

Large Family Resource Home Training

Created in collaboration with the Children's Division
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Definition

A large family resource home is a licensed foster home of two parents who are committed to caring for a large family and have completed an mutual assessment process with a trained resource development worker to be approved to provide twenty-four (24) hour care for seven to ten (7-10) children including foster youth in the custody of the Children's Division and all their own children up to 18 years of age. The primary purpose of approving a large family resource home is to safely keep sibling groups together.

- Successful Completion of this training is a requirement for the process to be assessed for approval to be a Large Family Resource Home in the State of Missouri
- This training is intended to be completed in a group setting
- This training may be completed self-taught only if followed with a minimum one hour processing of material with a Large Family Resource provider or Large Family Resource support group
- Three hours of in-service training hours may be earned with successful completion of this training

Myth: Children in large families are parented by their older siblings.

- This is a myth in large families. Parents with multiple children are still parents. Older siblings do help to set the culture and expectations of the home, but they do not do the work of parenting.
- Just as in smaller families, parents in large families determine the disciplinary approach in the home, set the rules, and create the culture of the home.
- Parents of large families must find individual time to spend with each child, and must make the effort to create meaningful one-on-one relationships and memories with each child just as parents with fewer children do. **Policy requires submitted documentation of the planned time one-on-one time for each parent and foster youth. See examples on next slide.**
- Some children with trauma histories are afraid to connect with (attach to) a parent. In these circumstances it is possible that a child may develop trust in a sibling before developing trust in a parent. This can be a 'bridge' to a healthier long term relationship with the parent as the child begins to let down his guard over time.

One-on-One Time Plan Suggested Examples:

Individual Parent/Child "dates"

- ☐- turn routine trips for dental/medical check ups into fun adventures
- ☐- Add an extra few minutes to play at the park
- ☐- Surprise him/her w/a new book you can read together while you wait
- ☐- Schedule Kid Date night- Have your significant other or family member watch your other children and take one child on a special date i.e. go eat ice cream, see a movie, go to the park and play, or just hang out and talk.

Our Time

Create 2 spinners: 1 w/children's names, 1 w/a variety of activities (games, a

- ☐walk, make cookies, draw, etc.)
- ☐- Build in time for 2 children per day
- ☐- Use the "name" spinner when you have opportunity to do an "extra" 1- on-1
- ☐- Use the activity spinner each time to make the time spontaneous, a
- ☐surprise & also a way to practice still letting the adult be in charge (which is often an issue)
- ☐**Find a unique common interest and pursue it together.-** as your multiples develop their own personalities and passions, identify an interest that you can share with each one. Whether it is a sport like golf or roller blading, an activity like gardening or scrapbooking, or a hobby such as collecting teddy bears or woodworking, you'll both enjoy spending time doing it together. It might be a great chance for both you and your child to learn something new -- sign up for karate together!

One-on-One Time Suggestions Continued..

- ☐ - Cook a meal together. Have the kids help you plan your menu adding their favorites, when it is the day for their meal have them help you prep and cook the meal just the two of you.
- ☐ - Every month on our child's 'birth date', they get to have "their night" (*example: if your child is born on August 29th, s every month on the 29th is his night.*) On their night, they get to **stay up about 20-30 minutes later than normal** and can pick to do whatever they want with you, but it can not be watching TV or playing on the computer (no electronics), play a board game, read a book, or even bake quick 3-ingredient cookies. All of this is time that is **focused on this ONE child**.

Teens

- ☐- Allow one teen to stay up 1/2 hour past weekday bedtime
- ☐- During that 1/2 hour, parents can have a snack, just talk, play a game, etc.
- ☐- Rotate a different teen through each night or every other night so that teens are spending quality "me" time w/parents in a consistent predictable basis

Myth: Parents of more than 5 children are either Super-Human or not in touch with reality

- Parents of large families are....
 - They typically are highly structured and flexible at the same time.
 - They don't base their self esteem on the behavior or accomplishments of their children.
 - They have a sense of humor and find reasons to be optimistic daily.
 - They work very hard, and enjoy small successes as much as huge victories.
 - They are quick thinkers who can multi-task, listen to things that others might miss, and use their intuition as a radar to keep their families on the right track.
 - They have the same struggles, fears, and frustrations as parents of smaller families.

