

CHAPTER 113  
LICENSING AND REGULATION OF FOSTER FAMILY HOMES

[Prior to 7/1/83, Social Services [770] Ch 113]

[Prior to 2/11/87, Human Services[498]]

**441—113.1(237) Applicability.** This chapter specifically relates to the licensing and regulation of foster family homes. Refer to 441—Chapter 112 for general licensing rules and regulations which apply to all foster care facilities, including foster family homes.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 237.

**441—113.2(237) Definitions.**

*“Age- or developmentally appropriate activities”* means activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity or that are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child, based on the development of cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age or age group; and in the case of a specific child, activities or items that are suitable for the child based on the developmental stages attained by the child with respect to the cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities of the child.

*“Corporal punishment”* means the intentional physical punishment of a foster child.

*“Department”* means the Iowa department of human services and includes the local offices of the department.

*“Foster family home”* means a home in which an individual person or persons or a married couple who wishes to provide or is providing, for a period exceeding 24 consecutive hours, board, room, and care for a child in a single family living unit.

*“Health care provider”* means a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, physician assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner who completes a health report.

*“Public water supply system (PWS)”* means a system for the provision to the public of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances, if such system has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year.

*“Reasonable and prudent parent standard”* means the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child while at the same time encourage the emotional and developmental growth of the child, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the state to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. For the purposes of this definition, “caregiver” means a foster parent with whom a child in foster care has been placed or a designated official for a child care institution (including group homes, residential treatment, shelters, or other congregate care settings) in which a child in foster care has been placed.

*“Reasonable force”* means that force, and no more, which a reasonable person in like circumstances would judge to be necessary to prevent an injury or loss.

*“Recruitment and retention contractor”* means the entity that contracts with the department statewide to recruit foster and adoptive parents, complete home studies, and perform activities to support and encourage retention of foster and adoptive parents, or any of its subcontractors.

*“Service area manager”* means the department employee responsible for managing department offices and personnel within the service area and for implementing policies and procedures of the department.

*“Social work administrator”* means the department employee responsible for supervising the social work staff within a department service area and for implementing service policies and procedures of the department.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 237.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 2069C, IAB 8/5/15, effective 10/1/15; ARC 2743C, IAB 10/12/16, effective 12/1/16; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

**441—113.3(237) Licensing procedure.**

**113.3(1) Application.** Applications for an initial license to operate a foster family home shall be submitted and processed as directed in rule 441—112.3(237). In addition to the application form, the applicant shall submit the following forms during the licensing process:

- a. Form 595-1396, DHS Criminal History Record Check, for each person living in the home who is 14 years of age or older, as required by rule 441—113.13(237).
- b. Form 470-0720, Physician's Report for Foster and Adoptive Parents, to satisfy the requirements of rule 441—113.11(237).
- c. Form 470-0693, Foster Care Private Water Supply Survey, if applicable.
- d. Form 470-4657, Floor Plan. The applicant or the recruitment and retention provider shall complete a drawing of the floor plan of the family's home.
- e. If licensed to drive, a copy of the driver's license and motor vehicle insurance.

**113.3(2) Orientation.** Applicants shall attend an orientation provided by the recruitment and retention contractor as described in rule 441—117.2(237).

**113.3(3) Record checks.** Before beginning preservice training, applicants shall pass at least the local record check procedures as specified in rule 441—113.13(237).

**113.3(4) Home study.** The worker for the recruitment and retention contractor shall complete a family home study.

a. *Process.* Information for the home study is gathered primarily through the required preservice training as described in rule 441—117.1(237). Tribal agencies may also be involved in conducting home studies for American Indian and Alaska Native children. 42 U.S.C.A. Section 671(a)(26)(B) provides that any receiving state must treat any tribal home study report as meeting the requirements imposed by the state for the completion of a home study.

(1) The worker shall hold at least two face-to-face interviews with the applicant with one of the interviews taking place in the applicant's home.

(2) The worker shall hold at least one face-to-face interview with each member of the household in the applicant's home to observe family functioning and to assess the family's capacity to meet the needs of a child in foster care. The worker will determine whether to interview or just observe each household member based on the household member's age and development.

(3) A physical inspection of the home is required. The worker shall use the Foster Family Survey Report to complete the physical inspection of the home to verify compliance with the licensing and regulation standards in this chapter.

(4) Reference checks shall be conducted as described at rule 441—113.14(237).

b. *Family assessment topics.* The assessment of the prospective foster family shall evaluate the family's ability to parent a special needs child. The assessment shall include the following:

(1) The applicant's motivation for foster care and whether the family has biological, adopted, or foster children.

(2) The attitude of the family and the extended family toward accepting a foster child.

(3) The applicant's emotional stability; marital relationship and history, including verification of marriages and divorces; family relationships; and compatibility.

(4) The applicant's ability to cope with problems, stress, frustrations, crisis, separation, and loss.

(5) Medical, mental, and emotional conditions that may affect the applicant's ability to parent a child; treatment history; current status of treatment; and the evaluation of the treatment. Applicants and all household members must disclose any past or current mental health or substance abuse issues, or both. The department may require further documentation or evaluation, or both, to determine the suitability of the home.

(6) All children who are household members must be up to date on immunizations jointly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, unless the immunization is contrary to the child's health as documented by a licensed health care professional.

(7) An evaluation of the applicant's willingness to accept a child who has medical problems (such as HIV), an intellectual disability, or emotional or behavioral problems. The applicant shall complete the

department form to indicate choices about caring for children who have or are at risk for HIV infection and other medical problems.

