



Proactively Engaging with Families

Understanding the Family Perspective

Families of children with disabilities can face unique emotional, logistical and financial challenges. They often juggle multiple responsibilities and may not have the time or energy to initiate contact when they would like to have respite help. By taking the first step, respite workers show initiative, reliability and understanding.

Proactive outreach can reduce the parent's stress and help them feel supported from the very first interaction. By initiating contact, you can directly impact the family's quality of life and the child's well-being.

Preparing for Outreach

Before reaching out, make sure you understand the child's needs. Review the child's profile and prepare thoughtful questions to clarify their needs, preferences, and medical and behavioral considerations. Make note of how your skills, experiences and/or interests relate to the child's needs and preferences. Showing how you could be a good fit for the child can be very encouraging for a parent and have a big impact on their desire to hire you .

Review the days and times the parent has reported needing help, and be prepared to share which you would be available for and which you are not. Don't be discouraged from making contact if you cannot work all of the times needed; parents are often willing to accept the help you can provide and then hire a second worker to take some or all of the remaining shifts"

Making the First Contact

If the parent hasn't stated a preferred contact method, texting is often a safe starting point. Start with a friendly greeting and your name. Explain that you got their contact information through UtahRespite.Care. State that you have reviewed their child's profile and are interested in seeing if you could be a good fit for them. Suggest a few times you are available to talk and ask if either would work for them.

Making the First Contact *(continued)*

If there is no response to your text, you can follow up with a phone call or voicemail, mentioning that you aren't sure if they saw your text and repeating the same information. Keep the tone friendly and understanding - families may be busy or even overwhelmed.

When you are able to talk with the parent on the phone, you could ask a few of the questions you prepared while reviewing the child's profile, as well as explain how your skills, experience and/or interests could make you a good fit for their child. Being prepared to ask a few questions and to explain a little about yourself can help the conversation flow and shows the parent you are genuinely interested in the position and their child.

If the parent seems interested but doesn't invite you for an in-person interview, you can take the initiative to ask if they and their child would like to meet you in person for an interview or trial visit. Some parents have never hired a worker before and may appreciate you taking the lead in suggesting the next step.

Owning Your Respite Care Experience

For most UtahRespite.Care workers, being willing to proactively reach out to families is critical to matching with them and getting the desired number of work hours. Many workers hire with more than one family in order to get all of the hours they desire.

Taking the initiative to match with families can be very enjoyable and rewarding. You will likely find that families are very appreciative of your efforts. You are helping them get relief they greatly need but may not be in a position to actively pursue themselves.