

PROHIBITION OF RESTRAINT IN FOSTER HOMES

The foster parent has basic understanding of the prohibition of physical punishment and physical restraint, acceptable methods of assuring the safety of all individuals in the foster home, and agency policies regarding critical or serious incident reporting for physical interventions with a child. (For more information about prohibitions regarding restraint, refer to Ch. DHS 94, Adm. Code, "Patient Rights and Resolution of Patient Grievances."

As stated in **Ch. DCF 56 Adm. Code**, foster parents are prohibited from using mechanical restraint or physical punishment with foster children. Foster parents are not allowed to use physical interventions for therapeutic purposes, punishment, or convenience to the foster parent; this would constitute physical punishment and is not allowed under the licensing rules. If there is a situation in which foster parents, foster youth, or other people in the foster home are in imminent danger (i.e. there is legitimate reason to believe someone will or is being hurt), foster parents are allowed to intervene physically to protect those people listed above.

As mentioned above, foster parents are allowed to intervene in situation(s) in which a child is in **imminent danger** of hurting him or herself or someone in the foster home, including the foster parent. **Examples of imminent danger might include:**

- Child threatens to put part of or his or her entire body through a glass window
- Child threatens or is in the process of jumping out of a moving vehicle
- Child is pounding his or her head against concrete or some other surface that could cause extreme damage to self
- Child is in the process of or actually physically assaulting another person

Foster parents should always consider the risks associated with using any type of physical restraint and should carefully evaluate the need for physical restraint in a situation. Restraints can result in injury to both the child and the person administering the restraint. Depending upon the child's history, the use of a restraint may re-traumatize the child as well. When possible, foster parents should try to de-escalate the child or use other alternatives for maintaining safety rather than engage in interventions that could potentially result in physical restraint or injury. Ideally there is a prearranged (preferably written) child-specific crisis intervention plan in place and the foster parent is trained on recognizing when crisis intervention is necessary.

If a foster parent determines that there is imminent danger and a physical restraint is needed, he or she should contain the situation as quickly as possible. If necessary, the foster parent or other adults should contact local law enforcement or emergency services for any additional assistance. This may be identified in the child's crisis intervention plan. Foster parents should report the use of physical restraint to the licensing agency as soon as the situation is resolved. This protects the child from inappropriate uses of physical restraint and injury, the foster parent from potential allegations and the risk of injury, and the agency.