



DCS Practice SOP

Foster Family Home Licensing

12.20: Variances (Foster Family Home Licensing)

Related Policy: [12.20](#)

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Version: 1

Roles

- Licensing Worker
- Licensing Worker Supervisor
- Central Office Licensing Unit
- Local Office Director (LOD)

Procedure

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) may allow a foster family home (FFH) to meet the intent of a rule or regulation in a different way. This is called a variance. A variance must still protect the health, safety, and well-being of the child.

How to Request a Licensing Variance

The licensing worker must:

1. Talk with their supervisor to decide if the variance request is appropriate;
2. Enter the request into the case management system, including a written explanation (called a documentation narrative);

Note: The narrative must explain the alternative method being used and how it still meets the intent of the DCS rule or regulation.

3. Submit the request as follows:
 - If the worker is with DCS, they send the request to their supervisor.
 - If the worker is with a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), they send the request directly to the Central Office Licensing Unit.
4. Tell the applicant or licensee whether the variance was approved or denied after hearing back from the Central Office Licensing Unit.

Supervisor Responsibilities

The licensing worker's supervisor must:

1. Help the licensing worker decide if the variance request is appropriate;
2. Review the request and send it to the Central Office Licensing Unit for approval.

Central Office Licensing Unit Responsibilities

Once the request is received, the Central Office Licensing Unit will:

1. Review the request and ask for more information if needed;
2. Approve or deny the request; and
3. Notify the licensing worker of the decision.

If a Variance is Violated

If a foster parent violates a condition of a variance:

1. The licensing worker must contact the Central Office Licensing Unit for guidance, and
2. The Central Office Licensing Unit will notify any (LOD) or designee who has a child placed in that home.

Definitions

- [Licensing Worker](#)

Resources

- N/A

Additional Information

- [Examples of Possible Variances for Foster Family Home \(FFH\) Licenses](#)

References

- N/A