Myth: Parenting a large family is the same as parenting a small family

- In a large family the children far outnumber the adults in the home, creating the need for more structure and consistency.
- In a large family the telephone game happens every day (he said, she said). Communication must be clear in order for everyone to stay on the same page and to avoid triangulation.
- In large families the costs for providing care multiply exponentially and foster care reimbursement does not meet the financial need. The more kids you take in, the poorer you become.
- Beyond more mouths to feed there is more laundry to do, more homework to supervise, more appointments to manage, and more trauma to resolve. Every member of the family must regulate themselves to keep chaos at bay.
- With more unrelated (by biology) siblings, there is more sibling posturing (fighting for position), so sibling drama is increased, and related siblings become protective of each other, and birth children become protective of each other and their parents.

Making the decision to take the next step....

Have you thought?

- We have this foster parenting stuff down and we could absolutely add one or two more into the mix.
- We have enough space to accommodate another child or two, and it breaks our hearts to see those kids/get those calls, and be unable to help.
- Our kids are stable enough to handle the drama of adding someone else's issues into the mix.
- Our kids are open to the idea of having another couple of siblings in our family.
- We have a good working relationship with our school, pediatrician, psychiatrist, therapist, and respite provider, and they'd support us if we took another couple of kids.
- We have a little left over income each month and we might as well be spending it to make a difference in the lives of a couple more kids.
- This is the most rewarding work anyone could do, and even though it's hard, we have some special skills that other families may not have.

Housing requirements

- Becoming a Large Family Resource Home (LFRH) is not the same as becoming a group home or facility. A LFRH is an above level licensure category which allows you to provide care for 7-10 children within your home and family.
- The sleeping and space requirements are the same for LFRH that they are for any other foster home. Your child must have a bed, dresser and closet space. Therefore if your home is not big enough to accommodate more than 6 children, this category is not for you.
- There are additional requirements for fire safety which are spelled out by the Fire Marshall, and can include smoke detectors in all bedrooms, ABC fire extinguishers on all occupied levels of the home, posted fire escape plans and documented practice, and door and window egress from all occupied floors. Your licensing worker will make a referral to the Fire Marshall to request an inspection of your home to assure that you meet applicable licensing standards.

Travel/Transportation standards

- Vehicle safety requirements are the same for LFRH families as they are for all other foster homes. Children must be safely transported in all applicable child safety seats and harnesses.
- A LFRH must be able to submit in writing to the licensing worker a detailed plan for how the family will manage the transportation needs presented by additional children. A vehicle which accommodates the entire family is not necessary, however is ideal. A plan for assuring that the entire family can be transported must be submitted.
- The LFRH transportation plan must include information on how foster children will get to appointments, to extra curricular activities, and other typical venues.

Transportation Plan Information to include:

- Make a monthly family calendar with all appointments (both in-home & away), & which parent is taking/staying/picking up
- Include non school days & who/where each child will be, as well as who is dropping off/picking up
- Include extra curricular activities & if "car pool" arrangements are made for practices (be sure to have worker do the necessary checks for others to transport)
- It may be necessary to have a seating plan in the car/Van

Creating Safe Spaces

- Bedrooms-

- Any bedroom for a foster child should be welcoming and age appropriate

- All children should have adequate storage space for clothing.

- Avoid keeping too many toys or electronics in rooms (rooms are for sleeping not for playing)

- Remember that any cameras in bedrooms can only survey sleeping areas. No dressing areas shall be viewable

- If you have a child who is exhibiting behaviors that are extreme and unsafe, that child may need individual room accommodations with a safety plan in place

- Play space-

- Shall be as free from clutter as possible

- Children shall remain in view as much as possible from various angles.

Supervision

- The adult to child ratio in the household should be 1 adult to 5 children, or higher depending on the needs of the child and family.
 - Some large families employ after school helpers or child care providers to be sure that supervision is adequate during busy times in the household. This additional expense is absorbed by the large family.
- Cameras are not a substitution for direct eyes on supervision.
- Family rules should address individual supervision needs.
 - Many large families prohibit play houses and tents, only allow playing in bedrooms by the occupant (if it's a single room), and otherwise use environmental controls to help with providing adequate supervision.
- Policy requires a submitted written back-up plan for supervision

Supervision Back-up Plan Example:

Plan A:

In the event that both resource parents are unable to provide supervision to the household, Jane Doe, Mrs. Resource Parent's sister, will provide supervision. Jane Doe does not work outside the home and is available most days within 1 hour of being requested to come to the house to provide supervision. Her cell number is ###-####. Her land line number is ###-####.

