

Iowa Administrative Rules 441 IAC 110.5(1), 110.9(3) and 110.10(3) outline the requirements of emergency exits in a Child Development Home (CDH).

- Conditions in the home shall be safe, sanitary and free of hazards.
- The home shall have a minimum of two direct exits to the outside from the main floor.
- If the second level or the basement of the home is used for child care, other than the use of a restroom, they must have at least one direct exit to the outside in addition to one inside stairway.
- All exits shall terminate at grade level with permanent steps.
 - Permanent steps cannot easily move and can withstand weight without breaking.
 - Rungs on a ladder are not considered to be permanent steps.
 - Steps must be clearly recognized as steps and be large enough to safely accommodate an average adult foot that is moving quickly.
 - Permanent steps are required inside leading up to the window unless the window is less than 12 inches from the ground.
 - Permanent steps are also required leading out of the window well unless the top of the well is less than 12 inches from the ground.
- A basement window may be used as an exit if the window can be opened from the inside without the use of tools and it provides a clear opening of not less than 20 inches in width, 24 inches in height and 5.7 square feet in area. The bottom of the opening shall be not more than 44 inches above the floor, with permanent steps inside leading up to the window.

Additional resources, such as [Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs](#) (CFOC), [Chapter 5](#), and the [National Fire Protection Association](#), provide guidance regarding emergency exits.

While these are not mandated, they are considered best practices and may help assure the safety of children in care when the use of emergency exits is required.

- Permanent steps and railings should meet building codes to avoid being hazardous.
- The design of interior and exterior steps is critical for safe emergency evacuation of children of various age groups and physical abilities.
- The standard dimension for stairs is a 7-inch rise to an 11-inch run.
- Interior steps leading to an escape or egress window should have handrails securely attached that are between 34-38 inches in height.
- Interior steps leading to an escape or egress window should be enclosed around open stairwells to prevent climbing or falling over the rail.
- Where access to exits is not immediately accessible from an open floor area, safe and unobstructed access should be maintained to all other exits to ensure prompt evacuation during an emergency.

The following are examples of approved windows and stairs:

