

PROCEDURE

Series:	Operating Procedures	COA: NA CFOP: 175-88
Procedure Name:	Pre-Service National Training & Development Curriculum for Foster Parents (NTDC) Training, Initial Licensing and Re-Licensing of All Levels of Licensure	
Procedure Number:	OP-1058	
Reviewed Date:	11/30/15, 04/16/24, 06/30/25	
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Effective Date:	07/05/05	
Applicable to:	Family Partnerships of Central Florida (FPOCF)	
<u>PURPOSE:</u>	To establish Pre-Service Training, initial licensing, and re-licensing procedures for the FPOCF Licensing staff to follow when engaging in the initial licensing and re-licensing of family foster homes. This operating procedure also provides a listing of the required documentation that must be in the licensing file before denying or revoking a license.	

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References

Florida Statutes: Section 409.175,

Florida Administrative Code (FAC); Chapter 65C-45

Initial Licensing for All Levels of Licensure.

General Information

1. All family foster home licensing packets, both initial and re licensures, will be completed by the assigned Licensing Specialist and submitted to the Licensing Supervisor and Director of Licensing for review and approval.
2. The Licensing Supervisor will submit the attestation and supporting documents to DCF for issuance of license.
3. Family Partnerships of Central Florida maintains a database and tracking system to ensure all licensures are completed and reviewed in a timely manner including the date of submission to DCF.

A. Background Screening: The Licensing Specialist will conduct background screenings for all persons considered for initial licensure, re-licensure, or re-screening for 3-year licensure for out-of-home caregivers and all adult household members. These screenings will be completed before an applicant shall be licensed as an out-of-home caregiver and before any children are placed in the home.

B. Pre-Service Training of Prospective Foster Parents for Levels II-V

- (1) All prospective out-of-home caregivers shall successfully complete NTDC Training; parent preparation training as a condition of licensure.
- (2) NTDC training includes training for out-of-home caregivers on decision-making related to the balance of normalcy for children in care and their safety. As a prerequisite to licensure, potential licensed out-of-home caregivers who have swimming pools or whose homes are adjacent to bodies of water unprotected by a barrier of at least four feet are required to complete a basic water safety course required. Behavioral Safety Management training will be completed after the initial licensing process and will be updated annually thereafter.
- (3) Foster parents shall be certified in CPR and shall maintain certification as long as they are licensed.
- (4) Foster parents shall be trained in Basic First Aid and Medication Administration and shall receive retraining at least every two years.
- (5) Foster parents shall be trained in protocols for responding to emergencies including accidents, serious illness, and natural and human-caused disasters.
- (6) Foster parents shall be trained in medical or rehabilitation interventions and the operation of medical equipment required for a child's care, as appropriate.
- (7) Psychotropic medication training will be completed during preservice training.
- (8) NTDC Training is led by a Certified Child Protection Professional who has a bachelor's degree or a master's degree from an accredited college or university. Whenever possible, NTDC Training will include a licensed out-of-home caregiver as a co-facilitator.
- (9) The FPOCF NTDC Trainer is responsible for ensuring that the pre-service curriculum is presented and discussed and that copies of all handouts and reading materials are provided to the participants.
- (10) Exemptions to the pre-service training may be made for individuals who have successfully completed pre-service training equivalent to the pre-service training provided the training was completed within the last five years and the individual(s) provide(s) proof of successful completion. If there have been changes or updates in the curriculum, the individual must take those portions of the course only.
- (11) When an individual successfully completes pre-service training but does not continue the licensing process, FPOCF will document the reason(s) the process was discontinued. FPOCF will reach out to these individuals twice annually to reassess interest. Previously completed pre-service training may be accepted towards licensure for up to five years from the date of verified curriculum completion. Previously licensed out-of-home caregivers who have a break in service of less than one year, but who completed pre-service less than four years prior to requesting renewal may be licensed without completing pre-service.

C. Pre-Service Training of Prospective Foster Parents for Level II-V

- (1) All prospective Level II-V out-of-home caregivers shall successfully complete the Department of Children and Families online training: Caring for Children: The Florida Child Welfare System; parent preparation training as a condition of licensure.
- (2) Caring for Children: The Florida Child Welfare System training includes training for out-of-home caregivers on the Child Welfare System, Expectations of Responsibilities of Caregivers, the impact of childhood trauma and how to manage children's behavior and first aid and medication administration. As a prerequisite to licensure, potential licensed out-of-home caregivers who have swimming pools, or whose homes are adjacent to bodies of water

unprotected by a barrier of at least four feet, are required to complete a basic water safety course.

