

Family Education Sheet

Balancing work and supporting your child with complex medical needs



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This sheet gives you information about what how to balance the demands of your job while you're caring for a child with complex medical needs.

Key points

- Most people have a job to manage while they're caring for a child with complex medical needs.
- It can be hard to juggle caregiving and work — but you do have rights that can help.
- It's important to organize your day-to-day work and caregiving tasks so that they can all be completed as needed.

How can I manage the demands of my work along with the care I need to give my child?

Caring for a child with complex medical needs is a big responsibility that takes love, strength and careful planning. If you're working, it can be difficult to manage your job and take care of your child at the same time. This guide gives you some tips and ideas to help you manage both roles. You'll find ways to get the support you need while keeping your child's care a priority.

What are my workplace rights?

It's important to know your rights at work so you can get help balancing your job and caregiving.

- **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA):** If your workplace qualifies, FMLA lets you take up to 12 weeks off to care for a sick family member without losing your job.
- Some employers offer **flexible work options**. This can include working from home or adjusting your work hours. Ask if this is available where you work.
- Talk to your boss or manager about what your family needs. Be honest and clear in order to best find ways to work together.

What are my employment options?

If working and caregiving feel overwhelming, there may be other options:

- **Ask for time off:** Talk to your manager or human resources about options for temporary leave.
- **Check your benefits:** Many workplaces have programs, like an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), to give advice or connect you with resources.
- Learn about FMLA to see if you qualify to take unpaid leave to focus on caregiving.

How can I manage my day-to-day responsibilities?

It can be hard to juggle caregiving and work. Here are simple ways to stay organized:



Focus on the most important tasks

Make a list of what must be done first. This may include important things like doctor visits, medicine schedules or school meetings.



Share the load

Ask family members or friends to help. Community services may also provide extra support



Use a calendar

Write down appointments and tasks so you can keep track of everything. Share this with others who help care for your child.



Try helpful tools

Use apps to remind you about appointments or share information with other caregivers.

How can I establish boundaries and practice self-care?

It's important to keep work and caregiving separate so you can focus on each.



Set clear times for work and caregiving

Let people know when you're available for work and when you need time for your family.



Take care of yourself

Find time to relax. This could be exercising, reading or spending time with loved ones. It's not selfish — it helps you stay strong.



Take breaks

Even a few minutes to rest during a busy day can help you recharge.



Find support

Talk to friends, family or caregiver groups. Sharing your experiences can make you feel less alone.

How can I support my child's education and development?

Children with complex medical needs may need extra help at school.

- Work with your child's teacher(s) to create a plan like an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** or a

504 Plan. These plans make sure your child gets the support they need.

- Look for programs or organizations that offer learning resources for children with medical challenges. These can help your child thrive.

How can I figure out my health insurance?

Understanding your health insurance is key to getting the right care for your child.

- **If you stop working:** Find out if you can keep your insurance through **COBRA** or choose a new plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace.
- **Learn what your insurance covers:** doctor visits, treatments, medicine and/or other care needs. Find out what you might have to pay out of pocket.
- If it's confusing, ask for help. Social workers or financial counselors can explain your options and help you access resources.

What are some helpful care manager skills?

Effective caregiving involves learning skills to manage your child's medical care with confidence.



Learn about their needs:

Understand their condition, treatment and what kind of help they need at home.



Make your home safe:

Check that your home is set up to meet your child's needs.



Find extra help:

Look into programs that provide support, like transportation for medical visits, home healthcare or financial help.

Balancing caregiving and work can be hard. You can handle both if you have enough planning and support. Remember that you're not alone. There are resources and people who can help.