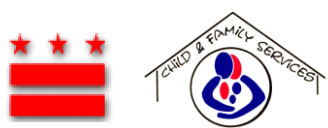


POLICY TITLE: Supervision and Self-Care of Children in Foster Care		PAGE 1 OF 5
	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY Approved by: <u>Brenda Donald</u> Agency Director Date: <u>April 8, 2013</u>	REVISION HISTORY: December 24, 2008
	LATEST REVISION: March 26, 2013	

I. AUTHORITY	<p>The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, 29 DCMR 6001.1(j); 6002.1(a) and (k)-(m); and DC Code §16-2301(9)(A)(ii) and 2301(3)-(5). <i>This policy supersedes administrative issuance CFSA-08-7 Children's Self-Care and Care for Others, dated December 24, 2008.</i></p>
II. APPLICABILITY	<p>All resource parents including traditional, therapeutic, pre-adoptive, and kinship who receive child placements through CFSA and CFSA-contracted child-placing agencies</p>
III. RATIONALE	<p>CFSA's primary goals are to ensure that children are safe, families are strengthened, and permanency goals and developmental needs of children and youth are met. In accordance with these goals, CFSA recognizes the importance of providing healthy opportunities to support the natural development of a child's independence and self-sufficiency. Like all children and youth, children and youth in the District's foster care system need opportunities to learn responsible care for themselves and others.</p> <p>CFSA acknowledges the subjectivity inherent in making decisions about substitute care (e.g., babysitting) and therefore requires that the resource parent and the child's team, which shall include the guardian <i>ad litem</i> (GAL), work together to develop plans and have on-going discussions regarding substitute care based upon the specific needs of each child. CFSA puts forward this policy to help support resource parents and to ensure that social workers are well prepared to collaborate with resource parents in regards to decision-making for children's supervision and self-care. This policy is also developed to provide guidance for social workers when responding to allegations that a child may not have been properly supervised by a resource parent. Guidelines for children served by CFSA may differ from guidelines for biological children and it is CFSA's responsibility to inform resource parents about these differences. As always, the welfare of the child remains paramount to CFSA.</p>

