



# RESPIRE HANDBOOK

Practical Outreach to Families  
Affected By Disabilities



**RESPITE HANDBOOK:**  
Practical Outreach To Families  
Affected By Disabilities

Copyright © 2012 by Joni and Friends

All rights reserved.

Compiled by Debbie Lillo

**Permission to Copy**

Permission to make photocopies or reproduce by any other mechanical or electronic means in whole or in part is granted and is intended for non-commercial use in churches, schools or ministry organizations.

No permission is granted to post any part of this handbook on blogs or internet sites.

Joni and Friends

PO Box 3333

Agoura Hills, CA 91376-3333

[www.joniandfriends.org](http://www.joniandfriends.org)

<b>INTRODUCTION TO RESPITE EVENTS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
WHY RESPITE EVENTS? .....	1
<b>PLANNING THE EVENT</b> .....	<b>4</b>
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FROM JONI AND FRIENDS .....	4
FIRST QUESTIONS TO ASK ONCE YOU'VE DECIDED TO DO A RESPITE EVENT .....	6
PLANNING FOR RESPITE VOLUNTEERS .....	8
RESPITE EVENT FORMS.....	10
<b>VOLUNTEER TRAINING</b> .....	<b>11</b>
A TYPICAL DAY-OF-EVENT RESPITE TRAINING OUTLINE .....	11
TRAINING ILLUSTRATION: THE WEIGHT OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES ..	12
SAMPLE DISABILITY SIMULATION ACTIVITIES.....	13
<b>DAY OF THE RESPITE EVENT</b> .....	<b>17</b>
COMPONENTS OF A RESPITE EVENT .....	17
HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS .....	21
SAMPLE SCHEDULES.....	23
<b>EVALUATIONS</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>25</b>

### Why Respite Events?

#### WHY DO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES NEED RESPITE EVENTS?

Every parent wants their child to be included in social activities and to make friends with other children and adults in the community. Every parent, no matter how devoted, also needs time away from their child to rest and to put the everyday strains of parenting into perspective. Typical community programs offer opportunities for parents to drop-off their children at wonderful recreation and learning activities, but these programs are often not welcoming to children affected by disability. In addition, these families often have difficulty finding qualified or willing babysitters. Through all of this, they are left feeling exhausted, rejected and isolated.

*Respite* literally means “a period of rest or relief.” Respite events provide parents a temporary relief from the responsibilities of caring for children with physical or intellectual disabilities. Respite is a gift of time. It is a church outreach activity that draws otherwise cautious families over the threshold and into the church because respite meets a valuable and practical need.

The families that might be served by respite juggle the typical demands of raising a family along with daunting extra strains. The social services offered for their children demand vigilant supervision, exacting decisions, time and money. Educational and therapy options need to be researched and implemented. Siblings demand additional time and emotional energy. Often children with disabilities are not well received in public because of atypical behavior, language, or noise. Community programs tell families that they do not belong. It is no surprise that they tend to stay home and feel cautious in new situations because of this rejection. And it is easy to think that **if the church rejects you, it’s like having God reject you**. Respite events reach out to these families to say, “The church cares. We have a place for you. We believe your child has great value in the Kingdom.”

In summary, respite events are important because:

- Parents can get respite – quality time away from their children.
- Families can get a taste of God’s perspective on children touched by disability.
- Families can consider a potential relationship with your congregation.
- Families can experience God’s perspective through the love shown to their children by faith-filled volunteers.

## WHY DO SIBLINGS NEED RESPITE EVENTS?

### **Siblings need to know that they are valued.**

These kids are often asked to grow up faster than other kids. Their needs are often considered secondary. Creating an event that includes and focuses on siblings too helps them see that the church believes they are valuable and important.

### **Siblings need the church to encourage them.**

These kids are well loved by their parents, but often give up many things because of their family's need to focus on the child with special needs. At respite events, siblings are matched with buddies who give up their time to make the event special for them as well as their brothers or sisters with disabilities.

### **Siblings need to know other siblings.**

Many of these kids feel like their peers can't understand their family. They may be afraid to bring friends home for fear of rejection. Hanging out with other siblings at a respite event gives these kids a chance to see that they are not alone. It allows them to make friendships with kids who have similar life-circumstances.

### **Siblings need to know that they were created with a purpose.**

Ultimately, siblings need to know that the church values them personally. They need to come to know that God has created them exactly the way they are and placed them in their family for a reason.

### **Siblings need to take a break from caregiving.**

Many siblings help care for their brother or sister with disabilities. Many feel responsible for caring for their tired parents as well— especially in single family homes. At respite events, the children are all cared for by respite volunteers and siblings, like the parents, get a break from care-giving.

## WHY DO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES NEED RESPITE EVENTS?

It is important for children with disabilities to know that the church cares. We find that children in special needs ministries love coming to church because they recognize that the people who serve them also love them in unique ways.

By loving these children, we show them that God loves them, which can open the door for teaching them about God's saving faith.

Many community services exclude these children, but churches can welcome them to respite events designed especially for them. We can train buddies to help them enjoy the many activities provided. Children with disabilities can make new friends of all ages— adults, teens and peers. Often these relationships begin at respite events and continue to grow afterward.

## HOW IS THE GOSPEL ADVANCED THROUGH RESPITE EVENTS?

When a church offers respite events, they act as Jesus' hands and feet. Most respite events are not evangelistic in nature, but the church earns the trust and confidence of families by meeting a specific need. As these families see that respite volunteers truly value them, hearts are softened to hear the Gospel message. They begin to believe that God desires them to be part of the church body. By reaching out to meet practical needs, the church shows families affected by disability the hope of Christ and the love of the Father.

**Note:** Churches should only consider respite events when they also plan to include these families in the everyday life of the church. Through training workshops, teachers in the children's education programs can be prepared to welcome respite families who want to take the next steps. Church staff and lay leaders need to understand and be prepared to answer difficult questions families might have about God and why He allowed their family to be affected by disabilities.

Without a biblical perspective, parents can feel their children were born by mistake or because of an uncaring God. They can become overwhelmed because they see little productive purpose in their family's experiences. When churches reach out to serve these families, their hearts are more opened to the Word of God. Respite events demonstrate the congregation's belief in the value of their children and in the truth that the Lord knit each child together in his or her mother's womb and that each one is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:13-16). The little children are welcomed in Jesus' name (Matthew 18:5) and the work of God is displayed in their lives (John 9:1-3). Scripture comes alive as evidence that their children are purposefully and lovingly created by God, and He desires for them to know Him and have fellowship with His people.

In summary, respite events provide a wonderful way for families to cross the threshold of the church with very little risk. Otherwise cautious families are willing to attend because the need is great. The church is able to put their faith into action by loving families in very practical ways. As families receive that love, they become more open to hearing the saving message of the Gospel. Here are a few quotes about respite from grateful parents:

*"The respite care sponsored by our church is a wonderful outlet for our son and gives me a welcome break when I need one. It's truly a labor of love. Thanks!"*

*"How do I decide what to do with my time away from the kids? It's like you've given me a million dollars and asked me to decide how to spend it!"*

*"We get a break from autism. It helps us be more patient with our son."*

*"It allows me and my wife to spend time alone to catch up on our relationship."*

*"While our daughter was at respite, we had lunch, did errands, and actually had a conversation! We were able to take a breath!"*

### Planning the Event

This section focuses on choosing a date and time, planning publicity, evaluating where to hold your event, preparing leaders and volunteers, registering, and getting supplies. In this section, you will find:

- Recommended Resources
- Questions to consider when planning.
- Volunteer roles and job descriptions.
- A Respite FAQ Sheet.
- Respite Event Forms.

