

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> April 1, 2017
	<b>Section 17:</b> Respite Services for Resource Parent(s)	<b>Version:</b> 2

<b>STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will encourage the resource parent(s) to utilize respite care to support the placement when necessary. **DCS defines respite care as a temporary transfer of caregiving responsibilities with the specific intent of providing support to the resource parent(s).**

**Note:** DCS does not consider field trips and sleepovers to be respite care when the resource parent(s) maintains care and control for the child while the child is absent from the resource home (i.e., the resource parent(s) is available and willing to meet any of the child's needs which may arise).

Respite care must be preapproved by the Family Case Manager (FCM) assigned to the child, unless emergency circumstances exist.

**Note:** If emergency circumstances prevent preapproval of respite care, the resource parent(s) must call the DCS local office to inform the contact person of the emergency and develop a plan that identifies where the child will stay. If the resource parent(s) is unable to speak to DCS local office staff, the Indiana DCS Child Abuse Hotline (Hotline) must be notified of the emergency by calling 1-800-800-5556.

DCS will not pay for the cost of respite care for a child placed in a licensed resource home. Exchange in per diem or reciprocal respite services should be arranged between the resource parent(s) and the respite care provider. See separate policy, [16.2 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative Placements](#), for guidance on respite care when a child is placed with an unlicensed relative.

For a child in out-of-home care, DCS will require that the respite care provider be a licensed resource parent home or licensed child caring institution. Exceptions to this requirement must be evaluated on an individual basis by the DCS Local Office Director (LOD) or designee. If the exception is granted, the approval must be documented in writing.

When the child has therapeutic level placement needs, DCS will require the respite care be provided by a licensed therapeutic foster home or a licensed child caring institution equipped to meet the therapeutic needs of the child.

**Note:** A foster home on an involuntary placement hold is not eligible to provide respite care.

DCS will require the resource parent(s) to provide the respite care provider with the DCS Hotline phone number (1-800-800-5556) and the following information about each child to be cared for:

1. Full name and date of birth;

2. Medicaid number or other insurance information;
3. Medical needs, including detailed medication instructions, doctor's contact information, preferred hospital, and known allergies, if applicable;
4. School and/or daycare information;
5. The DCS local office phone number;
6. A daytime phone number for the assigned FCM;
7. A contact phone number where the resource parent(s) can be reached;
8. Pertinent information relating to the child's behavior; and
9. Restrictions in contacting the parent, guardian, or custodian or any other individual

#### Code References

NA

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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The FCM will:

1. Document all requests, plans, and approvals for respite care services in the case management system;
2. Review all requests for respite care;
3. Seek input from the licensing worker<sup>1</sup>, FCM Supervisor, Child and Family Team (CFT) members, and/or convene a CFT Meeting if there are concerns regarding the length of the planned respite care, frequency of requests, or any other concerns. For further guidance, see separate policy [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#);
4. Notify the resource parent(s) if the request for respite has been approved, and provide an explanation if the request is not approved;
5. Recommend the use of respite care when there are signs of extensive resource parent stress and/or potential for placement disruption;
6. Collaborate with the licensing worker to assist the resource parent(s) with locating and/or coordinating the respite care;
7. Verify arrangements with the respite care provider (e.g., length of stay and drop off and pick-up times);
8. Ensure the respite care provider receives necessary information to adequately care for the child (e.g., medical information, Medicaid number, physician name and number, and FCM contact information);
9. Record the respite care as a temporary absence on the 'Placement Details' screen in the case management system; and
10. Ensure the resource parent(s):
  - a. Requests respite care at least three (3) business days in advance, unless emergency conditions exist. Requests may be in writing or oral;
  - b. Makes all arrangements with the respite care provider (e.g., length of stay, drop-off and pick-up times, pre-care visits, and any agreements regarding payment for respite care); and
  - c. Prepares the child for respite care (e.g., explains respite care to the child and arranges introductions and/or visits between the child and respite caregiver prior to respite care).

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<sup>1</sup> The licensing worker refers to the DCS Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS) or the Licensed Child Placing Agency worker.

## **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Respite care is not considered a placement. However, when choosing a respite provider the FCM and licensing worker should consider the same factors they would consider when identifying placement options, including caregiver capacity and ability. For further guidance, see separate policy, [8.1 Selecting a Placement Option](#).

The FCM should consult with the licensing worker to review the [Child Care Plan \(SF54608\)](#) and consider individuals listed for respite. Appropriate approvals must be obtained, prior to respite, for any unlicensed individual.

### **Why is Approval Necessary for Respite Services?**

DCS must review all respite care requests, because:

1. DCS is responsible for the care and custody of the child. Therefore, DCS needs to be able to locate the child at all times; and
2. Review of respite care use allows DCS to identify potential placement concerns.

## **FORMS AND TOOLS**

[Child Care Plan \(SF54608\)](#)

## **RELATED INFORMATION**

N/A