

January 26, 2024

**GENERAL LETTER NO. 18-DI-6**

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Child Welfare and Community Services  
Division of Family Well-Being and Protection

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 18, Chapter D(1), **Child Welfare Foster Family Home**, 60,  
revised.

**Summary**

This chapter is revised to update information regarding the Respite process.

**Effective Date**

Upon receipt.

**Material Superseded**

Remove the following pages from Employees' Manual, Title 18, Chapter D(1), and destroy them:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date</u>
60	October 20, 2023

**Additional Information**

Refer questions about this general letter to your area service administrator.

Foster parents will be required to submit the child care invoice on a bi-weekly or monthly basis and cannot combine multiple months on the same expense payment form. Multiple children cannot be on the same form.

### **Foster Family Respite Care**

Legal reference: 441 IAC 156.8(7)

**Policy:** The Department may authorize respite for a child in family foster care for up to 24 days per calendar year per placement. Foster parents may also use respite care for planned vacation as long as the total number of respite days in the calendar year does not exceed 24.

A licensed foster family shall provide the respite care. The family identified as a respite provider must not be above license capacity as the children in placed with the family for respite counts in the family's license capacity.

### **Procedure:**

1. Use respite care as needed to provide foster parents with a break from the constant demands of caring for a foster child.

The foster family should plan ahead for respite if possible.

The family seeking respite care is responsible to plan for respite care with the identified respite provider and then seek approval for the respite placement from HHS. The family may contact another foster family directly to make respite care arrangements.

The foster family's contract caseworker can assist in arranging respite care.

2. When a foster family requests respite, verify the foster family has available respite days to approve the request. If the foster family does not have the days of respite available, an exception to policy would be required.
3. Inform the contractor when a respite placement is approved.
4. Maintain documentation of the foster parent's use of respite care in the file. Include in the documentation that the child meets the definition of special needs when behavioral needs payments apply.
5. Reimburse a respite care provider at the same daily rate that the child is eligible to receive in the resident foster family home. If an overnight stay is involved, pay the respite family for the day in and successive days but not for the day out. (A respite day does not necessitate an overnight stay of the foster child in the respite family foster home.)

To process payments for respite, access the SERL screen in FACS. Payment for respite care **must** be made within 12 months of the care. For any payment over 12 months old, the provider must submit a claim to the State Appeals Board.

6. In accordance with reasonable and prudent parenting, foster parents may use a family member, friend, or other trusted person to provide respite. The foster parent would be responsible for any payment. The Department cannot pay respite to an unlicensed provider.