

Dane County Department of Human Services

Foster Parent Respite Policy

Even though families take joy in providing care to their foster children, there are physical and emotional demands that come with foster parenting. Respite care gives you and your foster children the opportunity to take breaks during which everyone can rest and recharge. The more you nurture and give to yourself, the more you will have to give to your family. While respite care is designed primarily to provide rest and relief for the foster parents, children can benefit as well.

Respite & The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard:

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS) is a standard of decision making that allows foster parents to make certain parenting decisions, such as respite care, for foster children placed in their home. When making a decision using reasonable and prudent parenting, you will consider a combination of factors in relation to the child and the specific situation. Reasonable and Prudent Parenting allows Level 1 & 2 foster parents to make respite care plans for the care of their foster children by any person in or away from the home for **up to 48 hours**. For respite care that is more than 48 hours, a foster parent must secure approval from the supervising agency. **Level 3-5 foster parents** must talk to their consultants for any respite arrangement.

Notice:

When possible, we require that foster parents provide their foster care consultant with a 30-day notice of the respite care need. This is necessary for the agency to do background checks on the identified respite resource or for your foster care consultant to identify another licensed home to provide respite care. Anyone 12 years or older in the respite provider's home will need to have a background check completed by the agency.

Payment:

The foster parent will pay the respite provider the daily rate at the commencement of the respite period. Any questions, including the daily rate and how it was established, can be answered by the consultant.

Information Sharing:

Foster parents will provide respite providers with information related to the child's emotional, behavioral, and medical needs.

Foster parents will provide respite providers with emergency contact information including the following:

- The name and phone numbers of all assigned social workers.
- The name and phone number of the parents, if appropriate.
- Phone numbers for reaching the foster parent for whom respite is being provided.

Medications:

- All medications, either prescription or over the counter, must be locked in both the foster home and the respite foster home.
- ***The foster parents will hand the medication directly to the respite provider and vice versa.*** Youth should not be in possession of their medications (exceptions below*). This applies to youth of all ages, including those over the age of 18.

- The name of the child, doctor, dosage and date must be readable on the container. If additional containers are needed, the foster parent will consult with the prescribing doctor or pharmacist about obtaining additional containers to be used for respite.
- The foster parent must provide written instructions for medication administration for the respite provider.
- The respite provider will give the appropriate dose to the youth and watch as it is ingested, injected, applied topically, or inhaled.
- At no time will the youth be given the bottle/container.

* **Birth control pills, Epi-pens, and asthma inhalers may be kept in the youth's possession.** Other exceptions may apply if the consultant approves **prior** to the beginning of the respite period.

Respite Provider Qualifications:

Foster parents will ensure that all respite providers meet the qualifications outlined in DCF 56.21(3):

- Be at least 18 years of age and at least 5 years older than any foster child being cared for by the respite provider, except if the respite care provider is a relative of the child, be at least 3 years older than the child.
- Have direct care experience or training in working with children with conditions similar to those of the foster child for whom he or she will be caring.
- Be physically able to provide the care needed.
- Be flexible and willing to work varied, atypical hours.
- Be able to reliably get to and from respite care assignments.
- Have the ability to accept responsibility, work independently, exercise good judgment, maintain confidentiality, and manage the varied medical, behavioral, and other care needs of the foster child(ren).
- Reside in a home that meets the physical, safety, and environmental needs of the foster child for whom care is to be provided if the respite care is to be provided in the respite care provider's residence. Foster parents are responsible for ensuring that respite providers meet these standards.
- Authorize the licensing or supervising agency to conduct a criminal records check. Criminal records checks will be completed prior to the first respite episode and then every two years for as long as the respite provider is used.
- Agree to provide quality, reliable, and temporary care for the child in foster care that is consistent with the child's treatment, case, or service plan.
- Obtain from the foster parent appropriate information about the specific care procedures and interaction strategies relevant for the child's care as well as emergency contact information.
- Agree to perform household and emergency tasks directly related to the general health and well-being of the foster child.
- Possess a valid driver's license, automobile insurance, and appropriate child safety restraints if transporting a foster child.
- Agree to abide by rules regarding discipline, physical restraint, and supervision as outlined in DCF 56.09 (1g), (2)(d)&(e), and (5).
- May not be an employee of the licensing agency or a relative of an employee of the licensing agency if the employee works in the area of the agency that issues foster care licenses.

Exceptions:

Any exceptions to this policy need to be made by the Substitute Care Supervisor and/or the Out-of-Home Care Manager.