What is Caregiving?
Caregiving is assistance provided to people who want to keep their independence but who need help with activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, dressing, taking medications, shopping, and transportation. Fifty-seven percent of those who need this kind of help are over the age of 65.

Who are Caregivers?
Caregiving may be divided into two categories, formal and informal. Formal caregivers are paid health care providers who assist people in their homes, assisted-living settings, and nursing facilities. Informal caregiving is provided by unpaid family members or friends. Family members are the primary and preferred caregivers, providing almost 80 percent of care. Care may include resources such as time, money, and/or shared living spaces, all of which support independent living.

Family caregivers are the backbone of the long-term care system. The care they provide reduces demands on the health care system by preventing or delaying institutionalization or the need for more formal, paid caregiving services.

In 2000, Congress approved the National Family Caregiver Support Program as part of the Older Americans Act reauthorization. This program authorizes state units on aging and area agencies on aging to help people who care for a person 60 or older, and/or grandparents 60 or older caring for a grandchild 18 or younger. The program supports provision of information, service access, training, respite from caregiving and temporary services such as meals, transportation and in-home support.

For more information on caregiving, contact your local area agency on aging at: 1.800.252.9240 or visit us on the web at: WWW.DADS.STATE.TX.US