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.

Informal caregivers may provide care for up to 72 hours. Foster parents should select individuals who possess the maturity and skills needed to address the child's needs. If a child will be with another caregiver for between 4 and 14 days, that caregiver must be approved through the agency as an alternate caregiver. In both instances, foster parents should 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 Human Services

Below is a chart comparing requirements between informal and formal respite care providers.

	Informal Care	Alternate Caregiver	Respite Care Provider
Time limit	Up to 72 hours	Less than 14 days	Less than 14 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	18 years old	21 years old
Background check required	No	Yes	Yes
House assessment completed by OKDHS/Agency	No	Yes	Yes
Provider approved by OKDHS/Agency for care	No	Yes – specific requirements are met	Yes – fully approved foster family
Approval needed by OKDHS/Agency prior to use	OKDHS homes - Yes* Agency homes - Yes**	Yes	Yes
Reimbursement	Refer to your Foster Care Specialist*	Refer to your Foster Care Specialist*	Refer to your Foster Care Specialist 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

* **Prior to utilizing other caregivers, always notify your foster care worker, and in the event it is a relative also talk with your child's worker first.**

** **Refer to Foster Care Specialist for additional details.**

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