



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I work full time. Can I still be a provider?

A: Absolutely. Most providers are employed full or part-time. People usually attend programming during the day, and sitter service funding may be available for hours when the person is not working or at the day program.

Q: Will I receive training?

A: Yes. All providers receive extensive training before their home is certified. They also receive annual training thereafter.

Q: What support will I receive?

A: Each provider is a respected member of a team of professionals which may include a Home Liaison, Nurse and a Psychologist. These OPWDD staff provide training, answer questions and act as resources.

Q: How will a person be found for my home?

A: People with developmental disabilities who are interested in living in Family Care are evaluated by a process which includes interviews, careful screening and developing an understanding of their personal preferences. Every effort is made to match each person with a home that is best suited for their needs in terms of location, type of setting, household composition and compatibility with the provider and others living in the home. Availability of needed services is also taken into consideration. Trial visits may be used to help determine the “fit” of a person within a Family Care home.



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Family Care



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OPWDD is committed to providing a variety of residential supports and services for people with developmental disabilities. This brochure provides an overview of our Family Care program, which assists people with developmental disabilities to live in private homes where they will be provided the caring support, guidance and companionship of a family. Each of our Family Care homes is designed to give each person we serve high-quality, individualized care.

What is Family Care?

Started in 1931, the OPWDD Family Care Program helps people with developmental disabilities to live in a certified private home if they are unable to live independently or with their own families. The Family Care program fosters a nurturing and stable home environment to the nearly 1,000 people who currently reside in Family Care homes throughout New York State.

Who is served in Family Care?

The Family Care Program serves people with developmental disabilities who are eligible for OPWDD services, regardless of their age or background.

Who are Family Care Providers?

Family Care providers must be at least 21 years of age. They must also be owners or renters of a house, apartment, or mobile home. They must be willing to share their interests and be open to experience the interests of a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Prior experience with people with developmental disabilities is not necessary. The most important requirement is the willingness to provide the caring, understanding and security that someone living in Family Care needs. A Family Care home provides an extended, supportive family for people, helping them to become active and productive members of a home and community.

What are the benefits to being a Family Care provider?

Perhaps the most important benefit that Family Care providers experience is the knowledge that they are making a difference in the life of someone with a developmental disability.

Providers share their lives with the person living in their home, but the providers' lives are also enriched as they share in the person's successes and challenges.

Providers receive reimbursement for each person who moves into their home, including room and board, payment for providing skill-building services (Residential Habilitation), as well as reimbursement for mileage to appointments.

No specialized equipment is generally needed. If it is needed, it will be provided by OPWDD.

How do I become a certified Family Care provider?

The first step is an initial visit and home study. Included in the home study is a home safety inspection to ensure the home meets specific safety requirements, family member interviews and an open discussion during which any additional questions may be answered.

After this initial visit, an application is completed. Applicants and their household members (age 18+) are then subject to a criminal background check and must be cleared through the NYS Central Registry for Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

Other requirements include employer and personal reference checks, proof of adequate household income and physician approval. All information is kept confidential.

For more information about the Family Care Program, call OPWDD's toll-free Information Line at (866) 946-9733 or 711 TTY, visit OPWDD's website at <https://opwdd.ny.gov/contact-us>, or email FamilyCare@opwdd.ny.gov

