

SCHEDULE XIII
[See regulations 24(1)(f) and 26(4)(h)]

STANDARDS OF CHILD CARE IN SPECIALISED ADOPTION AGENCIES

1. The agencies are required to ensure that the following facilities are provided to the children in the institution:
 - (a) **Physical facilities:**
 - (i) Physical surroundings in which the children are cared for must be clean. Sanitation and hygiene maintained at the agency must be adequate since a majority of children at the institution are small and suffer from numerous ailments. Children below the age of 1 year should be in a room with an attached bathing room and milk room. Children between the age of 1 – 3 years should be kept in a room with an attached bathing and bathroom. The older children need to be separated into two boy's room and girls room. Each room must have attached baths, and toilets.
 - (ii) There should be a separate washing area and a large kitchen and dining hall for the older children. Good lighting, ventilation and adequate space must be mandatory.
 - (iii) The home should be neat, clean, particularly bathrooms, toilets and kitchen. Walls and surroundings must be bright and stimulating. For visual stimulation the rooms should be well painted and decorated with toys, animal cut outs, etc
 - (b) **Medical facilities:** Regular medical inspection must be done. Preferably every alternate day by a registered medical practitioner. The child specialist is best trained to diagnose and treat children who are at risk and highly vulnerable.
 - (i) Infants and children on admission to institutions should be in quarantine and observation for a week at least.
 - (ii) Weight, height and head circumference may be noted along with any other details available on the child at admission.
 - (iii) A medical record should be maintained and a doctor must assess the child as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours of his or her admission.

- (iv) Each child below the age of six months should be photographed every month, from six months to 3 years every three months and thereafter, every six months.
 - (v) Immunization should be regularly given and monitored.
 - (vi) Emergency kits should be available at all times in the Home and there should be a doctor on call.
 - (vii) General health measures viz hygiene, dental, skin care and diet to be supervised.
 - (viii) Stimulation is very important for the proper development of the child. This could be achieved by increasing awareness amongst the nurses, helpers by introducing simple stimulation techniques in the daily routine. It is also advised to have a physiotherapist visit the children on a regular basis.
- (c) **Staff:**
- (i) The agency must have adequate staff for child care, preferably in the ratio of 4:1 for children below 1 year, 5:1 for children in the age group 1 to 3 years and 8:1 for older children.
 - (ii) Adoption Homes need personnel who are sensitized to the issues of the children. They need to be “educated” in caring for the children. It is recommended to conduct workshops for nurses, helpers, care takers and other staff to enable them to recognize the special status of these children who are under their care.
 - (iii) As committed staff is an integral part of good child care, the motivational levels of the staff should be kept high.
 - (iv) Staff to be immunized as well.
- (d) **Clothing:** It is important that the children in a home are dressed in clean, comfortable and well-kept clothes at all times, not just during the visit of the adoptive parents.
- (e) **Food:** The food in the institution should be hygienically cooked, nourishing and tasty. The menu should be varied. The need of children on a special diet should be attended to. This will help overcome the problems of malnutrition faced by children entering a home. Feeding charts with indication of the formulas may be displayed and followed.

- (f) **Education:** The Specialised Adoption Agency should be able to provide informal education through a qualified teacher, and a special educator, or tie up with a school that will take the child or children on a temporary basis.

Note: All adoption agencies shall adhere to the standards of child care prescribed under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016.

2. While providing child care, the following issues are important:

- (a) A child's neurological growth is complete within the first few years of his or her early childhood and determines the brain's capabilities throughout the rest of his or her life. Moreover, a child needs to have experienced positive attachment by the age of 3 in order to develop cognitively, physically, socially, and psychologically. Hence, every effort shall be made by the Specialised Adoption Agency to expeditiously find alternate family for such children so that they develop attachment and proper bonding experiences during infancy itself.
- (b) It is very essential to talk, hug, hold, play, tell stories and sing to the child to give it a sense of security. Though this should be done regularly by the staff, it is also advisable to encourage volunteers to take up this activity.
- (c) Quality child care (early childhood care) means providing adequate health care, immunization, feeding and nutrition, creating a safe environment so that infants and young children can play and socialize with their peers, promoting school readiness and preparing children for primary school and focusing on total development during early years of childhood.
- (d) It should be ensured that there is no instance of child abuse and neglect while the child is in the institution.