(8) The applicant's ability to provide for a child's physical, medical, and emotional needs and respect the child's ethnic and religious identity.

(9) The safety of foster children in relation to any animals that live on the applicant's property.

(10) The adjustment of any children in the home, including their attitudes toward foster care and adoption, relationships with others, and school performance.

(11) An assessment of the applicant's disciplinary techniques and practices.

(12) The applicant's financial information and ability to provide for a child.

(13) The applicant's attitude toward the foster child's birth parents and siblings.

(14) The applicant's commitment to and capacity to maintain a foster child's significant relationships and work with the child's parents when the permanency goal is reunification.

(15) Any history of substance use or substance abuse by family members or members of the household, including treatment history and current status of treatment.

(16) Any history of abuse by family members or members of the household, including treatment history, current status of treatment, and how this issue would affect the applicant's ability to be a foster parent.

(17) Any criminal convictions of family members or adults in the household and the evaluation of the criminal record.

*c. Written report.* The recruitment and retention contractor shall prepare a written report of the family assessment using Form 470-5436, Resource Parent Home Study. The Resource Parent Home Study shall include a recommendation for the number, age, sex, characteristics, and special needs of a child or children the family can best parent and any other pertinent information in making the licensing recommendation. The home study shall be maintained in the foster family record.

**113.3(5) Decision.** The department worker shall use the home study to approve or deny a prospective family as an appropriate placement for a child or children. The department worker shall notify the family of the licensing decision using Form 470-0709, Notice of Action: Foster Family Home.

*a.* Upon approval, the department shall issue the applicant a foster family home license as described at rule 441—112.4(237). The license shall indicate the licensed capacity for the number of foster children approved for placement in the foster family home under subrule 113.4(1).

*b.* If the department worker does not approve the home study, the notice shall state the reasons for that decision, as listed in rule 441—112.5(237). A license denial may be appealed as described at rule 441—112.8(237).

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.5.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17; ARC 5064C, IAB 7/1/20, effective 9/1/20]

**441—113.4(237) Provisions pertaining to the license.** On a case-by-case basis, the service area manager or area social work administrator may waive any standard in this chapter unless:

1. The requirement is set in state or federal law; or
2. The waiver could have a negative impact on the safety and well-being of a child placed in the foster family home.

**113.4(1) Number of children.** A foster family home may care for up to five children unless a variance is approved as described in this rule. The license capacity shall be based on the number of the foster family's biological and adoptive children and any relative placements. The license shall be issued for at least one child. A child who has reached the age of 18 and remains eligible for foster family care shall be included in the license capacity. Any variance to this rule must:

*a.* Be approved by the service area manager or designee.

*b.* Be documented in the licensing record with reasons given for granting the variance.

*c.* Meet one of the following criteria:

(1) The foster parents have three or more children in the home and have shown the ability to parent a large number of children. A licensing variance may be approved at initial or renewal licensure to allow the placement of up to three foster children as set forth in the chart below:

No. of Children in the Home (birth/relative/adoptive placements)	Maximum License Capacity:	
	Without variance	With variance
0 children	5	Not applicable
1 child	4	Not applicable
2 children	3	Not applicable
3 children	2	3
4 children	1	3
5 or more children	Not applicable	3

(2) A variance beyond the maximum capacity of the foster home license is needed for the placement of a specific child in foster family care. A child-specific variance shall end when that child leaves the placement or any other change brings the family into licensed capacity. Unless a variance is needed for the placement of a sibling(s) of a foster child already in the home, or to keep siblings together, the maximum number of children in the home shall not exceed eight. On a case-by-case basis, if it is determined the foster parents have shown the parenting skills and have the social support system to meet the children's needs for parenting more than eight children, the social work administrator shall approve the foster parents to parent more than eight children. A foster family may have both a licensing and a child-specific variance concurrently.

*d.* All other licensing requirements including, but not limited to, parenting ability and available bedroom space must be met before a foster home can be approved for a variance.

**113.4(2) *Employees of the department as foster parents.*** Employees of the department may be licensed as foster family home parents unless they are engaged in the administration or provision of foster care services. Employees engaged in the administration or provision of foster care services include:

*a.* Child care staff, social workers, youth service workers or their supervisors involved in programs for children in state institutions.

*b.* Foster care service workers, foster care licensing staff, and their supervisors employed in county or central offices of the department.

*c.* Other staff engaged in foster care placements, such as child protective staff or adoption workers.

*d.* Department staff responsible for the development of policies and procedures relating to foster care licensing and placement.

**113.4(3) *Limits on foster family home licensure.*** A licensed foster family home shall not be permitted to be a licensed comprehensive residential facility, community residential facility, or licensed child care center.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 237.3 and 237.5.

[ARC 7606B, IAB 3/11/09, effective 5/1/09; ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.5(237) Physical standards.**

**113.5(1) *General standards.*** The foster home shall be safe, clean, well ventilated, properly lighted, properly heated, and free from vermin and rodents to ensure the well-being of the foster children residing in the home.

##### **113.5(2) *Grounds.***

*a.* There shall be safe outdoor space provided according to the age and developmental needs of the foster child for active play. The area available shall be documented in the case record.

*b.* The foster child shall be adequately supervised and protected against hazards including, but not limited to, traffic, bodies of water, railroads, waste material, and contaminated water. The foster parent shall provide environmental protections such as door alarms, baby monitors, fences, and foliage barriers.

