

# Foster Children Child Care FAQs

This resource briefly answers common child care questions from foster parents/caregivers about acceptable child care for foster children according to current policy and practice.



## **Unlicensed: Family, Friend, Babysitter and Other Assistance**

### **Who can provide care for my foster child at home while I am away?**

- Family and friends can occasionally assist with care if it's less than 72 hours.
- A background check is required for friends and family providing regular, ongoing child care in your home.
- Traditional babysitters helping in the foster child's home are not required to have a foster or child care license.

### **When can other adults provide care for my foster child?**

Friends and family can assist with transportation and supervision for “normal childhood activities” (e.g. sleepovers) and some regularly scheduled activities (e.g., extracurricular activities) outlined in the *Prudent Parenting Guide* (CWP\_0078) available online at [www.dcyf.wa.gov/publications-library/CWP\\_0078](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/publications-library/CWP_0078)

### **Can I leave my medically fragile foster child in the care of a nurse?**

- Care for medically fragile children must be approved by the caseworker on a case-by-case basis.
- A background check may be required for caregivers providing specialized care.

## **Child Care**

A period of less than 24 hours per day of child supervision outside the child's home. A child care license is required when child care is provided for business purposes.

### **Can my foster child's licensed child care extend past the allowed 10 hours a day?**

- Allowable hours can be extended based on work hours and travel time (see <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=110-300-0455> for more information).
- Child care businesses determine their own hours and policies. Some licensed child care providers may allow an extension or charge above the regular rate. Your foster child might encounter multiple caregivers throughout the day.

### **What child care options are available for foster children 13 and older and unable to be left alone?**

- Child care subsidy can only be provided when the child is in a licensed facility and meets specific physical or mental disability requirements [45 CFR § 98.20(a)(1)].
- Discuss with your caseworker how to utilize your family and friends and find after-school programs for care.





## Respite Care

Brief, temporary relief care of children placed with licensed foster parents provided by an in-home or out-of-home provider. Foster parents are not permitted to utilize respite care at the same time they provide respite care.

### ② Can an unlicensed parent provide child care one hour a day for a week while my respite provider is at work?

- Yes, this arrangement is acceptable, if your respite is irregular and this fellow parent is not providing this care as a means of operating a business.
- Your caseworker must provide approval of this arrangement.

### ② Can two foster parents provide weekly respite for each other?

- Yes, this is considered “exchange respite.” This is allowed if each foster parent adheres to the capacity requirements of their license.
- Your caseworker must approve exchange respite.

### ② Can I babysit a fellow foster parent’s foster child in my home even if that puts me over capacity?

- No, you must adhere to your license requirements and have approval through the caseworker.
- Overcapacity situations require your licensor’s approval.



## Payments

View the Caregiver Support Rates chart (<https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-parenting/caregiver-supports-project>) and Provider Payments FAQ (<https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ProviderPaymentsFAQ.pdf>) for more information on payments.

### ② Can I provide paid respite care for another foster parent’s foster child until a licensed child care spot opens?

- Yes, with specific requirements, foster parents can provide “retention respite” (temporary, short-term up to 14 days).
- You must be licensed for the age of the foster child. You must not exceed your licensing capacity. The foster parent must have the accrued respite days.
- You must obtain a child care license if the arrangement becomes regular and long-term.

### ② Can a licensed child care worker or certified respite provider living in my home receive state payments for in-home care of my foster child?

- No, unlicensed respite cannot be paid by the state when the provider is a household member.
- A child care worker providing respite care needs both a child care license background check and a foster care background check.

### ② Can my foster child’s babysitter be paid by the state?

- A babysitter or nanny must be a certified respite provider to qualify for payment from the state.

**FOR ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE  
QUESTIONS, CONTACT:**

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