

RESPITE

Policy no.: 3.28

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Policy Cross References: Respite Foster Home Approval and Monitoring Process; Basic Foster Care Rate; Level Fee; Block Funding; In Care Progress Report; Child Care, Babysitting and Sleepovers; Discipline; Medical Consent; A Child or Youth Absent Without Permission; and A Child or Youth Missing or Abducted

Legislative References:

PURPOSE: To outline when respite may be provided to foster parents, the requirements for approving respite services, and the applicable respite rates.

POLICY:

1. The purpose of respite services is to:
 - a) provide temporary relief and reduce stress levels for foster parents who are providing care to a child or youth with complex emotional, psychological, physical and behavioral needs;
 - b) assist foster parents with the daily care of a child or youth with **exceptionally** complex needs, or a large sibling group, in order to facilitate or maintain a placement;
 - c) provide the child or youth with access to their community or to activities that will assist in meeting their needs;
 - d) provide care for a child or youth when foster parents must travel outside their home region for overnight or longer (e.g. to attend training related to fostering, a medical appointment, or to attend an appointment/event to meet the needs of another child or youth in care, etc.);
 - e) provide care for a child or youth when foster parents require overnight care for a child or youth due to employment purposes that is not part of a regular employment related child care arrangement (e.g. a foster parent has to work/travel overnight for employment reasons, which is outside their regular employment schedule, etc.);
 - f) provide care for a child or youth who requires overnight care for family visiting purposes; and
 - g) provide care for a child or youth when foster parents require respite due to a **significant life event** (e.g. death in the family, hospitalization, etc.).
2. Foster parents receive money for respite through block funding. Additional respite may be approved on an hourly, daily, weekend or weekly basis in **exceptional circumstances** and if deemed necessary based on the needs of the child or youth and/or the foster family.
3. Vacation respite may be provided to foster parents to enable them to take a vacation break.

4. Foster parents are **not permitted** to provide respite at the same time that a child or youth placed in their home is receiving in or out of home respite.
5. The social worker shall refer to the *Respite Foster Home Approval and Monitoring Process* policy for information on approving and monitoring respite homes.

PROCEDURES:

Approval

Level 1 and 2 Foster Homes

1. Foster parents receive monies for the equivalent of one respite weekend per month in the block funding they receive. Foster parents should use their discretion on how to best meet their respite needs using the funding provided. Requests for additional respite may be considered in **exceptional circumstances** where it is deemed necessary based on the needs of the child or youth and/or the foster family. The social worker shall consider the following when assessing the need for additional respite:
 - a) age and developmental abilities/needs of the child or youth;
 - b) number of persons with complex needs placed within a home;
 - c) degree of stress experienced by the foster parent(s);
 - d) number of respite hours the foster parent(s) is requesting;
 - e) medical considerations of the child or youth;
 - f) dependency of the child or youth in the area of self-help;
 - g) requirement of the child or youth for constant or intensive supervision;
 - h) behavioural difficulties exhibited by the child or youth (e.g. self-abusive, destructive or aggressive behavior, etc.);
 - i) recommendations by the In Care Planning Team and health care/school/other professionals; and
 - j) reason why a foster parent is requesting respite (e.g. for employment travel or for an out-of-town medical appointment, etc.).
2. Where additional respite is recommended by a social worker and supervisor, a manager may approve:
 - a) up to 5 hours of additional hourly respite per week; and
 - b) overnight respite to allow the foster parent(s) to attend to their own medical needs (e.g. a foster parent that has to be hospitalized or attend a medical appointment in another jurisdiction), respite due a significant life event (e.g.: death in the family), for employment travel, for the foster parent(s) to travel to accommodate the needs of another child (e.g. travelling with another child for a medical appointment), or for respite for a child/youth travelling to another community for family visiting or reunification purposes.

Level 3-Specialized Foster Homes

3. Foster parents receive monies for the equivalent of two respite weekends per month in the block funding they receive. Foster parents should use their discretion on how to best meet their respite needs using the funding provided. Requests for additional respite may be considered based the complex needs of children and youth that are matched with a specialized foster home and the support needs of the foster family.

4. Where additional respite is recommended by a social worker in consultation with the In Care Planning Team, a supervisor may approve:
 - a) up to 10 hours of additional respite a week to provide **temporary relief** and reduce stress levels for foster parents.
 - b) up to 20 hours per week of respite support in the home and/or in the community where a second person is required to work directly with and assist the foster parent(s) to manage and/or address a child or youth's complex behavioral or medical needs.
5. A manager may approve up to an additional 10 hours of respite per week for a combined maximum of 40 hours per week where it has been assessed and documented by the social worker in consultation with the supervisor and In Care Planning Team, that additional hours are required to meet a specific identified need that cannot be addressed with the hours a supervisor can approve (e.g.: a child has a medical condition that requires a second person to assist the foster parent more than 20 hours per week).
6. A manager may approve overnight respite to allow the foster parent(s) to attend to their own medical needs (e.g. a foster parent that has to be hospitalized or attend a medical appointment in another jurisdiction), respite due a significant life event (e.g.: death in the family), respite for the foster parent(s) to travel to accommodate the needs of another child (e.g. travelling with another child for a medical appointment), respite for the foster parent(s) to attend an approved training event or for respite for a child/youth travelling to another community for family visiting or reunification purposes.

