

RESPITE CARE GUIDLINES

Definition: The temporary, non-punitive absence of one or more foster children from a certified family foster home, receiving home or group home. Reasons may include: a vacation or trip in which the child/children is not able to go for a variety of reasons, a family emergency, or the foster family taking a brief break from fostering. The Larimer County Department of Human Services supports and promotes foster families taking planned respite as a healthy break from the stresses of providing foster care. The goal is to provide a safe alternate care taking arrangement with a minimum of disruption to the child/children. It is not considered respite care when the child spends time away from the foster home with family or friends. All arrangements for respite care require the pre-approval of the child's caseworker. A Family Development Specialist can help provide names and telephone numbers of other certified foster families who have openings and may be available to provide respite care. The attached Child Information for Respite Provider form will be filled out by the foster parent for each child going into respite care and given to the respite provider.

Respite person/family: Best practice would be a person or family well known by the foster family and familiar with the children, able to meet their needs for care, supervision and maintain their routines. The person or family does not need to be a certified foster provider. They may be a relative, neighbor, or friend of the foster family where the child is placed. However, other foster parents may be the best choice as they have an understanding of both the "system" and the likely needs and issues of foster children. If the child/children is in overnight care each child must have a bed. Per Volume 7, if care is provided for up to six hours, the person providing the substitute care can be 16 years old, for instance babysitting for the evening. If care is provided for more than six hours or overnight then the person providing the respite care needs to be 18 years old. If the respite care is provided on a regular basis (for instance, every other weekend) then the respite provider needs to be CPR/First Aid certified and have a CBI and Central Registry of Child Protection background check. If the respite is provided only occasionally, then these items are not mandated. (Per Dana Andrews, State Department of Human Services Licensing Specialist, 6-11-02)

The needs and issues of all the children in the proposed respite provider's home and the foster child/children to be cared for will be communicated to the caseworker prior to the respite to assure the safety of all the children during the respite.

Payment of Respite Care: See attached Child Information for Respite Provider form that contains the Agreement to Pay for Respite Care.