

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 child(ren) 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 child(ren) for active play. The area available shall be documented in the case record.

b. The child(ren) 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 as necessary to promote a safe environment.

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 the child(ren) 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 child(ren) when they are using the pool.

113.5(3) Bedrooms for child(ren) placed in the home.

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 the child(ren) placed in the home 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 the child(ren) placed in the home;

(4) A closet, wardrobe, armoire, or dresser for the child(ren)'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 the child(ren) 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(ren) 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 waiver of this non-safety licensing standard for kinship caregivers or a variance 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 child(ren) 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(ren).

e. Except for baby video monitors for the child(ren) birth to two years of age used in their bedrooms, video or surveillance cameras are not allowed in the child(ren)'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 child(ren) can safely reach the window if the finished sill height is more than 44 inches above the floor and that the child(ren) 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 child(ren).*

a. Grouping children in bedrooms shall take into consideration the age and sex of the child(ren), including the individual child's need for privacy.

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

(2) The child(ren) shall not share a bed with any other child. The social work administrator may approve a waiver of this policy for kinship caregivers or a variance for non-kinship caregivers.

b. Any child(ren) two years of age or older shall be provided bedroom space other than in the foster parents' bedroom. Any child(ren) 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 the healthy child(ren) 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 child(ren).

e. Personal care items must be provided for youth, and these items must reflect the individual, cultural, racial, and ethnic needs of the youth living in the foster home.

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

g. Foster parents shall follow universal precautions to reduce exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other infectious materials when providing care to any child(ren) placed in their physical custody.

h. Smoking and vaping shall be prohibited in the foster home or any vehicle when the child(ren) are present.

113.5(7) *Lead-based paint.* If the applicant lives in a home built before 1978, the applicant shall submit Form 470-4819, 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 the child(ren) 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 the child(ren) 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; ARC 6961C, IAB 4/5/23, effective 6/1/23]