



DCS Practice SOP

Out-of-Home Services

8.17: Respite Services for Resource Parents

Related Policy: N/A

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Version: 1

Roles

- Family Case Manager (FCM)
- FCM Supervisor
- Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS)
- Local Office Director (LOD)
- Kinship Navigator (KN)

Procedure

For children in out-of-home care, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will use licensed respite care providers (resource parent homes or child caring institutions [CCI]). Exceptions must be approved by the LOD or designee and documented in writing.

Note: Field trips and sleepovers are not considered respite care when the resource parent is still responsible for the child.

DCS must approve all respite care requests to:

1. Know the child's location; and
2. Identify any placement concerns.

Note: Discuss any medical needs, safety concerns, and/or behavioral considerations with the current placement provider.

When the child has therapeutic level placement needs, respite care must be provided by a licensed therapeutic foster home or a licensed CCI equipped to meet the therapeutic needs of the child.

Note: A foster home on an involuntary placement hold cannot provide respite care.

The FCM, RFCS, or KN will:

1. Ensure the resource parent:
 - a. Understands requests for respite care must be preapproved and submitted to the FCM at least three (3) business days in advance unless it is an emergency. Requests may be in writing or orally;

Note: In emergency situations, the resource parent must call the DCS local office to inform of the emergency and develop a plan that identifies where the child will stay. If the resource parent is unable to speak to DCS local office staff, they must call the Indiana DCS Child Abuse Hotline (Hotline) at 1-800-800-5556.

- b. Provides the respite care provider the DCS Hotline phone number (1-800-800-5556) and the following information about each child:
 - i. Full name and date of birth;
 - ii. Medicaid number or other insurance information;

- iii. Medical needs, including detailed medication instructions, doctor's contact information, preferred hospital, and known allergies, if applicable;
 - iv. School and/or daycare information;
 - v. The DCS local office phone number;
 - vi. A daytime phone number for the assigned FCM;
 - vii. A contact phone number for the resource parent;
 - viii. Pertinent information relating to the child's behavior; and
 - ix. Restrictions in contacting the parent, guardian, or custodian or any other individual.
- c. 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

Note: 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 and the respite care provider (see Practice SOP Assistance for Unlicensed Relative and Kinship Placements).

- d. 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).
- 2. Document all requests, plans, and approvals in the case management system;
 - 3. Review all respite care requests;
 - 4. Seek input from the licensing worker, FCM Supervisor, Child and Family Team (CFT) members, and/or convene a CFT Meeting (see References) if there are any concerns for the respite care;
 - 5. Notify the resource parent if the respite care request is approved, and explain if it is not;
 - 6. Encourage the use of respite care if there are signs of stress and/or potential placement disruption;
 - 7. Work with the licensing worker to help find and/or coordinate respite care. This may include review of the Child Care Plan and consideration of individuals listed for respite;

Note: 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 when identifying placement options, including caregiver capacity and ability (see References).

- 8. Ensure approval from the LOD or designee is obtained prior to respite for any unlicensed individual;
- 9. Consult with the KN to find and coordinate respite for the unlicensed individual;

Note: The LOD or designee is responsible for giving written approval of any non-licensed respite provider.

- 10. Verify arrangements with the respite care provider; and
- 11. Record the respite care as a temporary absence on the 'Placement Details' screen in the case management system.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Consult with the licensing worker, FCM, CFT, if there are respite care concerns; and
2. Work with the FCM to get LOD or designee approval for unlicensed respite providers.

The Licensing Worker will:

1. Seek input from the FCM and FCM Supervisor if there are respite care concerns;
2. Work with the FCM to help the resource parent find and coordinate respite care;
3. Consult with the FCM to review the Child Care Plan and consider individuals listed for respite; and
4. Ensure LOD or designee approval before respite for any unlicensed individual.

The LOD or designee will approve non-licensed respite providers and document the approval in writing.

Definitions

- [Licensing Worker](#)
- [Respite Care](#)

Resources

- [Child Care Plan \(SF 54608\)](#)

Additional Information

- N/A

References

- [Policy 8.01 Selecting a Placement Option – Related Practice SOP](#)
- [Policy 16.02 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative and Kinship Placements](#)
- [Practice SOP 5.07 Child and Family Team \(CFT\) Meetings](#)