

Section: Family and Children's
Subject: Alternate Care –
Title: Basement Sleeping Arrangements

I. PURPOSE:

To provide children in foster care a safe, well maintained sleeping arrangements (HFS 56.07)

II. APPLICABILITY:

Applies to all Children's Foster Homes licensed by La Crosse County Human Service Department under HFS 56 and 38

III. DEFINITIONS:

- **Basement** means that portion of a dwelling below the first floor or ground floor with its entire floor below grade [s. Comm.20.07 (8)]
- Exits [s. Comm. 21.03(5) (b) and (6m)]
- Applicable Foster Care Codes HFS 56.07(1) (4)
- **Ambulatory** means able to walk without difficulty or help
- **Semi - ambulatory** means able to walk with difficulty or able to walk only with assistance of an aid such as crutches, a cane, or walker
- **Non-ambulatory** means not able to walk at all but is able to be mobile with the help of a wheel chair.
- Finished Basement includes:
 - Semi to permanent floor covering (tiles, wood floors, carpets and area rugs {at least 75% of the floor covered by an area rug}) does not include throw rugs, or painted or unpainted cement floors.
 - Bedrooms shall be enclosed by full height walls and shall have a rigid door that the child can open and close, be properly ventilated, have a window for light and a light operated by a wall mounted switch.
 - Walls include sheet rock or dry wall & painted, or paneled walls, does not include painted or unpainted cement block or poured concrete walls on exterior walls.
 - Hallways should be a least 3 feet in width. Comm.21.03 (9)
 - Ceilings should be covered, no exposed insulation or wiring. Ceiling height shall be at least 7 feet Comm. 21.06
 - Bedrooms must have electrical wall mounted outlets, and be vented for heating and cooling.
 - Lighting should be adequate, no unfinished light fixtures.
 - Basement living spaces, including bedrooms must have a means of controlling and regulating humidity levels.
 - Furnace and laundry rooms must be distinct rooms separate from common living areas (play areas, TV rooms) and sleeping areas. Furnace rooms should have a solid door.

IV. POLICY/PROCEDURE:

All basement living spaces must be finished, including bedrooms, play areas, hallways. Unfinished parts of the basement need to walled off and separated from areas that are considered "living areas".

No foster child may regularly sleep in an unfinished basement. No household member may regularly sleep in any of these places in order to accommodate the presence of the foster child. HFS 56.07 (4) (e)

No foster child under the age of 7 years or a child with limited mobility or functioning may regularly sleep in a finished basement. HFS 56.07 (4) (f). A child, who is not able to independently evacuate the basement within two minutes, is considered to have mobility impairment for the purpose of this policy.

No foster child 7 years of age or older may regularly sleep in a finished basement bedroom... Unless there are two exits to grade from that floor level and provisions for adequate heating, cooling, ventilation and humidity control and been made. HFS 56.07 (4) (g) and s. Comm. 21.03 (5) (b) and (6m)

Basements which include spaces used for sleeping shall be provided with at least two exits. One exit shall be a stairway or ramp that leads to grade. A code compliant egress windows in each room used for sleeping may be provided in lieu of a second exit from the basement.

The licensing agency may impose additional safety conditions upon a licensee who provides care for foster children under one year of age or foster children with mental or physical disabilities when the age, impaired judgment, or mobility of the children creates additional safety risks..."

A fire extinguisher must be located near the exit to grade. (2A10BC)

The foster parent/s will maintain **Fire Protection**, consistent with **HFS 56.08 (7) & (8)**

Homes utilizing basement sleeping arrangements must have a carbon monoxide detector in the basement living area.

Smoke detectors must be replaced every ten years or sooner if recommended by the manufacturer.

A smoke detector must be placed in the furnace room, as well as other rooms as prescribed by the foster care code.

Homes built after 4/1/1992 must have interconnected smoke detectors in all living area including basements.

Homes built prior to 4/1/1992 must have at least one radio connected /wireless unit for basement smoke detector that is connect to a main floor smoke detector.

Sleeping arrangements will be reviewed and approved during the initial licensing process and subsequent re-licensing.

Foster parents seeking to utilize basement sleeping arrangements must first notify the Alternate Care Social Worker and secure approval prior to the use of the room.

If there is a disagreement between the home owner and the Social Worker licensing the home regarding compliance with building codes, we will ask a local building inspector to render a decision regarding compliance with the building code. Issues related to compliance with foster care code, will be reviewed by the supervisor of the Alternate Care Unit

V. METHOD OF REVIEW:

The policy will be reviewed annually.

EFFECTIVE: 1/1/2006

REVISED: DEC 2005

APPROVED: KEITH KELLER