

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 13, 2022

TO: CfE Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
CfE Assistant Directors, Local Departments of Social Services

THRU: Stafford Chipungu, Chief Financial Officer 
Department of Human Services

FROM: Denise Conway, LCSW-C 
Executive Director, Social Services Administration

RE: Center for Excellence in Resource Family Development (CfE) Respite Care Guidance

This Respite Care Guidance is provided by the Department of Human Services/Social Services Administration (DHS/SSA) to the State of Maryland Local Departments of Social Services' (LDSS) leadership and staff for the five local sites participating in the Center for Excellence (CfE) in Resource Family Development (Baltimore County, Carroll County, Frederick County, Montgomery County and Prince George's County). The guidance adheres to and builds on the CfE model by developing a community of support that will systematically ensure a pool of respite providers within a geographic radius of resource homes; fosters relationships among resource parents, respite providers and children/youth; and facilitates child/youth well-being and stability as well as resource parent well-being and retention. This guidance serves as a tool to promote utilization of planned respite care as a vital support for CfE resource parents and will be in effect until September 30, 2023, at which point the guidance may be renewed.

Respite Care

Respite care is an essential supportive service provided to resource parents caring for children in foster care. Respite services are meant to be planned and therefore prevent stress that may lead to crisis. Respite is an opportunity for the CfE resource parent and the child/youth to take a short break/pause to renew and/or relax. Respite care providers contribute to keeping the child/youth safe while he/she remains in the community where they live in a least-restrictive, family-like setting. Traditionally, respite is a short-term service consisting of daily (minimum of 8 hours) or overnight care to children/youth who reside in a public resource home or kinship care placement. However, as part of the CfE model, CfE resource parents may request a shorter period of respite (4-7 hours) as an exception to the traditional 8-hour daily minimum. By following this guidance, respite can be a positive, stabilizing service for all involved.



Benefits of Respite Care

- Provides down time for resource parents to promote and encourage self-care and wellbeing.
- Provides down time for children/youth in care and allows them to build self-esteem as well as relationships with others.
- Prevents disruption in placements and facilitates retention of current resource families.
- Contributes to keeping children/youth safe by allowing them to remain in the community where they currently reside and in a least restrictive, family-like setting.
- Facilitates a community of peer support among resource parents and respite care providers.

Guidelines for CfE Respite Care

- Each CfE Site (Baltimore County, Carroll County, Frederick County, Montgomery County and Prince George's County) should identify a staff person to be responsible for oversight of respite services for CfE resource parents. This will include informing resource parents about the CfE Respite Care Guidance.
- The LDSS will facilitate building a community of care by:
 - identifying respite care providers using the current pool of all categories of approved foster parents and kinship care providers within their jurisdiction; recruiting families in the communities where CfE resource parents are located to provide respite services; and approving qualified applicants who wish to exclusively provide respite services;
 - building on the peer support developed within the CfE, resource parents will be asked to foster a network of parents and children/youth who know each other and are comfortable providing respite care. Each CfE family will identify their informal/formal support networks and encourage their community of support to provide respite as a part of their onboarding and development; and
 - continuing to promote respite as a part of on-going training and include in outreach support activities for CfE.
- To maximize the success of respite care, resource parents will be oriented on respite care within the framework of CfE during Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) training and at annual reconsiderations.
- Resource workers and caseworkers will also be informed about the CfE Respite Care Guidance as part of the case management process. This information will include:
 - the use of trauma-informed language to facilitate effective communication about the purpose and value of respite services;
 - the identification of respective roles of everyone involved in respite care planning;
 - information about how to include children/youth in the respite care planning process within age and developmentally appropriate considerations; and
 - recognition of the experience of all stakeholders.



