

Modernizing Iowa's training for foster families

Foster Care Training Legislative Facts

This legislation updates Iowa's foster care system to **prioritize relevance and competency** over rigid hourly mandates.

It **empowers HHS to tailor training** to the specific needs of the child and the experience of the foster parent, while still mandating critical modern curriculum on trauma and attachment.



Support HF2163 & SF2096



The Facts

What the Bill does:

- Switches to Competency-Based Training:** Removes the arbitrary statutory floor and instead requires training to be 'determined appropriate' by HHS based on the foster parent's experience and the specific needs of the child.
- Mandates Critical Modern Topics:** While it removes the hourly rigidities, it adds specific requirements for what the training must cover. The bill continues to mandate training on:
 - Trauma and its effect on child development
 - Attachment, grief, and loss
 - Behavior management
 - Biological parent contact and supporting the family of origin
- Recognizes Prior Experience:** Allows HHS to look at a prospective parent's professional background to waive redundant training, while focusing on gaps in their knowledge.
- Protects Military Families:** Retains current protections for active-duty military members who cannot complete renewal training due to deployment.

Why Change the Current Law?

Currently, Iowa law mandates a rigid 30-hour initial training and 6-hour annual renewal for all foster parents, regardless of their background.

- The 'One-Size-Fits-None' Issue:** A pediatric nurse, or a special education teacher currently face the exact same generic hourly requirements as someone with no childcare or medical expertise.
- Barrier to Entry:** Rigid seat time requirements discourage qualified professionals from becoming licensed foster parents.

Mythbusting

What the Bill does NOT do:

- Myth: *"This bill eliminates training requirements for foster parents."*
 - FALSE:** Training is still mandatory. The bill simply shifts the metric from counting hours to ensuring competency. HHS must still approve all training.
- Myth: *"Foster parents will be less prepared to handle difficult behaviors."*
 - FALSE:** They will be better prepared. The bill updates curriculum to strictly require training on trauma, behavior management, and attachment.
- Myth: *"This is just a shortcut to license unqualified people."*
 - FALSE:** It is a strategy to license qualified people faster. It removes bureaucratic hurdles for professionals who already have the skills, while ensuring they get specific training on the foster care system.
- Myth: *"This lowers the standards for safety."*
 - FALSE:** Safety is improved when training is relevant. A foster parent caring for a medically-fragile child needs specific medical training. This bill allows that flexibility.