Plan B:

In the event the both resource parents are unable to provide supervision to the household and plan A is unavailable, Minnie Mouse, our next door neighbor, has agreed to provide supervision. Minnie Mouse is a retired school counselor and is available most days to provide supervision. Her cell number is ###-####. Her land line number is ###-####.

Supervision Back-up Plan Example, continued

- (for emergencies lasting for 0-4 hours I have Joe Jones at 816-322-1578 and Lois Smith at 816-587-1247
- For emergencies lasting 4-24 hours Pat Smith at 816-xxx-xxxx and Rose Johnson at 816-xxx-xxxx
- Emergencies lasting longer than 24 hours I have Mark Johnson and Jimel Hogan.

Common Triggers in Large Families

- Property invasion
- Invasion of personal space
- Negative comments about Birth Families
- School work
- Chores
- Schedule Changes
- Unscheduled visits from professionals
- Hotlines
- Disorganization
- Altered Mealtimes/ Bedtimes

Family Rules that don't bend

- Regular and consistent family meetings
 - Allow your kids to offer input into what they think should be included on the list of rules. When kids have some input, it can get them more invested in following the rules.
 - Work together as a family to problem-solve specific issues. For example, if you're noticing that several family members aren't picking up after themselves, talk about it and see what you can do to better enforce this rule.
- Family rules should consist of each family's individual view of things that are safe and healthy in their family for example:
 - No forts
 - One person in each bed
 - No tickling
 - Safe hands
 - No sagging
 - No Profanity
- Family rules should be posted

Using Environmental Controls to Reduce Chaos

- Establishing Daily Routines:

Providing structure for children can mean setting up routines for daily living that are consistent and predictable. Important daily routines include morning, mealtime, and bedtime routines. Children learn many things from these routines, such as how to take care of themselves and how to interact with others. However, the most important thing they learn from regular routines is that life runs more smoothly if things are organized and predictable.

- Remember to schedule in individual positive time

You want your child to feel both connected to the family as a whole, but also to each parent in their own way. As children grow older each parent plays a significantly different role, so having invested in your child with your time will help transition these 'sometimes' difficult times.

Appointments

Managing an Efficient Calendar

- Have a visual and digital calendar

-Keeping both will allow you and your family to all be on the same page. For you and your partner it allows you to better manage the month and ensure all appointments for your family are kept.

-For kids it allows them to know what comes next in their lives, this can potentially avoid meltdowns.

-Make sure your digital calendar can be shared with your partner, ~~and~~ any in-home support people and any other parties who might be involved in transportation and care of the children.

-Make sure you have your visual calendar accessible to all yet placed in a spot where it can not be altered by anyone but adults.

Planning Meals for Large Families

- Use a calendar to make a meal schedule. Plan all meals including lunches for the days kids are going to be home (weekends and schooldays off) snacks and desserts
- Plan for those unexpected days when things don't go quite right(quick meals)
- Make shopping list based on menu
- Grocery shop for the main items on your menu monthly
- Plan to go to the grocery store to buy perishables every two weeks
- Do as much prep work as possible (if you have adequate freezer space it helps to make meals ahead of time)
- Create nutritionally balanced meals that are kid friendly
- Make one meal; avoid being a short order cook. Have cold cuts and peanut butter available for your difficult eaters.

Homework and Computer time

- Have a space in your home that is quiet and conducive to a distraction free learning environment
- Space should be adequately lit
- There should be plenty of surface area to allow for multiple children to study at one time
- Optimal time should be allotted to complete all homework, e.g. before dinner and other activities to reduce brain fatigue
- All computers and internet access needs to be monitored and limited to programs deemed appropriate by foster parent(s)
- All technology should remain in public spaces or study area (technology not allowed in bedrooms)
- Social media needs to be monitored by an adult (should have all passwords for your children and plan time to regularly check them)

Laundry and Clothes Management

- Assign laundry days and times to avoid crisis if teens are doing their own laundry
- Come up with strategies to reduce washing of items that can be used more than once, like towels
 - One foster parent of multiple kids washed towels twice per week, and had each child's name embroidered on their towel so that she could be sure towels were returned to the child's room for their use.
- Sort socks when they come out of the dryer into separate bins for easy matching later, or use clothes pins or rubber bands to 'tie' socks together prior to washing for easy matching later
- If clothes are on the floor for more than a day they disappear
- Come up with a borrowing house rule and stick to it
 - Decide what items you will allow your children to share, and what they can keep as their own
 - When borrowers do not return things with appreciation and care, they forfeit their ability to borrow in the future

