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|  <b>VERMONT</b><br>DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES<br>Family Services Policy Manual |                              | <b>95</b>                |
| Chapter:                                                                                                                                                                  | Placing Children and Youth   |                          |
| Subject:                                                                                                                                                                  | Respite Care                 | Page 1 of 3              |
| Approved:                                                                                                                                                                 | James Morse, Commissioner    | Effective: 12/1/04 FINAL |
| Supersedes:                                                                                                                                                               | Social Service Policy No. 95 | Dated: 7/1/04            |

## Purpose

To describe the requirements related to approval of respite care providers and use of respite care for children in custody.

## Policy

Respite care is care by an individual or family who is not the child's regular resource caregiver, intended to provide resource caregivers with temporary relief from the demands of caring for a child in custody.

This policy is in effect for respite care that is:

- more than five hours duration (paid or unpaid);
- five or less hours and is being reimbursed by respite care funds; or
- any situation described as respite care in the Teamwork Agreement or the child's case plan.

To the extent that funds allow, resource families are entitled to reimbursement for at least two days of respite care per quarter.

Resource families must obtain approval for any respite care (planned or emergency), unless regular planned respite care is included in the Teamwork Agreement or the child's case plan. Even if pre-planned, resource families should notify the child's social worker of any overnight respite care.

### Approval of Respite Care Providers

Families or individuals who will provide respite care for more than two consecutive days at any time or for more than fifteen days in any 12-month period must be approved. The criteria for approval are:

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- the caretakers are at least eighteen years of age;
- the caretakers have not had a foster care license denied or revoked;
- no member of the household is a substantiated perpetrator of child abuse or neglect or has a criminal history that suggests children would be at risk in the home;
- the family is not providing child care in the home, except that they may provide respite care for a child for whom they already provide child care.

As part of the approval process, a social worker or resource coordinator must visit the home and discuss:


- general information about why children are placed and what behaviors they may see in those children,
- the special needs of an individual child for whom they will provide respite care;
- confidentiality;
- appropriate discipline for children in custody;
- how to access services in case of an emergency during or after the regular work day; and
- reimbursement procedures.

If the family will provide respite care in their own home, the staff person must complete a Checklist for Care of Children in Custody (FS-326). Respite providers will be encouraged to attend Foundation Training.

#### Licensed Resource Families as Respite Care Providers

With the approval of the district office, licensed resource families may provide respite care. They may exceed their license capacity to provide respite care if:

- respite care for the child with this resource family does not occur on a regular, planned basis;
- the child's respite stay with the resource family will not exceed fifteen days;
- safety of concerned parties has been considered.

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### Reimbursement for Respite Care

There are two ways to reimburse for respite care:

- The resource family pays respite workers for their services directly and requests reimbursement by submitting an expense account to the resource coordinator at least monthly. A receipt from the respite care provider must be attached.
- The resource family submits a bill from the respite worker, listing the respite worker's name, address and social security number, the child's name, the hours worked, the total rate to be paid.

Respite care is not ordinarily paid via the foster care payroll, as resource families should continue to receive their daily rate during the respite period. In no case will respite care of two or fewer day's duration be regarded as a change of placement. When respite care is planned for an extended period of time, the district director may approve payment on the payroll. If respite care is paid on the foster care payroll, the placement should be coded as such.

When resource families are receiving an enhanced daily rate as a result of a Caregiver Responsibility Agreement, respite care is ***included*** in the daily rate unless otherwise specified by an agreement approved by the district director.

#### District Tasks:

The district director will establish local protocol to ensure that the following steps are completed.

- Obtains Information on the Family (FS-687) form from the applicant.
- Checks central registry and master index.
- Sends or faxes Information on the Family form (FS-687) to Residential Licensing, indicating that the family is applying for respite care only.

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- Provides necessary training to applicants.
- If respite will occur in the family's home, visits to review physical facility. Completes Checklist for Care of Children in Custody (FS-326).
- Makes recommendation for approval to district director.
- Determines if specific requests for respite care can be approved in light of available funds.
- Keeps social workers informed about the presence of children receiving respite care in resource families where children are currently placed.
- Processes foster parent expense accounts and/or respite worker bills.

#### District Director Tasks

- Reviews recommendation and makes approval decision.
- Approves expense accounts and/or bills. Tracks expenditures (or designates other staff person to perform this function).