

Why Respite?

Respite is usually the greatest need expressed by parents and caregivers caring for children and adults with disabilities. The 24/7 routine of caregiving can become overwhelming, isolating, and exhausting. Providing respite meets a practical need and demonstrates the love Christ for those with disabilities and their families.

Who is Respite For?

Parents/Caregivers

Respite provides margin for parents and caregivers by giving them planned time without caregiving responsibilities. This might be time to catch up on their reading, do chores around the house, have a date night, or just take a nap.

Children

Respite events provide a time of safe fun with peers! It helps cultivate friendships, builds trust with volunteers and staff, and communicates the love of Christ in word and deed.

Siblings

Many siblings of children with disabilities are forced to grow up faster than their peers. They often sense their parents' stress, recognize their sibling's needs, and feel a responsibility to help. Respite events allow them to relax, knowing their brother or sister is safe and being cared for in a loving way, and provides fellowship and fun with others who understand their unique life circumstances.

Structure and Staffing

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to respite events. Respite can be as simple as in-home care (commonly known as babysitting), a small group meeting at a local park, or in a large, highly structured event at a church facility. The size and structure of respite events reflect the needs of those you are serving and resources of your church.

As a general rule, the more people there are, the more structured it should be. A respite event with one person needs hardly any structure and can be customized entirely to that person's needs and interests! A respite event with 100 attendees will need far more structure: a registration process, trained volunteers with specified roles, documentation of things like diagnoses, behavioral issues, allergies, and medications, and a monitored check-in and check-out process. Your church—no matter its size, budget, or staffing—can do respite. The structure should be specific to your community and their needs! Talk to the people you want to serve and find out what best meets their needs.

For more help in organizing a respite event at your church, check out [*We've Got This!*](#) from the Joni and Friends *Irresistible Church Series*.