Integrating Therapy into your Schedule and Parenting

- Make sure to engage in positive behavioral interventions that work well for your family, but remember that typical behavioral interventions do not work the same for all children
- Have a clear and concise reward system that children can understand and buy into, and be willing to change that system up or add new techniques if things don't seem to be working
- Use your positive time opportunities to engage/ address therapeutic goals like cooperation (for example: by playing a board game where your child has to wait and take his turn)
- Have a space designated for safe and secure conversations during therapy sessions which take place in the home; Therapy sessions should not be interrupted
- Therapy times should be consistently scheduled as much as possible; This allows for consistency in family schedule
- Parenting styles in large families should include a positive attitude toward healthy therapeutic interventions

Safe Crisis De-escalation Techniques

- **Remember you are the one in charge-** How you handle the situation can mean the difference between things getting further out of hand or becoming stable. The child's emotional response is not targeted AT you. Do not take the child's behavioral reaction to his emotions as a personal attack on you or your parenting.
- **You need to think before you act**
 - Assess the situation, and remove other children (audience) from the immediate area.
 - Get out of yourself before you respond- you may be upset or angry at the situation make sure you are acting as the adult and putting all personal issues aside
- **Keep your voice calm**
- **Express support and concern**
- **Ask how you can help**
- **Avoid continuous eye contact**
- **Keep stimulation levels low**
- **Move slowly**
- **Be patient**
- **Engage in active listening**
 - Active listening lets them know you are focused on them and have their self care at interest
 - It can help you target the cause of the meltdown and allows you to appropriately respond.
- If the situation becomes a threat to their safety or yours you may need to call the authorities

Building a Support System

- Find other adults to spend adult time with, especially parents of foster and adoptive families. They will 'get' you.
- Join support groups, especially if you parent tough kids.
- Plan and use respite whenever possible.
- Never feel guilty about your time away.
- Network with other families to help your kids make friends, and use groups like church youth activities, scouts and other organizations where kids who may not be excellent at relationships or activities can fit in.
- Develop a positive and interactive relationship with your child's school including teachers, social workers and administration, by communicating with them regularly and being responsive to their concerns as much as possible.
- Include each child's mental health professional in your support network .

Taking Care of You After the Storm

- Make a list of your favorite low budget fun activities
- Burn incense or light candles that calm and soothe you.
- Play soft music to calm yourself and your children
- Stick to bedtime routines so you can have time to yourself or with your partner to preserve your couple relationship

Organization Tools

Tools that are used by parents of large families to help them stay on top of children's activities include:

- Electronic or Printed calendar with children's appointments listed (always up to date.
- Chore charts
- Behavioral charts
- Having a message and announcement board (post papers and notes that you need to sign and return back to school or activities)
- Having some type of storage system that allows you to easily de-clutter (get ideas for what will work for you online..Pinterest is a great source)

Employment Plan

- If one of the two parents desires to be employed, a written plan must be submitted for approval
- Policy located in [Section 4 Chapter 14 Attachment B](#) provides the required information to include on a plan for one of the parents to request working outside the home
- Description of the job and work schedule
- How the resource parent would be available 24-hours a day for immediate crisis response to the school, home and/or community
- Where the child(ren) would be during the hours worked and who would be providing care for the child(ren)
- Who would be transporting the child(ren) and providing support for the child(ren) during visits with parents and kin, counseling and medical appointment, recreation, social activities and other activities when the working resource parent is unavailable;
- How the resource parent(s) will participate in all staffing and treatment planning meetings;
- How the resource parent(s) will provide treatment and support to the biological parents/kin

List of Services

- A written list of services the large family resource home has access to and will use for medical, physical, and social treatment per the foster youth's case plan must be submitted to the resource development worker to place in the resource case file
- The resource parent(s) should work with their resource development worker and the foster youth's case manager for required and potential services

List of Services Example:

- Name and number of the community mental health center
- Names and numbers of pediatricians that accept Medicaid
- Names and numbers of therapy groups that accept Medicaid
- Names and numbers of local dentist that accept Medicaid
- Names and numbers of local eye doctors who accept Medicaid