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FROM JONI AND FRIENDS

The tools in this handbook give the church one specific way to meet the needs of families by providing a respite. However, before beginning a respite ministry, church leaders should consider other ways to welcome interested families into other church programs such as worship, midweek studies and special events. The families that cross the church's threshold to receive respite also need to see that the church truly cares about them.

Here are some useful resources for adapting church programs and teaching children with disabilities and about Jesus. These resources are available from your local Joni and Friends office. For a list of locations visit the JAF website at <http://www.joniandfriends.org/local-offices/>. Please contact the nearest JAF office if you have questions or need assistance with planning disability ministry programs.

*Special Needs Smart Pages: Advice, Answers and Articles about Teaching Children with Special Needs* by Joni and Friends

This comprehensive resource features over 125 practical training articles, stories, lessons and ideas. Softcover—325 pages, includes an inspirational DVD and a reproducible CD-ROM.

*The Father's House: Welcoming and Including People and Families Affected by Disability* by Joni and Friends

This DVD is a powerful visual tool that presents ten ways to become a disability-friendly church. It will help your church address common fears and misunderstandings associated with beginning a disability ministry.

*Through the Roof: A Beginner's Guide to Disability Ministry* by Joni and Friends

Is your church ready for one of the fastest growing movements in America? In this comprehensive CD-ROM, you will learn how to build awareness about the needs of families affected by disabilities, how to train leaders and volunteers, and how to find the support to maintain a disability ministry in your church.

## MORE GREAT TOOLS

*Autism and Your Church* by Barbara J. Newman

*Exceptional Teaching* by Jim Pierson

*Give Them Jesus—Evangelizing Children with Special Needs* by Pat Verbal

*Making Sense of Autism* – Joni and Friends TV series DVD and discussion guide

*Practical Pathways* by Pat Verbal

*Responding with Compassion* by Debbie Lillo

*Special Needs Ministry for Children*, Pat Verbal, General Editor

**Joni and Friends resources are available from  
our local Joni and Friends office and on our  
website at [www.joniandfriends.org/store](http://www.joniandfriends.org/store)  
or by phone at 800-736-4177**



## FIRST QUESTIONS TO ASK ONCE YOU'VE DECIDED TO DO A RESPITE EVENT

### 1. Date, time and event style

Successful respite programs are offered on Friday nights, Saturday mornings and Saturday nights. Some churches target monthly, less structured programs that have a small group of volunteers watching the children “in a group”. These events need fewer volunteers and allow families more frequent respite. The most common model is to plan a larger event that encourages more members of the church to participate. These are often scheduled quarterly or during holiday seasons. For your first respite event, you will want to choose a 3-4 hour time frame that works best for your church and the potential volunteers. Churches that host evening events allow parents to share a dinner date, but may have a difficult time recruiting teens or adult volunteers with long work-days. Saturday respite events can conflict with sports schedules. Some volunteer groups have a difficult time waking up early for a morning event, but others prefer to have their service done in time to enjoy the late afternoon and evening with their families and friends. There is no one plan. It depends entirely on your goals, your potential volunteers, and the church calendar.

**Note:** You should also consider the respite schedules of the churches in your area that already host respite events. It is wonderful when community churches coordinate care so that families can receive respite more often than one church could provide.

### 2. Target ages of kids

You need to decide the age group you will target. Since the respite events described in this handbook are structured as children’s programs, they should be modified if you plan to include high functioning teens and adults, and/or if you include youth siblings. Many respite events limit the developmental age to 12. (Many teens and young adults with cognitive delays have enjoyed respite events IF they do not mind doing kids’ activities and if their buddies treat them as teens and young adults, not kids). It is very difficult to have a sibling older than 12, unless you know them well and can use them as a helper. Teen siblings tend to feel like they have been dragged to “baby” activities and can be very disruptive.

### 3. Space and rooms available for the event

You will want to use classrooms that are equipped for children and that do not include things that could easily be damaged. Preschool classrooms make wonderful respite rooms. Nurseries are good for younger children and sometimes for older children with cognitive delays who like the typical, cause-and-effect toys. If the church has a playground or secure outside area, children will enjoy outdoor play. It is nice to have a larger room to hold recreation and special events. If you are using rooms that are set-up for school or Sunday use, ask teachers to put valuable or sentimental things away. Kids who attend respite events are not more destructive than typical kids, but you do not want to spend the whole day worrying about protecting classroom items.

#### **4. Potential volunteer pool**

You will want to consider who is likely to volunteer for a respite event. Look for youth leaders who are trying to engage students in service. If you use youth ministry students, it is extremely helpful for their leaders to be there, too, helping them to stay more focused on service than socializing. Are there empty nesters in the congregation who would love to play with children? Are there members who are trained in special education or who seem particularly drawn to kids with special needs? Do your adult small groups tend to serve together? You may find that respite events will attract a whole new group of volunteers. No expertise is required in order to do an excellent job. Churches can use their regular children's ministry volunteer applications and background check policies.

#### **5. Potential leaders**

Look for leaders with organizational skills, music skills, recreational skills, and nursing experience who might volunteer time. There is a list of leadership roles in the next section, *Planning for Respite Volunteers*.

#### **6. Will you offer a special training session to excite potential volunteers and give them extra preparation?**

Many successful respite events have been held with 45 minutes of "day-of-event" training. Extra training and awareness is always a plus, however, sometimes volunteers are willing to serve but are not willing to give up an additional afternoon or evening for pre-training. You know your congregation well enough to determine the best training format.

#### **7. How many families do you hope to serve?**

After determining the potential volunteers, you can begin to decide how many children the respite program can serve. A good rule of thumb is one volunteer for each child with a disability and at least one volunteer for every one to two siblings, plus a leadership team.

#### **8. Who will handle registration and how will families register?**

Do you want to initially register children by hearing from parents via email? This will allow you to keep all the communication in a single folder. Will a church staff member receive registrations or will this be done by a volunteer at their home? Does the church have a fax machine that could be used to receive registration forms?

#### **9. How will you advertise?**

Once you create a flyer for the event, how will it be used to get the word out? If there are already area churches doing respite, will their families be invited? Are there special needs families already attending your church who might also want to invite a friend? Do you have school teachers who could invite their students? The first event is always the hardest because parents don't know your church. There is no track record of successful respites, and you don't necessarily know the families in the community who would benefit. Encourage your team to pray for God's leading. He knows the right families to be reached, and they can invite their friends. This is an amazing outreach opportunity!

### 10. Can others in the community participate?

See the “*Components of a Respite Event*” on page 28 for details on how to invite community helpers and guests to your respite events. It is helpful to begin inviting and scheduling these special features as early as possible.