*c.* The applicant's home must meet the following standards concerning swimming pools, hot tubs and spas:

(1) A child's plastic pool shall be drained daily and shall be inaccessible to children when it is not in use. Swimming pools must have a barrier on all sides at least four feet high.

(2) An aboveground or in-ground swimming pool that is not fenced shall be covered whenever the pool is not in use. The cover shall meet or exceed the ASTM International (formerly known as the American Society for Testing and Materials) specification intended to reduce the risk of drowning by inhibiting access to the water by children under five years of age. Swimming pools must have their methods of access through the barrier equipped with a safety device, such as a bolt lock.

(3) Swimming pools must be equipped with a lifesaving device, such as a ring buoy.

(4) If the swimming pool cannot be emptied after each use, the pool must have a working pump and filtering system.

(5) Hot tubs and spas must have safety covers that are locked when not in use.

The foster parent or other adult shall provide reasonable supervision according to the ages and swimming abilities of the foster children when they are using the pool.

**113.5(3) *Bedrooms for foster children.***

a. Bedrooms shall either have been constructed for the purpose of providing sleeping accommodation or remodeled for sleeping to provide proper heat and ventilation. Bedroom additions to a home shall meet building code requirements. All bedrooms used by foster children shall have:

(1) Permanent walls;

(2) A door that closes;

(3) An unobstructed, operable window that opens from the inside that is large enough to allow for an unrestricted exit by a foster child;

(4) A closet, wardrobe, armoire, or dresser for the child's clothes; and

(5) A standard bed, for infants and toddlers who cannot safely use a standard bed, a crib or crib-like furniture which has a waterproof mattress covering and sufficient bedding to enable a child to rest comfortably and which meets the current standards or recommendations from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission or ASTM International for juvenile products for each child under two years of age if developmentally appropriate. The provider shall follow safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics for infants under the age of one. Safe infant sleep practices shall conform to the following standards:

1. Infants shall always be placed on their backs for sleep.

2. Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitting sheet that meets U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission federal standards.

3. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child shall be allowed to sleep in any item not designed for sleeping. This is not referring to a child in a car seat in a car.

4. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant.

5. No co-sleeping shall be allowed.

6. If an alternate sleeping position is needed for an infant, a signed authorization with a statement of a medical reason is required and shall be submitted by a physician, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

b. The minimum bedroom area per child shall be 40 square feet. However, the service area manager or designee may approve a smaller room size when approval is in the best interest of specific children placed or to be placed in the home. Such approvals shall:

(1) Be in writing;

(2) Contain the names and birth dates of the children for whom issued; and

(3) Be reviewed at each license renewal.

c. When bedrooms meet only minimum requirements, the home shall provide additional room in other parts of the home for study and play.

d. The ceiling height for bedrooms shall be adequate for the child.

e. Except for baby video monitors for children birth to two years of age used in their bedrooms, video or surveillance cameras are not allowed in children's bedrooms or bathrooms.

f. Bedrooms belowground shall:

(1) Be free from excessive dampness, noxious gases, and objectionable odors;

(2) Have access to at least one direct exit to the outside from the level belowground and one inside stairway exit from the level belowground;

(3) Have an egress window with a clear opening area with an opening height of 24 inches and an opening width of 20 inches or an opening height of 20 inches and an opening width of 24 inches;

(4) Have provisions, such as a ladder or steps, to ensure that the foster child can safely reach the window if the finished sill height is more than 44 inches above the floor and that the foster child can safely reach ground level if there is a window well that has a depth of 44 inches or higher;

(5) Have a finished ceiling such as drywall or a drop ceiling; and

(6) Have a covered floor.

**113.5(4)** *All rooms aboveground.* Rescinded IAB 10/3/12, effective 12/1/12.

**113.5(5)** *Rooms belowground.* Rescinded IAB 10/3/12, effective 12/1/12.

**113.5(6)** *Physical care standards for foster children.*

a. Grouping children in bedrooms shall take into consideration the age and sex of children.

(1) Children over five years of age shall not share a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex.

(2) Foster children shall not share a bed with any other child. The social work administrator may approve a waiver of this policy.

b. Children two years of age or older shall be provided bedroom space other than in the foster parents' bedroom. Foster children under the age of two may share a bedroom with the foster parent in an individual crib.

c. There shall be a plan for isolating healthy children from a child who is ill or suspected of having a contagious disease.

d. The foster home shall provide food with good nutritional content and in sufficient quantity to meet the individual needs of the children.

e. Bedding shall be clean, odor-free, and free of urine and feces.

f. Foster parents shall follow universal precautions to reduce exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other infectious materials when providing care to all children placed in their physical custody.

g. Smoking and vaping shall be prohibited in the foster home or any vehicle when the foster child is present.

**113.5(7)** *Lead-based paint.* If the applicant lives in a home built before 1960, the applicant shall submit Form 470-4819, Lead Paint Assessment, certifying that the applicant:

a. Has conducted a visual assessment for lead hazards that exist in the form of peeling or chipping paint; and

b. Has applied interim controls using safe work methods if the presence of peeling or chipping paint is found, unless an inspector certified pursuant to department of public health rules at 641—Chapter 70 has determined that the paint is not lead-based. “Interim controls” are measures designed to temporarily reduce human exposure or likely exposure to lead-based paint hazards, such as repairing deteriorated lead-based paint, specialized cleaning, maintenance, painting, and temporary containment.

**113.5(8)** *Artificial lighting.* Adequate artificial lighting fixtures shall be provided for study in areas where children will be studying.

