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| OCFP Office of Child and Family Policy | Department of Children and Family Services | |
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Interpretation

Question: Are cellular telephones an acceptable telephone instrument to meet the licensing requirement for foster family homes?

Applicable To: Licensed Foster Family Homes

Policy Citation: 402.8 General Requirements for the Foster Home

- i) The foster home shall have an operating telephone on the premises unless the supervising agency has approved a written plan detailing the immediate and unrestricted access to such an instrument.

Discussion: The intent of subsection 402.8(i) is that an available means of communication be accessible in an emergency. A cellular telephone meets the requirement as long as it is on the premises when children are present and is operable.

Cellular telephones provide some benefits that fixed units do not, such as the mobility of the telephone in cases of an emergency. A cellular phone allows an individual to be with a child and on the phone accessing help at the same time.

A primary disadvantage is that the batteries run down. Alternative means can be used to assure that access can still be allowed, such as multiple changes batteries and cords that can be used to activate the telephone as an alternative to batteries. Such alternatives should be discussed with the foster parent to assure that the foster parent has arranged for full access at all times.

Response: Cellular telephones are acceptable telephone instruments to meet the telephone requirement under 89 Ill. Adm. Code 402, Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes.

