

S-261 RESPITE FOR FOSTER FAMILIES- MODIFIED



Version 4 effective October 20, 2008 (modified April 1 2019)

(previously FA-14)

Policy

Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell will offer foster parents an array of regular and emergency respite services that are adapted to the needs of both the foster parents and the children in care. These services aim to ensure the continuity of care to the children by the foster family, and avoid exhaustion of the latter. The Agency will favour respite measures that prove to be the least disruptive to the child.

A Residential Services worker will be available each day, within a set schedule, to respond to urgent requests from foster parents in the absence of their Child Welfare Worker.

Respite measures favoured by the Agency are as follows:

- Visits to the child's parents;
- Having a trusted sitter care for the child in the foster parents' home;
- Having the foster parents' friends or extended family care for the child;
- Enrolling a preschool-aged child in daycare for several hours or days each week;
- Hiring a tutor to assist a child who has fallen behind in school;
- Enrolling the child in a summer camp;
- Having another foster family care for the child for a day or the weekend;
- Scheduling an inactive period between placements.

While it is hoped that a child in care might accompany the foster family on vacations, we do recognize that this would incur additional costs. Foster parents who chose to have the child in care accompany them on vacation may request a subsidy for annual vacations. The amounts allocated are determined at the beginning of each fiscal year (April 1st).

Procedure

1. Regular respite services

During the development or review of a child's plan of care, the Child Welfare Worker and the foster parents will determine the form, frequency, conditions and duration of respite services required. **Respite services may be offered in the foster family or by a person who is not a foster parent.** Respite services must meet the needs of both the child and the foster family, without being disruptive to the child or the foster family.

When possible, the individual providing respite services should be known to the child. If the child is receiving respite services from another foster family, a pre-placement visit

must be arranged to allow the child to meet **other foster family**. The child should receive respite care from the same foster family in order to ensure continuity.

If respite services are offered by individuals other than foster parents for a period of more than seven days, such as family or friends of the foster parents, the Child Welfare Worker must complete an abbreviated evaluation (site inspection, criminal records check of all adults, including the vulnerable sector screening, interview with the parents caring for the child, etc.) in order to ensure that it is a safe place.

2. Emergency respite services

In the event of an emergency, foster parents requiring assistance must contact their Child Welfare Worker to plan an intervention and arrange for services appropriate to the circumstances.

In the absence of the child's Welfare Worker, a Residential Services Worker is available to respond to emergency calls from foster parents.

Outside office hours, **foster parents offering respite services** can call the 24/7 Emergency Service at (613) 673-5148, and an on-duty Child Welfare Worker will contact them. If required, the Child Welfare Worker will conduct an intervention at the foster home, following a consultation with the supervisor on duty.

3. Requests for respite

Foster parents will coordinate a respite plan with the Residential Services Worker within 7 working days of the requested respite services. After exhausting all available options that would be least disruptive to the child, the placement worker will select a respite foster family. The worker will ensure the best match between the child, the respite foster family and the foster children already in care.

If the child returns to this foster family on a regular basis, the foster parents may arrange for respite services among themselves. The foster family is responsible for the child's transportation. Foster parents must, however, respect the plan and the frequency approved by the Child Welfare Worker. They must also advise the Child Welfare Worker within 24 hours of the dates that the child will be displaced in order to ensure that the respite foster parents receive the appropriate compensation. If the foster parents cease to provide respite services to the child, the foster family must make a new request to the Child Welfare Worker.

The Agency trusts foster parents to choose a sitter for a child in their care. In making this choice, foster parents must consider the child's age, maturity, and sex, the capabilities of the sitter, and the child's individual needs. Foster parents may only share information with the sitter that is directly related to the supervision and care of the child. Confidentiality concerning the child's parents or others is of the utmost importance. Foster parents must provide the sitter with a contact phone number in case of emergency, as well as the Agency's phone number and the 24/7 Emergency Service number. Foster parents must inform the sitter of the procedure to follow when administering medication to the child. The foster family must ensure that a baby's crib is safe and that a child over six years of age does not share a room with a member of the opposite sex. The sitter must also be advised that the use of corporal punishment is forbidden.

At no time will parents requesting respite services be permitted to provide respite services to other foster parents.

Foster parents who provide respite services must respect all of the Agency's requirements and policies, such as a maximum capacity of four children and the obligation to report serious occurrences.

4. Reimbursement/compensation

4.1. Babysitting/private respite

Upon approval from the Child Welfare Worker, foster parents can claim the cost of babysitting services at their home at the established rate, or at a negotiated rate for extended hours.

Hiring a sitter may allow foster parents to accompany the child in care to medical, dental or psychological visits, as well as for visits to his parents or other family members. Foster parents may hire a sitter to attend training previously approved by the Child Welfare Worker, or in the event of an emergency or a special occasion within the immediate foster family.

4.2. Holiday subsidy

This subsidy reimburses the cost of lodging, meals and special activities incurred during a trip, or other special projects during family vacations.

Any requests for this subsidy must be discussed with the Welfare Worker and approved by the Welfare Worker and his/her supervisor at least 30 days prior to the activity.

Under exceptional circumstances, foster parents may request an additional amount to compensate for extraordinary travel expenses such as airline tickets and lodging.

Definitions

Parents: The term "parents" includes biological and adoptive parents, stepfathers, stepmothers and any other person who is responsible for a child before Valoris intervenes.

References

- [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 156/18: General Matters Under the Authority of the Minister](#)
- [F-210 Board Rates and Refund of Expenses to Foster Parents](#)