

Section: Family and Children's

Subject: Alternate Care – Respite

Title: Foster Care Respite Policy

- I. PURPOSE:** Respite Care is meant to provide a “break” or “rest” for the primary caregiver(s) of the foster children that are currently residing in their home. Foster parenting can be exhausting and can place stress upon members of the family. This increase in stress is especially true when the foster child(ren) living in the home exhibit significant behavioral and emotional needs and/or have significant physical care needs. The respite that is used by the foster family is intended to relieve stress and prevent “burnout” and thereby reduce the chance of a disruption in the foster child’s placement. Appropriate use of respite services are an important part of the treatment for the children in foster care because prevention of disruption also prevents further trauma to the child.

Respite care is offered to all La Crosse County foster homes that are currently caring for foster children. Respite care may be coordinated with a child's visitation or reunification plan. The base rate is a maximum of twelve (12) days per calendar year and these days are accrued each month. For example, a foster home that has a child (rated at the base rate for respite) placed in their home on April 4th would be eligible for one (1) day of respite for the month of May.

Foster children that are in care for more than thirty (30) days will be assessed for a **level of care rating** (based on the Uniform Foster Care Supplemental/Exceptional Rating system). If the child’s behavioral, emotional or physical care needs warrant a supplemental/exceptional rating, this rating will determine how many additional days of respite the foster family will receive per calendar year for the identified foster child.

- II. Applicability:** This policy applies to all La Crosse County foster homes and La Crosse County foster children.

- III. Definitions:** Throughout the Alternate Care policies these definitions apply:
- U.F.C.R. – Uniform Foster Care Rate (State of Wisconsin)
 - Supplemental/Exceptional – as defined per (1990)HSS 56.09 (a)(b)(c)
 - Regular respite – the monthly allotment used consistently every month.
 - Extended respite – respite that is longer than a 2 day period.

IV. Policy/Procedures:

- 1.) Use of respite is at the discretion of the foster parents, however respite earned must be used within the calendar year as respite does not carry over into the next calendar year.
- 2.) All respite providers must have a foster care license for respite, this includes a completed respite application, criminal background checks, an interview with ACRU staff, and a home inspection. The provider must also meet all insurance requirements **prior** to being designated as a certified respite provider for the La Crosse County Foster Care program. All La Crosse County Foster parents automatically qualify as a certified respite care providers for La Crosse County.
- 3.) Foster parents utilizing respite for the foster placements in their home **may not** provide respite care for other foster children during the same period of time.
- 4.) **Initial** requests for regular respite care shall be made to the respite care coordinator not less than two weeks in advance of the dates that respite is needed unless an emergency exists.

- 5.) The respite care coordinator will assist the foster parents in selecting an appropriate provider and the foster parent will make final arrangements (i.e. set dates, times and arrange transportation). The foster parent can then utilize respite on an ongoing basis, consistent with the authorized amount,
- 6.) A request for **extended respite** care shall be made to the Alternate Care Social Worker not less than **Fifteen (15) days** in advance of the dates that respite is needed unless an emergency exists.
- 7.) Respite care must be earned prior to use or must have the prior approval of the supervisor of Alternate Care, in emergency (i.e. hospitalization or death of family member) situations exceptions will be made.
- 8.) At the time of respite use, the foster parent must fill out the **Respite Care Agreement form** and provide this to the respite care provider.
- 9.) The respite care provider must complete the Respite Care Agreement, sign and send it to the Respite Care Coordinator. **All forms** must be received by the coordinator no later than the **third (3rd) day of each month** to receive payment for the services provided.
- 10.) The respite care coordinator will monitor respite care earned and respite care used for each child in placement.
- 11.) When Supplemental/Exceptional payment rates are set and take effect the following scale will be used to determine level of care, respite per placement year and respite rate:

2009 Rates

<u>Points</u>	<u>Level of Care</u>	<u>Days per placement year</u>	<u>provider rate/day</u>
0	Base (infants)	twelve (12)	\$30.00
0	Base (1 –17 yr.)	twelve (12)	\$35.00
1 – 16	First	twenty-four (24)	\$35.00
17 – 28	Second	thirty -six (36)	\$35.00 - 40.00
28 + except*	Third	forty-eight (48)	\$40.00 - 55.00

* requires a minimum of 28 points plus recommendation of the treatment team and supervisory approval from the Alternate Care Unit supervisor.

- 13.) The respite rate/day will become effective on the month following the rate setting and respite pay will not be retroactive unless previously approved by the Alternate Care supervisor.
- 14.) Additional respite provider qualifications are outlined in the new foster care licensing rule, HFS 56.06 (a – m)
- 15.) Four (4) respite children is the maximum allowable during any one respite period, or no more than eight (8) total (including all respite, biological, adopted, related or non-related visiting children, and adults requiring care and supervision) shall be in the care of the provider at the same time.

V. Method of Review: This policy will be reviewed by the Alternate Care Supervisor on an annual basis, January of every year.

Effective: 1/1/2000

Revised: 3/31/01

Approved: 3/30/00, 3/31/01 (N. Pohlman)

Revised 10/30/02

Approved : Keith Keller 11/12/02

Revised 1/3/2006

Approved: Keith Keller 1/3/2006