**113.5(9)** *Bathroom facilities.*

a. Bathroom facilities shall have at least one toilet, sink, and tub or shower in safe operating condition.

b. Bathroom facilities shall have natural or artificial ventilation.

**113.5(10)** *Heating plant.*

a. The heating plant shall have a capacity to maintain a temperature of approximately 65 degrees Fahrenheit in the bedrooms with the door closed.

b. Fireplaces and water heaters shall be vented to the outside atmosphere. The temperature of any water heaters must be set in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Kerosene heaters and gas-fired space heaters shall not be used to heat any space in the home.

**113.5(11)** *Ventilation.* Ventilation shall be provided in all rooms where foster children eat, sleep, and play either by windows which can be opened or by mechanical venting systems. Windows and doors used for ventilation shall be screened.

**113.5(12) Phone.** A working phone or access to a working phone shall be in close walking proximity to an applicant's living space.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 0357C, IAB 10/3/12, effective 12/1/12; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17; ARC 5064C, IAB 7/1/20, effective 9/1/20]

#### **441—113.6(237) Sanitation, water, and waste disposal.**

**113.6(1) Food preparation and storage.** Food preparation areas shall be clean, and the home shall have kitchen facilities with a sink, refrigerator, stove, and oven in safe operating condition.

**113.6(2) Public water supply.** The water supply is approved when the water is obtained from a public water supply system.

**113.6(3) Private water supply.**

a. Each privately operated water supply shall be tested prior to initial licensure and tested before license renewal, and evaluated for obvious deficiencies such as open or loose well tops or platforms and poor drainage around the wells.

b. As part of the evaluation, water samples must be collected and submitted by the licensing worker or health sanitarian to the university hygienic laboratory or other laboratory certified by the hygienic laboratory and analyzed for coliform bacteria. In order to be licensed for the care of children under two years of age the nitrate (NO<sup>3</sup>) content must be analyzed.

c. When the water supply is obtained from more than one well, proof of the quality of the water from each well is required.

d. When the water sample result shows the water is potable, the license can be granted.

e. When the water sample is not approved, no foster family home license shall be issued until the foster parents provide a written statement that foster children will be provided potable water, including where the water will be obtained and how it will be transported and stored.

(1) The statement shall be provided on Form 470-0699, Provisions for Alternate Water Supply.

(2) When the family has made ongoing alternative arrangements for the use of safe, potable water, annual testing of the water may be waived after the private water supply has tested unpotable for three consecutive years.

**113.6(4) Sewage treatment.**

a. Foster homes, wherever possible, shall be connected to public sewer systems.

b. Private disposal systems shall be designed, constructed and maintained so that no unsanitary or nuisance conditions exist, such as surface discharge of raw or partially treated sewage or failure of the sewer lines to convey sewage properly.

**113.6(5) Garbage storage and disposal.**

a. A sufficient number of covered garbage and rubbish containers shall be provided to properly store all material between collections.

b. Containers shall be fly tight, watertight, and rodent proof and shall be maintained in a sanitary condition.

**113.6(6) Rodent and insect infestation.** The home shall prevent or eliminate rodent and insect infestation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17; ARC 5064C, IAB 7/1/20, effective 9/1/20]

#### **441—113.7(237) Safety.**

**113.7(1) Fire protection for bedrooms.** Any floor of a house, including the basement, shall be equipped with the following:

a. At least one UL (Underwriter's Laboratory)-approved smoke detector. On floors that are used for sleeping, the smoke detector shall be in a location where sleeping areas can be alerted. For hearing-impaired children, the foster parent shall install a smoke detector in the child's bedroom that will use an alternative means of waking the child.

b. Hallways and stairways free of debris and clutter to allow unrestricted access to an exit.

c. A working carbon monoxide detector in all homes with:

- (1) Gas appliances, furnaces, fireplaces, or other gas equipment; and
- (2) Attached garages.

**113.7(2) Combustion hazards.**

*a.* Combustible materials shall be kept away from heat sources, including but not limited to furnaces, stoves, electrical panels, space heaters, and hot water heaters.

*b.* Explosives and flammable substances shall be stored securely and be inaccessible to a child. Matches and lighters shall be inaccessible to a child.

*c.* The home shall have at least one operable 2A-10BC-rated or ABC-rated fire extinguisher.

**113.7(3) Safety plan.** The family shall have an emergency safety plan to be used for fire, tornado, blizzard, flood, other natural or manmade disasters, accidents, medical issues, and other life-threatening situations for children in out-of-home placements. The safety plans shall state the action that the foster parents and children are to take in each situation that may occur and shall be posted in a prominent place in the home.

*a.* The safety plans for fire and tornadoes shall be reviewed with foster children at the time of placement. Fire and tornado plans shall be practiced with the foster children within one week of placement and no less than annually thereafter.

*b.* In a disaster requiring evacuation of the foster home, the foster parents shall notify the department of the evacuation and the address and telephone number of the foster parents' temporary residence within 24 hours after evacuation.

*c.* The plans shall include a designated meeting place.

*d.* Applicants must maintain a comprehensive list of emergency telephone numbers, including poison control, and post those numbers in a prominent place in the home. If there is a landline phone located in the home, the numbers must be posted next to the phone.

**113.7(4) Medications, first aid and poisonous substances.**

*a.* All prescription medication shall be administered as prescribed and documented in a medication log that is given to the child's department caseworker when the child leaves the placement.

*b.* All over-the-counter medications shall be administered according to label directions or as directed by a physician.

