

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) proposes to amend rules in Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 700, Subchapter M, relating to the Treatment Foster Family Care (TFFC) Program.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Treatment Foster Family Care (TFFC) program is a placement option for children with mental and/or social behavioral needs that cannot be met in traditional foster care settings. TFFC is designed to provide innovative, multi-disciplinary treatment services to children in a highly structured family home environment and is a cost-effective alternative to congregate residential treatment. To qualify, a child must be 17 years old or younger and: (1) placed in or recommended to be placed into an RTC, or (2) placed in or at risk of being placed in a psychiatric hospitalization due to a history of a diagnosed emotional disorder. Caregivers are highly trained to meet the specific needs of the child population and abide by requirements set out in contract. A child's TFFC placement cannot exceed nine-months, except for one three-month extension.

Due to the complex mental and/or socio-behavioral needs of children served in the TFFC program, current TAC Section 700.1335(c)(2) limits a foster home's capacity to no more than two foster children at one time. At the time the rule was promulgated, DFPS believed that this was all a TFFC family could handle. However, DFPS now believes there are limited circumstances where children would benefit from being in a TFFC home with more than two foster children. Those circumstances include:

- Respite care and babysitting for other TFFC foster parent(s);
- Keeping siblings together; and
- Placement into kinship TFFC homes.