 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	9 – Ongoing Services to Foster Children
	Section No./Name	Ongoing Services to Foster Children
	Document No./Name	6-920 Respite Care and Alternative Child Care Plans
	Effective Date	August 3, 2021

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Free of charge, community, licensed respite services may be available to children in very limited circumstances. The Foster Care case worker is responsible for working with relatives or the Home Development (HD) worker to encourage foster caregiver to develop a variety of backup child care options to provide assistance when needed.

II. PROCEDURES

The case worker should discuss alternative child care plans with relative caregivers during the home study process. HD workers should discuss alternative child care plans with certified foster caregivers. Refer to [9-210, Qualifications of Foster and Adoptive](#), for alternative child care plan requirements. The case worker should encourage and assist the relative or foster caregiver in networking with other relatives or foster caregivers to provide mutual assistance to one another.

Respite cannot be used as a temporary placement for children who have no other placement.

Payment shall only be made for respite when a child has another actual placement.


A. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

42 USC 671 reauthorized the Family Preservation and Family Support Act enabling an annual amount of funding to be directed toward community based family supports, time limited reunification efforts, adoption supports and family preservation services to assist families in reaching goals of safety, permanence and well-being. Respite care is one of the services which may be provided. Staff are encouraged to use these resources to support and stabilize foster care placements.

B. DCFS PAID RESPITE CARE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Respite care is the temporary care of the child in a certified foster home or residential care setting while board payments are continued to the foster caregiver. The purpose of respite care is to give caregivers temporary relief from care of the child. * Caregivers should explore relatives and friend to assist with providing care prior to requesting respite care. Respite care is planned and arrangements must be discussed with the Foster Care case worker as far in advance as possible. All foster caregivers can receive up to seven days of respite care with case worker and supervisory approval. Approval of up to 25 days per calendar year can be approved by the Child Welfare Manager to assist in preserving placements and providing support for placements of children requiring additional care and supervision. Respite care days in excess of 25 days may be approved by the State Office Foster Care Unit. **

In most situations where temporary child care is needed for foster children, foster caregivers should rely on the child care provider who was designated during the home certification

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process. Refer to [9-210, Qualifications of Foster and Adoptive](#). Noncertified caregivers should also establish temporary child care providers for their foster children ***.

In situations where a foster child or foster caregiver is hospitalized and the foster caregiver or relative caregiver parent needs child care for the foster children in the home, purchase of babysitting may be appropriate. Refer to [6-925, Babysitting for and of Children DCFS Custody](#).

The Department pays for babysitting of foster children when the foster caregivers or relative caregivers attend training.

Therapeutic Family Care (TFC) receive * 25 days of respite per child, per calendar year. Alternative Family Care (AFC) foster caregivers and foster caregivers receiving over \$300 per month in special board payments, excluding payments for non-custody infants, receive 25 ** days of respite care per child per calendar year. *** Respite care days * for TFC and AFC homes in excess of 25 days per calendar year may be approved by State Office Home Development Unit. Diagnostic and Assessment homes and residential providers do not qualify to receive respite care.

Community respite care funded through the Medicaid waiver program must be explored for children who qualify. Any respite days provided through this program will be counted toward the 25 calendar days per year funded by the Department


Payment is \$25 per day per child and \$50 per day per child with special needs for foster care providers other than residential providers. A child is considered special needs if the caregiver is currently receiving at least \$300 in special board for the child or the child is in a TFC/AFC placement. Approval to pay over the amounts set forth ** per day per child can be requested from State Office if the child has special needs which would warrant a higher rate and an identified provider with skills to meet the child’s special needs. Payment is the facility daily rate if a residential care setting must be used. Child Welfare Manager approval is needed.

C. RESPITE CARE IN THERAPEUTIC FAMILY CARE AND ALTERNATE FAMILY CARE

Agencies providing Therapeutic Family Care are expected to provide respite care through the use of their certified foster families.

Alternate Family Care foster caregivers are expected to provide respite care to other AFC families but, if no AFC family is available, a specialized foster home, regular foster home or Therapeutic Family Care home can be used if the family can meet the needs of the child on a temporary basis.

Only when the needs of the child are so intense no foster home can care for the child can a residential care provider be used.

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The TFC or AFC home for which respite services are being provided shall not offer respite services to another child during the respite period.

Refer to [6-525, Treatment Foster Homes Alternate Family Care/ Therapeutic Foster Care and Medical Therapeutic Foster Care Programs.](#)

III. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

There are no forms associated with this policy.

IV. REFERENCES

42 USC 671