### 11. What is the church’s liability policy for special events?

We always encourage churches to check with their insurance company and any other church agents who deal with liability issues. We don’t know of a church that needed to take out an additional policy or add liability—insurance companies generally treat respite events just like they would VBS or other drop-off programs. But please check since each community’s issues are unique.

### 12. What are the emergency procedures?

Review the church's normal emergency procedures with all the volunteers at training times and before the start of the event. Volunteers need to know who and how to contact the appropriate person(s) in case of an emergency, as well as all evacuation and take cover plans.

## PLANNING FOR RESPITE VOLUNTEERS

Respite events are more successful when you consider the role of each volunteer and pray about the right person for each role. Every church’s respite event will be unique, but it helps to have designated lead volunteers for the following positions.

1. A **Program Coordinator** organizes the advertisement and registration.
2. A **Volunteer Coordinator** finds and schedules volunteers. In some cases, one person can serve as both the program and volunteer coordinator.
3. A **Crafts Coordinator and/or Station Leader** plans the crafts, collects or purchases the materials for the crafts, and trains the other crafts volunteers to supervise at craft stations.
4. A **Music Leader** plans and leads music.
5. A **Snack Leader** plans the food for training, oversees the snacks that parents bring for their children, as well as optional treats for the volunteers when they take breaks.
6. A **Volunteer Nurse** meets with parents during check-in to ensure that pertinent information and day-of-event contact information is included on their children’s registration forms. During the event, the nurse helps with minor injuries and sees that children with allergies are given the correct foods. The nurse determines if parents and/or EMTs need to be contacted in cases of seizures, illness or major injuries and changes diapers for older children who need such assistance (with another adult present).

7. A **Volunteer Check-in Coordinator** keeps track of volunteers as they arrive and makes last-minute buddy decisions if volunteers or families do not come. This may be the same person as the volunteer coordinator if you have one.
8. An **Optional Leader** for each age-group rotates with the group during the events and helps with any issues that arise. Not all respite events keep the age groups together during rotations so this position is not always needed.
9. An **Event Promoter** creates flyers and handouts, as well as bulletins and local press releases.

## RULE OF THUMB WHEN DECIDING HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED

Beyond the positions listed above, enough buddies are needed to provide one-on-one care for all children with disabilities and if possible the same care for the siblings. Siblings can be grouped by age-group and sex, but the more personal attention they get the more they will feel like the event has been planned especially for them. In addition, there should be at least one "floater" who can fill in wherever needed or if another leader is absent. Also, consider the building layout with the number of entrances and exits. You may want to have a person assigned to prevent unauthorized entrances or exits (especially if you have a child who is a known "runner" in the group.)

## RESPITE FAQ'S

Here are some frequently asked questions from families and churches.

1. **What are respite events?**  
Respite events are provided by community churches and offer three to four hours of fun for children affected by disability and their siblings, allowing parents a few hours of quiet and refreshment.
2. **What is the cost?**  
Respite events are free to the families and staffed by volunteers. The costs are also minimal for churches.
3. **Why are respites needed?**  
These parents tend to be stressed, tired, and isolated. A high percentage of their marriages end in divorce. Many are single parents. In most areas only a small percent of the churches welcome these families and know how to share God's perspective on disability.
4. **How does a church get involved?**  
There are a number of Joni and Friends area offices that can walk alongside churches to help plan a new respite event. This Respite Handbook is free to

churches and provides useful strategies and templates. Interactive toys and equipment can be borrowed from some JAF offices and/or other churches in your area.

For more information go to: [www.joniandfriends.org/local-offices](http://www.joniandfriends.org/local-offices)

## RESPITE EVENT FORMS

### **Family Registration Application**

See Appendix A. *Note: It is helpful to keep a separate registration binder. As registrations come in, keep them in alphabetical order for easy reference.*

### **Volunteer Application**

See Appendix B.

### **Volunteer Sign-Up**

See Appendix C.

### **Volunteers Pairing By Buddy**

See Appendix D.

### **Volunteer Pairing By Children**

See Appendix E.

### **Materials To Enhance A Respite Event**

See Appendix F.

## VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Many churches have held very successful respite events by holding training prior to the event. Others choose to offer a special training a month or so ahead of the respite event to allow for more in-depth disability awareness training and to get volunteers excited about the upcoming event.

The advantage of more in-depth training is that your volunteers can become better prepared and need less guidance during the event itself. It can also serve as a volunteer recruitment event if part of the evening is spent discussing why families need respite. The disadvantage is that it adds one or two hours to volunteers' commitments, and you may lose some potential volunteers whose schedules are already full.

In either plan, every training event should include: (1) prayer, (2) the biblical perspective on embracing families affected by disability, (3) disability sensitivity training that is focused on the disabilities that will be represented at the event, (4) a clear description of the volunteer roles and (5) your expectations/rules for the day.

As mentioned earlier, you will want to be sure that volunteer applications and screenings conform to your church's guidelines. This is particularly important if you have invited volunteers from outside of the congregation to participate. In this section, you will find:

- A Typical Day-of-Event Training Outline
- Disability Sensitivity Training
- The Weight of Raising a Child with Disabilities
- Simulation Activities that Might Be Done in Training

## A TYPICAL DAY-OF-EVENT RESPITE TRAINING OUTLINE

- Open in prayer.
- Make sure that everyone has a disability sensitivity handout (see Appendix G) and explain that it is a good tool for life. Explain that you'll only cover the parts of it that are relevant to the kids who are coming that day, but these are things to be mindful of every day.
- Read Psalm 139 located at the top of sheet. Encourage volunteers to look up other verses later. God fully values all His creations and wants us to draw them into His church. Respite will often draw otherwise cautious families in because the events meet huge needs.
- Reiterate how most of the parents who participate are exhausted and isolated. They are often "on" most waking hours of the day, and have very little opportunity to rest and reflect. Couples rarely have time to talk. Respite gives them a HUGE gift. Encourage volunteers to share how they spend their leisure time and reflect on what it would feel like to not have any downtime.
- Work through the sensitivity sheet quickly, highlighting the disabilities that will be represented.

- Go through the day's schedule, the volunteer roles, and the check-in process.
- Allow time for questions and answers.
- Prayer
- Have fun!!!

## TRAINING ILLUSTRATION: THE WEIGHT OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES

Materials needed: 5-10 large building blocks

Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the room and stand next to you.

*Today we are giving some exhausted parents a rest. I'd like to use some blocks to help you get a sense of the fatigue most of these parents' experience.*

*Many of these children live with serious health issues. For example, little Emily (name a child who will be attending) had five or six surgeries in her first year of life. Many have immune deficiencies and frequently visit doctors or hospitals. This block represents all the medical decisions and stressors families with children affected by disability must carry.*

(Hand one block to the volunteer, adding more blocks to his or her arms with each pressure you describe.)

