

Respite and Link Programs



Family & Children Services
A Source of Hope

"Services that Support the
Promise of Family"

Calhoun • Kalamazoo

About Respite

Caring for a child family member impacted by serious emotional disabilities or developmental disabilities takes 24-hours a day, every day. The intensity of care can be overwhelming.



Families have taken advantage of the Respite and Link Programs for over 20 years as a support to their parenting challenge and as a means of strengthening and improving the quality of life for all family members.

Philosophy

Respite and Link Programs offer youth and families many choices from a broad array of highly individualized services designed for youth challenged by serious emotional disturbances and for children with developmental disabilities. Families are encouraged to participate in setting goals and planning for their family member. Programming is flexible and creative.



History

Family & Children Services began offering the Respite Program in 1986 as a response to families' needs. Services have evolved and expanded, shaped by the personal preferences of youth, their families and funders who support programs. The Link Program offers a variety of group and individualized community-based treatment opportunities which include social, recreational, educational and pre-vocational activities.

Goals



All services offer planned breaks in the daily care routine, in addition to safe, structured, yet nurturing settings. An individualized plan of service is designed to improve and enhance youth skills. Youth have a chance to gain new skills and experiences through broad exposure to community opportunities.

Staffing

Respite staff represent a variety of academic backgrounds and professional experiences and are trained to support children's special physical and medical needs, including the administering of medications as directed by the parent and physician. They have primary responsibility and oversight for all group and community activities planned to ensure that program youth work toward meeting identified treatment goals. Staff participate cooperatively in a team framework and/or act as individual role models or mentors for youth.



We welcome feedback and suggestions for improvement and new program initiatives.



Respite Program

Youth

Children and youth (4-17) challenged with serious emotional disturbances and/or developmental disabilities.



Schedule

Flexible and individualized scheduling, weekday and weekend, overnights and daytime blocks of time, 24-hours/7 days, year-round; limited crisis respite available.



The program provides an opportunity to enhance the social, recreational, community integration and inclusion, daily living, adaptive and behavioral skills of youth while offering a break from care-giving responsibilities to parents and families.

Children enjoy their visits in a comfortable, licensed home operated by Family & Children Services. Trained staff supervise, nurture and assure a safe environment for children. Nutritional meals and snacks are included throughout structured day and evening activities.



Staffing

The ratio of staff to children ranges from 1:1 to 1:3 depending on the individuals served.



Respite...home away from home

Respite Homes

Respite Homes are family-like homes which are structured, nurturing settings offering a wide variety of in-home and community-based activities. Homes are designed with guests' needs in mind. They are safe and barrier-free homes away from home.



- Lake Respite House I - Glen's House
- Lake Respite House II - Gail's House
- Parchment Respite House

Respite Activity Center and Indoor Pool

An Activity Center and Wheelchair Accessible Indoor Pool, located at the Lake Street site, are available to all children in the Respite Program. A lifeguard is on-site anytime the pool is being used.

Respite Includes Many Benefits for Guests

- Small, closely supervised groups (limited to six children overnight)
- Groups formed on the basis of compatibility of needs, age and gender
- Opportunity to meet other youth and staff and develop new friendships
- Growth in abilities and increased life skills through new experiences

There are Many Benefits for Parents Too!



The stress of managing jobs, relationships, and the needs of other family members while parenting a family member with special needs can become overwhelming. Parents report that the gift of time through Respite renews their energy and results in a more fulfilling family life. Parents are able to relax and enjoy time away from their family member, often for the first time in years, confident that Respite staff will meet the specific needs of their loved one.

Link Summer Program

Youth

Children and youth (4-17) challenged with serious emotional disturbances (SED)



Schedule

Morning, afternoon and evening sessions, Monday through Friday during June, July and August.

Program Activities

The **Link Summer Program** offers youth a lively array of structured group day activities tailored to each youth's individual needs in a variety of community settings.

The **Link Summer Program** includes broad skills development activities with the addition of swimming, sports, recreational and other community-based activities. Youths are picked-up and dropped-off at their home each day. Groups assemble with specific staff and travel to our Respite Campus or to community settings such as parks, zoos, museums and lakes for the recreational activities planned daily. Nutritious snacks are provided.

Services are designed specifically for children and youth impacted by serious emotional disturbances and address each individual's emotional needs using a variety of skills and development activities in a safe, supportive community-based setting. Youth participate individually or as a group in structured activities which promote their social, educational and recreational needs with the goal of integration into existing community resources. The ratio of staff to children ranges from 1:1 to 1:3 depending on the individuals served.

Respite Activity Center and Indoor Pool

An activity center and wheelchair accessible indoor pool are located at the Lake Street site and are available to all youth in the **Link Program**.

Link Program

Youth

Children and youth (4-17) challenged with serious emotional disturbances and/or developmental disabilities



Schedule

Varies by individual's need, family preferences and funding guidelines; includes blocks of time in the evening year-round.



Staffing

The ratio of staff to children ranges from 1:1 to 1:3 depending on the individuals served.

Program Activities

The Link program provides intensive community based services which emphasize skill development and utilization of natural support systems. Children and youth participate individually or as a group in structured activities which promote their social, educational and recreational needs with the goal of integration into existing community resources. The program offers a variety of individualized approaches designed to accommodate a wide range of intensity of service need. Services can generally be grouped into the following categories:



- Individual Mentorships
- Sports
- Art Group
- Music Group
- Swim Group
- Adventure

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Family & Children Services is a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian, human service organization begun in 1903. Its mission has remained constant *"...To support, strengthen and preserve the safety, well being and dignity of children, individuals and families"*.

The Agency receives funding through allocations from local United Ways, contracts with Community Mental Health programs and the Michigan Department of Human Services, insurance reimbursements, fees for service based on a sliding scale, and contributions. The Agency is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children. The Agency is licensed by the State of Michigan as a Child Placing Agency, Child Caring Institution, and Substance Abuse Program.

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