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|  | INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY | |
| | Chapter 12: Foster Family Home Licensing | |
| | Section 13: Licensing Recommendation and Approval Process | |
| | Effective Date: March 2, 2023 | Version: 4 |

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POLICY OVERVIEW

The licensing recommendation and approval process is completed to assess the foster family home's (FFH) ability to meet the roles and responsibilities of a licensed foster parent.

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PROCEDURE

Prior to making a recommendation decision, the licensing worker will:

1. Consider whether the FFH applicant has the ability to meet the needs of the children according to the level of care to be provided;
2. Ask the FFH applicant if they need a reasonable accommodation due to a disability;

Note: If an FFH applicant has a disability, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will consider the provision of reasonable accommodations. DCS will not discriminate against an applicant who is a person with a disability.

3. Consider the demographics and number of children that can best be served in the FFH;
4. Ensure the FFH fully complies with the licensing requirements and regulations;
5. Ensure all required documents and training have been completed; and

Note: The licensing of a FFH will not be determined based on vaccination status of the children in the home. However, the lack of current vaccinations as posted on the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) website will be considered when placing a child who is medically fragile or an infant under six (6) months of age.

6. Ensure all information is entered in the case management system.

When processing the licensing recommendation, the licensing worker will:

1. Process the request for licensure in the case management system within five (5) business days of the completion of the state-approved foster family home licensing study (see policy 12.11 Foster Family Home Licensing Study); and

Note: The licensing worker who requests licensing approval shall **not** be the same person who approves the license.

2. Submit a recommendation for approval to:
 - a. The licensing Supervisor or designee for DCS local offices, or

- b. The Central Office Foster Care Licensing Team for Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPAs).

Note: DCS will not recommend children to be placed in a FFH until final approval has been given to license unless the home is a relative or kinship home. See policy 8.48 Relative or Kinship Placements for more information.

DCS will process all recommendations received by the licensing worker within ten (10) calendar days of receipt as follows:

1. The DCS Supervisor or designee will process the licensure approval or endorse the denial in the case management system for DCS local offices. See policy 12.18 License Denials for further guidance regarding license denials;
2. The Central Office Foster Care Licensing Team will print the approved license and mail the license to the appropriate DCS local office or the LCPA if the license is approved;
3. The licensing worker will maintain a copy of the license in the licensing file and provide a copy of the license to the foster parent; or
4. The Central Office Foster Care Licensing Team will process the license approval or denial in the case management system for LCPAs.

In accordance with Indiana Code, the expiration date of the license will be four (4) years from the effective date, minus one (1) day. The effective date and expiration date will be listed on the license.

License Revisions

Licensing workers are required to make revisions in the case management system when a change occurs that impacts the health, welfare, and general well-being of the child, as outlined in 465 IAC 2-1.5-3(g). After receiving the notification of a change, the licensing worker will follow the approval process outlined in this policy.

Upon approval of the revision, the Central Office Foster Care Licensing Team will:

1. Print the approved license with the revision, keeping the licensure dates the same as the original license; and
2. Ensure a copy of the license is mailed to the appropriate DCS local office or LCPA to be filed, placed in the licensing file, and forwarded to the FFH.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Licensing Worker

The licensing worker refers to the DCS Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS) or the Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) worker.

Medically Fragile

A child who has a medically diagnosed immunocompromised condition (chronic or acute) or dependence on specialized care or equipment for life or health sustaining function. Conditions that may qualify a child as medically fragile may include cancer, transplant care, and cystic fibrosis.

Forms and Tools

N/A

Related Policies

- [8.48 Relative or Kinship Placements](#)
- [12.11 Foster Family Home Licensing Study](#)
- [12.12 Foster Family Home Capacity](#)
- [12.18 License Denials](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-27-4-16: Duration of license; limitations; renewal](#)
- [IC 31-27-4-6.5: "Disability"; foster family home](#)
- [42 USC 12102: Definition of disability](#)
- [465 IAC 2-1.5-3: Qualifications of the foster family; general](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 12.13

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Partnership in the Licensing Process

Partnership is key in the decision-making process. The concept of FFH applicants having a role in the licensing decision should be explained and emphasized during orientation, pre-service training, and home visits. The applicant's role as a partner in the licensing process is to make an honest assessment of their skills and abilities to foster and if fostering is a good fit for their family. The following are decisions that should be made collaboratively between the agency and the FFH applicants:

1. Whether fostering is a good fit for the foster family as well as the LCPA or DCS;
2. Whether the family should focus on adopting and/or fostering;
3. Whether the potential foster parents have needs that must be addressed or strengths that must be developed prior to being licensed or during licensure; and
4. The level of care the family will be able to provide.

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