

Respite Service Limit 2011 Public Comments

The Arizona Legislature has directed the AHCCCS Administration to establish a program within legislative appropriation. Due to the State's severe budget crisis, the Legislature has not appropriated sufficient funds to maintain the benefit at the current level. Reducing respite hours involves difficult decisions which the Administration realizes will have significant impacts on the lives of some Arizona residents. The reduction of respite hours is one of several steps the Administration must take to provide benefits within appropriated funds. The AHCCCS Administration has previously limited or eliminated optional services and continues to explore other service limitations. In addition, the AHCCCS Administration has previously reduced provider rates, and made changes to eligibility.

<u>Numb:</u>	<u>Date/ Commentor:</u>	<u>Comment:</u>	<u>Response:</u>
1.	07/23/11 Pam Rowe Director Caring Connections	If respite care is to be very nimal or nonexistant I believe that the state had best be prepared to open and staff (big money) more children home type facilities. Along with that our juvenile system is going to grow majorly. People are going to think twice before becoming foster parents. Would we be better off with respite support systems now or juvenile halls being at capacity?	The AHCCCS Administration initially proposed a reduction to 360 hours of respite care. After considering the public's input the Administration implemented a much more limited reduction to 600 hours of respite care per year. The Administration understands that a reduction in services may be challenging, but we believe that 600 hours per year – 50 hours per month – will allow for families to receive needed respite.
2.	07/24/11 Jessica Nelson Caregiver Caring Connections	I believe if the respite hours a year is cut in half it will not only hurt the kids but thier families also. By thier parents not being able to work as much as they are now which will impact thier lives financially. It will also effect alot of providers as well by even putting them out of jobs. We can still work with the kids if the respite hours are just cut down to 600 a year.	See above response.
3.	07/24/11 Shellie Echternach Direct Care Provider Caring Connections	I feel that these services are absolutly necessary to the families we provide them to. most of the kids i work with are in foster care. they need to use the respite programs for many reasons. the main thing i see is these kids come from pretty tuff situations when they are placed in foster care so act out because they don't know what else to do. the need a break from worrying about whats going on in the home. the foster parents need a break from the behaviors. the families we provide respite services that are not foster families, are usually at the point were if the child does not get this break something bad is gonna happen. with out the respite house many of these children are gonna end up in the juvenile detention center, gangs or something. please do not cut the funding to our program.	See above response.

4.	08/09/11 Joyce Hoie Director Raising Special Kids	<p>In keeping with a family-centered approach to services, it would be helpful to avoid a situation where respite services alone are being changed or considered outside of the ISP process, and without the context of planning and coordinating the full range of needed services for the child.</p> <p>Although the plan year, starting October 1st, offers a precise date for administrative implementation, it may pose significant problems for large numbers of families and Support Coordinators to thoughtfully plan and prepare for a respite reduction within a short period of time. By using the ISP year, rather than the plan year, it maintains respite services within the complement of other service arrangements and offers a more efficient and family-friendly implementation. In a planned service reduction that is likely to be somewhat complex and difficult for both families and service providers, it is suggested that AHCCCS consider this as a necessary and prudent accommodation.</p>	<p>Although an ISP year was considered, DES Division of Developmental Disabilities supported the respite change with the benefit year of 10/01 through 09/30 timeframe.</p>
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