

10 Tips for Caregivers



1. **Keep Perspective.** You cannot do everything. While you can do some things well, perfection isn't required or expected. You are a good person and what you do for your loved one is great!
2. **Routine Helps.** Whether you are caring for a grandchild, an adult with a disability, or a frail elder, routine can help. Having a routine gives them something they can count on.
3. **Make Time Spent Together Personal.** Caregiving isn't just about tasks – it's also about relationships. There may be certain tasks that could be performed by service providers such as day centers, home care, or transportation. Getting help allows you to spend time with the person you're caring for in a better, more personal way.
4. **Keep Money Separate.** Having separate accounts for your money and the person you care for can be essential. When applying for service programs, it's easy for your own money to look like it belongs to your family member, and this could disqualify them. Pay specific bills from your family member's account instead of transferring money to your account.
5. **Find Your Voice. Speak Up. Ask Questions. Say "No".** You have every right to make your wishes known, to ask questions and get answers, and to say "no" when more is asked of you. You don't have to always be the one to do it. Saying "no" and asking for other ways it can be done opens the door for help and resources.
6. **Store Identification and Other Important Papers in One Place.** Social Security cards, Medicare and other health insurance cards, Power of Attorney forms, deeds, and other important paperwork will be needed frequently. Find a secure but accessible place to keep these documents together, such as a fireproof box. This way there is only one place to look when you need them.
7. **Take Time for Yourself.** Take care of your own health – physically, socially and emotionally. Using services such as babysitting, respite care (for an adult, at home or in a facility), day centers, after school care, and home care gives you the time needed to do things for yourself.
8. **Understand What the Future Will Bring.** It can feel like all you can do is to get through today, but an understanding of what's coming next can help you prepare now and reduce stress later on. Social workers, service providers, healthcare professionals, and lawyers can help you learn about services and plan for the future.
9. **Speak with Other Caregivers.** Many, many people like you are providing daily care to family members and close friends. Whether it's an online group, an educational conference, a support group, or a social outing, it can be comforting and refreshing to speak with others who share your caregiving experience.
10. **Know You Are Doing an Amazing Job.** Caring for another person is hard work. Some days may be better than others, but every day you are doing it – and that is fantastic! Give yourself a hug. Look in the mirror and say "good job!"