*c.* Applicants must prevent the child's access, as appropriate for the child's age and development, to all medications, poisonous materials, cleaning supplies, other hazardous materials and alcoholic beverages.

*d.* Applicants must maintain first aid supplies as recommended by the American Red Cross.

**113.7(5) Weapons.** All weapons, firearms, and ammunition shall be inaccessible to a child of any age.

*a.* The following weapons must be stored in an inoperative condition in a locked area inaccessible to children:

- (1) Firearms;
- (2) Air guns;
- (3) BB guns;
- (4) Hunting slingshots;
- (5) Any other projectile weapons.

*b.* All ammunition, arrows or projectiles for such weapons shall be maintained in a locked place separate from the firearms.

*c.* The weapons, firearms, and ammunition storage unit shall not share the same key or matching security code. If a key is used, the key shall be stored in a place inaccessible to the foster child.

*d.* Any motor vehicles used to transport foster children shall not contain a loaded gun, and any ammunition in the vehicle shall be kept in a separate, locked container.

*e.* Foster parents who have a permit to carry a firearm shall sign Form 470-4657, Firearms Safety Plan. Foster parents who have firearms but do not have a permit to carry shall complete the safety plan section of the Firearms Safety Plan form.

*f.* Foster parents who are also law enforcement officials and can document that their jurisdiction requires them to have ready and immediate access to their weapons may be exempt from these weapon requirements provided they adopt and follow a safety plan approved by the department.

**113.7(6) *Transporting foster children.***

*a.* Foster parents will ensure that if a privately owned vehicle, owned by the applicants, family or friends, is used to transport the child in foster care, it must be inspected (if applicable under state law), registered, and insured and meet all applicable state or tribal requirements to be an operable vehicle on the road.

*b.* The driver will have a valid Iowa driver's license.

*c.* Safety restraints will be used that are appropriate to the child's age, height, and weight.

*d.* Any motor vehicles used to transport foster children shall be smoke-free when foster children are being transported.

*e.* Weapons must not be transported in any vehicle in which the child is riding unless the weapons are made inoperable and inaccessible.

*f.* Foster parents will have access to reliable public transportation if they do not have access to a reliable, registered, and insured vehicle.

**113.7(7) *Supervision.*** The foster parents shall provide reasonable and prudent supervision of foster children to ensure their safety.

*a.* Foster parents shall adequately supervise foster children while the children are using any hazardous or dangerous objects or equipment. In order for foster children to participate in age- or developmentally appropriate activities, the foster parent would apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

*b.* Foster parents shall use reasonable and prudent supervision of foster children when the foster children are using the Internet or other social media.

**113.7(8) *Household pets.*** Household pets and any outdoor animals or pets accessible to foster children shall have a current veterinary health certificate verifying that the animal's routine immunizations, e.g., rabies, are current.

*a.* At the time of the initial home study and any time thereafter, foster parents shall report an animal's history of aggression towards people and inform the department of the animal's aggression towards people within 24 hours of an occurrence.

*b.* Foster parents who have pets or animals with any history of aggression shall have a written plan that addresses strategies to reduce the risk of aggression by their pets or animals with which the child will have contact.

*c.* Animal waste will be contained and disposed of on a routine basis.

**113.7(9) *Liability.*** Foster parents who apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard reasonably and in good faith in regard to a foster child placed in their home shall have immunity from civil or criminal liability which might otherwise be incurred or imposed. This subrule shall not remove or limit any existing liability protection afforded under any other law.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 0357C, IAB 10/3/12, effective 12/1/12; ARC 2743C, IAB 10/12/16, effective 12/1/16; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17; ARC 5064C, IAB 7/1/20, effective 9/1/20]

**441—113.8(237) Foster parent training.**

**113.8(1) *Preservice training.*** All foster parent applicants shall complete the following training before licensure and the placement of a child in foster care in their home:

*a.* Orientation pursuant to rule 441—117.2(237);

*b.* Preservice training pursuant to rule 441—117.1(237);

*c.* Preservice training, which shall include:

(1) An agency-approved medication management training,

(2) A face-to-face cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first-aid training,

(3) Mandatory reporter training on child abuse identification, and

(4) The reasonable and prudent parent standard training; and

*d.* Mandatory reporter training on child abuse identification and reporting before initial licensure and every five years thereafter as required by rule 441—112.10(232) and 441—subrule 117.8(3).

**113.8(2) *In-service training.*** All licensed foster parents shall complete six hours of in-service training annually as required by rule 441—117.7(237).

Each foster parent shall maintain certification in CPR and first-aid training.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.5A.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 2069C, IAB 8/5/15, effective 10/1/15; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.9(237) Involvement of kin.**

**113.9(1) *Support by foster parents.*** Foster parents shall support the involvement of biological or adoptive parents and other relatives of the foster child unless this involvement is evaluated and documented by the department to be detrimental to the child's well-being.

**113.9(2) *Nature of involvement.*** The extent and nature of the involvement of the biological or adoptive parents and other relatives shall be determined by the caseworker in consultation with the foster parents, biological or adoptive parents, and others involved with the child and family.

**113.9(3) *Cultural connections.*** Throughout the provision of care, the foster family shall actively ensure that the foster child stays connected to the child's kin, culture, and community as required in the child's case permanency plan.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09]

#### **441—113.10(237) Information on the foster child.**

**113.10(1) *Foster child information.*** Foster parents shall maintain a separate folder of information on each foster child placed in the foster family home. This folder shall be provided to the department or the child's parent or guardian when the child leaves the placement. The folder shall contain:

*a.* The names and addresses of all doctors, mental health professionals, and dentists who have treated the foster child; current medications prescribed, including over-the-counter medications; medication log; and the type of medical, dental, vision, and mental health treatments and hearing examinations received while the foster child is in the foster home.

