

Questions to Ask a Support Provider

Use this sheet when contacting a support service. Before the conversation, mark the questions you most need answered. During the conversation, record what the provider confirms and note anything you still need to check. You can leave out questions that do not apply to the service.

Organization:

Official website or contact information:

Date of conversation:

Name or role of the person you spoke with:

Start with the service

- What help does this service provide?
- Who is it intended for, including ages and service area?
- What does it not provide?
- Do I need a referral or assessment before I can take part?

Notes:

Ask about the people involved

- Who would work with me or my child?
- What is their role and what qualifications apply?
- How can I check a relevant professional credential?
- Who should I contact with a question or concern about the service?

Notes:

Understand cost and commitment

- What fees or other costs should I expect?
- Does the service accept insurance or public assistance? Are other payment options available?
- Are there deposits, missed-appointment charges or cancellation rules?
- What would I be agreeing to, and can I read that information first?

Notes:

Ask about access and availability

- Are appointments or places available?
- What happens if there is a waiting list?
- What hours and locations are offered?
- Is interpretation or another communication format available?
- How are disability access needs handled?
- Is a remote option available, if relevant?

Notes:

Ask about information and privacy

- What information or documents do you need, and why?
- Who can access them?
- How should I send sensitive material securely?
- What permission is needed before information is shared with another provider?

Notes:

Leave with a clear next step

What I will do:

What the provider will do:

Any documents needed:

When and how to check back:

What to do if the service cannot help:

Keep a brief record

An inquiry, an application and acceptance into a service are different steps. Note which step you have reached. Do not send this completed sheet to NPF or place personal details in a public message.

Start with three questions

If you have only a short call, begin with these:

1. Does this service address the need I have described?
2. Can I use it, considering my location, circumstances and the current availability?
3. What would I need to do next, and what would it cost?

Then choose the questions relevant to the answer. An education group does not need every question intended for a clinical service. A child care inquiry needs the program's applicable oversight and care policies as well as hours and fees. A professional assessment requires a clear explanation of who provides it and what follow-up involves.

For a discussion group: ask about the focus, facilitator, format and what participants are expected to share. **For a class:** ask who it is for, what is taught, materials, fees and attendance commitments. **For individual support:** clarify the provider's role, assessment process where relevant and follow-up. These are selection prompts for independent services, not descriptions of NPF offerings.

Completed example: an information service

This example is fictional. It demonstrates note-taking, not an endorsement or an actual referral.

Need: Information about child care options for a variable work schedule.

Confirmed: The service provides information about local programs; it does not operate a child care setting or guarantee a place.

Still to ask: Which suggested programs have the hours needed, current openings and suitable care arrangements?

Caregiver's next step: Contact two programs using their official details and arrange visits if possible.

Service's agreed step: Send its public search information. No private child records are being transferred.

Cost or commitment: No enrollment agreement has been made. Each program's fees and terms need to be checked separately.

Record the answer in the provider's terms

If the person says “call next week,” ask when and through which route. If they say “usually covered,” ask who confirms coverage for you. Keep the uncertainty in the note until the responsible organization answers it.

Question not yet answered:

Person or agency responsible:

How and when I will ask:

You do not need to complete every question before taking an appropriate next step. You do need the important details for the decision you are making.

Related resources

[Read Choosing Support for Your Family](#) · [Save the question sheet as text](#)

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