**ARC 0758D**

# HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT[441]

**Notice of Intended Action**

**Proposing rulemaking related to foster parent training and providing an opportunity for public comment**

The Department of Health and Human Services hereby proposes to rescind Chapter 117, "Foster Parent Training," Iowa Administrative Code, and to adopt a new Chapter 117 with the same title.

*Legal Authority for Rulemaking*

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code section 237.5A.

*State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapter 237.

*Purpose and Summary*

This chapter was reviewed as part of the Red Tape Review process laid out by Executive Order 10. As a result of this review, restrictive terms were removed, areas that were duplicative were combined or eliminated, and editorial updates were made to processes and procedures to ensure they reflect current policies and procedures. This proposed chapter sets forth requirements for foster parent orientation, preservice training, and in-service training. These proposed rules also set standards for becoming certified as an approved foster parent training provider.

This proposed rulemaking also implements 2026 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2096, by referring preservice training requirements back to Iowa Code section 237.5A.

*Regulatory Analysis*

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on October 14, 2026. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- November 3, 2026

*Fiscal Impact*

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

*Jobs Impact*

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

*Waivers*

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Department for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 441—Chapter 2504.

*Public Comment*

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 15, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

Victoria L. Daniels
Department of Health and Human Services
Lucas State Office Building
321 East 12th Street

Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.829.6021
Email: compliancerules@hhs.iowa.gov

*Public Hearing*

Public hearings at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

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|---|---|
| December 15, 2026<br>10 to 10:30 a.m. | Microsoft Teams<br>Meeting ID: 211 572 644 831 451<br>Passcode: ZT6A8r9A |
| December 15, 2026<br>2 to 2:30 p.m. | Microsoft Teams<br>Meeting ID: 226 219 564 194 258 8<br>Passcode: iH72gM9K |

Persons who wish to make oral comments at a public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department and advise of specific needs.

*Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its regular monthly meeting or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Rescind 441—Chapter 117 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 117
FOSTER PARENT TRAINING

**441—117.1(237) Required preservice training.** Foster parent preservice training shall be offered by the department or by a public or private agency with expertise in the provision of child foster care or related subject areas through a training program that has been offered or approved by the department.

**117.1(1)** *Preservice training requirement.* Each individual foster parent applicant shall complete the entire preservice training as approved by the department.

*a.* Applicants shall complete preservice training before receiving a license for the first time.

*b.* Applicants shall retake the preservice training as prescribed by the department if the applicants do not complete the curriculum within 24 months after initially commencing it.

*c.* The department may waive the preservice training requirement in whole or in part when the department finds that:

(1) The applicant has completed relevant training or has a combination of relevant training and experience that is an acceptable equivalent to all or a portion of the required preservice training; or

(2) There is good cause for the waiver based upon the circumstances of the child and the applicant.

**117.1(2)** *Preservice training program approval requirements.*

*a. Content.* The department will consider Iowa Code section 237.5A(1)*"a"* when developing preservice training for proposed individual licensees. At a minimum, the program will address the topics outlined in Iowa Code section 237.5A(2).

*b. Missed content.* The department's contracted agency or any approved agency shall devise a procedure for applicants to make up any portions of the preservice training that are missed.

*c. Instructors.* The program shall be team-taught by at least two instructors. All instructors shall be approved by the department.

*d. Group method.* The program shall be provided in groups that consist of three or more persons. The training shall be offered to a foster family individually only when the foster family is unable to attend group trainings as approved by the department.

*e. Training certificate.* A certificate of completion shall be provided to each foster parent who completes the training.

*f. Training evaluation.* A means for participants in the training to evaluate the instructors and the content shall be provided.

*g. Training records.* A record of the applicants who begin and complete the training and of the training program evaluations shall be submitted to the recruitment and retention contractor.

**117.1(3)** *Additional preservice training.* Each foster parent applicant before licensure shall complete trainings on the reasonable and prudent parent standard as well as mandatory reporter training on child abuse identification.

**441—117.2(237) Required orientation.** All foster parent applicants shall attend orientation.

**117.2(1)** *Method of provision.* The approved agency may provide orientation:

*a.* In a virtual or individual meeting with one set of foster parent applicants; or

*b.* In a group setting.

**117.2(2)** *Provider.* Orientation shall be conducted by the contracting agency completing the family's licensing study.

**117.2(3)** *Content.* Orientation shall be designed to provide the foster parent applicant with information on the policies and procedures of the foster care and adoption programs.

**441—117.3(237) Application materials for in-service training.** Applications for approval of an in-service training program shall be submitted to the department and must be approved before the delivery of the training.

**117.3(1)** Applications submitted after a training is completed will not be approved.

**117.3(2)** Applications shall be submitted with the following materials:

*a.* A detailed training program description relative to a foster parent, including objectives, program agenda, content, participant materials, and time frames.

