

# S-259 CLASSIFICATION AND CAPACITY OF FOSTER FAMILIES **MODIFIED**



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(previously FA-12)

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## Policy

Despite the Ministry rule that allows a maximum of four children to be placed in the same foster family, Valoris tries to avoid placing more than two unrelated children in the same regular foster family **and never more than two children under 2 years of age**. This limit aims to ensure that the children receive the individual attention that they require, as well as a certain degree of exclusivity in their relationships with the adults and children significant in their lives. This measure maximizes the success rate of the permanency plan.

Before placing more than four related children in the same foster family, a Residential Services Supervisor must obtain written authorization from a representative of the Director of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (Program Supervisor). The written approval is placed in the foster family's file.

Upon their approval or during their annual assessment, foster families will be classified according to their availability, their capabilities and their relationship to the child they would like to care for. The classifications are as follows:

- Admission Foster Family and Short Term Placement;
- Regular Foster Family;
- Parent Model Treatment Home;
- Kin Foster Family;
- Emergency Home.

## Procedure

### 1. The capabilities of the foster family

The Welfare Worker leading the assessment will determine the foster family's classification and maximum capacity, upon its approval or during its annual assessment. This decision will consider the following factors:

- The foster parents' ability to respond to the physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs of the children;
- The number of children in the family and their individual needs;
- The amount of space available;
- The foster parents' stated availability.

The number of children in respite care may exceed the maximum of two children; however, the total number of children in respite care plus other children placed in the

foster family must not exceed a maximum of four children. Foster parents must respect this regulation and may not accept additional children into respite care.

## **2. Placement**

Before placing a second child into a foster family, the Welfare Worker of the child currently in the home must be consulted in order to ensure that the child's stability and care will not be jeopardized.

It is preferable to consult directly with children over six years of age. Their comments and suggestions must be taken into consideration.

## **3. Exceptions**

Residential Services Supervisors must authorize any placement of more than two children into the same foster family. This decision will consider the foster parents' capabilities and experience, the particular needs of the child, the impact of a new placement on the children already in care, and the anticipated date for the placement. The Welfare Workers of children currently in the home must also be consulted.

## **4. Database of Foster Families**

A report generated in **CPIN** will include the updates of foster families data (opening, closure, classification and availability) and this report will be distributed, at a frequency as required, to the Residential Services Supervisors and Welfare Workers and to the Child Protection Services Supervisors. A paper copy of the list of foster families will be distributed to the members of the Foster Family Association's Executive Committee and another will be included in the 24/7 Emergency kit.

## **5. Other Classifications**

In some instances, the Agency may commission services from external sources for a specific child for whom there is no adequate care available. Any placement in this type of resource must be approved by a Director of Service, in accordance with Policy and Procedure S-219 Limited use of external residential resources.

Children may be placed in other residential sources such as the following:

- Private external foster families, or foster families supervised by other agencies;
- Group homes or mental health establishments (Roberts/Smart Centre, etc.) that are 100% financed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.
- Hospitals (CHEO, Royal Ottawa Hospital, etc.)
- Private group homes accredited by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

## **6. Private Childcare**

The Ontario Day Nurseries Act stipulates that individuals caring for more than five children in their residence must obtain a permit from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Within this total number, there can be no more than two children under two years of age or three children under three years of age. The number of children in private daycare does not include biological children and children in foster care.

The Agency has the obligation to ensure that this law be respected and must inform the Ministry of Community and Social Services' Eastern offices when foster parents are in breach. Foster parents will be advised in writing when the Agency makes any such report to the Ministry.

## Definitions

**Director:** Employee of the Ministry (or its representative) appointed by the Ministry under the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA). Not to be confused with the Executive Director of the Agency.

**Admission Foster Home and Short Term Placement:** This family provides care for several days or several weeks (up to a maximum of 90 days), for a maximum of four children or adolescents under Valoris' care. An admission foster family is on duty 24 hours a day according to a schedule of availability and it is compensated for its availability. This family receives support from a Community Integration Counselor.

**Regular Foster Family:** This family looks after a maximum of four children and adolescents; the majority of children are placed in this category of foster family.

**Parent Model Treatment Home:** One of the foster parents is in service at home at all times; this family cares for a maximum of four children with special needs (mental health or severe behavioral problems). Foster parents receive support from a specialized team and a supplemental per diem.

**Kin Foster Families:** These families generally look after a child with whom they have a relationship such as a niece/nephew, a neighbor or an acquaintance. The requirements of the assessment take into account that these families are approved to care for a specific child.

**Emergency Home:** These are regular foster families available after hours. They are also on call during the weekend and statutory holidays or when Welfare Workers are unable to find a placement in regular foster families. They are on call according to an established schedule and they receive compensation for their availability.

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

## Annex(es)

- Foster family network

## References

- S-219: Limited use of external residential resources;
- Ministry requirements:  
**R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 70, Article 117**
  - 1) The Society shall ensure that it places no more than four foster children and no more than two foster children under two years of age in each foster home.
  - 2) Subsection (1) does not apply where all the foster children are of common parentage or related to the foster parents and the placement is approved in writing by a Director.

## GUIDELINE

By means of rules and practices governing the placements and capacity of foster homes, the Society must attempt to limit the number of children placed in each foster home, in excess of the limit governed by the rules. These policies and practices must take into account the complexity of the needs of the child in placement and the number of children already placed in the foster home.