What is this study about?

Many individuals play an important role as caregivers in the wellbeing of family members with special healthcare needs. Home caregivers can be parents, siblings, other family members or even friends. Being a home caregiver can mean experiencing stressors that take a toll on personal health and wellbeing.

Stressors are anything that causes extra pressures such as planning medical and home health visits, keeping track of medications, or managing medical technology. Home caregivers risk exhaustion, face financial issues, can have troubles at work or in their relationships, and are at a higher risk of stress-related illness. While being a home caregiver can be challenging, the right supports can help. But what kinds of aids can best help with different types of stressors and different caregiver needs?

What did the study find?

The review identified 6 aids that can be helpful to caregivers:

- **Care and Service Planning Supports**
  - Professionals such as a social worker or care coordinator can help with planning services, offering information on services that are available or might be needed, and information on funding to apply for.

- **Respite Supports**
  - Organizations offering respite care such as camps or weekend stays, allows parents and siblings breaks from caregiving duties to deal with other parts of their lives.

Who are ‘children with medical complexity’?

Children with medical complexity are a distinct group among children with serious, long-term health conditions. They have physical and developmental disabilities and are considered to be medically-fragile, meaning they depend on medical technology (feeding tubes, ventilators, heart monitors) and need round-the-clock care.

What is a ‘scoping review’?

A scoping review looks at many types of studies to better understand a topic. It may include published (e.g., journal articles) and unpublished work (e.g., posters, presentations, other documents).
### Caregiver Supports
- Taking part in peer and emotional support programs, like a parents’ group, connects caregivers with others who know about a child’s condition and can suggest different resources and creative solutions

### Technology Supports
- Access to technology such as tele-medicine or remote vital sign monitoring allows families to access expert care from home, saving time and simplifying the day without the need to travel to and from appointments

### Funding Supports
- Workplace benefits such as health insurance or paid leave can lessen worries about money and costs of care, and the need to take time away from work to care for their child

### Equipment and Service Supports
- Access to special equipment or health services in the home such as mechanical lifts, day and night nurses, or accessible transportation

While studies only looked at one type of stressor and aid at a time, understanding how best to organize aids to help with multiple stressors at the same time is important to help families as whole.

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### Tips for speaking to your healthcare provider:

**Stuck on where to start? Consider completing the following sentences:**

- An educational opportunity that I would like is ______________________
- My key contact(s) for support is ____________________________________
- I would like respite for ________________________
- Funding sources available to me are _________________________________
- Technology supports in my area include ______________________________
- Equipment or service supports I could use are ________________________

Check out the Care for the Caregiver Hub at Holland Bloorview to help caregivers find the support they need.

### For more information

Find the abstract [here](#), or visit your local library:


- View [Dr. Kingsnorth's researcher profile](#)