

Parents tell us that finding and hiring a child's Personal Care Attendant is one of their biggest challenges. Here are some helpful suggestions.

Finding and Hiring a Child's Personal Care Attendant

Sometimes children need extra help to perform their age-appropriate activities of daily living. Children's Personal Care Services (CPCS) may be able to help.

CPCS is a program within Children with Special Health Needs (CSHN) at the Vermont Department of Health. CPCS is a Medicaid program that provides funding for one-on-one support to aid a child in meeting age-appropriate personal care needs, including dressing, bathing, grooming, toileting, eating, mobility, and transfers.

Family-Directed Program

Children's Personal Care Services is a family-directed support program. This means that families have control over who, how, and when someone provides care to their child, within Medicaid guidelines.

Many people can become your CPCS employee, or Personal Care Attendant (PCA), and families can hire the best person to meet the needs of *their* child. There are, however, a few rules about who can be hired, including policies related to family members, wage restrictions, age of caregivers, and background checks.

Family members who are not the child's primary caregiver can be PCA employees, including siblings, aunts, uncles, or grandparents. PCAs must be 18 years or older. A waiver can be obtained for someone aged 16 - 18, or if you'd like to pay a PCA more than \$15 an hour by contacting: CPCS, CSHN, Vermont Department of Health.

Historically, primary caregivers such as parents, stepparents, domestic partners of a parent, or any other relative in that role, were not allowed to be paid PCAs for their own child.



Recognizing the workforce and health challenges related to the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency, the State adopted Temporary Changes to CPCS allowing parents to be paid caregivers to their children. Money earned is considered income to the parent.

The Agency of Human Services contracts with ARIS Solutions as the fiscal agent to assist and support family employers with hiring, timesheets, and payroll. They perform background checks on potential hires, make sure taxes are paid, and manage employment concerns. The ARIS team is knowledgeable in program guidelines and resources, including Vermont Earned Sick Leave eligibility, accrual and use, and Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) requirements.



Getting Started

If your child has been approved for the CPCS program, you may feel a bit overwhelmed with the process of finding and hiring a PCA. You want to find the right person who will be a good match for your child and family. Knowing what your child and family needs is an important first step. Here are some questions you may want to think about:

- Considering your child's interests, likes, personality, and temperament, what qualities would you like a PCA to possess?
- What skills could the PCA learn on the job or through additional training?
- What is your vision for how the PCA will spend time and interact with your child? What skills will they work on and how will goals be accomplished?
- If you have safety, behavioral, medical, or other concerns about caring for your child, what do you expect from the PCA? Would a checklist for the PCA be helpful?

Creating an Advertisement

PCA advertisements that are clear and upbeat work best to spark multiple inquiries. Use a short version of your ad for publications such as Craig's List and a longer version for other purposes such as Front Porch Forum. When creating your PCA advertisement, include your "must haves" and your child's interests. Each parent decides how much information to include in an ad. Some things to consider:

- Your child's age, gender, and a brief description of their interests.
- Your location and transportation needs.
- Do you have set hours in mind, or could the hours be flexible?
- What qualities and qualifications would you like in an employee?
- What are the main responsibilities and what is the hourly rate?
- Your contact information



Sample PCA Advertisement

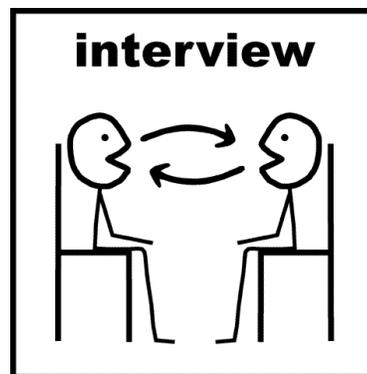
Parents of an outdoorsy, energetic, bright, and kind autistic 10-year-old boy seeks Personal Care Attendant for up to 20-hours per week. Schedule is somewhat flexible; 4 hours per day, 5 days a week preferred. Ideal candidate is cheerful, dependable, easy-going, likes children, and able to follow routines and schedules. They will have a car to provide transportation to nearby activities. No experience needed. Training provided. \$15/hour. Jane.Doe@gmail.com or call/text me at 802-123-1234. I am looking forward to talking with you!

