

# Social Support

Social support can be an important source of strength in any stressful situation. In the instance of pediatric cancer, social support is very important for all members of the family.

Identifying Sources of Support: It can be helpful to identify multiple sources of support for yourself and your family. Examples include:

- Immediate Family: Spouse/Partner, Children
- Extended Family: Parents, Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Nieces, Nephews
- Community Members: Friends, Coworkers, Neighbors, Clergy
- Social Media Contacts and Groups
- Members of Your Child's Treatment Team

Types of Support: Levels and types of support may vary based on current needs and the supporter's abilities. There is often a distinction between those who are "task supporters" and those who are "emotional supporters". Relying on different people for different types of support can reduce worries about "asking for too much" and help each supporter feel valued.

## Task Supporters

- Walking the dog
- Cooking a meal
- Childcare
- Transportation

## Emotional Supporters

- Discussing your child's illness/treatment
- Offering advice
- Being a good listener

## Support Resources:

- CaringBridge – A free, secure webpage to keep family and friends connected and updated; [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)
- Lotsa Helping Hands – A care calendar website to organize meals and other help; [www.lotsahelpinghands.com](http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com)
- Neighbor Brigade – establishes community specific network of volunteers that can be mobilized to help residents facing sudden crisis; [www.neighborbrigade.org](http://www.neighborbrigade.org)



**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute



**Boston**  
**Children's**

Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center