Researching Social and Community Integration Opportunities

- A written list of social, recreational, educational, or vocational activities in the community the large family resource home uses to encourage social and community integration through the development of life skills is to be submitted to the resource development worker
- Engage your resource development worker regarding the social opportunities that are available for community integration
- Engage other resource families regarding known resources for social opportunities and community integration

Social and Community Integration Opportunities List Example:

- Local community center
- Local athletic facilities
- Local community theater
- Local community gardens
- Local boy/girl scouts

Facilitation of Involvement Plan

- There shall be a written plan of how the large family resource home will encourage and facilitate family involvement including visits, activities, family support team meetings and other support as needed
- The plan includes identifying what each resource parent's responsibility, together and individually, will be for each foster youth in their home to ensure that all the involvements listed in the previous bullet are attended
- Use a Calendar to document all court hearings, family visits, family support team meetings, counseling appointments, physician appoints, etc. and sharing the calendar with the foster youth's family

Facilitation of Involvement Plan Example

- Planning for involvement for all children will most likely be a flexing/breathing thing. Using a cozi calendar app on your smart phone will allow you to plan, share specific dates and times with each member of your home. You can share it with your older children and they can add their appointments as well. I will allow the Resource Parents to coordinate all visits.
- You could also use a large dry erase calendar to map out visits, therapy, and extra curricular activities.

Review

1. Foster Parents have different motivations to become a Large Family Resource Home. The following are typical motivations, except:
 1. Want to help additional children, and feel like we have the skills to do so.
 2. Have children who are stable and ready to add siblings to the family.
 3. Want to increase our income by filling additional beds.
 4. We have a good professional support system and feel like we can use our supporters to help other kids.

2. Kids in LFRH's can sleep on pull out beds.
 1. True
 2. False

3. To become a LFRH, I must buy a fifteen passenger van.
 1. True
 2. False

Review

4. Name two ways that parenting a large family is different than parenting a smaller family.
 - 1.
 - 2.

5. Older siblings help to discipline their younger siblings by setting rules and enforcing them.
 1. True
 2. False

6. Parents of large families are highly _____ and _____ at the same time.

Review

7. The adult child ratio should be?

- A. 1-15
- B. 1-3
- C. 1-5
- D. 2-4

8. Establishing routines for children helps them feel as life is running more smoothly.

- A. T
- B. F

9. Spending individual time with each child in your family helps them to feel both _____ to the family as a whole, but also to each _____ in their own way.

- A. Connected, Parent
- B. Disconnected, Peers
- C. Put off, Parent
- D. Connected, Siblings

Review

10. Bedrooms Shall

- A. Have adequate storage space for all occupants
- B. Have changing area free from camera surveillance
- C. Shall be free from technology
- D. All of the above

11. Assigning Laundry times for each person(s) in the home helps reduce crisis

- A. True
- B. False

12. There should be plenty of _____ to allow for multiple children to study at one time.

- A. Time
- B. Surface area
- C. Freedom
- D. All the above

Review

13. List Three common triggers in Large Families

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

14. Having kids help with coming up with additions to family rules help them feel like they have some ownership in the process.

- A. True
- B. False

15. Therapy times should be _____ scheduled as much as possible.

- A. Randomly
- B. Strictly
- C. Consistently
- D. None of the above

16. Please list Three tips for De-escalation:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Review

17. Developing a positive and interactive relationship with your child's school includes:
- A. Teachers, social workers and administration
 - B. Teachers, Cafeteria Staff and administration
 - C. Gym teachers, Librarians and administrative assistants
 - D. None of the above
18. You should feel guilty about your time away
- A. True
 - B. False
19. Which one of these is not a way to take care of yourself after a crisis period.
- A. Make a list of your favorite low budget fun activities
 - B. Burn incense or light candles that calm and soothe you and them
 - C. Play soft music to calm yourself and your children.
 - D. Play the Blame game with your Partner
20. Please list Two organizational tools that are important in managing a large family
- 1. _____
 - 2. _____

If this training was completed as a self-taught curriculum

- Print the review pages, answer all the questions and submit to the resource development worker
- Participate in a minimum one hour processing of material with a Large Family Resource provider or Large Family Resource support group
- Submit a written verification from the Large Family Resource provider that a minimum of one hour processing was completed
 - Include date
 - Include amount of time spent
 - Include Name and DVN of the Large Family Resource Home provider
- Your resource development worker will provide the completed certificate of completion

This Certificate is awarded to
(name)

For successful completion of
Three hour Training
Large Family Resource Home

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Trainer

Date

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Resource Development Worker
Date