Enhanced Respite for Children with Autism & Behavioral Challenges

Program Development Considerations with Family-Centered Strategies

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What is Enhanced Respite?

AKA “Behavioral Respite”

- In-Home Hourly Respite Care provided in regular intervals by caregivers who have training and experience in effective behavioral modification strategies.

- Targeted Population: Children & teens who are experiencing maladaptive behaviors that are frequent and aggressive in nature, placing them at greater risk of injuring themselves/others and for out-of-home placement.
What Enhanced Respite is NOT

• A replacement for professional behavioral treatment (short-term or long-term)

• A “step-down” program (from a behavioral program toward a traditional respite program)

• On-Call / Deployment childcare service

• Community Inclusion / Access program
Autism Spectrum Considerations
Most Common ER Program Referral Traits

Parents/Families who:

• Are under so much stress that they have mentioned placing the child in a group home
• Have experienced high turnover in respite caregivers due to child’s behaviors
• Need caregivers who can maintain professional boundaries and behavioral consistency
• Have had changes in the family structure that has re-defined roles and expectations (divorce, separation, remarry / blended family, new baby)
• Have been reported to CPS by concerned neighbors (loud noises, bruises, wandering...)
Most Common ER Program Referral Traits

Kids or Teens who:

• Exhibit very challenging behaviors such as self-injury, aggression, property destruction, screaming, spitting, poor impulse control
• Have a history of causing severe injury to others or self, requiring medical treatment
• Require a high frequency of reinforcement to maintain appropriate behavior
• Exhibit frequent hyper-sexualized behavior
• Have grown larger than their parents and most caregivers, who are now fearful of them
Why Develop an Enhanced Respite Program?
Benefits of Enhanced Respite
(Family’s Perspective)

• Behaviorally-trained and experienced caregivers
• Consistent person in your family’s life who understands you and your child and can look beyond the behaviors
• Consistency implementing behavioral strategies (antecedent recognition, rewards/consequences, data reporting)
• A TRUE BREAK! & still able to direct care
Benefits of Enhanced Respite
(Child’s Perspective)

Someone who:

• knows what I like to do, and what I do NOT like (or know how yet) to do

• knows my schedule and knows how to help me transition to new activities

• comes when they say they will so my mom and dad can go do things I don’t like to do

• I look forward to seeing, and who is patient with me and knows my good & bad days
Benefits of Enhanced Respite
(Caregiver’s Perspective)

• Competitive pay at reliable intervals; opportunity for professional growth and promotion at same company

• Agency support (in person and phone); Regular quarterly meetings / trainings (i.e. group support meetings for staff)

• Behavioral training (ABA plus Non-violent Crisis Intervention such as Pro-ACT)

• Families who value your skills & support!
Benefits of Enhanced Respite
(Funding Partner’s Perspective)

- Cost-Effective, compared to out-of-home placement (eg. $1200 vs. $6000+ per month)
- “Another set of trained eyes” in the home to help prevent/report abuse & neglect
- Can provide 3rd party feedback on effectiveness of behavioral treatment plans & current family supports
- Services are person-centered vs. group living in a children’s residential home
- BEST when funding agency proactively authorizes, and NOT as a stop-gap or “fail first” measure
Benefits of Enhanced Respite
(Respite Agency’s Perspective)

• Specialty program to better help families who are considered “in crisis” and may be considering placing their child

• Better pay, additional training and support for qualified staff (if properly funded) = improvement in staff morale and reduction of turnover

• Viewed by funding agencies, families and the community as a Partner in long-term family strengthening
Challenges of Enhanced Respite
(Respite Agency’s Perspective)

• Gaining family trust! It’s ok for them to stay
• Making best match between families and caregivers, given demands for hiring qualified and available caregivers (consistent recruitment efforts)
• Increased risk for staff injury
• Additional training / tracking / coordination
• Hard to phase-out once caregiver has bonded with family, and caregiver adjusted to higher rate of pay
From Referral to Respite
How Services are Authorized in CA

- Funding agency determines eligibility and holds planning team meeting with family where all agree to the referral
- Funding agency sends referral packet and written authorization to agency for:
  * Intake Assessment (flat fee)
  * Hours per month and miles allowed
- Agency performs in-home intake then refers caregiver for family to interview
  (see forms at www.IslandSocialServices.org)
Family & caregiver schedules respite hours, up to authorized amount (typically 30 hrs/mo)

Caregiver submits timesheets signed by parents biweekly with required data tracking

Agency pays caregiver biweekly and submits monthly bills to funding agency

Agency keeps track of all hours, sending quarterly utilization letters to families, but families and caregivers must also track hours
Make sure to budget for at least 150% of your traditional hourly respite cost to operate an Enhanced Respite program for:

- Higher caregiver wages (33% - 50% more)
- Caregiver mileage
- Program Coordinator / Supervisor
- Behavioral Consultation ($64 - $195/hr!)
- Staff training (wages, trainer, materials)
Caregiver Training

34 Hours Upon Hire:

• Orientation (2 hours)
• Positive Behavioral Supports/ABA (8 hours)
• Non-violent Crisis Intervention training
  (Pro-ACT or NCPI – 16 hours) + 8 hours/year renewal
• CPR and First Aid (8 hours)

THEN

• Child-Specific training by family and behaviorist
• In-home supervision/training by program Admin
• Quarterly group staff meetings with topical trainings
Keeping Services
Family-Centered
By Design
Families are the Experts and Key Trainers on their child, how supports should look, and on their own family values and house rules.

Families Control Service Variables as much as possible:

- **WHEN** respite is provided and for how long (within authorized amounts and agency policies)
- **WHO** provides care (they call qualified staff)
- **WHERE** – care in home until rapport and safety, then community activities may be OK
Vital Caregiving Tips

• Support the Family as a whole unit
• **Model consistency, patience and respect; be forgiving and flexible**
• Agree on expectations and encourage setting of schedules weeks in advance
• **Respect the family’s confidentiality; keep open communication with family & agency**
• Understand that it takes time to build trust and that parent and sibling ‘behavior’ may be in reaction to past disappointments or trying to seek some form of control
Enhanced Respite Program Outcomes

- **Family Permanency** - The child will remain living at home for as long as possible and beneficial to the child (and family)

- **Consistent Support** - Families will receive regular respite care from behaviorally trained staff

- **Access to Resources** - The family will learn to recognize when they need additional help and will reach out to other people and organizations
Channel Islands Social Services

Providing Quality Respite Care to Families in Ventura County, CA since 2004

(805) 384-0983  www.IslandSocialServices.org
5251 Verdugo Way, Suite G, Camarillo, CA  93012

Voted Service Provider of the Year by the Autism Society Ventura County two times!
Respite services from Channel Islands Social Services are free to those with developmental disabilities funded by Tri-Counties Regional Center or to Foster & Kinship Families as funded by the County of Ventura Human Services Agency.

Thank you!