

Congregate Care Restrictions: Overview of Senate Bill 1379

[Senate Bill 1379](#) outlines restrictions on foster placements in currently unregulated congregate care settings, including short-term rentals, hotels, and group homes. These restrictions include:

1. **No child under the age of 13 shall be housed in such placements, with exceptions for emergencies, sibling groups, and teenage mothers.**
2. **No child shall be housed in such placements for more than two weeks.**
3. **Any exception must be individually approved by the department director.**

By establishing guardrails for congregate care, Senate Bill 1379 will protect the safety of kids and help end Idaho’s current practice of housing foster kids in short-term rentals and hotels.

► **Idaho needs to end its troubling practice of placing children in potentially unsafe settings:**

During the pandemic, the Department of Health & Welfare opened its first short-term rental home (also referred to as an ‘Airbnb’) to place foster children. What started as a temporary plan to provide emergency shelter for kids in care quickly spiraled into common practice. In 2024, 175 foster children were placed in short-term rentals and hotels. Children of all ages have been housed in these settings for extended periods of time.

Idaho children are spending months with a rotating cast of caregivers from temporary staffing agencies. Foster children, their advocates, and caregivers are reporting significant concerns surrounding child safety, the absence of trauma-informed care, and a lack of oversight on the proliferation of this practice.


Placing vulnerable foster children in short-term rentals, hotels, and unregulated group homes for any amount of time is widely recognized as inappropriate. These placements can lead to long-term mental health struggles, impacting a child’s ability to trust, attach, and love.¹

► **Family-based settings must be the state’s top priority for foster placements:**


Family-based settings allow foster children to heal and thrive. To encourage family-based placements, the 2021 Idaho Legislature added safeguards to accredited facilities referred to as Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs).² However, congregate care settings outside of QRTPs were not included in the statute and remained unregulated.

Senate Bill 1379 corrects this oversight and adds restrictions to all congregate care settings. If passed, Idaho will join 23 other states that have broad congregate care restrictions in statute, including age limits, time limits, and the requirement for director approval on any exceptions.³ Similar state efforts have reduced congregate care placements and helped increase foster parent recruitment and retention, family finding, and other kin placement initiatives.

From 2021-24, Airbnb placements increased:

 **91%**

Foster kids have stayed in Airbnbs for over:

 **5 months**

All ages have stayed in Airbnbs, as young as:

 **2 yrs old**

¹ American Academy of Pediatricians, “[Fostering Health: Standards of Care for Children in Foster Care.](#)”

² Idaho statute [16-1619A](#) was added to the Child Protective Act in 2021.

³ American Academy of Pediatricians, “State Congregate Care Age Limits.”