

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 non-safety licensing standard for a kinship caregiver or grant a variance for any standard for a non-kinship caregiver in this chapter unless:

1. The requirement is set in state or federal law; or
2. The waiver or variance could have a negative impact on the safety and well-being of the child(ren) 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. Any child(ren) who have reached the age of 18 and remain 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 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 the child(ren) 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.