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Caitlin's Story

Hello- My name is Caitlin and at the age of 22-year I am the proud mother of five children ranging in age from 9 years to 6 months. I along with my 9-year-old son Elijah, have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. In addition, my newborn Jared, now 6-months old was recently diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis. My life is full of activity caring for my family's medical and mental health needs. Due to weekly appointments for myself, Elijah and Jared, I struggle to maintain time to do things many of us take for granted such as spending time with my family uninterrupted by community providers. Even finding time to tidying-up our home on a consistent basis and/or having time to be alone to rejuvenate from a relentless calendar of activity is very hard. Despite the overwhelming circumstance with my son's Elijah and Jared, I still need to find time to address the social and emotional needs of her 2-year-old twins Alvah and Azriel as well as my lovely 6-year-old daughter Sapphire. I have requested respite services from all my community providers, but due to long wait lists and limited resources it has not happened yet! Also most programs would only provide care for 1 of my children at any given time. I really need a break and my children need 1 on 1 time from me to help them cope with all the issues we are currently dealing with. Life is a daily struggle to meet all our health needs, keep our family together and avoid costly out of home placements.

Like many family caregivers, my ability to continue to care for my children within our home and community is dependent on my maintaining my own health. Many of our providers talk about how respite could help us, but the reality is there is only a very little of this service to go around, and it currently has lots of restrictions on how it can be used. If I could get respite services to get a break from my care-giving responsibilities for even short periods of time, I could spend time with my children one on one other than at medical appointments. I could rest and get a short break which would help me keep my family together and maintaining all of our health.

I look forward to the day that CT will offer quality Lifespan Respite services with out waiting lists so that my children and myself can all enjoy a better quality of life as a family.

Caitlin, Mother 5
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