Where to Advertise for a PCA

Many jobs are filled through word-of-mouth so share your PCA job opportunity widely with your friends, family, and members of your community. Other parents who employ PCAs may be a good source of leads. Some families ask personnel at their child's school for recommendations. It's helpful if you can find someone who already knows your child, but of course this isn't always possible.

Consider advertising at the following places:

- Word of mouth - talk with your contacts at your child's school, church, healthcare settings, neighborhood friends, and on Facebook for recommendations.
- Local newspapers online and in print. Other online forums such as Craig's list or your local Front Porch Forum.
- Care.Com (subscription fees apply)
- Indeed
- In Chittenden County, you can send an email to Sara.M.White@med.uvm.edu to have an ad included in the UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences student newsletter.
- Vermont Technical School, Castleton University and Dartmouth College each have a School of Nursing and could be a good resource.
- In northern Vermont, join the Facebook group: "Vermont Family Network PCA Group for UVM Students and Caregivers". You can both post your ad as well as see ads by UVM students interested in becoming a PCA.
- Parents/Caregivers may also join our closed Facebook group for parents only: "Vermont Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs".
- Bulletin boards in popular places, such as local colleges, food markets and co-ops, coffee shops, and general stores.
- Vermont Family Network does not screen families or PCA applicants. It will be the responsibility of each party to screen each other to ensure a good fit.



Interviewing Potential PCA Candidates

When you find a potential PCA, you will be responsible for interviewing, checking references, getting paperwork to ARIS, and hiring that person.

Consider the following:

- Ask the potential employee to submit a resume, references, and a statement about why they want the job.
- Have the initial interview in a neutral public place such as a coffee shop or the student center of a nearby university.
- Have a list of questions prepared ahead of time to ask the potential PCA.
- Share information about the position and your expectations. This may include communication preferences, details about the job, schedules, rate of pay, electronic visit verification, timesheets, and whatever else feels important.
- Ask the candidate what questions they have for you. Address any concerns.
- Set-up a time for a second interview, in person or a follow-up telephone call.
- Have the candidate meet your child/family and visit your home before extending a job offer.



Resources

[ARIS Solutions](#)
800-798-1658

[The MDA's Independent Living and PCA Support Resources](#)

[Vermont Center for Independent Living](#)
The Quickstart Guide to Hiring and Supervising Personal Assistants

[Vermont Department of Health](#)
Children's Personal Care Services-
Children with Special Health Needs
800-660-4427 or 802-863-7338
AHS.VDHchildrenpersonalcaresvs@vermont.gov.

CPCS- [Covid-19 Public Health Emergency](#): Parents to be Paid Caregivers

[Vermont Family Network](#)
802-876-5315 info@vtfn.org

How can Vermont Family Network help?

VFN alerts students about the PCA opportunity at Family Faculty events in Chittenden County. Parent panelists speak to students in healthcare and education classes at University of Vermont (UVM). Interested students email us a brief paragraph about themselves with contact information. We share the ads of interested PCAs with parents who contact us, and post these in our closed Facebook group for parents. We have a new Facebook group for UVM students and parents to help facilitate and fill a need for both the potential employee and the parent employer.

Call VFN to talk with one of our Family Support Consultants. They are happy to talk with you about your PCA needs. They can also guide you to our Facebook page and groups, tell you about our Family Faculty program, help you understand your rights in special education and more. You can request a parent match or sign your child's brother or sister up for Sibshops. You can also join our monthly e-newsletter.



We are happy to hear that our materials are appreciated and used by others. To order copies of this fact sheet, or to learn more about VFN's materials and services, please contact us at:

802-876-5315

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