<p>IV. POLICY</p>	<p>It is the policy of CFSA to provide guidelines for all Agency and Agency-contracted social workers to assist resource parents in determining when children in foster care are considered responsible enough for self-care (i.e., caring for self without adult supervision). In addition, CFSA shall provide guidance to assist resource parents in the selection of other individuals to function as babysitters for the children in their care. Social workers shall inform resource parents of these policy guidelines so that when a resource parent must be absent from home on a regular basis (e.g., during employment, school, or other regularly scheduled activities), or an occasional basis (e.g., running an errand, a medical appointment, or a business meeting), there is a plan for appropriate substitute care for the child.</p> <p>Any necessary substitute care must be provided by a licensed day care provider, a licensed resource parent, a certified substitute care provider, or the equivalent according to the guidelines of the jurisdiction where the supervision will occur. When the resource parent is away from the home on an occasional basis, substitute care may be provided by a babysitter or substitute care provider who is not a licensed or certified provider. Prior to child placements, social workers must ensure that resource parents understand and agree to comply with the guidelines described in this policy.</p>
<p>V. CONTENTS</p>	<p>A. Resource Parent Planning for Substitute Care B. Guidelines for Resource Parents and Social Workers to Determine Self-Care for Children under CFSA’s Care or Custody C. Recommended Age Guidelines for Children in Foster Care to Care for Others D. Guidelines for Resource Parents to Select Babysitters for Children in Foster Care</p>
<p>VI. PROCEDURES</p>	<p>Procedure A: Resource Parent Planning for Substitute Care</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In accordance with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), resource parents and social workers must discuss the substitute care of each child in the home when the resource parent is absent on a regular basis (29 DCMR § 6002.1k). 2. For a child newly placed in foster care, at the initial visit in the home, social workers and resource parents shall determine a plan for substitute care. All information relative to the discussion, including the written plan for substitute care on a regular basis, shall be documented in the child’s case record and in FACES.NET. 3. For a child already in foster care who is moving to a new placement, during the initial placement visit, the social worker shall meet with the resource parent and develop a written plan for substitute care on a regular basis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision shall include information based on any previous history of substitute care needs, level of supervision required, the new resource parent’s schedule for being out of the home for work, or a regularly scheduled activity and need for substitute care, and other relevant concerns.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Until the initial home visit when the resource parent and social worker jointly discuss or revise a substitute care plan, the resource parent will assess the needs of the individual child to assist in making the best decision about his or her care. 5. Resource parents shall not develop long-term substitute care for any child in foster care without consulting with the child's social worker and the GAL. 6. A substitute care discussion and written plan shall include but not be limited to contact information for any babysitters, or licensed respite care resource parents and day care providers who will provide regular care to a child in foster care. 7. The social worker shall provide the resource parent and GAL with a copy of the substitute care plan. 8. Within 48 hours of discussions on substitute care that occur between the social worker, resource parent, and GAL, social workers shall document the discussion and any relevant information in FACES.NET.
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	<p style="text-align: center;">Procedure B: Guidelines for Resource Parents and Social Workers to Determine Self-Care for Children under CFSA's Care or Custody</p> <p>CFSA strives to further the independence and self-sufficiency skills of children and youth in foster care, including self-care (i.e., personal responsibility for one's self without supervision). <i>A child 8 years and younger should not under any circumstances be left unattended or allowed to self-care for any period of time.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the time of a child's placement in a foster home, the assigned social worker and resource parent shall review the licensing requirements that concern child safety and well-being, including access to a working telephone, storage of firearms and alcohol, and mitigation of hazards within the home. <i>See 29 DCMR § 6007 (General Physical Environment).</i> 2. Resource parents and social workers shall jointly consider the following factors and collaborate to determine if and when a child in foster care is ready for temporary self-care for a pre-determined length of time: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The age of the child b. The physical, mental, and emotional maturity level of the child c. The recommendation of any mental health professional regarding the appropriateness of the child's self-care without direct supervision d. The behavioral history of the child e. Whether the child has memorized contact numbers f. Whether the child understands how to escape from the home in case of fire and is physically and emotionally capable of doing so g. Whether the child knows how to and is capable of keeping safe around appliances (such as a stove or iron) that could be dangerous if not used properly
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Whether the resource parent or another responsible adult will be accessible by phone or in person and the response time for the resource parent or other responsible adult to return home i. The amount of time the resource parent will be away from home <p>3. As a result of the discussion on substitute care and the assessment of the child's ability to provide self-care, resource parents should ensure that the children in their care receive education in self-care skills and emergency preparedness, and are taught to memorize important contact numbers, such as those of the caregivers.</p> <p>4. Based on the above factors, the social worker and resource parent shall jointly develop a written plan for a child's self-care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The written plan shall be discussed with the child and modifications made after agreement of the resource parent and social worker. b. The social worker shall enter the self-care plan into FACES.NET within 48 hours of its development. c. Within 1 week of developing the self-care plan, the social worker shall provide the GAL and other team members with a written copy, including contact information for substitute caregivers (e.g., a weekend babysitter), if applicable.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Procedure C: Recommended Age Guidelines for Children in Foster Care to Care for Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No child in foster care who is under the age of 16 shall care for another child without an adult in the home. 2. Resource parents shall follow the guidelines detailed under <i>Procedure D</i> to determine if a child in foster care is appropriately suited to be a babysitter.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Procedure D: Guidelines for Resource Parents to Select Babysitters for Children in Foster Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a child in foster care requires a babysitter, that babysitter must be 16 years of age or older [29 DCMR § 6002.1(l)]. 2. Resource parents shall only utilize babysitters whom they trust, based on experience and interactions that demonstrate the babysitter can provide the appropriate care of the child. 3. It is strongly recommended that all babysitters who are responsible for children in foster care on a regular basis complete a local babysitting certification course. 4. For short-term, occasional situations when it is necessary for the resource parent to be absent from the home, the resource parent may select a trusted individual to babysit.

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	<p>5. The resource parent shall have confidence, based on knowledge and experience with the babysitter, in the emotional stability, maturity, and skills of the babysitter to handle the child's needs as well as any emergencies.</p> <p>6. Resource parents shall ensure that a babysitter is well informed of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Any known allergies of the child and steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction b. How to manage medical and physical conditions the child may have that also may require the use of special equipment c. The emotional and behavioral needs of the child d. Scheduled bedtime for the child e. Age-appropriate activities (which may be suggested by the social worker and resource parent) that promote physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional development of the child f. Location in the foster home of age-appropriate toys and books suitable for the child in care g. Any restrictions on activities due to the needs and best interest of the child h. Visible posting of emergency contact numbers, including the resource parent's cell phone number, the social worker's phone number, and other means of emergency contacts, including 911 and local phone numbers for the police and fire departments, and poison control. If the resource parent will be at a friend's home, the land line phone number should be posted. i. Other important information as determined by the resource parent and the social worker
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