

How do Hosts benefit?

Hosts find that making links with people with disability enriches their lives too. Many hosts develop lasting friendships with the person who comes to visit them. Hosts develop their skills in the area of disability and can avail of ongoing training and support.

"I feel I have given the family a short break and the child cared for some special one to one attention"

"It is very rewarding and fulfilling and it is good to know you are providing an essential service"

What is expected of Family Placement Hosts?

Hosts are ordinary people who want to share their parenting skills, life skills, their family and their home with people with learning disability.

Any family or individual with a secure and stable home life can apply. Hosts work in close co-operation with St. Michaels House. Hosts must have a spare bedroom, which would be where the person from St. Michaels House would stay when they come to visit. Hosts should plan leisure activities to suit the interests and abilities of the individual child or adult. Hosts should encourage the person to take part in family and community life. In most cases hosts will need access to transport to collect and bring the child/adult home or to their day unit.

How do I become a Family Placement Host?

- Fill in an application form
- Upon receipt of your completed application form, the team leader will arrange to meet you to discuss the scheme, the assessment and the training process
- With agreement to continue, your permission will be sought to undertake statutory checks and references
- An assessment will be completed during a number of visits to your home to determine your suitability as a host family
- Subject to satisfactory references and statutory checks and subject to St Michael's House panel agreement, you will be approved as a Host Family.
- Training and Induction will begin.

For more information contact:

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ST. MICHAEL'S HOUSE



**Information about
Family Based
Respite- short breaks for children
and adults
with learning disabilities**

Telephone 01-8770550

About St. Michael's House

St Michael's House is a non-denominational voluntary agency funded from state and private funds. We provide facilities, services and supports to over 1500 adults and children who have a learning disability and their families in the greater Dublin area. St. Michael's House promotes choice and equal participation in the community for people with a learning disability. The Family Based Respite Schemes is co-ordinated and managed by the Team Leader, in the Social Work Department.

What do we mean by Learning Disability?

Learning Disability is a permanent disability that limits how well a person can cope with everyday skills. It may be caused by brain damage before or after birth, or may have a genetic cause.

What is Family Based Respite?

Family based respite is where independent host carers/families in the community are recruited to provide short breaks in the host's home for children or adults with learning disability. The breaks take place in the host's home. Family based respite is seen as complementary to family care, in order to support primary care givers in their role.

A small expense allowance is paid to the hosts.

- € 45.42 per night for children under 12 years (day rate €30.30)
- €49.28 per night for those over 12 years (day rate €33.90)

Also €20 per day can be claimed in terms of expenses (retain receipt for proof)

Hosts can be single people or couples with or without children. No particular qualifications are required—just energy, creativity and enthusiasm!

"An extraordinary job done by ordinary people"

'It enriches my life"

"I know by offering a short break I'm making a big difference to the child's life and to the family's life. That is my job satisfaction".

Who uses the Schemes?

Everybody who uses the schemes attends, or is linked to St. Michael's House services. They generally live at home with parents or family carers. They all have a learning disability and some may have additional physical or medical needs. Some use a wheelchair. Some people will need help with personal care e.g. dressing, using the toilet, washing etc

Some children attend mainstream primary and secondary schools. Other attends St. Michael's House special national schools. Children who are

placed on the scheme are about 3 or 4 years old to about 16 years old. Adults who participate on the scheme are aged from about 16 years up. Adults attend day centres or work in sheltered or open employment.

"I like going on a break, sometimes we go shopping and I play on the computer and we watch videos"

"It is better than staying in, I do lots of things when I am there! I go to the playground or to the cinema"

How do the Children and Adults benefit from having a break?

Our experience in St. Michael's House and reports from similar schemes outside of Ireland show that participants on the schemes benefit enormously from this type of break. Many people with learning disability have limited social contacts outside of their families and their peers in specialist services. The schemes help them to make new friends, develop new interests, broaden their experience of community life and become more independent.

"My child loves going to stay with the host family, she gets to do so many activities and gets so much attention".

Why do Families/Carers need a break?

Caring for a child or adult with learning disability with can be very demanding and stressful at times. When the carers get a break they can use the time to relax and spend time with other family members and friends. It gives them an opportunity to pursue their own interests. Their relationship with the person with learning disability improves as they are refreshed and under less pressure.

"When I get a little break, I am more able for my son"

"A 24 hour break is as good as a week's holiday. It gives me time for myself and time with my other children"

"Family based respite is like a lifeline to our family, it is the pin that holds us together"

How do we book breaks?

Booking is arranged in consultation between the host and the social work department. Arrangements are made after reviewing the needs of the service user and the skills and availability of the hosts.

Information on each person is discussed with hosts prior to booking and then an introductory meeting is arranged with the person and their parent/carer. The first few visits are usually short (i.e. day care building up to an overnight stay) until everyone gets to know each other. There is an on-call service during all breaks.