*When a family learns that their child has or will have a disability, they begin to research the specific diagnosis. They become advocates for that child and assume many decisions about giving their son or daughter the best care possible. This block represents all the advocacy decisions these parents must make on an ongoing basis.*

*Most of these kids receive several types of therapy. Parents must schedule, coordinate, and even participate with therapies. They may assist speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, behavior therapists, educational therapists...it's a daunting list. This block represents all of those therapies families must coordinate.*

*Often there are other children in the family, and parents must figure out how to give them adequate attention and support. Understandably, some siblings go through difficult stages and can resent the attention their parents must give a child with special needs. This block is for the stress of parenting siblings.*

*These parents expected to have typically developing children. Even if they adore their son or daughter with disabilities, their hopes were dashed. When expectations don't come to pass, true grief follows. This block is for the grief process, and for the toll it takes on parents' emotional stabilities.*

*Not surprisingly, there are stressful divorces among some couples dealing with grief, painful decisions, and little time to work on their marriage. This block is for the stressful marriages.*

*We could keep going with things such as endless reports; meetings with school officials, the difficulties of simply getting out of the door...or being in public, but you get the point!*

(Turn to the volunteer who is now buried in blocks.)

*Are the blocks heavy? Go ahead and put them down.*

(The helper will probably be unable to put the blocks down without assistance.)

*The same is true for the parents: They are exhausted. They are stressed. They are buried in their unique lives. They need churches to walk alongside and care for them—to show them the love of Christ in supportive, practical ways.*

*This is a good opportunity to define the difference between pity and compassion:*

*Pity: I'm standing without any blocks in my hands, looking at you with all your blocks and feeling sorry for you. Almost always, I am looking down on you. And I am making myself feel better by doing something for you.*

*Compassion: I see that a brother or sister is carrying a heavy load. I look them in the eye—as an equal—and offer to walk alongside and lighten the load.*

## SAMPLE DISABILITY SIMULATION ACTIVITIES ROLE-PLAYING

If you are serving a meal as part of your training, take your participants to a different room (ideally down some stairs or away from the training classroom).

**Materials needed:** Secure several manual wheelchairs, duct tape, bandanas, sunglasses, Vaseline, tag board with alphabet letters, “yes,” and “no” written in a grid, and earplugs.

1. Ask everyone to choose a partner, and then give each pair one of the following scenarios:
  - a. You do not have use of your legs, use of your arms (limited), and use a wheelchair. Use an ace bandage or duct tape to limit mobility.
  - b. You have limited dexterity with your fingers. Use duct tape to attach several of your fingers together on both hands.
  - c. You have no vision. Please have your partner tie a bandana over your eyes and guide you.
  - d. You have limited vision. Please wear sunglasses coated with Vaseline. You will be asked to read aloud to the group during the meal.
  - e. You have an auditory deficit. Please put earplugs firmly in both ears.
  - f. You cannot talk. Please use the communication board provided whenever you need to speak.



2. Ask one member of each pair to pretend to have the described disability. His/her partner should act as the assistant.
3. Each pair should make their way back to the meeting room in his/her role for the meal, and switch roles halfway through the meal.

## DISABILITY SIMULATION ACTIVITIES STATIONS

An alternate training scenario can be done by breaking the participants into small groups and rotating those groups through stations. This scenario does not need a served meal to be effective, but it requires more facilitators to ensure that participants understand the activities and to encourage discussion about the experiences. Here are some good activities to choose, depending on your space, time and facilitators.

### 1. Wheelchair Experiences:

**Supplies needed:** wheelchairs, barriers, and objects to carry

**Instructions:** Ask partners to switch midway through the activity.

Practice carrying-on a conversation with your partner in a wheelchair. Notice how his/her neck could become stiff if you stand in front. Each partner should practice navigating an obstacle course with a manual chair. Their partner should watch for obstacles and assist if requested. Each partner should try to overcome a difficult obstacle without help.

### 2. Sensory Overload:

Note: This can also be done as a group activity. Have one to three volunteers sit on chairs in the front of the room. Ask them to read the book out loud. One at a time, add a sensory overload activity. As you do, explain how this might be for an individual with sensory sensitivities.

**Supplies needed:** 3 chairs, 3 CD players with headphones, something scratchy to place on each chair, 3 shirts with tags taped inside the collars, 3 feather dusters, something for each group to read and answer questions about, and 3 flashlights

**Instructions:** Many individuals with autism, ADHD or learning disabilities are particularly sensitive to noise and other sensory bombardments. Ask one partner to wear the shirt with a rough collar, put on the headphones and sit in the “scratchy” chair. While he or she tries to read a passage aloud, the partner brushes around the head and shoulders with a feather duster. Then asks questions like “What are you reading? What does it mean? Do you need any help?” Another option is to intermittently flash the flashlight into his or her eyes. After the passage is over, the reader should answer questions about what was just read. Switch.

### 3. Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia:

**Supplies needed:** mirrors and stands, markers, patterns to draw, and stiff paper

**Instructions:** One partner holds the shield that keeps the other from seeing the pattern directly. The other partner uses the mirror and marker to trace over the pattern. Switch.

1. Visual Deficits:

**Supplies needed:** several pairs of sunglasses, Vaseline in small containers, eye masks, and dowel sticks cut to cane length

**Instructions:**

*Blurred Vision:* Using the sunglasses and Vaseline in the plastic bag, rub a semi-thick film of Vaseline over the outside lens. When the person put them on, he or she will not be totally blind, but will definitely have a hard time seeing things clearly. The partner will need to assist him or her in any way that might be helpful.

*Complete blindness:* Use the eye mask and dowel as a red-tip cane. Place eye mask completely over one person's eyes so nothing can be seen. Use the dowel as a cane to assist/alert. The partner can help with objects that may obstruct the path. The other partner can assist in ways that are helpful for safe movement.

2. Auditory Deficits: Participants work in pairs: One person puts earplugs in his/her ears and listens to the partner read a children's story in a very soft voice. This is most effective if the partner does not give direct eye contact.

3. Communication Disorders

**Supplies needed:** communication boards, straws, and prompts for question-asking

**Instructions** for Nonverbal Communication: One partner is not allowed to speak whatsoever to the other or to anyone else in the group. The partner who is nonverbal can use only the alphabet communication board and the straw, as a pointer, to spell out the words. Partners should switch halfway through the designated time so that each one can experience being nonverbal.

Activities: Using the communication board spell out:

My name is (include your name).

Jesus loves you.

Spell a sentence with 5 words.

See if the person across from you can figure out what you're trying to communicate.

4. Impaired Manual Dexterity

**Supplies needed:** Various items of clothing that need buttoning/tying/zippering, gloves, duct tape, piggy bank and coins, peanut butter and crackers, and plastic knives

**Instructions:** Participants work in pairs to accomplish several tasks. For each task, one partner is either wearing gloves that have fingers taped, or has several fingers taped to his hand. Try putting on buttoned or zipped clothing, tying shoes, putting pennies in a piggy bank, spreading peanut butter on a cracker and feeding it to your partner. Then switch rolls.

5. Developmental Disability

**Instructions:** One partner represents the person who is developmentally delayed by only using three words or less when communicating with the other partner. If too many questions or too many options are given at one time, look confused and don't answer. Make your partner rethink how to ask the questions in a simpler way.

