



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Guidelines for Foster Home Placements Exceeding Five Total Children in a Foster Home

Supplemental to DCS Policy: 16.4, 16.46

Placement best practice is to maintain no more than five (5) total children in an approved foster home. This guideline provides steps necessary to take for approval for exceptions to this practice.

Approved Foster Home:

- Utilize the PER process for exceeding five (5) total children in an approved foster home;
- When it is questionable if the foster parents can handle the additional placements, access the **Harmony Family Center H.A.R.T.** contract to assess **Home Evaluation/Home Capacity Evaluation** of an approved foster home's capabilities of exceeding five (5) total children in a foster home;
- If the region accepts the recommendation of the **Harmony Family Center** assessment, a cover letter will accompany the assessment identifying the region's approval to allow this home to exceed capacity requirements. This information will be scanned and uploaded to the foster home's current approval period in TFACTS.

Re-activated Foster Home:

- For re-activated foster homes that meet or exceed five (5) total children in the home and it is questionable if the foster parents can handle the additional placements, access the **Harmony Family Center H.A.R.T.** contract to assess **Home Evaluation/Home Capacity Evaluation** the foster home's capabilities of exceeding five (5) total children in a foster home **prior** to re-activation;
- If the region accepts the recommendation of the **Harmony Family Center** assessment, a cover letter will accompany the assessment identifying the region's approval to allow this home to begin the home approval process. This information will be included in the RET Packet when the home is fully approved;
- At re-activation if the region is confident of the foster parent's abilities to provide care beyond five (5) total children in the home, a Non-Safety Waiver request approved by the Regional Director (RD) will be included with the re-activation documentation.

New Foster Home:

- New foster home applicants that have never fostered or have never fostered in Tennessee that meet or exceed five (5) total children in their home **requires** the **Harmony Family Center H.A.R.T. Home Evaluation/Home Capacity Evaluation** assessment to be completed **prior** to beginning the home approval process.
- A criminal history check will be completed on adult household members prior the assessment referral.
- Once the assessment is completed, it is to be reviewed by Foster Parent Support leadership and the RD to determine if the recommendation will be accepted.
- If the region accepts the recommendation of the **Harmony Family Center** assessment, a cover letter will accompany the assessment identifying the region's approval to allow this home to begin the home approval process. This information will be included in the RET Packet when the home is fully approved.

