

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 12: Foster Family Home Licensing Section 12: Foster Family Home Capacity	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 7

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) authorizes the number of children a foster family home (FFH) can care for. These limits are based on state law and help make sure FFHs can meet the needs of every child in their care.

POLICY STATEMENT

The number of children allowed in a foster home is set when the home is first licensed. This number can change later if needed. The maximum number depends on the child's age, needs, and how much supervision they require.

- A foster home cannot care for more than six (6) children at one time.
- No more than four (4) of those children can be under six (6) years old.

Note: This total includes:

- Foster children placed by DCS or probation,
- The foster parent's own children (biological, adopted, or guardianship),
- Any other children living in the home who receives regular care and supervision.

A child is defined as:

- Someone under 18 year old, or
- A youth 18 or older who is still under the care of a juvenile court.

Therapeutic Foster Homes

If a foster parent is certified to run a therapeutic FFH:

- They may care for no more than four (4) children total.
- Only two (2) of those children may be foster children.
- This includes any children for whom the foster parent is a relative, guardian, or custodian.

Exceptions to Capacity

DCS may approve an exception to these limits.

- Exceptions are only valid for the specific placement that needs it.
- Once the placement ends, the exception must be removed or the capacity updated in the case management system.

Respite Care

Respite care does not count toward the home's capacity. However, the Family Case Manager (FCM) and licensing worker should still consider:

- The caregiver's ability and limits, and
- The space available in the home.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 29-3-9-1\(h\): Delegation of powers by executed power of attorney; limitations](#)
- [IC 31-27-4-1: License required to operate foster family home; exception](#)
- [IC 31-27-4-8: Supervision and care limits; exceptions](#)
- [IC 31-34-23-5: Placement of a child with a previous placement](#)
- [42 USC 672: foster care maintenance payments program](#)