Level 1, 2 and 3 Foster Homes

7. All Financial requests and approvals shall be completed electronically on the Financial Benefit Request (FBR) and the approval shall be noted in the case file.
8. Approval of funding for additional respite shall be approved up to a **maximum period** of 6 months, at which time the need for respite shall be reassessed before any further approval is granted.
9. When it is determined that additional respite services are required to meet the needs of a child or youth, the social worker shall document the rationale for respite in the child or youth's *In Care Progress Report*.
10. Please refer to the **Block Funding** policy for additional information related to considering and/or approving additional respite.
11. A manager may approve transportation costs for respite, to a maximum of 250 kms per week, if deemed necessary based on distance and frequency, and if established to meet the needs of the child or youth. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the fluctuating basic Provincial Government rate. Foster parents in receipt of block funding shall be expected to cover all or a portion of the respite provider's transportation costs. Please refer to the **Block Funding** policy for details.
12. Hourly respite providers shall not be approved for reimbursement of their own meals.

Requirements for Hourly Respite Providers

13. The social worker shall discuss the requirements for hourly respite providers with foster parents, and shall ensure and document in the child or youth's in care file that prior to being hired to provide respite, the hourly respite provider:
 - a) provides one reference from a non-relative and one reference from a collateral community contact (e.g. minister, community leader, teacher, etc.) who they have known for at least one year;
 - b) provides a clear police records check and Vulnerable Sectors Check by:
 - i. making an application to the police jurisdiction where they currently reside and giving permission to have a criminal record check completed in all jurisdictions where they previously resided;
 - ii. selecting to have the Vulnerable Sector Check completed on the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) Criminal Records Check form, or completing a Request for a Vulnerable Sector Check form if residing in a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) jurisdiction. The Vulnerable Sector Check will identify if an individual has been pardoned for a sexual offence;
 - iii. if residing in an RCMP jurisdiction, making an application to the provincial court to have a check completed. Applications are available at RCMP detachments;
 - iv. if residing in a Royal Newfoundland Constabulary jurisdiction, making an application to the Provincial Court to have a check completed if it is possible that they may have a record prior to 1980.
 - v. if a criminal record check identifies a current criminal charge(s) or previous criminal conviction(s) for a child or youth, the social worker shall stamp the criminal record check documentation with the non-disclosure date. Please refer to the *Youth Corrections Records Management* policy for additional information.
 - c) has a completed *Child Protection Clearance Check* from any areas of the province and from any other jurisdictions in which they have previously resided. Where there has been previous involvement, the social worker shall explore the circumstances of that involvement. Contact shall be made with any social worker previously involved, all relevant information shall be reviewed, and there shall be supervisory consultation before a decision is made whether to continue with the approval process. Potential respite providers who have unresolved child protection concerns shall not be approved to provide respite;
 - d) understands their role with the child or youth;
 - e) understands the importance of maintaining confidentiality in relation to information about the child or youth and the child or youth's family; and
 - f) signs a *Declaration of Confidentiality* form and understands the limits of confidentiality.

14. The social worker, through consultation with the foster parent(s) and the child or youth where appropriate, shall review and evaluate the respite worker's performance to ensure the service is an appropriate fit for the child or youth and the foster parent(s).

15. The social worker shall advise the foster parent(s) that he/she is considered to be the employer of the hourly respite provider and therefore the foster parent(s) must contact the Canada Revenue Agency to open an account. Information regarding payroll,

contributions and deductions can be obtained directly from the Canada Revenue Agency online at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/payroll.html>.