## DEBRIEFING ACTIVITIES

Whether you have your training participants take part in the first role-playing activity, or experience disability simulations at stations, it is important to allow time to debrief. Usually, discussion will quickly follow questions like:

- How did it feel to suddenly have those limitations?
- What was the hardest thing for you?
- Did these activities change the way you will relate to an individual with a disability in the future?

### DAY OF THE RESPITE EVENT

This section talks about how to run a respite day event. It should be thoroughly reviewed and understood before the event. This section includes:

1. The *Components of a Respite Event* describes each element of the day and gives suggestions for success.
2. The *Health and Safety Considerations* contain a brief discussion of the health and safety issues you should consider. Your church probably has its own policies for most of these issues.
3. *Sample Respite Event Schedules*

### COMPONENTS OF A RESPITE EVENT SET-UP

Some churches find that it is easiest to set-up the afternoon before a morning event or the morning/early afternoon before an evening event. Obviously, this is only possible if the space is not being used during that time period. If you are setting up just before the event, plan on at least one hour before training to arrange the stations, check the area for things that should not be out during the event, set-up refreshments, and to pray before the volunteers arrive.

### DAY-OF EVENT TRAINING

Most churches ask volunteers to arrive 45-60 minutes before families for a brief training and explanation of the day's schedule. However, this does not allow time for thorough training. It is enough to explain basic disability etiquette, discuss information about the primary disabilities represented, review the schedule and station locations, and to answer questions about the buddy matches. We have included a handout entitled "Disability Sensitivity" in [Appendix G](#) to help you plan what you will share. Always assure volunteers that you will be available to assist during the event, and that they are not alone. It may be helpful to explain that their service is an example of "compassion fellowship"—stepping out beyond one's comfort zone with friends at your side.

### TRAINING SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE:

1. Prayer: Ask God to bless the morning, the volunteers and the families as they try to get out of the door and to the church.
2. Buddy Assignments: Hand out schedules for the day that include the volunteer's name and assignment. Attach a copy of the child's registration form. But be sure to collect forms before families arrive so that confidential information is not left lying around the church.
3. Biblical Perspective: Share at least one Bible verse that reminds your volunteers that they are serving as the hands and feet of Jesus.

4. Definition Sheet: Provide a short description of the primary disabilities represented with suggestions for succeeding in difficult areas such as communication.
5. A Description of the Day's Events
6. Policies and Rules: Give volunteers the rules that they should follow, including where they can be with the children, bathroom protocol, and what to do if they need a break to use the bathroom or to rest.
7. Optional: Show an inspiring short video that illustrates the "weight of raising a child" or do one of the disability simulation activities listed in the training section of this manual.
8. Introductions: Everyone should know the nurse and understand her role, especially in toileting procedures.
9. Q & A: Allow time for questions from the volunteers.

## CHECK-IN

The nurse should be positioned at the check-in table 15 minutes before parents are due to arrive. After the training is over, it is helpful to have the program coordinator assist with check-in. Here is a list of what you'll need at the registration table.

1. **Registration Forms** for all registered children
2. **Name Tags** for all registered children with names written in the same color as their group, if you have the children divided. Caution: **DO NOT** put last names on children's nametags if you plan to take pictures during the event.
3. **Special Instruction Forms** to note any changes since the registration form was completed and any extra instructions regarding the care of the child. See Appendix H.
4. **Nurse Check-In Procedures** (1-2 copies) to track medical needs, feeding schedules, etc. It helps to have this all in one place. See Appendix I.
5. **Extra Nametag Labels** to mark diaper bags, snack bags and other personal items
6. **Permanent Markers** for labeling, pens and pencils
7. **Digital Thermometer** in case children arrive who appear to be ill
8. **Small Purell® Hand Sanitizer** for buddies whose children are more susceptible to disease transmission
9. **Zip-lock Bags** for the snacks families bring

## CHECK-IN ROOMS AND GROUPS

It helps to divide the children by developmental age groups. This allows activities to be done in smaller groups and attempts to keep bigger children from stumbling over smaller children. It also provides a place where each child begins the event and helps parents know where to pick their child up at the end of respite.

## SCHEDULE

Many children with disabilities find activities they particularly like and want to stay there. Always encourage volunteers to allow children to relax and have fun. It is not so important at a respite event to keep a firm schedule or to accomplish set goals. These events are not like school or therapy appointments. The goal is to keep children safe and give parents a break. As a result, schedules become a way to keep order and give volunteers options to do with the children. They do not need to be rigidly kept.

We have, however, included a sample icon schedule in Appendix that helps children who particularly like order and routine. It can be used to foreshadow changes by pointing to what's coming next and saying to the child, "In 5 minutes..." It can also be used to point to what you plan to do, "First we'll... Next we'll..." Communication boards allow children to see their options and choose what they would like to do.

To prepare a communication board:

1. Print a copy of the communication board and the icon pictures. See *Appendix*.
2. Laminate both.
3. Cut out the individual icons.
4. Attach Velcro dots to the back of each.
5. Attach the matching Velcro dot to the blank squares of the communication board.
6. Store the sheet and icons in a zip-lock bag.

## CRAFTS

Most kids with special needs enjoy simple crafts, but may need help from their buddies due to their limited dexterity. Simple crafts can be created using basic items such as paper, tempera paint, stamps, foam stickers or large paint tubes designed for kids who can't grasp a brush. Add more craft steps to projects for kids who are higher functioning and for siblings. Many congregations have someone who is gifted in creating simple crafts and could provide a variety of craft options. To add greater interest tie craft time to a special theme such as Advent, Christmas or Valentine's Day and make gifts for parents and friends.

## MUSIC

If you have someone who plays the guitar and loves to lead singing, here is their opportunity to serve! If not, it is possible to have a wonderful music time using a CD player, some fun kids' music, a full set of musical instruments, and some ribbon wands. By and large, kids with disabilities LOVE music and are easily engaged by rhythm and movement. But for a few children, it may be too noisy and chaotic. Those kids can go back to their individual recreational activities, take a walk with their buddy or watch from a distance. Again, our goal is to help the kids have fun—not to force them to do activities they don't enjoy.

## GROUP RECREATION

Most children enjoy being part of a group recreation period. If you're including sandbox play, lead into the activity by having a parade around the sandbox. Children usually enjoy games and activities with a large rainbow parachute and are fascinated by fun things to hurl into the air. Depending upon the number of kids using wheelchairs, you can plan an endless variety of group activities using the parachute.

## INDIVIDUAL RECREATION

Some children, especially those on the autism spectrum, may not want to participate in group recreational activities. That's fine— this is supposed to be fun!! For these kids, offer a variety of individual activities such as therapy balls, a wading pool filled with plastic balls or scooter boards that can be pulled with rope. They may also like to chase bubbles or simply escape to a quiet tent.