*b.* School reports including report cards and pictures.

*c.* Date the child left the placement.

*d.* Name, address, and telephone number of the person to whom the child is discharged.

**113.10(2) *Confidentiality.*** Foster parents shall maintain confidentiality regarding a child in placement except as required to comply with rules on mandatory reporting of child abuse and with the child's case permanency plan. Foster parents shall not without parent or guardian and department consent post pictures or information concerning a foster child on any Internet Web site or on social media.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.7.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.11(237) Health of foster family.**

**113.11(1) *Health report required.*** The foster parents shall furnish the licensing agency with a health report on the family completed no more than six months before the application for licensure. The report shall include information on all family members, including foster parents, their minor children who reside in the home, and adult household members. An updated report shall be provided upon request of the department licensing worker or the recruitment and retention contractor.

**113.11(2) *Contents of report.*** This report shall include a statement from the health practitioner that there are no physical or mental health problems which would be a hazard to foster children placed in the home and a statement that the foster parents' health would not prevent needed care from being provided to the child.

**113.11(3) *Whooping cough vaccine.*** All household members who are caregivers must have up-to-date whooping cough vaccines unless contrary to the person's health.

**113.11(4) *Capability for caring for the child.*** If there is evidence that the foster parent is unable to provide necessary care for the child, the department licensing worker, the recruitment and retention contractor, or the physician may require additional medical and mental health reports, including a substance abuse evaluation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.7.  
[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17; ARC 5064C, IAB 7/1/20, effective 9/1/20]

**441—113.12(237) Characteristics of foster parents.**

**113.12(1) *Age.***

- a. Foster parents shall be at least 21 years of age.
- b. The age of foster parents shall be considered as it affects their ability to care for a specific child and function in a parental role.

**113.12(2) *Income and resources.*** The foster family shall have sufficient income and resources to provide adequately for the family's own needs.

**113.12(3) *Religious considerations.*** The foster parent shall respect the foster child's religious background and affiliation.

**113.12(4) *Requirements of foster parents.*** Foster parents shall be stable, responsible, physically able to care for the type of child placed, mature individuals who are not unsuited by reason of substance abuse, lewd or lascivious behavior or other conduct likely to be detrimental to the physical or mental health or morals of the child. They shall exercise good judgment in caring for children and have a capacity to accept agency supervision.

**113.12(5) *Personal characteristics.*** The foster parents shall:

- a. Provide evidence of relationship stability.
- b. Have realistic expectations of foster children.
- c. Have time available to parent foster children.
- d. Be able to communicate with the licensing agency and health care and other service providers.
- e. Have functional literacy, a level of reading, writing and calculation skills such as having the ability to read labels on medications in order to properly administer them.
- f. Be able to accept and deal with acting out behavior with realistic expectations and good judgment.
- g. Include foster children in normal family life.
- h. Have the ability to be accepting and loving toward a foster child entering the home.
- i. Be able to support the case permanency plan for the foster child and be willing to cooperate with visits, transportation, or other activities that support the child's connection to and reunification with the child's family.
- j. Ensure that all family members are aware of having foster children in the home.
- k. Articulate their strengths and concerns and limitations which are essential to the department's matching the foster children with foster parents appropriately.

**113.12(6) *Determination of characteristics.*** The areas discussed in subrules 113.12(4) and 113.12(5) shall be explored through observation of the family and interviews with family members and documented in a foster home study as described in subrule 113.3(4), or in the foster family record when explored after licensure and prior to renewal. Any additional areas that the family or worker identifies as a possibility for creating problems shall also be documented in the foster family record.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.  
[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17; ARC 5064C, IAB 7/1/20, effective 9/1/20]

**441—113.13(237) Record checks.** Record checks are required for each foster parent applicant and for anyone who is 14 years of age or older living in the home of the applicant. The purpose of the record checks is to determine whether any of these persons has any founded child abuse reports or criminal convictions or has been placed on the sex offender registry.

**113.13(1) *Procedure.*** The department's contractor for the recruitment and retention of resource families shall assist applicants in completing required record checks, including fingerprinting.

*a. Iowa records.* Each foster parent applicant and anyone who is 14 years of age or older living in the home of the applicant shall be checked for records with:

- (1) The Iowa central abuse registry, using Form 470-0643, Request for Child and Dependent Adult Abuse Information;
- (2) The Iowa division of criminal investigation, using Form 595-1396, DHS Criminal History Record Check, Form B;
- (3) The Iowa sex offender registry; and
- (4) Iowa Courts Online.

*b. Other records.*

(1) Each foster parent applicant and any other adult living in the household shall also be checked for records on the child abuse registry of any state where the person has lived during the past five years.

(2) Each foster parent applicant shall also be fingerprinted for a national criminal history check. Fingerprinting, for the purpose of a national criminal history check, is required on all other adult household members at the time of initial application effective with applications dated on or after October 1, 2011. When warranted, the department may require fingerprinting for a national criminal history check on adult household members who move in after initial application.

**113.13(2) Evaluation of record.** If the applicant or anyone living in the home has a record of founded child or dependent adult abuse, a criminal conviction, or placement on the sex offender registry, the department shall not license the applicant as a foster family unless an evaluation determines that the abuse or criminal conviction does not warrant prohibition of license.