16. The foster parent(s) or an individual/agency they have hired to keep payroll records shall be reimbursed for the approved respite rate, including employer contributions. All earnings must be reported to the Canada Revenue Agency. Foster parents are required to provide a T4 to the respite provider at the end of the calendar year. Foster parents receiving block funding are required to pay any associated payroll administration fee for hourly respite paid for through block funding.
17. In situations where the foster parent is considered the employer for a service not covered under block-funding, (e.g. child care, babysitting, tutoring or hourly respite approved in addition to block funding), the cost of associated employer benefits and/or payroll administration fees shall be approved by the individual approving the original request (e.g. if a supervisor has the authority to approve child care hours they would also approve the associated employer benefits and administration fees).
18. Foster parents shall ensure that when hiring individuals/agencies to keep payroll records that the respite providers are not placed on the agency's/individual's payroll. The respite provider is employed by the foster parent(s) and all records shall be in the foster parent's name.
19. The cost of coverage by the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC) is not provided by the Department. Where the employer (the foster parent) wishes to provide the respite provider with WHSCC coverage, this must be paid for from their own resources and involves the completion of the Householder's Coverage Application which can be accessed online at: <http://www.workplacenl.ca/forms.whscc>.

Requirements for Overnight/Weekend/Weekly Respite Providers

20. The social worker shall advise foster parents that respite providers who provide regular overnight or weekend respite in the foster home, or any duration of overnight respite outside the foster home shall be assessed/approved as respite providers as per the *Respite Home Approval and Monitoring Process* policy.
21. If a foster parent requires one time or occasional overnight/weekend respite in the foster home a supervisor may approve a respite provider outside of the *Respite Home Approval and Monitoring Process* policy based on the following requirements. The social worker shall ensure that the respite worker:
 - a) is well known to the foster family and has a connection to the child (e.g. relative who regularly visits the foster home, etc.);
 - b) provides one reference from a non-relative and one reference from a collateral community contact (e.g. minister, community leader, teacher, etc.) who they have known for at least one year;
 - c) provides a Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sectors Check by:
 - i. making an application to the police jurisdiction where they currently reside and giving permission to have a criminal record check completed in all jurisdictions where they previously resided;
 - ii. selecting to have the Vulnerable Sector Check completed on the Royal

Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) Criminal Records Check form, or completing a Request for a Vulnerable Sector Check form if residing in a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) jurisdiction. The Vulnerable Sector Check will identify if an individual has been pardoned for a sexual offence;

- iii. if residing in an RCMP jurisdiction, making an application to the provincial court to have a check completed. Applications are available at RCMP detachments; and
- iv. if residing in a Royal Newfoundland Constabulary jurisdiction, making an application to the Provincial Court to have a check completed if it is possible that they may have a record prior to 1980.

If a prospective respite provider has a current criminal charge(s) or previous criminal conviction(s), the social worker must carefully assess the relationship of any criminal activity to the safety of a child or youth placed in the home and they shall not be approved if there is a current charge or previous conviction for a child related offence.

If a criminal record check identifies a current criminal charge(s) or a previous criminal conviction(s) for a child or youth, the social worker shall stamp the criminal record check documentation with the non-disclosure date. Please refer to the ***Youth Corrections Records Management*** policy for additional information.

- d) consents to a *Child Protection Clearance Check* from any areas of the province and from any other jurisdictions in which they have previously resided. Where there has been previous involvement, the social worker shall explore the circumstances of that involvement. Contact shall be made with any social worker previously involved, and all relevant information shall be reviewed. Potential respite providers who have unresolved child protection concerns shall not be approved to provide respite;
- e) understands their role with the child or youth;
- f) understands the importance of maintaining confidentiality in relation to information about the child or youth and the child or youth's family;
- g) signs a *Declaration of Confidentiality* form and understands the limits of confidentiality;
- h) receives a copy of the ***Positive Discipline, Medical Consent, A Child or Youth Absent Without Permission, and A Child or Youth Missing or Abducted*** policies; and
- i) completes an in-person interview with the social worker to ensure that they meet these requirements.

22. The social worker shall, in consultation with the foster parent(s), review and evaluate the respite worker's performance to ensure the service is appropriate for the child or youth and the foster parent(s).

23. Remuneration of approved respite homes providing overnight/weekend/weekly respite is not considered reportable income by the Canada Revenue Agency and is treated in the same manner as foster care payments.

Vacation Respite

- 24. A supervisor may approve 1 week of vacation respite annually for a *Level 1* or *Level 2* foster home to accommodate a foster parent(s) going on vacation.
- 25. A supervisor may approve up to 2 weeks of vacation respite annually for a *Level 3* foster home to accommodate a foster parent(s) going on vacation.