- (3) Psychotropic medication training will be completed during preservice training.
- (4) Foster parents shall be certified in CPR and shall maintain certification as long as they are licensed.
- (5) Foster parents shall be trained in Basic First Aid and Medication Administration and shall receive retraining at least every two years.
- (6) Foster parents shall be trained in protocols for responding to emergencies including accidents, serious illness, and natural and human-caused disasters.
- (7) Foster parents shall be trained in medical or rehabilitation interventions and the operation of medical equipment required for a child's care, as appropriate.

1. Foster Home Initial Licensing Requirements for all Levels of Licensure: Family Partnerships of Central Florida Licensing Specialist will conduct licensing home studies of all new homes.

- a. The Licensing Specialist will conduct a minimum of two visits to the applicant's home, inspect the entire indoor and outdoor premises, document the conditions, and conduct face-to-face interviews with all household members. The dates, names of persons interviewed, and summary of these interviews are documented in the unified home study. A minimum of two personal references is required (that are not related to the applicant being screened) who have known the applicant for at least two years for levels II-V.

The FPOCF Licensing Specialist is responsible for completing the initial home study inclusive of the following information:

- (1) Demographics: Names, Dates of Birth, Address, and contact numbers.
- (2) Applicant's motivation to foster and his or her commitment to the foster care experience, including how other family members and extended family feel about the decision to foster.
- (3) Physical description of the home, including the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, type and number of available beds and current sleeping arrangements, storage space for children's personal belongings, living area, dining area and other interior space. Interior and exterior photos must be included.
- (4) A description of how the home complies with safety requirements, including location and verification of operating fire extinguishers with current tag and smoke detectors, storage of medications, cleaning supplies and toxins. The description shall also include the storage of alcoholic beverages, weapons and ammunition, location of burglar bars, fireplaces, handrails on stairways and space heaters, if applicable.
- (5) Water Safety. A description of the outdoor area including swimming pools, canals, ponds, lakes, streams and other potential water hazards and documentation of the counselor's discussion with the applicant regarding the requirements for supervision and how the applicant will ensure safety and adequate supervision.
- (6) Pets and description of any household pets.
- (7) Social History including Background and Family History, place(s) of birth, description of family relationships during childhood and current state of family relationships, education, types of discipline used in the family, family values, and any prior residences in or out of Florida.
- (8) Marital Status and Other Significant Relationships.
- (9) Medical History.
- (10) Parenting experience of each applicant.
- (11) Discipline. A description of the methods used by the applicant's own family while growing up; discipline methods used by the applicant on his or her own children and the plan for disciplining foster care children in the home.

(12) Family Life. Document observations of family members' personalities and their interpersonal relationships. Describe family activities, hobbies and interests and civic involvement. For each child living in the home, describe the child's school, grades, achievements, and interests. Describe each child's relationship with the applicant and siblings in the home, as well as his or her feelings of having a foster child in the home.

(13) Religion. Explore the family's attitudes regarding prohibitions against seeking medical treatment, celebrating holidays or birthdays, and discipline practices encouraged by their faith.

(14) Childcare. Describe day care arrangements, including transportation to and from day care provider, if applicable.

(15) Transportation. Describe the vehicles and who shall be the responsible drivers. A description of each vehicle shall include its physical condition, the seating capacity, and the number of seat belts.

(16) Employment. Describes the current employment status for each parent, including occupation, current place of employment, work hours and flexibility of schedule in case of emergencies, medical or school appointments for foster children.

(17) Financial Capacity and Income. Discusses the applicant's ability to meet the licensing standard for financial capability by demonstrating financial solvency by providing documentation of the household income and budget sufficient to meet the needs of the family. The additional financial stresses of fostering and how applicants intend to address that stress should also be explored.

- i. After the initial home study completion by the Licensing Specialist, the Licensing Supervisor reviews and provides feedback to the Licensing Specialist of any missing documentation or required corrections. After corrections are made, if warranted, the FPOCF Director of Licensing reviews and provides feedback. The Licensing Supervisor then completes the Attestation and forwards the packet to the Department of Children and Families Licensing Specialist for issuance of the license.

