members in the household.

Homecare Resources

American Association for Homecare

Tel: (703) 836-6263

<http://www.aahomecare.org>

Family Caregiver Alliance/National Center on Caregiving

Tel: (800) 445-8106

<http://www.caregiver.org>

National Association for Home Care

Tel: (202) 547-7424

<http://www.nahc.org>

Electronic newsletters

<http://www.care-givers.com>

<http://www.caregiver.com>

New Hampshire
FAMILY VOICES®



NH Family Voices
Family to Family Health Information
and Education Center
129 Pleasant St. Thayer Bldg.
Concord, NH 03301
In state toll free: 1-800-852-3345 X 4525
or (603) 271-4525

Home Health Care



A Guide for Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs

NH Family Voices
A Family to Family Health Information
and Education Center
1-800-852-3345 X 4525

Home Health Care

There are different types of caregivers who provide home health care services to children with special health care needs. They may be an RN, LPN, LNA (Licensed Nurse Assistant), or a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).

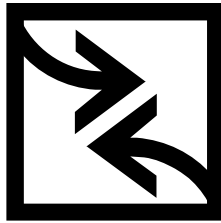
You, the parent or guardian, should be able to interview and have the final approval of the home based caregiver for your child. You should decide if your child or other members should participate in the interview and in preparation make a list of questions applicable to the care of your child. Some suggested questions for the interview might be:

- ♥ Where have you worked before?
- ♥ What were your duties?
- ♥ How do you handle people who are angry, stubborn, or fearful?
- ♥ Are you able to lift or transfer from a wheelchair to bed?
- ♥ Is there anything in the job description that you are uncomfortable doing?

Consider what qualities/skills you require and what you can train a good candidate to do. Be sure that you have a chance to watch the interactions between the in-home caregiver and the family member for whom he or she will be providing care.

Making Your Home Care Situation Work

The relationships between the family, the child who requires assistance and the in-home caregiver are very important. Consequently, it is imperative that you take the time to go carefully through the selection process.



Good communication is essential for a good relationship.

- ♥ Keeping communication open and honest, but respectful, is the best way to maintain a positive relationship with your child's caregiver and with the agency that employs him or her.
- ♥ Arrange for meetings with the agency supervisor, home care staff, and your family to review and resolve any problems.
- ♥ Keep written instructions available that will facilitate consistency in care in the event a substitute in-home caregiver is needed. (See NHFV publication "Caregivers Guide" for suggestions.)

Agency Responsibilities

Families should expect the service agency that employs the caregiver to do the following:

- ♥ Recognize that the parent, guardian is the constant in the child's life and are experts in their care and well-being.
- ♥ Provide fully qualified and trained personnel suitable to the job, including proof of background checks and references from previous employers. (Families should feel free to ask for this information in writing).
- ♥ Provide back-up coverage when the regular in-home caregiver is unavailable.

Family Responsibility

- ♥ Communicate your child's needs as specifically as you can and have all agreements in writing. If applicable, talk with your child and the in-home caregiver about what activities or situations may be decided by the child and which ones may not be negotiated.
- ♥ Be clear in the beginning about any household rules, like "no smoking," but be sure your rules are reasonable. For instance, can you provide an ashcan for a caregiver who agrees only to smoke outdoors during breaks?
- ♥ Families should uphold their end of any agreements and act respectfully towards caregivers.