## SNACK TIME

Ensure each child receives a snack brought by his or her family. Be watchful to see that children eat their own snack and not their neighbor's. Food allergies should be noted on each child's registration form. Many respite events make it a practice to only serve gluten-free, dairy-free snacks. This allows kids with food allergies to eat what everyone else is eating.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

A wonderful way to engage the broader community in your respite event is to start a presentation rotation schedule. Community service providers often have short programs they've prepared for children. Check with local firefighters, police departments, youth science institute, petting zoos, companion dog trainers, etc. Individuals may want to bring petting zoos or guide dogs in training. Not only would the kids love seeing fire equipment or meeting snakes or puppies, but this tells the community that your congregation values these families enough to offer this kind of care.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Other children's clubs and organizations in your area may help you locate magicians, jugglers, puppeteers, choirs or other entertainers that they can recommend. Children enjoy these special programs and will want to invite their friends. This is another wonderful opportunity to show your community that there are churches that make the needs of families with special needs a priority.

## QUIET ENDING ACTIVITY TIME

As respite comes to an end, plan some quiet activities the children can do back in their group meeting rooms such as quiet table games, reading a story or showing a short movie. This is a good time to provide playdough, Legos, board games, books and quiet toys. These activities help boys and girls wind down before their parents arrive so that everyone can go home relaxed and happy!

## PICK-UP TIME

Designate a set place where kids are to be picked up. It might be in the central meeting hall where they were dropped off or in their initial classrooms. Be sure parents sign their children out and ask them to complete a short survey as they arrive. Be sure to ask parents what they did with their time. This helps them to remember that the day was about them as much as about their children!

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

Was this a fun time for the kids? The less it feels like school, the more likely the kids are to want to come back.

Did you find creative ways to serve and encourage your volunteers? Did the age-group leaders, nurse and coordinator have good communication? If a walkie-talkie system is available, it would be good for them. Did everyone enjoy the respite event and want to sign-up for next time?

## HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Sometimes church leaders and volunteers are scared due to health concerns. Their fears are unwarranted, but we recommend a nurse on hand during respite primarily as a “security blanket” for anxious volunteers and protective parents. As we noted earlier in this handbook, the nurse does check-in to ensure that parents have left contact phone numbers, as well as pertinent medical and allergy information. They oversee snack collection and distribution and handle allergy issues. They change diapers for children older than those typically needing diaper changes (along with a second adult), and they administer first aid to decide if medical questions are serious. Please keep in mind that most children with disabilities are not medically fragile.

It is, however, helpful to create clear health and safety policies. These are best communicated clearly in writing to volunteers and parents alike.



## MEDICATIONS

It is good practice to ask parents or caregivers to administer all medication before or after respite events. Non-nurse volunteers and staff leaders are not allowed to administer medication. In extreme cases—if and only if the volunteer nurse feels comfortable—arrangements may be made to administer time sensitive medications such as allergy or asthma medicine. In those cases, clear written instructions and permission slips should be signed and left by the parent.

## SAFETY PROCEDURES

Every time a volunteer handles blood, bodily fluids, or feces they should use latex-free gloves. Many children are allergic to latex and peanuts, so it is a good policy to have respite events latex and nut-free.

Volunteers should wash their hands after accompanying a child to the toilet, after assisting a child with wiping his or her nose and before food preparation. Children should wash hands before eating. During winter cold and flu season, it is a good idea to provide small Purell® Hand Sanitizer bottles to any buddy working with a child who is prone to illness.

## ILLNESSES

Parents are asked to keep children home from respite events if they have any of the following symptoms of illness:

- Fever greater than 99 degrees
- Green runny nose
- Rashes that have not been identified as allergy-related
- Deep cough
- Diarrhea
- Active chicken pox
- Measles
- Mumps
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Lice
- Ringworm

Sick children should not be admitted. It is suggested that a digital thermometer and disposable sleeves be available for the nurse to use at check-in. If a child develops symptoms during the event, the nurse should be notified and the parents called to pick up the child. If the child is being treated for an infection with antibiotics he/she must be on the drug for at least 24 hours prior to the event.

## TOILETING

If a child needs assistance in the bathroom, follow your normal church procedure. At a minimum, the buddy should ask another adult to accompany them to the bathroom. There should never be one adult alone in the bathroom with a child. If the child can toilet independently, the buddy should wait outside the door. No adult should change a child's diaper without another adult present.

## NEVER ALONE IN THE ROOM

There should never be only one adult and one child in a room, unless the entire room is clearly visible to someone watching in the hallway.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Parents are responsible to inform the respite nurse if their child has been diagnosed with immunodeficiency or Hepatitis B. This information should only be shared with those staff members who need to know in order to protect the child against other infections. All information on a child's registration form is confidential and should only be seen by the nurse and the assigned buddy. Great care must be taken to keep any copies of the forms in the training room and to avoid leaving forms out during or after the event.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULES

We have included examples of schedules that have been successful. Read all three schedules to see the differences between a morning, afternoon, or evening respite event. See Appendix L.

### EVALUATIONS

You will want to ask every family and every volunteer to complete an evaluation sheet after the event.

Parent evaluations give you inspiring stories to use when you report to church leaders and recruit volunteers for the next event. This affirms the important work that your church is doing and how they are blessing families by providing much needed respite. If a parent has an issue, the evaluation can help your team make corrections and improve service in the future.

Volunteer evaluations assist in planning for future events. They give ideas of what worked and what did not. They might suggest additional volunteers to contact for the next respite. Include a question about Sunday morning volunteers because respite volunteers are often excited to help in the Sunday School class with the children they have served at respite.

See Appendix M for a sample Parent Evaluation Form and Volunteer Evaluation Form.

If serious issues occurred during the respite, i.e. roof caved in, playground equipment broke, child abuse, etc. you should use your church's regular incident reporting forms.

Appendix A: Respite Event Family Registration Form.....	i
Appendix B: Respite Volunteer Application .....	iv
Appendix C: Volunteer Sign-up Form .....	vi
Appendix D: Volunteers Pairing by Buddy .....	vii
Appendix E: Volunteers Pairing by Children .....	viii
Appendix F: Materials to Enhance a Respite Event .....	ix
Appendix G: Disability Sensitivity Handout .....	xi
Appendix H: Special Instructions Form .....	xiv
Appendix I: Nurse Check-In Procedures .....	xv
Appendix J: Sample Icon Schedule .....	xvi
Appendix K: Communication Board .....	xviii
Appendix L: Sample Schedules .....	xx
Appendix M: Evaluations .....	xxiii



**Respite Event  
Family Registration Form**

(Please complete one form for each child with a disability)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate (dd/mm/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Male / Female (circle one)

Child lives with: \_\_\_\_\_ both parents \_\_\_\_\_ mother \_\_\_\_\_ father \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name \_\_\_\_\_ Home # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different than above)

\_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name \_\_\_\_\_ Home # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different than above)

\_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Home # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

What is your child's diagnosis? What health concerns should we be aware of?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have seizures? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, what should be done if your child has a seizure during the respite event?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Please describe your child's food allergies, if any.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Under what circumstances would you like to be notified during the respite event?

---



---



---

**\*\* IF YOUR CHILD HAS FOOD ALLERGIES, PLEASE BRING A SNACK FOR YOUR CHILD AND CHECK IT IN WITH THE NURSE WHEN YOU ARRIVE.**

<b>VISION</b>	___ Normal	___ Partial	___ Impaired	___ Blind	
<b>HEARING</b>	___ Normal	___ Partial	___ Impaired	___ Deaf	___ Hearing Aid
<b>MOTOR</b>	___ Normal	___ Rolls Over	___ Sits	___ Crawls	___ Walks
<b>USES</b>	___ Normal	___ Crutches	___ Braces	___ Wheelchair	

What sensory needs does your child have?

