Caring for Foster Children Who Else Can Provide Care?

Sometimes children need a break from their daily routine. Activities, time with their birth family, and friends can build a child's self-esteem and reduce the stress of separation from their birth family. It's important for you, as a foster parent, to take a break too! Breaks can provide time to recharge, regroup, and refocus which all help prevent burnout.

Foster parents can exercise the reasonable and prudent parent standard to identify an informal care provider for up to seven consecutive days of care. If a child will be with another caregiver for seven to 13 days, that caregiver must be approved through the agency. In both instances, foster parents can select other individuals who they know, trust, and believe will provide a safe place for their foster children. Foster parents may also access formal respite caregivers that are approved foster homes.

Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Below is a chart comparing requirements between informal and formal respite care providers. As a reminder, please keep your child's worker informed of the child's whereabouts when utilizing other caregivers.

	Informal Care	Alternate Caregiver	Respite Care Provider
Time limit	Less than eight days*	Less than fourteen days	Less than fourteen days
Reasons for use	Date night, before or after school care, weekends away, etc.	Unexpected emergencies, out-of-state family events, etc.	Short-term break
Age requirement	18 years old*	21 years old	21 years old
Background check required	No – foster parent discretion	Yes	Yes
House assessment completed by DHS/Agency	No	Yes	Yes
Provider approved by DHS/ agency for care	No	Yes – specific requirements are met	Yes – fully approved foster family
Approval needed by DHS/agency prior to use	DHS homes – No Agency homes – Yes*	No	Yes
Reimbursement	Foster parent discretion or vouchers, if available (for DHS families only)*	Foster parent discretion or vouchers, if available (for DHS families only)*	Refer to agency for details
Existing relationship with foster family	Yes	Yes	Not required
Examples of providers	Friends, church members, neighbors, relatives	Friends, church members, neighbors, relatives	Fully approved foster family

^{*} Refer to agency for additional details.

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