D. Capacity. The study includes an assessment of the home and family as well as a recommendation regarding licensure of home. The recommendation made by the Licensing Specialist for the licensed capacity in each family foster home is based on:

1. An evaluation of the skills, experience, and support network of the prospective licensed out-of-home caregiver;

(a). The physical space in the home; and

(b). The needs of the children served.

(c) The total number of children in the home shall not exceed five children, including the out-of-home caregiver's own children, unless the home is being licensed as a child specific license for a sibling group larger than five. There shall be no more than two infants under twenty-four months in a foster home, including the family's own legal children.

E. Placement. The total number of children placed in each family foster home shall be based on the recommendation of the supervising agency, using the following criteria:

(a) The needs of each child in care;

(b) The ability of the licensed out-of-home caregiver(s) to meet the individual needs of each child, including any adoptive or legal children living in the home;

(c) The amount of safe space;

(d) The ratio of active and appropriate adult supervision to the number of children; and

(e) The background, experience, and skill of the licensed out-of-home caregivers.

Level Waivable Requirements.

(1) Initial Licensure.

(a) Items deemed waived will not be required for an applicant to obtain a Level I-Child Specific License through the Department.

(b) The waiving of items not related to safety must be approved in writing by the Regional Managing Director or Department designee. In determining whether to approve or deny a request for waiver, the Regional Managing Director or Department designee shall consider the strengths of the caregiver and the needs of the child with respect to the requirement.

(c) FPOCF makes efforts to assist a caregiver with meeting the waivable requirements.

a. **Relicensing requirements for all Levels of Licensure.** Ninety days prior to the license expiration, the following procedures are initiated by assigned Licensing Specialists for re-licensing of the family foster home.

1. Request a sanitation inspection of the home a minimum of 90 days prior to the expiration of the license.

2. Review and assess all exit interviews of children who left the home during the past year. If necessary, conduct a staffing with the Care Manager responsible for completing the child exit interviews.

3. Send Care Manager Review of Foster Parent(s) Performance to all Care Managers who have had children in the home and request that the form is returned to the licensing unit within 14 working days.

4. Secure Child Abuse Hotline and local law enforcement clearances, including a check for current orders of protection, for all persons over the age of 12 who reside in the home.

5. Ensure that an FDLE criminal records check on the foster parent(s) is completed no less frequently than once every five years.

6. The foster or emergency shelter parent must sign an Application for a License, form CF-FSP 5007.

7. Levels II-V foster parents must have completed eight hours of in-service training annually, and Level I foster parents must have completed 1 hour of in-service training annually. The number of hours of training and subjects of training must be documented in the case file of the family and in FSFN.

8. The Licensing Specialist must inspect and approve the home.

9. The foster parents must sign the Partnership Plan.

10. At least four weeks prior to the date of re-licensure, certification of all updated requirements (Checklist, CF-FSP 5205), the updated family assessment, a

request to license and a prepared license must be submitted with a cover letter requesting the issuance of a license to Family Partnerships of Central Florida.

11. The foster or emergency shelter parents must provide proof of income.

12. All re-licensure packets are due to Family Partnerships of Central Florida FPOCF Licensing Supervisor forty (40) days prior to the expiration of the family foster home license.

13. After the internal review, the Licensing Specialist is notified of any missing documentation or required corrections. FPOCF then completes the Attestation and forwards the packet to the Department of Children and Families Licensing Specialist.

14. Any corrections identified must be made within 5 business days and submitted to Family Partnerships of Central Florida Licensing Supervisor.

15. The updated Home Study must also include: history of placements, information obtained from exit interviews, staff and Community Feedback, Foster Home Referrals, Concerns or Complaints. A summary of foster care referrals, unusual incidents, accidents, and complaints received during the licensure year, and any concerns received from staff or others.

16. The Licensing Specialist summarizes all information obtained from the "Services Worker's Review of Licensed Out-of-Home Caregiver's Performance" forms. The narrative should include the type of children for whom the family is most appropriate, including number of children, age, gender, special needs and behaviors. A summary of the family's ability to continue the provision of foster care services shall be completed and encompass the following. The home study is then reviewed, signed, and dated by each licensed out-of-home caregiver. The Licensing Specialist responsible for completing the study, and the Licensing Supervisor and Director of Licensing will review and approve home study.

