

# Respite Care Support Services

(Revised 11/14/25)

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## Related Policies

Additional information can be found in the following policies:

- Normalcy Protocol
- Placement Coordinators Office (PCO)
- Foster Home Hold

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## Forms

The following forms are referenced in this policy:

- 04-25 Caregiver Information Sheet
- 04-25Sp Caregiver Information Sheet (Spanish)
- 04-410 CFWB Respite Information Letter
- 04-410Sp CFWB Respite Information Letter (Spanish)
- 04-87 Request for Excess Respite Hours or Respite for Bio-Parents with Open Case Plan

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## Resources

Additional information can be found in the resources below:

- Child and Family Well-Being Respite Program Brochure
- Child and Family Well-Being Respite Brochure (Spanish)

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## Definitions

**Respite providers** are resource parents approved under the Resource Family Approval (RFA) program or are CFWB certified respite providers approved under CFWB respite program.

[Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) 16501\(b\)](#) defines Respite Care as the temporary care for

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## Definitions (cont.)

periods not to exceed 72 consecutive hours and in order to preserve the placement. This may be extended up to 14 days within any one month, but respite hours cannot exceed 14 hours in calendar month. Respite care may be provided to biological parents or guardians (with a current case plan) Services are not for the purpose of routine, ongoing childcare.

**Options Respite:** Options for Recovery Program provides specialized training and support for resource families caring for children ages of 0-5 who have been exposed to drugs or alcohol. Resource parents in the program receive 48 hours per month of respite care when they have an Options qualified placement. Respite care is provided by trained providers approved through the Options program.

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## Levels of Respite

Respite care is provided based on the level of care needed. The Levels of respite care are defined as follows:

- Level I applies to respite care for all children/youth who do not have a diagnosis or documentation of specialized care needs and do not qualify for Level II.
  - Level II applies to respite care for a severely disabled or medically fragile child/youth as defined by Education Code Section 8208(y). Those conditions are limited to:
    - Autism
    - Blindness
    - Severe orthopedic impairment
    - Serious emotional disturbance or
    - Severe developmental disability
  - Levels I and II do not coincide with child/youth's Levels of Care (LOC).
  - Level II requires the respite provider to have specialized training, knowledge and/or provide close supervision to meet the needs of the child/youth.
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## Policy

Respite care is for resource parents who reside within San Diego County, such as Foster Family Agency (FFA) resource parents, Tribally Approved, and caregivers approved or pending approval under Resource Family Approval (RFA), of at least one San Diego County dependent child or youth (0-17) with an open CFWB case plan who is placed in their care. When the resource parent utilizes respite for at least one dependent child/youth, other children/youth who reside in their home and under their care may be included in the same respite care service if they meet one of the following categories: birth, adopted, foster, relative/non-relative extended family member (NREFM) and/or guardianship children/youth. Resource parents with a closed RFA are not eligible for respite care. Eligible county resource parents may self-refer for up to 20 hours per calendar month of respite care and FFA resource parents may be approved for up to 8 hours per month of respite care. Respite hours are for the resource family home as a whole and not per child.

**NOTE:** Respite hours do not accumulate if the hours are not used.

**Biological parents:** Parents with a CFWB Case Plan may be referred for respite care by their SW via the Request for Excess Respite Hours Or Respite for Bio-Parents with Open Case Plan ([04-87](#)) to assist with the fulfillment of their case plan services. Available respite hours for bio-parents will be assessed based on their case plan and family circumstances. This includes

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**Policy (cont.)**

Family Reunification, Family Maintenance and Voluntary Services cases.

**NOTE:** It is best practice for SWs to assist parents in developing their natural supports with Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) genograms, and ecomaps that can provide ongoing support to families in addition to formal respite care supports. Respite care is not intended to serve as an interim or temporary placement and an 07-65 should not be submitted when a child is in respite care.

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**Respite Care Services Eligibility**

The following table identifies the different respite care that resource parents, FFA resource parents and biological parents are eligible for:

Respite Service	CFWB Resource Parent	FFA Resource Parent	Biological Parent
Respite Hours per Month	20 hours	8 hours	Case by case basis
Overnight Respite	Yes	No	Case by case basis
Level II Respite	Yes	No	Yes
Non-San Diego Dependents	No	No	No
Excess Respite Hours	Yes *	No	Case by case basis
Excess Respite Care Hour Segments	24 hours	8 hours per day	24 hours
Respite Care for Adopted, Biological, Guardian children with a CFWB dependent child in their care	Yes	No	Yes

\*The use of excess respite hours require prior approval from the Protective Services Program Manager (PSPM) overseeing the Respite Program.