*a. Exclusion.* An evaluation shall not be performed if the person has been convicted of:

- (1) A felony offense as set forth in Iowa Code section 237.8(2)“a”(4); or
- (2) A crime in another state that would be a felony as set forth in Iowa Code section 237.8(2)“a”(4).

*b. Scope.* The evaluation shall consider the nature and seriousness of the founded child or dependent adult abuse or crime in relation to:

- (1) The position sought or held,
- (2) The time elapsed since the abuse or crime was committed,
- (3) The degree of rehabilitation,
- (4) The likelihood that the person will commit the abuse or crime again, and
- (5) The number of abuses or crimes committed by the person.

*c. Evaluation form.* The person with the founded child or dependent adult abuse or criminal conviction report shall complete and return Form 470-2310, Record Check Evaluation, within ten calendar days of the date of receipt to be used to assist in the evaluation. Failure of the person to complete and return Form 470-2310 within the specified time frame shall result in denial of licensure.

**113.13(3) Evaluation decision.** The service area manager or designee shall conduct the evaluation and make the decision. The department shall issue Form 470-2310, Record Check Evaluation, to inform the subject of the decision and describe the basis of the decision using the criteria specified in paragraph 113.13(2)“b.” The department shall mail the form to the person on whom the evaluation was completed:

*a.* Within 30 days of receipt of the completed Form 470-2310, Record Check Evaluation, or

*b.* When the person whose record is being evaluated fails to complete the evaluation form within the time frame specified in paragraph 113.13(2)“c.”

**113.13(4) License renewal.** Foster parents applying for an annual or biennial license renewal shall be subject to the same checks as new applicants, except for fingerprinting. The department shall evaluate only abuses and convictions of crimes that occurred since the last record check. The evaluation shall be conducted using the same process.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.8(2).

[ARC 7606B, IAB 3/11/09, effective 5/1/09; ARC 0356C, IAB 10/3/12, effective 12/1/12; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.14(237) Reference checks.**

**113.14(1)** At least three additional unsolicited references shall be checked for all foster family home applicants in addition to a minimum of three references provided by the applicant. Required references shall include a minimum of one relative and one nonrelative.

**113.14(2)** Responses of references shall be documented in the applicant's record.

**113.14(3)** Information received from references may be discussed with the applicant at the discretion of the worker. The reference shall be so informed.

**113.14(4)** Reference checks shall include only those areas related to the applicant's ability to care for children and should include discussion of the following areas:

- a. How long and in what capacity the reference has known the applicant.
- b. Personal qualities of the applicant including the general character, ability to get along with others, ability to deal with children's problem behavior, ability to give affection and care, discussion of use of drugs and alcohol, questions regarding personal difficulties that could be detrimental to a foster child.
- c. Relationship stability.
- d. How the applicant handles anger, problems, crisis situations, discipline, and disappointments.
- e. Any areas of general concern not previously mentioned.
- f. Would the reference feel comfortable leaving a child in this home for a period of time?
- g. Recommendations regarding licensing.

**113.14(5)** When warranted, additional references may be sought after licensure.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17; ARC 5064C, IAB 7/1/20, effective 9/1/20]

#### **441—113.15(237) Unannounced visits.**

**113.15(1)** The department's recruitment and retention contractor shall make unannounced visits during periods of the day when the child and foster parents would normally be at home and awake, unless there has been a specific complaint about the family and care of the child.

**113.15(2)** The unannounced visit shall include, but is not limited to, assessment of the following areas:

- a. Home environment.
- b. Who was present at the time of the visit.
- c. Interaction between the foster child and foster family and their children.
- d. The foster child's perception of the foster parents, other children and adults in the home, behavioral expectations of foster parents, discipline used by foster parents, religious training, school, contact with natural parents, and purpose of placement in foster care.
- e. The foster parents' view of the child, the child's problem, placement worker's involvement, plan for the child, involvement of natural parents, and additional services that either the foster child or foster parents need.
- f. Any previously or currently cited deficiencies, corrective action plans and progress.
- g. Any previous or current concerns from department workers.
- h. Discussion of placements during the licensing year and, if none, the reason why.
- i. Progress on completing training in the foster parents' training plan.
- j. Awareness of the foster parents' license capacity and compliance.
- k. Recommended action.

**113.15(3)** An unannounced visit to the foster home:

- a. Shall be completed annually;
- b. Shall not be waived; and
- c. Shall not occur in conjunction with license renewal.

**113.15(4)** The findings from the unannounced visit shall be summarized on Form 470-5438, Progress Notes.

- a. The report shall be sent to the department licensing worker and the foster parents within two weeks after the visit.
- b. A copy of the report shall be retained in the foster parents' record.

**113.15(5)** Actions after the unannounced visit.

- a. When deficiencies are cited that do not appear likely to cause immediate physical or mental harm to the child, an additional visit may be scheduled. The department licensing worker and the

recruitment and retention contractor shall discuss the deficiencies with the foster parents and make plans for improving the deficiencies.

*b.* When the reported deficiencies raise questions of concern as to the quality of care provided, the recruitment and retention contractor shall:

(1) Report deficiencies to the department licensing worker and to the placement worker for each foster child currently placed in the home;

(2) Hold a meeting with the department licensing worker and the foster parents to discuss deficiencies and the plans for improving the deficiencies and then complete a written corrective action plan as to how the foster parents intend to address the deficiencies.

*c.* When the reported deficiencies appear likely to cause immediate physical or mental harm to the child, the service area manager or designee shall immediately:

(1) Direct the placement worker to determine if the child should be removed, and

(2) Direct the licensing worker to complete a review of the foster home to determine if the family should continue to be licensed, should receive a provisional license, or should have the license revoked according to 441—112.6(237).

