



Don't Say "No" Before You Know Series: Facts About Respite



The *Don't Say "No" Before You Know Series* provides Clark County Caregivers with information on a monthly basis about various topics that support quality care to children in your home.

Edition 1 – Facts about Respite Care: This edition is focused on quality respite care and addresses several myths about requesting the temporary placement of a child in your care to another caregiver.

WHAT IS RESPITE CARE?

Respite care is a planned, scheduled, temporary period of relief from the responsibility of parenting a foster child whose legal custodian is the Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS). While respite is available to licensed caregivers, the decision to request the support service must be carefully considered as its effects can be drastically felt by and negatively impact the children we serve.

Parenting can be stressful, and respite care allows the caregiver time to rest. Respite might also be needed in emergency situations, such as sick relatives.

PROVIDING RESPITE CARE:

Caregivers are expected to identify possible respite providers through their networks of other licensed caregivers. Participation in the local caregiver associations/support groups is encouraged for this reason. We also encourage caregivers to identify approved non-primaries; someone who assists in the home, such as a grandparent who can take care of the child if the parent is at work. Once respite is secured, the caregiver is required to notify the case manager. In the event that a caregiver is unable to identify a respite provider they must contact their case manager with their request for respite. All attempts will be made to accommodate the request however if a respite provider is not available, then the caregiver may be asked what accommodations can be made for travel requests to change so the child can remain with the caregiver or alternative respite dates are identified. The reason for this is not to inconvenience the caregiver however it is to ensure the best interest of the child (ren) is met.

A licensed caregiver with an open bed and who is known by the foster child is most favorable and is the preferred first option. This method is preferred because the respite caregiver has had a chance to establish a rapport with the child which will reduce the discomfort or trauma of transitioning into a new home for the respite period.

SCHEDULING RESPITE CARE:

When a caregiver is in need of respite, and they have been unable to secure respite with a KNOWN caregiver, he or she must contact the case manager, who will complete a placement change and/or movement form (see attached) and email it to the DFS Placement Team Family Support Workers. This information is needed to match the request with appropriate respite providers. The caregiver and case manager will be notified by the Family Support Worker when respite is secured.

Care may be provided either at the licensed respite care provider's home or at the home of the caregiver requesting time off.

If it is an emergency, what is the process?

The process to request emergency respite is the same as the regular process. Submit a request to the case manager who will complete required paperwork. Requests are being secured by DFS Family Support Workers, who are now assigned to the Placement Unit. You can call: 702-455-0195.



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Myth: Respite is a time for me to take 'my family' on a vacation.

Fact: Children in care are to be treated as part of the family and included in all family activities. As described in the DFS respite policy: "...respite is not intended to replace the duties or obligations originally agreed to by the caregivers, e.g. foster children should be included in family holiday events, activities, and family vacations when possible."

Myth: Child Haven is a respite option.

Fact: Child Haven is not a respite choice. Children should not be in shelter care and this is not the intention of this shelter. This can also cause the children trauma based on their previous placements at Child Haven and increase a sense of abandonment.

Myth: There is one type of respite.

Fact: There are four types of respite as defined in DFS policy: Peer-to-Peer Respite, Planned Respite, Emergency Respite, and Respite through Community Groups or Organizations.

Myth: I only need to give two weeks' notice.

Fact: You must give a minimum of 30 days' notice if you have been unable to secure your own respite with a licensed provider that is known to the child and are requesting that the Family Support Workers assist with securing respite care. Emergency situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Myth: Respite is no longer available to caregivers.

Fact: Respite is available to caregivers. The DFS respite policy is being reviewed by the Child Welfare Quality Parenting Initiative workgroup to make recommendations that would reflect caregiver requests. What is different now is we are requesting that you look to your informal and formal support system to support your respite needs as it greatly reduces the stress on the child during your absence.

Myth: I am not allowed to find my own respite.

Fact: You are able to find your own respite and we encourage it. However, we ask that you connect with licensed caregiver networks for the peer- to-peer method, which is preferred. If you are in need of babysitting please make sure to connect with your licensing specialist and review the babysitting policy,