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**Eligible Reasons for Using Respite Care**

Respite care is offered to support a resource parent in fulfilling their other responsibilities necessary to improve or maintain the ability to function as a caregiver.

Resource parents may utilize respite for the purpose of:

- Pre-scheduled or emergency medical appointments
  - Unforeseen events or emergencies that include but are not limited to:
    - Serious illness or other incapacity,
    - Death of a family member
    - Personal demands that interrupt the caregiver's ability to provide care.
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**Eligible Reasons for Using Respite Care (cont.)**

- Attending support group meetings and trainings
- Stress alleviation

Respite services are not intended for routine babysitting, vacations, employment or to allow the caregiver to provide respite care for other children. To ensure safe and appropriate supervision of children, respite providers may not provide respite for more than one family at a time.

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**Respite Coordinator Responsibilities**

The CFWB Respite Coordinator will:

- Maintain an updated list of RFA and certified respite providers
  - Receive respite requests via phone and send an email to the Respite inbox
  - Verify eligibility of resource parents and respite providers
  - Supply respite provider lists to resource parents
  - Verify respite provider eligibility to receive payment
  - Assist resource parents in locating respite care by screening providers that best meet the needs of the child/youth and resource parent such as language, age, behavioral and medical needs, and respite care preference in or out of the home.
  - Assess excess respite requests for appropriateness based on the family's needs and circumstances and submit to the CFWB Respite Manager for final approval or denial.
  - Verify with Placement Coordinator's Office (PCO) and the RFA worker that the RFA is in good standing, eligible to provide respite care, and that there are no concerns needing to be addressed before providing respite care such as [Foster Home Hold](#) for Placement Issues, Investigations, Pending Evaluation, or Training.
  - For certified respite providers, conduct background clearances, home inspections to ensure that the respite provider's buildings and grounds meet the needs of child(ren) (e.g., pool has a fence, can only provide respite in their home for children over the age of 10), assist in training registration and collection of training certificates.
  - Approve Level II requests:
    - Prior to approving [Level II](#) Requests:
      - Obtain verification of the child/youth's status and maintain documentation for on-going records.
      - Provide respite provider with verbal and written information about any special developmental, behavioral and emotional needs of foster child/youth.
      - Verify that the respite provider spent a minimum of a half hour with the resource parent, learning the special needs of that child/youth.
  - Verify Level II respite providers meet training requirements:
    - Minimum of four hours of training for the child/youth's specific condition, which include:
      - Medically fragile
      - Developmentally-delayed
      - Serious emotional disturbance
    - Trainings may be taken through the Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Care Education (FAKCE) program, Rady's Children's Hospital or as advised by child/youth's physician.
  - Liaison between CFWB staff, resource parents, community partners, and respite providers to facilitate communication and help resolve concerns.
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**Respite Coordinator Responsibilities (cont.)**

- Report any information received from providers on injuries to a child/youth while receiving respite cares to:
    - Child/youth's SW
    - PCO
    - RFA worker
  - Maintain a tracking log of respite hours utilized for each home.
  - Verify the accuracy and eligibility of respite claims before approving payment.
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**PCO Coordination with RFA Respite Provider Homes and Holds**

[Placement Coordinators Office \(PCO\)](#) maintains a list of respite providers who are RFA. In order for an RFA family to provide respite services, their approval/license must be in good standing.

PCO will complete the following duties when working with the CFWB Respite Coordinator regarding respite providers:

- Verify that the respite provider is RFA.
  - Verify that the respite provider is in good standing.
  - Verify that the RFA is not child specific.
  - Verify that the RFA is not on "inactive" status.
  - Send HOLD & HOLD Removal notices to the CFWB Respite Unit.
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**Options For Recovery Respite Care and CFWB Respite Care**

Respite care recipients cannot receive respite care from both the Options for Recovery Respite Care and CFWB Respite Care Support Services programs simultaneously.

- Options resource parents with Options children should request services from the Options Respite Program.
  - Options resource parents that do not have Options children in their home, but are in need of respite, are eligible for CFWB Respite Services.
  - Options resource parents can use both Options and CFWB Respite Services within the same month, just not at the same time. (E.g. Options child leaves and resource parent takes placement of non-Options child within the same month.)
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**Eligible Respite Providers**

Respite providers are RFA approved individuals, or certified respite providers who have been approved by the CFWB Respite Services Program.