**113.15(6)** When the foster parents refuse to make a written commitment to improve the deficiencies, the department licensing worker shall conduct a complete review of the foster home to determine if the license should be revoked according to rule 441—112.6(237).

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.7.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.16(237) Planned activities and personal effects.**

**113.16(1)** *Daily routine.* The daily routine shall promote good health and provide an opportunity for activity suitable for the foster child with time for rest and play.

**113.16(2)** *Clothing.*

*a.* All children should have their own clothing.

*b.* Children shall have training and help in selection and proper care of clothing.

*c.* Clothing shall be suited to the existing climate and seasonal conditions.

*d.* Clothing shall be becoming, of proper size, and culturally appropriate.

*e.* There shall be an adequate supply of clothing to permit laundering, cleaning and repair.

*f.* There shall be adequate closet and drawer space for children to permit access to their clothing.

**113.16(3)** *Educational opportunity.* Every foster child shall be given the opportunity to complete high school or vocational training in accordance with the child's case permanency plan. The foster parent shall be an advocate for the foster child by working with the foster child's school.

**113.16(4)** *Religion and culture.* Each child shall be given an opportunity, in consultation with the child's parents, to participate in the child's culture and religion. Children shall not be required to participate in religious training or observances contrary to the wishes of the biological or adoptive family or the religious beliefs of the child.

**113.16(5)** *Community participation.* Every child shall be given the opportunity to develop healthy social relationships through participation in neighborhood, school and other community and group activities. The child shall have the opportunity to invite friends to the foster home and to visit the home of friends.

**113.16(6)** *Work assignments.* Work assignments shall be in keeping with the child's age and development.

*a.* Exploitation of the child is prohibited. No child shall be permitted to do any hazardous tasks or to engage in any work which is in violation of the child labor laws of the state.

*b.* Each child shall have the opportunity to learn to assume some responsibility for self and for household duties in accordance with the child's age, health and ability. However, assigned tasks shall not deprive the child of school, sleep, play or study periods.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.

[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.17(237) Medical examinations and health care of the child.**

**113.17(1) *Medical and dental care.*** Foster parents shall keep the child's department case manager informed of any medical and dental appointments and treatments prescribed for the child.

*a.* Foster parents shall contact the child's parents to engage them in the process of accessing routine medical and dental care for their child unless parental rights have been terminated.

*b.* In case of an emergency or urgent situation requiring medical care and treatment of an acute illness, disease or condition of a child, when a delay or inability to access parental or department consent for medical care or treatment would endanger the health or physical well-being of the child, the foster parents can provide consent for medical care and treatment.

**113.17(2) *Exemption from medical care.*** Nothing in this rule shall be construed to require medical treatment or immunization for a minor child of any person who is a member of a church or religious organization which is against medical treatment for disease. In such instance, an official statement from the organization and a notarized statement from the parents shall be incorporated in the record. In potentially life-threatening situations, the child's care shall be referred to appropriate medical and legal authorities.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.  
[ARC 7606B, IAB 3/11/09, effective 5/1/09; ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.18(237) Training and discipline of foster children.**

**113.18(1) *Foster parents' methods of training and discipline.*** The home study evaluation of each foster parent applicant shall include a discussion and a written report of the foster parents' methods of training and discipline. Discipline shall be designed to help the child develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others.

**113.18(2) *Restrictions on training and discipline.*** Child training and discipline shall be handled with kindness and understanding.

*a.* A child shall not be locked in a room, closet, box, or other device.  
*b.* No child shall be deprived of food as punishment.  
*c.* No child shall be subjected to verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family.

*d.* The use of corporal punishment is prohibited.  
*e.* Restraints shall not be used as a form of discipline.

(1) Reasonable physical force may be used to restrain a child only in order to prevent injury to the child, injury to others, the destruction of property, or extremely disruptive behavior.

(2) Upon approval of the department, the foster parent may use restraints only in accordance with the written plan of a licensed mental health professional who is working with the child and the foster parents.

**113.18(3) *Reports of mistreatment.*** Reports of mistreatment coming to the attention of the department licensing worker and caseworker for the foster child shall be investigated promptly and referred to the proper authorities when necessary.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 234.40 and 237.3.  
[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09; ARC 3185C, IAB 7/5/17, effective 9/1/17]

#### **441—113.19(237) Emergency care and release of children.**

**113.19(1) *Supervision and arrangements for emergency care.***

*a.* Foster parents shall provide supervision of foster children and children in preadoptive placement as dictated by the individual child's specific needs.

*b.* In case of emergency requiring the foster parents' temporary absence from the home, arrangements shall be made with other licensed foster parents or with designated, responsible persons

for the care of the children during the period of absence. The child's placement worker shall be notified of all emergency absences of the foster parents.

**113.19(2) Release of foster child.** The foster parents shall release the foster child only to the agency, parent or guardian from whom the child was received for care, or the person specifically designated by the agency, parent or guardian.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.  
[ARC 8010B, IAB 7/29/09, effective 10/1/09]

**441—113.20(237) Changes in foster family home.** Foster parents shall notify the department and the recruitment and retention contractor within seven working days of:

1. Any change in the number of persons living in the home (except for foster children);
2. A move to a new home; or
3. Any circumstances in the home that could negatively affect the health, safety or welfare of a child in the family's care.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.3.  
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<sup>◇</sup> Two or more ARCs