

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 12: Foster Family Home Licensing</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b> October 1, 2012
	<b>Section 12: Foster Family Home Capacity</b>	<b>Version:</b> 2

**POLICY [REVISED]**

**[REVISED]** The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will require the foster family home to only care for the number of children authorized on the license and only at the address that is designated by the license.

The maximum capacity requirements are based on the age, needs and category of supervision of the child.

A foster family home may not provide supervision and care as a foster family home for more than:

1. Five (5) individuals, each of whom is either:
  - a. Less than 18 years of age, or
  - b. At least 18 years of age and is receiving care and supervision under an order of a juvenile court.
2. Four (4) of the five (5) individuals are children less than six (6) years of age.

**Note:** The maximum capacity includes the children in the home for whom the foster parent is a parent, stepparent, guardian, custodian, or other related or non-related children for whom the provider provides continuous and direct care and supervision.

A foster family home with a therapeutic certification may not provide supervision and care as a therapeutic foster family home to more than four (4) total children at the same time; including the children for whom the foster family home is a parent, stepparent, guardian, custodian, or other relative. Only two (2) of the four (4) may be foster children.

**Note:** The capacity for a foster home with a therapeutic certificate will also apply to all licensed homes who care for a therapeutic child.

DCS may grant a child specific exception to capacity when it is determined that:

1. The placement of siblings in the same foster family home is desirable;
2. A foster child has an established, meaningful relationship with the foster family; and/or
3. It is otherwise in the foster child's best interest.

DCS may grant a general exception for the foster family home when it is in the best interest of the foster children.

A foster family home that has a therapeutic foster child placed with them may not accept a non-related child who is not therapeutic unless it is in the best interest of the child being placed. An exception must be granted for non-siblings.

## Code Reference

1. [IC 31-27-4-1: License required to operate foster family home; exception](#)
2. [IC 31-27-4-8: Supervision and care limits; exceptions](#)

## PROCEDURE

**[REVISED]** Prior to requesting initial capacity for a foster family home or an exception to capacity, the licensing worker<sup>1</sup> will:

1. Consider the number, ages, and special needs requirements of each child (household and foster) already in the home;
2. Determine that the housing requirements found on the [Foster Family Home Physical Environmental Checklist \(SF53186\)](#) can accommodate the number of children who need placement;
3. Evaluate the ability of the foster parent to meet the needs of the children currently in the home, in addition to the foster children;
4. If an exception is required, submit an exception request **prior** to placing children in the home (see practice guidance section).
  - a. For emergency placements occurring during business hours, submit an **urgent** email to the Foster Care Licensing Unit including the resource ID number and the required information below
  - b. If an emergency occurs after business hours or over the weekend, submit all required information the next business day.
5. Request an exception in the Management Gateway For Indiana's Kids (MaGIK).

**Note:** Once the exception is no longer needed, a request to reduce capacity should be submitted via MaGIK.

The Central Office Licensing Unit Manager or designee will:

1. Print the approved license reflecting the capacity; and
2. **[REVISED]** Mail the license to the licensing worker so it can be forwarded to the foster family and a copy should be retained for Central Office files.

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

**[NEW]** Below is a list of necessary information needed for the Central Office Foster Care Licensing Unit to evaluate a request for a **child specific** exception to capacity. Use the outline below as a format for submitting information regarding exception requests:

1. The number of household children under the age of 18 (e.g. biological, adopted and guardianship), in the home, their age, sex, category of supervision, and a brief summary of their behavioral, emotional, and physical needs;
2. The number of foster children currently in the home and a brief summary of their behavioral, emotional and physical needs. Include their age, sex and category of supervision;
3. The names of the children who need placement and a brief summary of their behavioral, emotional and physical needs at the time of placement, including category of supervision;

---

<sup>1</sup> The licensing worker refers to the DCS Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS) or the Licensed Child Placing Agency worker

4. A description of the foster family's support system;
5. A description of the foster parents' work schedules and their child care plan;
6. Written statements (email or letter) from each FCM who has foster children placed in the home detailing whether they are in support of the additional child being placed in the home;
7. The experience of the foster family:
  - a. number of years fostering,
  - b. areas of expertise, or
  - c. any specific training they have received to meet the needs of the children in their home.
8. An explanation of the following:
  - a. placement of siblings in the same foster family is desirable,
  - b. the foster child has an established, meaningful relationship with the foster family, or
  - c. it is otherwise in the foster child's best interest for the exception to be granted.
9. The sleeping arrangements for household members.

**[NEW]** Below is a list of necessary information needed for the Central Office Foster Care Licensing Unit to evaluate a request for a **general** exception to capacity. Use the outline below as a format for submitting information regarding exception requests:

1. The number of household children under the age of 18 (e.g. biological, adopted and guardianship), in the home, their age, sex, category of supervision, and a brief summary of their behavioral, emotional, and physical needs;
2. The number of foster children currently in the home, their age, sex, category of supervision, and a brief summary of their behavioral, emotional and physical needs;
3. A description of the foster family's support system;
4. A description of the foster parents' work schedules and their child care plan;
5. The experience of the foster family:
  - a. number of years fostering,
  - b. areas of expertise, or
  - c. any specific training they have received to meet the needs of the children in their home.
6. An explanation of why the foster family should be granted an exception and why it is in the foster child's best interest for this family to be granted an exception.

#### FORMS AND TOOLS

[Foster Family Home Physical Environmental Checklist \(SF53186\)](#)

#### RELATED INFORMATION

DCS will require the applicant or licensee to notify the licensing worker within 24 hours of any change in the household composition, such as the number of persons living in the home.