Respite Rates

- 26. The maximum rates for payment of hourly and overnight respite for a Level 1 or Level 2 foster home are as follows:

Table 1: Hourly (Out-of-Home) Respite Rate for Level 1 and 2 Foster Homes

Respite rate for 1 child or youth or for 2 children/youth, where respite is provided to both children/youth together, by the same respite provider	\$15.55
Respite rate for 3 or more children/youth where respite is provided to all children/youth together by the same respite provider	\$19.44

Table 2: Hourly (In-Home) Respite Rate for Level 1 and Level 2 Foster Homes

Respite rate for 1 child or youth or for 2 children/youth, where respite is provided to both children/youth together, by the same respite provider	\$15.55
Respite rate for 3 or more children/youth where respite is provided to all children/youth together by the same respite provider	\$19.44

Table 3: Overnight (Out-of-Home) Respite Rate for Level 1 and 2 Foster Homes

Duration of Respite	Rate per child/youth
Overnight (single day <i>and</i> night only)	\$87.50
2 nights	\$175
3 nights	\$220
4 nights	\$258.75
5 nights	\$297.50
6 nights	\$336.25
Weekly	\$375

Table 4: Overnight (In-Home) Respite Rate for Level 1 and 2 Foster Homes

Duration of Respite	Rate for 1 child/youth	Rate for each additional child/youth <u>in</u> the foster home
Overnight (single day <i>and</i> night only)	\$87.50	\$43.75
2 nights	\$175	\$87.50
3 nights	\$220	\$110
4 nights	\$258.75	\$129.38
5 nights	\$297.50	\$148.75
6 nights	\$336.25	\$168.13
Weekly	\$375	\$187.50

Table 5: Hourly (Out-of-Home) Respite Rate for Level 3 Foster Homes

Respite rate for 1 child/youth	\$17.13
Respite rate for 2 children/youth (or a sibling group of more than 2) where respite is provided to all children/youth together by the same respite provider	\$21.41

Table 6: Hourly (In-Home) Respite Rate for Level 3 Foster Homes

Respite rate for 1 child/youth	\$17.13
Respite rate for 2 children/youth (or a sibling group of more than 2) where respite is provided to all children/youth together by the same respite provider	\$21.41

Table 7: Overnight (Out-of-Home) Respite Rate for Level 3 Foster Homes

Duration of Respite	Rate per child/youth
Overnight (single day <i>and</i> night only)	\$100
2 nights	\$200
3 nights	\$245
4 nights	\$308.75
5 nights	\$372.50

6 nights	\$436.25
Weekly	\$500

*A foster parent(s) shall be approved as a Level 3 foster home to receive the Level 3 respite rate

Table 8: Overnight (In-Home) Respite Rate for Level 3 Foster Homes

Duration of Respite	Rate for 1 child/youth	Rate for each additional child/youth <u>in</u> the foster home
Overnight (single day <i>and</i> night only)	\$100	\$50
2 nights	\$200	\$100
3 nights	\$245	\$122.50
4 nights	\$308.75	\$153.38
5 nights	\$372.50	\$186.25
6 nights	\$436.25	\$218.13
Weekly	\$500	\$250

27. If a Level 1, 2 or 3 foster parent is approved for respite for a month or longer, the weekly rate shall be used for the first 30 days and after 30 days the basic foster care rate, Children’s Special Allowance, block funding and a level fee, if applicable, shall be suspended for the foster parent(s) and provided to the respite provider. The rate paid to respite providers on a **monthly** basis **shall not exceed** the monthly rate paid to the child or youth’s foster parent(s).
28. If a foster parent is considered the employer for an hourly respite provider, the employer benefits and payroll administration fees shall be approved in addition to the hourly respite rate by the individual approving the respite hours (e.g.: if a manager has the authority to approve the respite hours he or she would also be able to approve the employer benefits and payroll administration fees).

EXCEPTIONS:

1. In **exceptional and emergency situations** (e.g. additional respite to avoid placement breakdown, etc.), for Level 1, 2 and 3 foster homes a zone manager may approve an exceptional respite request if the Regional Director (RD) is unavailable and the request is urgent and cannot wait for approval. In such circumstances, the manager shall notify the the RD explaining the circumstances of why they approved the expense.
2. In **exceptional circumstances** for Level 3 specialized foster homes, the manager may

approve a higher hourly respite rate of **\$24.10** if an agency is required or where a respite provider is required who has unique skill set. This skill set should be consistent with the required competencies for Level 3 foster parents and the respite worker should demonstrate through a combination of education, experience and employment history the ability to care for a child/youth with extraordinary complex behavioural or medical needs.

3. In an **emergency situation** where overnight respite is required for up to one week and an approved respite provider is not available, a supervisor may approve a respite provider outside of the ***Respite Home Approval and Monitoring Process*** as outlined in Procedure #15 above, and if a Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector Check are not available, a Provincial Court Check and a verbal police check may be substituted until the Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector Check is completed (this should be obtained as quickly as possible).
4. Any other exceptional requests for respite for Level 1, 2 or 3 foster homes require the approval of the RD.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

- *Canada Revenue Agency:* <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/payroll.html>.
- *Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission – Householder’s Coverage Application:* <http://www.workplacenc.ca/forms.whscc>
- *In Care Progress Report*
- *Child Protection Clearance Check Application* form