

Who Can Be Around Foster Children?

As a resource parent, DHS understands that you may have questions about who can be around foster children placed in your home. Whether it is an individual visiting your home and family, or someone providing a much needed break from caregiving, DHS wants to support you in making good decisions regarding the individuals that are around foster children. Having open and honest conversations with your resource specialist regarding individuals who are around children in the home can be helpful in making those good decisions. Include them in your questions and as a team find solutions together. We are all working to keep children safe.

It is important that you apply the same standards to each person who visits your home that will be around foster children, including family members, friends, and informal caregivers. You must consider that person's personal history as well as his or her history with children. Below is a list of questions to ask yourself prior to allowing other individuals around foster children placed in your home. This is not an all-inclusive list but a starting off point for things to consider.

- ▶ What do you know about the individual's background or personal history? This includes known incidents, allegations or concerns, as well as charges or convictions he or she may have. Does he or she have a history including any of the following, but not limited to:
 - ▶ Substance use and/or abuse, including alcohol
 - ▶ Physical violence
 - ▶ Allegations or concerns that involve things of a sexual nature
 - ▶ Child Welfare involvement, such as investigations regarding abuse, neglect, lack of supervision, or threat of harm
- ▶ Have you observed this person around children? How does he or she interact with children?
- ▶ Is this someone who you accept as "ok" because they are family, or familiar with your family, but you aren't fully aware of their background? If so, don't be afraid to ask more questions.
- ▶ What role will this individual have with the foster children? For example:
 - ▶ Do you expect the individual to visit your family briefly and have supervised or unsupervised access to the foster children?
 - ▶ Do you expect the individual to watch over the foster children as sole caregivers? See Informal Caregiver section below.
- ▶ If the individual is a family member of the foster child, have you talked with the permanency planning specialist, or your resource specialist, to verify if he or she can be around the foster child?

What Is an Informal Caregiver?

An informal caregiver is someone who can provide care for foster children for up to seven consecutive days in order to give you a break. Talk with your resource specialist regarding your choice of informal caregiver(s) for any insight your specialist might have. **Refer to DHS policy regarding this topic on the back of this page.**

340:75-7-65. Child care and support services for the resource home

(h) **Informal care arrangements for the foster child.** Resource parents may make informal care arrangements with friends, neighbors, or relatives for the foster child's occasional care.

- (1) Resource parents apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard when selecting an informal care provider to care for the foster child and ensure he or she possesses the maturity and skills to address the child's needs.
- (2) The foster child may stay with a friend, when the resource parent:
 - (A) knows the family;
 - (B) reasonably believes the family, household members, and environment are safe for the child; and
 - (C) exchanges contact information, including names, addresses, and phone numbers.
- (3) The resource parent notifies the resource specialist when using informal care arrangements. The resource parent cannot use an informal care provider who the resource specialist determines is unsafe.
- (4) The resource parent must obtain permission from the foster child's assigned CW specialist before allowing the foster child's relatives to provide informal care for the child.
- (5) An informal care provider, living outside of the resource parent's home, must be 18 years of age and older.
- (6) A teenager living in the resource parent's home must be 16 or 17 years of age, related to the resource parent, and is limited to providing 12-consecutive hours of informal care. The resource specialist and the resource parent assess the teen's ability and appropriateness to assume responsibility for the foster child and ensure his or her needs and well-being can be met.
- (7) The resource parent does not utilize a child in DHS custody to care for a younger child unless approved by the resource specialist.
- (8) Informal care providers must be notified on how to reach the resource parent and other emergency contacts.
- (9) An individual providing care for more than seven-consecutive days must be an approved alternate caregiver.