17. The Re-licensing Application Packet includes the application for License to Provide Out-of-Home Care for Dependent Children, the Re-licensing Standards Checklist, Re-licensing Home Study, Re-licensing Summary for Licensed Homes for Dependent Children, Signed Parent Partnership Agreement, verification of at least twelve hours in-service training, including and verification of Psychotherapeutic Medication training if appropriate.

b. Possible Outcomes of the Re licensing Process

- i. Renewal with no changes.
- ii. Renewal with changes.
- iii. Change to provisional license.
- iv. Denial of license.
- v. Voluntary Closure of home.

Enforcement Procedures

- a. Provide written notification by certified mail to the licensee of the statutory and rule violations that were found, citing the applicable rule and statute and providing a date by which the family must correct the deficiencies through a corrective action plan.
- b. The notification must specify that failure to comply within the time frame specified could result in the license being suspended, denied or revoked.
- c. If the licensing violations found pose an immediate threat to the health, safety or welfare of the children, the children must be removed. The FPOCF Licensing Specialist must make a report to the hotline and notify the appropriate intake and placement staff that the children need to be removed.
- d. If the licensing violations do not pose an immediate threat to the health, safety or welfare of the children, Family Partnerships of Central Florida will initiate a Corrective Action Plan developed by the Licensing Specialist and Licensing Supervisor to correct the deficiencies and approved by the Department of Children and Families.
- e. A plan to correct the deficiencies/violations is developed by the Licensing Specialist in conjunction with the foster parents. The plan must contain time frames which must be complied with as a prerequisite to re-licensure. The corrective action plan must be put into writing in the form of a letter, return receipt requested, and sent to the foster parents. The signed return receipt shall be placed and shall remain in the licensing file at Family Partnerships of Central Florida.
- f. The failure of the family foster home to timely comply with the corrective action plan shall result in denial of re licensure, a provisional license or revocation of the license.

Documentation Requirements Prior to Revoking a License for All Levels of Licensure

- a. Before making a determination that a license will be denied, suspended, or revoked, the following actions/occurrences must be fully and completely documented in the FPOCF licensing file and provided to the Department of Children and Families in accordance with the Florida Statutes 120.60.
 - (1) All reports made to the Abuse Hotline, as required by Chapter 415 F.S. and the outcome of the investigation(s).
 - (2) List of all deficiencies or conditions, other than abuse or neglect of the children, which compromise the safety or well-being of the children.
 - (3) The length of time and frequency of the noncompliance with the licensing requirements or deficiencies in caring for children.
 - (4) The date of written notification to the licensee as to the deficiency and time given to the licensee to correct the deficiency.
 - (5) The Licensing Specialist efforts to help the licensee to come into compliance.
 - (6) Barriers, if any, which prohibit the licensee from correcting the deficiencies.
 - (7) All abuse reports and records on the foster family must be kept in a separate confidential file from the foster parents' licensing file, which is a public record.

- (8) The decision to issue, deny, suspend, or revoke the family's license rests with the Department of Children and Families, Regional Administrator or designee has appointed to deny or approve licenses.
- (9) All documentation shall be reviewed with the Department's legal counsel. The notice of revocation or denial shall not be sent to the out-of-home caregiver without the approval of both the Department's legal counsel and the Regional Licensing Authority.

Coordination with Chief Legal Counsel and Other Appropriate District Staff

The documentation described in the Documentation Requirements Prior to Revoking a License paragraph above must be shared with Chief Legal Counsel and other appropriate staff for the Department of Children and Families to make an informed decision whether to deny, revoke or suspend the license. The Family Partnerships of Central Florida Chief Legal Officer reviews the licensure status and works in consultation with Chief Legal Counsel. Chief legal counsel must respond to this request within 10 calendar days. No notification of action is to be sent to the licensee without approval of both the district legal counsel and the Department of Children and Families to approve or deny licenses in accordance with Florida Statutes 120.60.

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:



PHILIP J. SCARPELLI
President and Chief Executive Officer
Family Partnerships of Central Florida

APPROVAL DATE: 10/20/2025