

Respite payments

There are three options available to pay for respite services:

- **DHS respite voucher**

DHS will provide three vouchers for up to \$200 per quarter to pay for respite on a case-by-case basis. Contact your TFI worker at least two weeks before the requested respite date and submit a completed Foster Care Respite Application Form. Please be sure to review the following training on how to obtain a DHS respite voucher and the associated rules: okbridgefamilies.com/video/training/how-to-accessing-respite-services.

After respite service has been rendered, the voucher will be completed by the respite provider and submitted to DHS finance. Vouchers are valid for 90 days after issuance and payment is usually issued within 10 days of receipt.

- **TFI payment**

TFI will pay for up to two respite nights a month. Foster parents must first attempt to use their alternate care provider and exhaust or be denied for DHS respite vouchers. Contact your TFI worker who will seek prior approval from TFI's foster care director. Upon completion of respite services, the foster parent and the respite provider need to sign the Verification of Respite form, available from your TFI worker or at tffamilyconnections.org/foster-family-resource-page. The foster parent should obtain this form and bring it to the respite provider when the child is placed into respite. The respite provider is responsible for submitting this form to your TFI worker for payment.

- **Foster parent payment**

Payment can be made to the respite provider out of the foster parent's daily rate. Contact your TFI worker who will facilitate a conversation with the respite provider to confirm the amount of payment and when and how the payment will occur.

FOSTER *hope* FOSTER *love* FOSTER *care*



You provide the loving home and family a child needs and deserves.

Thank you for making a difference in the life of a child as a TFI foster care provider. If you have any questions please call 866-543-9810.



Family Connections
tffamilyconnections.org

TFI Family Connections is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides experience, compassion, quality services and care for the children and families we serve.



FOSTER PARENT GUIDE *to respite care*

Respite care is when one foster family cares for another family's foster children for a short amount of time. This allows for the children's original foster parents and their children to have a break and helps prevent burnout. Respite care is very beneficial when foster children have difficult to manage behaviors or when the foster parent is going through a very stressful time. A foster parent's alternate care provider is always the first source of respite, but when these caregivers are not available, respite care providers can provide assistance.

Respite care providers ensure the child's safety and will notify foster parents if a child experiences an accident, health problem or changes in appearance or behavior. In the event the respite providers have concern for the child's safety or the child experiences a serious incident, the respite care provider will call the child's worker or the TFI hotline to report the incident or concern and obtain support. Respite care providers will only release a child to his or her foster parents, other people approved by the foster parents or the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Tips for a successful respite weekend

If your alternate care provider is not available, contact your TFI worker at least two weeks in advance to request respite. While emergency respite is available, it can be challenging to find a provider at the last minute. If you find your own respite provider, let your TFI worker know who you have chosen so they can get it approved.

Help the respite provider get to know your foster child. Try to arrange a visit between your foster child and the provider ahead of time to avoid further trauma. Even a phone call can help a child feel more comfortable with going to a respite home. While sometimes this is not possible, notably in emergency cases, it is strongly encouraged, especially for children with attachment issues.

Contact the respite provider. Discuss each of the following:

- Clarify drop off and pick up dates and times to prevent misunderstandings about the schedule.
- Identify any appointments, including visits. It is unfair to spring this on a family at the last minute. If they are unable to make these appointments, you may need to choose another provider or speak with the child's DHS worker about rescheduling the appointments. If conflicting schedules mean visits may be missed, it's in the birth family's best interest to search for another provider. If this is impossible, contact the child's DHS worker to reschedule immediately. Remember, visits are the heart of the reunification process.

- Discuss the child's needs and routines. This includes information regarding medical needs, like prescriptions and known allergies. Use TFI's Respite Foster Care Information Sheet to ensure all necessary information is given to the respite provider. This form can be obtained from your TFI worker or at tfifamilyconnections.org/foster-family-resource-page.
- Confirm a payment plan. Let the provider know if you intend to use DHS respite vouchers, TFI paid respite, self-pay or unpaid respite.

Prepare a respite care packet for each child.

This can be done well ahead of the visit.

- Write the child's name on a gallon size storage bag. Use separate bags for each child.
- Fill out the Respite Foster Care Information Sheet and place in the bag. TFI policy indicates this form must be completed.
- Add a copy of the DHS Placement Agreement which has the medical authorization and child's medical card number.



- Include a copy of the child's last physical.
- Add medication to the packet just before taking the child to respite and update appointment information.

Pack accordingly. Include enough clean clothes, diapers, wipes and formula for the length of stay.

- Pack extra underwear and socks.
- For infants and toddlers, too many diapers and wipes are better than not enough. It's unfair to expect the respite provider to purchase more items because they were not given a sufficient supply to get through the weekend.
- Let young children pick out a special toy or stuffed animal to help them at bed time.
- Consider putting together a small scrapbook or photo album. Include pictures of the child's birth family, foster family, friends and pets.

When dropping off your foster child, let the respite provider know of any last minute information or changes.

When picking up your foster child, make sure you have the child's medication, respite care packet, belongings and the completed Respite Foster Care Information Sheet.

- Find out if anything occurred during the respite that should be reported to DHS or TFI.
- Turn in a copy of the completed Respite Foster Care Information Sheet to your TFI worker.