

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Supervision and Self-Care of Children in Foster Care

What is the policy about?

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for all CFSA and contracted social workers and resource parents for determining when children in foster care are considered responsible enough for self-care (i.e., caring for self without adult supervision) and the care of other children.

When substitute care is needed, who is involved in the decision making process?

Those involved in making decisions about substitute care shall include resource parents and the child's team (which includes the social worker and guardian *ad litem*).

If substitute care is provided, who will provide that care?

- Any necessary 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 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 a substitute care provider who is not a licensed or certified provider.

What are some of the important factors to consider in planning for substitute care?

- A discussion about substitute care must take place between the social worker and the resource parent in the home.
- The social worker and resource parent must produce a written plan that should include but not be limited to contact information of those who will provide substitute care, including emergency numbers.
- A child 8 years of age and younger must not under any circumstance be left unattended or allowed to self-care for any period of time.
- No child under the age of 16 shall care for another child without an adult in the home.
- If a child in foster care requires a babysitter on a continual basis, the babysitter must be 16 years of age or older, and trusted by the resource parent based on experience and interactions.
- 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.
- Resource parents must ensure that babysitters are well informed of the following information (at a minimum):
 - Any known allergies of the child
 - How to manage medical and physical conditions of the child
 - The emotional and behavioral needs of the child
 - Age appropriate activities and any restrictions on activities
 - Visible posting of emergency numbers including 911 and local numbers for the police, fire departments, poison control, foster parent's cell phone number, and other important information as determined by the resource parent and social worker

To read this online policy in its entirety, click on [Supervision and Self-Care of Foster Children](#) or visit CFSA's online policy manual at <http://cfsa.dc.gov>.