

Alternate Care

What is “Alternate Care”?

When you allow someone else to look after a child/youth in care, it is considered “Alternate Care”. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, day care, and relief care.

What are my general responsibilities?

When you ask another person to be responsible for a child/youth in care, ensure the Caregiver:

- Is responsible.
- Is mature, knowledgeable, and skilled.
- Will use positive behavior management and appropriate discipline.
- Will follow through with child caring routines.
- Will be present and in charge.
- Understands confidentiality.
- Knows what to do in an emergency & how to contact the child’s Social Worker.
- If the child/youth is Indigenous, respects the importance of the child/youth’s cultural identity.

What are my responsibilities to the child/youth?

You must ensure that the child/youth:

- Is advised and prepared for all alternate caregiving arrangements.
- Knows what to do in an emergency and how to contact their social worker.
- Receives care that is consistent with what you provided as their Foster Parent.

Must I notify the child’s Social Worker?

- You should always consult with child/ youth’s social worker about alternate care arrangements.
- The importance of normalizing everyday life and social activities is a primary consideration when weighing the safety factors for a child/youth in care.
- Keep written records which document that alternate care requirements are met, including social worker approval.

Can I hire a youth in care to baby-sit?

It is strongly recommended that you do not. You must get Social Worker permission to have a child in care baby-sit in your home.

When can I leave my foster child/youth home alone?

This must be pre-arranged with the child/youth's worker. If permission is given, get it in writing so that you all agree to the same thing.

What about other adults in my home?

Adults or youth over the age of 18 must be screened by a social worker if they:

- Reside in the foster home.
- Are visiting/staying overnight in the foster home for more than 30 days.
- Are in an intimate partner relationship with the foster caregiver and regularly visit and/or stay in the foster home.

In summary:

	Foster Caregiver in your Role as a Prudent Parent
Child Minding / Babysitting	Use a checklist to select and assess the child minder.
Child Care / Day Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen and select the Child Care provider using the Parents' Guide to Selecting & Monitoring Child Care in BC. Consult with the child's worker and your Resource worker about your selection. • If an unlicensed childcare provider is to be used, you and the Social Worker are responsible for screening and monitoring the facility.
Sleepovers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using parental due diligence, check the sleepover arrangements and confirm that adults in the sleepover home/setting are providing a safe environment. Consult with the child's worker. • For sleepovers as part of school, a sport team or recreation events, confirm that supervising adults are providing a safe environment.
Unsupervised Situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use parental due diligence to ensure the safety of the child/youth around casual visitors in home and when the child goes on "play dates". • Discuss with youth the safety and risk factors associated with friendships and youth activities. • Use parental due diligence for situations involving coaches, tutors, music teachers etc. and ensure they are included in the child/youth's care plan.
Relief Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use approved Foster Caregivers as Relief Caregivers. • When not possible, you <u>must</u> select and assess your relief care provider using the Assessment Guide and Checklist provided in Resource Work Policies, Appendix F.

Please note:

- Sometimes MCFD requires babysitters to be over 18 and have a criminal record check.
- Some areas require that babysitters of infants have Safe Baby training.

*Please check with your Resource Social Worker before making arrangements.

For more information see:

- *Non-Primary Caregiver Situations for Children in Care:* Appendix E, Resource Work Policies – Chapter 8.
- *Foster Caregiver's Guide for Assessing Relief Care Providers:* Appendix F, Resource Work Policies – Chapter 8.
- *FAQ Relief* – fosteringokanagan.com.
- *FAQ Assessing Relief* – fosteringokanagan.com.