*b.* The names of program instructors and their qualifications to provide the training.

**441—117.4(237) Application process for in-service training.**

**117.4(1)** *Group training.* Applications to provide group foster parent training shall be submitted to the department.

**117.4(2)** *Individual training.* Applications for approval for individual training, college credit, written materials, or prerecorded trainings shall be submitted to the department office for the service area in which the foster family resides.

**441—117.5(237) Application decisions.** The department will notify the applicant of the department's decision regarding the application for approval of in-service training within 30 days of receipt of the training materials. This notification will include the reason for not giving approval if approval is denied.

**117.5(1)** *Approval.* Foster parent training programs that meet the criteria in rule 441—117.1(237) or 441—117.7(237) and that are submitted will be approved by the department.

**117.5(2)** *Denial.* Preservice training programs and in-service training programs that do not meet the department criteria will be denied approval. The applicant may submit a revised program for approval at a later date.

**117.5(3)** *Revocation.* Approval will be revoked when any of the following exists and corrective action is not taken to correct the deficiencies within 45 days:

*a.* The training provider fails to provide the training to the department as described in the approved application materials.

*b.* Over 25 percent of the participant evaluations of the training program rate the training program as not helpful.

If approval is revoked, the training provider may submit a revised program at a later date.

**441—117.6(237) Application conference available.** If an applicant or provider of training objects in writing within seven days after the notification of the department's decision to deny approval, the department's area social work administrator will review the decision to determine if the original decision will stand. The decision of the department's area social work administrator is final and is not subject to appeal.

**441—117.7(237) Required in-service training.** The foster parent training plan shall be used to address in-service training needs. The training plan shall be developed with the department or contracted agency and the foster parent annually.

**117.7(1)** *Providers of in-service training.* Foster parent in-service training may be provided by the department or by a department-approved agency, institution, or association with expertise in the training content. Agencies, institutions, or associations wishing to have a foster parent in-service training program or workshop approved shall submit application materials pursuant to rules 441—117.3(237) and 441—117.4(237).

**117.7(2)** *In-service training program approval requirements.*

*a. Content.* The program shall relate to the foster parent's role in providing foster care and the skills needed by a foster parent. Training shall be specific to developing each foster parent's skills for addressing the needs of foster children.

*b. Method.* The training shall be provided through one or more of the following methods:

(1) Face-to-face or interactive virtual training to a group.

(2) Face-to-face or interactive virtual training to an individual foster family.

(3) Written materials.

(4) Pre-recorded trainings.

*c. Approved training.* Approved training includes workshops offered at the National Foster Parent Association's annual conference.

**117.7(3)** *Foster parent training requirements.* Each individual foster parent shall complete department-approved in-service training as recommended by the department annually when the foster parent has an approved one-year license or an approved two-year license.

*a. Content.* The choice of in-service training shall be based upon an assessment of the foster parent's training needs made by the foster parent and the approved agency in collaboration with the department.

*b. Foster parent-specific training.* Each foster parent must complete the specific training required in rule 441—117.8(237).

*c. Documentation.* The contracted or approved agency shall document training information and provide that information to the department when requested.

**441—117.8(237) Specific in-service training required.** Each foster parent shall complete an approved mandatory child abuse reporter training as required every three years after the foster parent's initial preservice mandatory child abuse reporter training relating to the identification of child abuse and the requirements and procedures for the reporting of child abuse.

**117.8(1)** *Training provider.* The foster parent shall be responsible for completing the required mandatory reporter training on child abuse identification and reporting in accordance with Iowa Code section 232.69.

**117.8(2)** *Documentation.* The foster parent shall secure documentation of the training content, amount, and provider and shall forward the documentation to the recruitment and retention contractor, who will provide the documentation to the department for inclusion in the foster parent's licensing file.

**441—117.9(237) Foster parent training expenses.** No expense stipend is provided for orientation or preservice training.

**117.9(1)** *Training stipend.* Each family that is issued an initial or renewal foster family home license shall receive a $100 stipend to be used for the family's annual in-service training. The department's contracting agency shall issue one stipend per license on or after the date that the license is issued. When a family with a two-year foster family home license has completed the first training

cycle of required in-service training, the contractor shall issue the next training stipend no earlier than the start of the second year of licensure contingent upon the foster family's completion of the in-service training hours in the first cycle. Foster families who elect not to receive the $100 stipend shall notify the department and the contractor.

**117.9(2)** *Trainer fees.* Instructors who serve as trainers for approved preservice training programs shall each be paid a contract fee per class hour appropriate to community standards based upon the education and experience of each trainer. These rates shall be negotiated between the approved agency and the trainer.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.5A.