- The respite care planning process should include the resource worker, resource parents, the child/youth caseworker, and when age and developmentally appropriate, the child/youth who is being placed in respite care. Whenever possible it is best for respite care providers to have been identified in advance so that they can also be included in the planning process to establish a relationship between all involved parties prior to the actual respite. It is expected there will be circumstances when the respite care plan may need to be amended over the course of the year to best meet the needs of resource parents and children/youth.
- CfE resource parents are eligible to request up to twelve (12) days of respite per reconsideration year. Families have the option to use their respite care services in single days or in a block of days. These days may not be carried over to the next reconsideration year.
- Resource parents must initiate the request for respite services and should give fourteen (14) days advance notice for planned respite. The resource parent and respite care provider must complete the **Foster Care and Kinship Care Respite Services Request Form** (see link below). All caseworkers with children in the caregiver's home must be notified of the dates that respite care will be provided and the form should be uploaded into the child's record in the Child, Juvenile, and Adult Management System (CJAMS). A copy will be provided to the CfE resource parent and respite care provider.
- CfE respite care rates will be \$50 per day (a minimum of 8 hours to an overnight stay) per child. CfE resource parents may request to use respite for a period of 4-7 hours, and providers will be compensated at a fee of \$30 per day. These fees shall cover all costs associated with respite care.
- Payments for respite care services are to be accessed through the CJAMS service log and should be charged to **Category Code 4181**.
 - Respite care payments can be made outside of the service log until **Category Code 4181** is available in CJAMS.

Criteria for Providing Respite Care Services

For the purpose of this guidance, which will be in effect for the duration of the CfE Project, **Out-of-Home Respite Care** is defined as respite provided in a home other than the CfE resource home. Respite care provided in the CfE resource home where the child resides is defined as **Home-Specific Respite Care Option**. The criteria for each option are listed below.

- **Out-of-Home Respite Care:** respite care services are completed in the home of an approved respite care provider who must meet the following requirements:
 - be 21 years old or older;
 - have the physical and mental health to care for the child(ren)/youth;
 - meet safety and health standards by receiving a satisfactory Home Health inspection, completed by a local department of social services;
 - provide the foster child with his/her own bed; bunk beds are prohibited;
 - have an operable telephone in the respite home;
 - complete a Criminal Background Check for the respite provider and all members of the



- o household 18 years and older; and
 - o complete Child Protective Services Clearance for respite providers and all members of the household 18 years and older.
- **Home-Specific Respite Care Option:** all respite care services must be provided in the approved resource/kinship care home where the foster/kinship child resides by an approved respite care provider. The respite care provider must meet each of the above requirements except for those specifically related to the resource parent’s home since the respite care provider will be providing services in the CfE approved home.

Approved Respite Care Providers

For the purpose of this guidance, the following categories of respite providers have been approved. Each LDSS should encourage CfE families to identify their informal/formal support networks and encourage them to become approved respite providers:

- Licensed resource parents
- Respite resource parents
- Emergency resource parents
- Restricted resource parents
- Kinship care providers
- Day care providers (Maryland State Department of Education - Office of Child Care)
- Prospective resource parents who have completed PRIDE training, criminal background/child protective services clearances and all assessments but have failed to pass their home inspection. This respite care provider is required to provide respite care using the **Home Specific Respite Care Option** as described above.
- A family member or friend who has been assessed and approved by a local department of social services using the attached CfE Respite Care Provider Assessment Form (see link below) and meets the requirements for **Out-of-Home Respite Care** as listed above.

Documentation By LDSS

Each LDSS site is responsible for:

- Keeping accurate and up-to-date logs of approved respite care providers;
- Maintaining current profiles of each respite care provider;
- Documenting that resource parents are informed about the CfE Respite Care Guidance;
- Keeping records of respite care requests and usage to be documented in the contact notes in CJAMS and on the revised **Resource Parent Recruitment and Retention Quarterly Report Template** (See link below);
- Submitting timely payment invoices for the respite care providers following respite care services being offered; and
- Conducting yearly reconsideration screening of all respite care providers.

Forms/Links

- [Foster Care and Kinship Care Respite Services Request Form](#)
- [Resource Parent Recruitment and Retention Quarterly Report Template](#)
- [CfE Respite Care Assessment Form](#)



cc: Peggy Hughes
Romaine Young
David Lee
Valerie D. Douglas
Nicole Cameron
Ardena Walker