---



---



---

Does your child have any special toileting/self-care needs?

---



---



---

What sorts of things upset your child?

---



---



---

What activities work to calm your child if he/she is upset?

---



---



---



What behavior and/or learning strategies work best with your child at school?

---

---

---

Is there additional information you would like our volunteers to know about your child such as personality traits, behaviors, likes and dislikes, etc.?

---

---

---

Does your family attend a church in the community? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which one?

---

Aside from parents, please list other person(s) authorized to pick up your child(ren). (Must be at least 18 years old)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your child's siblings who will also be attending: \*\*

- |    |       |           |
|----|-------|-----------|
| 1. | _____ | Age _____ |
| 2. | _____ | Age _____ |
| 3. | _____ | Age _____ |
| 4. | _____ | Age _____ |

\*\* Please list any special needs of the sibling(s).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTO RELEASE:** I give permission to use pictures of my child(ren) in publications, newsletters, and on the \_\_\_\_\_ (church name) website:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: \_\_\_\_\_

**Respite Volunteer Application**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Contact Information**

Full Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ Male / Female (circle one)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Information**

Do you have a disability?  Yes  No If yes, disability: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you employed?  Yes  No Position/Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Church you attend (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all that apply:

Currently CPR certified Agency/Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous *respite* volunteer

Previous Joni and Friends volunteer: When/Where: \_\_\_\_\_





My experience with children with special needs includes (none required):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am comfortable working with children ages (check all that apply):

0-1 (Infant)     2-4 (Toddler)     5-7     8-10     11-12     12+     Any and All

**AGREEMENT**

Have you ever been convicted of a crime involving children and/or youth? Yes/No

Have you ever been convicted of child abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment? Yes/No

Have you ever been arrested or accused of child abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment? Yes/No

*I hereby confirm that all the information above is true and correct. I authorize \_\_\_\_\_ (name of church) to procure a consumer report (background check or known as an investigative consumer report in \_\_\_\_\_ (name of state). I give my consent that photographs, interviews, and audio/video recordings during the respite event may be used by the host church for training, promotion, and fundraising.*

*I have read the above statement and agree to the terms designated.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this application:

----- **OFFICE USE ONLY** -----

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Background Check Complete: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Sign Up Form**

I am interested in serving as a:

<p style="text-align: center;">Buddy to a child with a disability</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;">Leader/helper with recreation</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p style="text-align: center;">Leader/helper with music</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;">General Volunteer</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p style="text-align: center;">Leader/helper with crafts</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

SAMPLE

## Volunteers Paring By Buddy

Registered Volunteers

Respite Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Volunteer First Name</b>	<b>Volunteer Last Name</b>	<b>CHILD FIRST</b>	<b>CHILD LAST</b>	<b>Special Assignments</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Sally	Alvarez	Frank	Getz		
Tom	Armiger	Lui	Nguyen		
Erica	Baughman	XXX	XXX	Recreation	
Trevor	Jones	Alex	Getz		
Allison	Burley	Grace	Miller		
Sue	Campbell	Joseph	Bothwell		
Abby	Chamberlain	XXX	XXX	Crafts/must leave by noon	
Debbie	Potter	Sarah	Bothwell		

SAMPLE

## Volunteer Pairing By Children

Registered kids and possible buddy pairings

Respite Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_

First	Last	Age	Disability	Buddy First	Last
<b>RED</b>	<b>0-3 years</b>				
Grace	Miller	2	down syndrome	Allison	Burley
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>3yrs – 7yrs</b>				
Lui	Nguyen	7	spina bifida	Tom	Armiger
Frank	Getz	7	sibling	Sally	Alvarez
Alex	Getz	5	autism	Trevor	Jones
Sarah	Bothwell	6	down syndrome	Debbie	Potter
<b>BLUE</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade +</b>				
Joseph	Bothwell	11	sibling	Sue	Campbell

### MATERIALS TO ENHANCE A RESPITE EVENT

#### FOR RECREATION:

- Felt pieces
- Two scooter boards and rope
- Large Parachute, small balls
- Small Parachute
- Parachute Game resource book
- 6' Tunnel
- Stretchy material fish tunnel
- Three medium or large therapy balls (including a half-and-half ball that is particularly popular)
- Small weighted ball
- Bubbles
- Face paints
- Plastic Swimming Pool with bright balls
- Musical/cause and effect toys
- Board games, foam balls, and stacking cups for older kids/siblings
- Sidewalk chalk
- Easy games of other sorts

#### FOR MUSIC:

- Children's CD's
- Musical instrument set
- Rainbow ribbons and streamers

#### FOR ART:

- Paper
- Tempera paint
- Foam Stamps
- Paint brushes
- Large tube paint
- Waterproof markers
- Crayons
- Beads and lanyard rope
- Misc. Foam stickers and project pieces
- Stickers
- Q-Tips

#### FOR QUIET TIME:

- Playdough and cookie cutters
- Small tent
- Board books
- Sparkle wands
- Musical/cause and effect toys
- Wooden blocks filled with beads
- Squishy “spider” balls and small squishy balls
- Plastic bottles with shiny metal objects/stick magnets
- Children’s videos
- For Diaper Changes:
  - Yoga mat
  - Wipes
  - Latex-free gloves

#### FOR SNACK TIME:

- Gluten-free cookies
- Straws

### Disability Sensitivity Handout

Disability Etiquette: Responding with Compassion

#### ALL INDIVIDUALS ARE PURPOSEFULLY AND LOVINGLY CREATED BY GOD

**Psalm 139:13—16:** For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Other verses to ponder: John 9:1-3, Matthew 9:36-37, 2 Cor.1:3-4, Luke 14: 21-23

#### PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

- Phrasing descriptions so that you talk about the person before his/her disability:
- Example: The child who is blind vs. the blind child
- Using people- first language puts the emphasis on the individual, not on the disability. It is a subtle difference, but means the world to the individuals!

#### GREETING THE WHOLE FAMILY

- When you greet a family, acknowledge everyone in the family
- It is very easy to only communicate with those who are easy to communicate to
- Make an extra effort—but one that appears genuine—to include the individual with disabilities
- If the individual with disabilities is in a wheelchair, consider pulling up a chair or getting down at his/her level

#### WHEN INTERACTING WITH AN INDIVIDUAL IN A WHEELCHAIR

- Give the individual space—the chair is part of their private space
- Don't lean over the chair
- Use body contact with the chair using the same guidelines you would if leaning on someone's arm
- Try to converse at eye level
- Pull up a chair to sit eye to eye or kneel down if possible
- Don't expect individual to look up to you at a sharp angle
- Do not assume that the individual needs you to push
- Give the individual the choice
- Encourage independence
- Know the "nuances" of power wheelchairs
- Don't rest your hands on the control side of the chair unless it is off
- Be careful not to accidentally send the chair forward
- Be certain to set the wheelchair brake, and make sure the controller is turned off, before helping anyone in or out of the chair

## COMMUNICATION

- Handle communication challenges honestly
- Avoid raising your voice
- Avoid asking others to speak for the child
- Avoid pretending that you understand when you do not
- If you don't understand, try asking questions to narrow the field. It's ok to say that you're not getting it and that you'll try again later

## SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

- Keep in mind that there is a broad spectrum
- In general, these kids will have apprehensions about social interaction
- They tend to have sensory- sensitivities: loud noises, scratchy textures, bright lights...
- Find your friend's comfort level and stay with him there—this is not the time to force the child into uncomfortable situations
- Even if the child doesn't give you eye contact or smile, be positive and upbeat. Suggest new options without forcing decisions
- Children on the autistic spectrum tend to like routine and predictability—tell the child what is happening next, how long the current activity will probably last....

## SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

- Announce your arrival by name as you come into the room until the child is able to recognize your voice
- Do not shout at an individual with visual impairments
- Remember this individual is more like other people than different—relax and enjoy your time together

## TIPS FOR WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

- Speak at normal pitch, but slowly
- Be sure that the light is accentuating your face, not glaring in the individual's face
- Face the individual when speaking
- Be sure you have the individual's attention before trying to communicate
- Use meaningful gestures

## RELAX AND TREAT THE INDIVIDUAL LIKE ANY ONE ELSE

- Talk with a child, not through the parent whenever possible
- Talk with the adult, not through the spouse or caregiver whenever possible
- Talk with the individual, not at them
- Speak positively and directly to nonverbal children, using age- appropriate language and tone.
- Learn as much as you can about the ways your new friend communicates
- Kids with disabilities love to play just like other kids



- Adults with disabilities enjoy friendship and fun just like other adults
- Laugh, smile and enjoy the individual
- If you encounter an individual working with a guide dog or companion dog, be certain that you do not distract or try to play with the dog—the dog is working!
- Do not assume that every person with a disability is hard of hearing
- **DO NOT SHOUT** at the child unless necessary for safety
- Tell the child what to do more than what not to do

---

**Special Instructions Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Regarding Eating/Drinking

(i.e. bottle schedule)

---

---

---

---

---

Regarding Toileting/Diapering

---

---

---

---

---

Is there anything else you want us to know?

---

---

---

---

---

Phone number parent(s) can be reached at today: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Nurse Check-In Procedures**

When each family arrives:

1. Greet children and their parents.
2. Check binder for registration form.
3. Give children and parents their nametags and label for any diaper bags.
4. Ask parent to verify their emergency contact information.
5. Ask parent if child is taking any medications or has any allergies and note below.
6. Ask parent if they brought the “Special Instructions” form. Look it over and make any notes for yourself below. Tell parents to give the form to their child’s respite buddy.
7. Have coordinator/runner take family to assigned classroom where buddies are waiting.

Children on Medications:

---

---

---

Allergies:

---

---

---

Eating Instructions:

---

---

---

Diapering/Toileting Instructions:

---

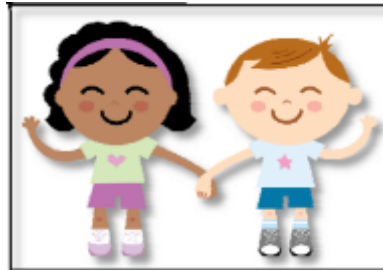
---

---

Icon Schedule

9:00

Sign-in: Meet Buddies



Play



Art



Music



## Icon Schedule

11:00

Snack



11:15

Outside Play



12:00

Group Time



12:15

Quiet Time



1:00

Goodbye



**Communication Board**


## Respite Icons\*



\*Boardmaker Software® icons [www.mayer-johnson.com/boardmaker](http://www.mayer-johnson.com/boardmaker). Used with membership agreement

SAMPLE

## Morning Schedule

**Volunteer's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **December 13 Advent Respite Schedule**

8:15 AM	Breakfast and Training in room 105
8:45	Check-in Opens (preschool entrance)
9:00-9:30	Kids' arrival and greet families Blue Group (oldest) goes to room 111-112 and/or playground Green Group (middle group) goes to room 101 and/or playground Red Group (babies and youngest) goes to nursery and/or playground
9:30	Blue Group recreation—room 111-112 Green Group art in room 101 Red Group art in nursery
10:15	Everyone goes to music with Dale in room 105
10:45	Snack in room 105
11:00	Blue Group to art—room 102 Green Group to recreation—room 111-112 Bring out little parachute for nursery group
11:45	Everyone goes to Living Nativity in room 105
1:00 PM	Parent pick-up Be sure to ask parents to tell you about their day and fill out an evaluation form. Please don't leave without filling out an evaluation form.

**Thank You!**



SAMPLE

## Afternoon Schedule

Volunteer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

### August 29th Respite Schedule

Noon	Lunch and Training in 105
12:45	Check-in Opens (preschool entrance)
1-1:30	Kids' arrival and greet families Blue Group (oldest) goes to room 111-112 and/or playground Green Group (younger) goes to room 102, nursery, and/or playground
1:30	Blue Group recreation—room 111-112 Green Group art in room 101
2:15	Everyone goes to music and puppets in room 105
2:45	Snack in room 105
3:00	Blue Group to art—room 101 Green Group to recreation—room 111-112
3:45	Everyone goes to Juggling show in room 105
5:00 PM	Parent pick-up Be sure to ask parents to tell you about their day and fill out an evaluation form. Please don't leave without filling out an evaluation form.

**Thank You!**

SAMPLE

## Evening Schedule

Volunteer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

### January 5th Respite Schedule

5:30 PM	Pizza and training in 105
6:15	Check-in Opens (preschool entrance)
6:30-7	Kids' arrival and greet families
7:00	Blue Group (oldest) goes to room 111-112 and/or playground Green Group (younger) goes to room 102, nursery, and/or playground
7:10	Blue Group recreation—room 111-112 Green Group art in room 101
7:40	Transition time—potty breaks, gather up, move to next room
7:45	Everyone goes to snacks, followed by music and puppets in room 105
8:30	Transition time—potty breaks, gather up, move to next room
8:45	Blue Group to art—room 101 Green Group to recreation—room 111-112
9:15	Transition time back to home room to meet parents
9:30	Parent pick-up Be sure to ask parents to tell you about their evening and fill out an evaluation form. Please don't leave without filling out an evaluation form.

**Thank You!**

---

**Parent Evaluation Form**

**We're SO glad you joined us for today's respite event! We hope that you had a nice break from the important task of raising your children. Please take a moment to answer these few questions for us, which helps us plan for future respite events.**

Parents' name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Child(ren) who attended today's event: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you spend your time away from the children? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How will this time help your family? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be included in future events like this one?  yes  no

If so, please let us know the best way to contact you: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else we should know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Volunteer Evaluation Form

**Thank you SO much for volunteering to make today's respite event a success. Please take a few minutes to complete this form, which will help us as we plan future respite events.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What was your role in the event? \_\_\_\_\_

What did you enjoy most about participating in this event? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you do to improve future events like this one? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can we call you again to volunteer at a similar event?  yes  no

Is there anything else we should know? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_