

FOSTER HOME REQUIREMENTS

A. The following items **shall** be mandatory requirements for the foster home:

1. The home **shall** be accessible to community resources needed by foster children.
2. The home **shall** be clean and free of hazards.
3. The home **shall** have a continuous supply of sanitary drinking water. If the source is not a municipal water system, the water **shall** be tested and approved by the Arkansas Department of Health annually. The approval **shall** be kept in the foster home case record.
4. There **shall** be operational smoke detectors within ten (10) feet of the kitchen and each bedroom.
5. There **shall** be an operational chemical fire extinguisher, readily accessible, near the cooking area of the home.
6. The foster parents **shall** practice and document emergency evacuation drills with each new child entering the home, and at least quarterly thereafter.
7. All heating units with hot external areas **shall** be screened or otherwise shielded.
8. The home **shall** have at least one (1) exterior door that exits directly to the outside or the home **shall** have an alternate fire escape route.
9. The home **shall** have an operational telephone. Working cell phones kept on the premises are acceptable. The phone **shall** be accessible for children.
10. Each child **shall** have adequate space for storing clothing and personal belongings.
11. All household pets **shall** have proof of current rabies vaccinations as required by Arkansas law.
12. All firearms **shall** be maintained in a secure, locked location or secured by a trigger lock.
13. All ammunition **shall** be secured and locked separately from firearms unless they are stored in a safe, hand gun safe or a long gun safe.
14. The foster home record **shall** contain an agency approved safety plan for any noted hazards. The safety plan **shall** be signed by all caregivers in the foster home and an agency representative.
15. A current floor plan of the home with room dimensions for all rooms used for sleeping **shall** be in the foster home record.
16. Manufactured homes, used as foster homes, **shall** have an agency approved safety plan for tornado safety. The safety plan **shall** be signed by all caregivers in the foster home and an agency representative.
17. The following items **shall** be mandatory requirements regarding sleeping arrangements in the foster home:
 - a. Each household occupant **shall** have a bedroom that provides privacy.
 - b. Each bedroom **shall** have at least fifty (50) square feet of floor space per occupant.
 - c. Each bedroom used for foster children **shall** have a window to the outside which is capable of serving as an emergency escape.
 - d. Bars, grilles, grates, or other items that block access to the window are permitted only if they can be removed from the inside without the use of a key, tool, or force greater than that required for normal operation of the window. In this event, each such bedroom **shall** have a working smoke detector in the bedroom.
 - e. No more than four (4) children **shall** share a bedroom.
 - f. Each household occupant **shall** have a bed with a mattress, sheets, pillow, pillowcase, and adequate cover, all in good condition.
 - g. Children of the opposite sex **shall** not share the same bedroom if either child is four (4) years old or older, except for a parent in foster care with her child.
 - h. No children **shall** share a bed if either child is four (4) years old or older.
 - i. No child under age six (6) years **shall** occupy a top bunk.
 - j. Foster children, except infants under age two (2) years, **shall** not share a sleeping room with adults; this age would increase through age four (4) for a grandparent to the child and a teen parent in foster care with her child.
 - k. All cribs used for children **shall** have current certification of compliance with Consumer Product Safety Guidelines (CPSC) standards.
 - l. Children twelve (12) months of age and below **shall** be placed flat on their backs to sleep, in accordance with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.
18. The following **shall** be additional requirements for foster homes:
 - a. A foster home **shall** be approved only by one (1) agency.
 - b. At least three (3) positive personal references **shall** be obtained on the foster family from non-relatives.
 - c. Each member of the foster family **shall** have a physical exam within twelve (12) months before the initial approval.
 - d. The agency **shall** ensure that the foster parents receive at least ten (10) hours of pre-service training.
 - e. Foster parent(s) **shall** have a current certificate of completion of First Aid and CPR before a child is placed in the home. The training **shall** require hands-on skills based instruction as well as practical testing. Training and certification that is provided solely on-line will not be accepted. First Aid and CPR certification **shall** be maintained and current.
 - f. Foster parents **shall** provide documentation that they carry homeowner's or renter's insurance and general liability insurance.
 - g. Foster homes **shall** not also operate as Child Care Family Homes.
 - h. Criminal Record Check, Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check and a record check with the Federal Bureau of Investigation **shall** be completed on all persons in the home (These record checks are not required for international adoptions as background checks are already part of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requirements for adoption.). Criminal Record Check and Central Registry Check **shall** be updated every two years.
 - i. Only one child at a time **shall** be placed in the foster home, unless approved by executive level staff at DDS and DCFS.
 - j. Prior to the placement of children in their home, foster parents shall complete at least thirty (30) hours of skill-based pre-service training (excluding CPR and First Aid) consistent with the agency's treatment methodology and the needs of the population served. Trauma informed care must be included in the skill based training.
 - k. Each DDS foster parent shall complete at least twenty-four (24) hours of skill-based training annually, excluding CPR and First Aid.