Resource parent respite providers must meet the following requirements in order to provide respite care through the CFWB Respite Services Program:

- Approved as a respite provider by the CFWB Respite Coordinator
  - In good standing with their RFA approval
  - Have capacity within their approval to provide overnight respite care
  - Have an age-appropriate bed and clean linens for each respite child
  - Certified respite providers must meet the following requirements, as assessed by the Respite Coordinator in order to provide care through CFWB respite program: Submit respite application
  - Clear background checks including Live Scan and CFWB history review
  - Successful completion of a home inspection
  - Completion of Trauma Informed Pre-Service (TIPS) and First Aid/CPR training
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**Eligible Respite Providers (cont.)**

Resource parents are **not** eligible to provide respite care services, when there is a:

- Child specific RFA
  - Investigation or Placement Issues Hold on the RFH
  - Training Hold (e.g. First Aid, CPR and annual training hours)
  - Pending Evaluation Hold (e.g. building & grounds violations, new adult in the home, referral to Quality Parenting Review)
  - RFA on “Inactive” status
  - Any homes that have not completed the RFA process
  - Prospective respite care providers cannot reside in the same household as the resource family for whom they will be providing respite care.
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**Respite Request Process for Non-FFA Resource Parents and Biological Parents**

Respite care is available 7 days/week, 24 hours/day and is coordinated during normal business hours only. CFWB resources parents will self-refer 10 working days in advance of the respite need, by contacting the CFWB Respite Coordinator to request respite care.

For biological parents, the SW will complete the Request for Excess Respite Hours or Respite for Parents with Open Services Case Plan [04-87](#) and submit it to the Respite inbox to request respite care for biological parents needing support in fulfilling their case plan services.

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**Respite Request Process for FFA Resource Parents**

The following procedures apply when submitting a request for respite services for an FFA resource parent:

Step	Who	Action
1	FFA SW	Submit the respite request 7 calendar days in advance via email to their Institutions Evaluation Unit (IEU) FFA contact with the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Date(s) of requested care</li><li>• Number of children</li><li>• Age of children/youth</li><li>• Number of hours need</li><li>• Dangerous propensities</li><li>• Preferred provider (if any)</li></ul>
2	IEU	Review respite request and submit to the Respite inbox, if approved.  If unable to approve, notify the FFA SW.
3	CFWB Respite Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact FFA Resource Parent to assist with establishing respite services.</li><li>• Review and process completed respite claim forms for payment.</li></ul>

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## Emergency Respite Request

The Respite Coordinator will respond to emergency respite requests within two hours during regular business hours. If there is an urgent need for respite care, such as after hours or weekends, when the CFWB Respite Coordinator is not available, resource parents are encouraged to utilize the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard contained in the [Normalcy Protocol](#).

The resource parent will report the emergency to the SW and provide the location of the child. If immediate contact with a SW is needed, the resource parent should call the Child Abuse Hotline.

**NOTE:** The [Normalcy Protocol](#) and the Caregiver Information Sheet [04-25](#) provide several temporary care options for resource parents, besides formal respite care.

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## Approval for Excess Hours

Resource parents are encouraged to use a combination of their natural support system and their respite hours. If a resource parent needs more than the allotted 20 hours of respite per month, an approval for excess respite must be obtained **prior to** accessing the respite care. Requests for respite hours in excess of the 20 hours per month can only be approved in cases of extreme need and circumstances.

Approval for excess respite requests will be made on a case-by-case basis, and after a review of the circumstances around each request. Each determination is different, and will not apply to every case. Unapproved excess respite care services will not be paid.

The following procedures will be followed when submitting a request for excess respite hours:

Step	Who	Action
1	SW	Contact CFWB Respite Coordinator for assistance in completing the Request for Excess Respite Hours or Respite for Bio-Parents with Open Case Plan (04-87) and determining the excess hours needed.
2	Requestor's PSS & PSPM	Review and sign 04-87.
3	SW	Email the signed 04-87 with a detailed description of the need for respite hours to the CFWB Coordinator.
4	CFWB Respite Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review excess hours request</li><li>• Contact SW if additional information is needed</li><li>• Submit to CFWB Respite Manager for approval or denial</li></ul>

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**Approval for Excess Hours (cont.)**

Step	Who	Action
5	CFWB Respite Manager	Approve or deny the request in writing.  <b>NOTE:</b> Denials will be discussed with the office/program's PSPM, if necessary.
6	CFWB Respite Coordinator	Inform SW via email that the request was approved or denied.
7	SW	Inform the resource parents of the approval or denial decision of the request.  If approved, inform resource parents of the guidelines for using respite such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose</li><li>• Dates and</li><li>• Number of approved hours approved are the only hours that the provider will be paid by CFWB respite. Any additional hours will be the responsibility of the resource parent to pay.</li></ul>

**Alignment with SET**

This policy aligns with SET [Value 2](#): Collaborative Partnerships with Kinship and Resource Families by providing supportive services, consistent communication and information sharing and keeping safety, permanency, and well-being of a child/youth at the forefront.