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June 1, 2010

To: Regional Managers
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services
Directors, Licensed Child Placing Agencies
Supervisor, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director
Angela Green, Deputy Director of Practice Support
Dave Judkins, Deputy Director of Field Operations
Jeff Lozer, General Counsel

Subject: Foster Family Homes Due for Annual Review or Relicensure
DCS-10-04

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is committed to partnering with families and communities to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes for children under DCS care and supervision. In fulfilling our mission, it is important to ensure that foster family homes remain in compliance with licensing requirements at all times. In the spirit of full disclosure, the foster parent should understand at initial licensure the possible outcomes of the licensing process, including their right to voluntarily withdraw their license.

This administrative letter outlines recent policy changes regarding Corrective Action Plans and probationary status for foster family homes. Below is a summary of changes effective July 1, 2010.

Annual Review

Notice of the annual review and requirements are sent to the foster parent 90 days prior to the annual review due date. If the annual review is due and the foster family has not completed the required paperwork and/or has not made arrangements for the licensing worker to conduct an onsite visit, the licensing worker should attempt to engage the foster family to encourage them to either proceed with licensure or voluntarily withdraw their license. If after 90 days from the annual review due date there is



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no response or the foster family has not voluntarily withdrawn their license, then the licensing worker should recommend revocation to the DCS Local Office Director. If the annual review is due and the requirements for annual review have not been met and the foster parent decides to proceed with licensure, it will be necessary for the licensing worker to place the foster home on a Corrective Action Plan until all licensing requirements are met. If there are safety concerns, the home should be placed on probation with a Corrective Action Plan until all licensing requirements are met.

Relicensure

Notice of expiration and requirements for relicensure are sent to the foster parent 90 days prior to the expiration date. If the foster parent fails to submit a new application by the expiration date, the license will expire in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) and there will be a gap in licensure. If the license is expired and the requirements for relicensure have not been met but the foster family and DCS has determined that relicensure will proceed, it will be necessary for the licensing worker to request a license with a Corrective Action Plan and contact the Central Office Licensing Unit to correct the effective date to match the signature date on the new application. However, if the non-compliance of a licensing requirement constitutes a safety concern (e.g. background check requirements are not met), the home must be placed on probation in addition to a Corrective Action Plan. All probation requests must be submitted to the Central Office Licensing Unit.

The Corrective Action Plan

The purpose of the Corrective Action Plan is to support the foster parent in the development and utilization of more appropriate methods of meeting the needs of children under DCS care and supervision. In addition, the Corrective Action Plan clarifies the roles of DCS and the foster parent to prevent further violations of DCS policy. The Corrective Action Plan serves as a supportive intervention rather than a punitive intervention.

A Corrective Action Plan without probation is implemented following a violation of DCS policy, statute, and/or regulation that does not have a direct impact on the safety and well-being of the child; however, a formal plan to address the lack of compliance is required. The Corrective Action Plan should state the statute, regulation, and/or DCS policy which the home is in non-compliance with, what tasks need to be completed to bring the home into compliance, and a timeline as to when the tasks will be accomplished. The Corrective Action Plan should be signed by the licensing worker and the foster parent. The Corrective Action Plan must also be approved and signed by the Local Office Director or designee. A signed copy of the Corrective Action Plan must be provided to the foster parent and a copy must be placed in the licensing file. If the foster parent refuses to sign the Corrective Action Plan and fails to submit the [Voluntary Withdrawal of Application for Licensure or Relinquishment of Foster Family Home License \(SF53237/CW3340\)](#) form, the licensing worker must submit a recommendation to revoke to the Local Office Director.

The Corrective Action Plan should be monitored and progressive intervention must occur if the foster family home has not met the licensure requirements. The Corrective Action Plan should be in place for up to six (6) months. However, if the family meets all the requirements prior to six (6) months, then the family should be notified in writing that they have been removed from the Corrective Action Plan. If the family has made substantial progress over a six (6) month period but has not yet met the licensure requirements, the licensing worker should consider requesting an extension of up to six (6) months on the



Corrective Action Plan. The licensing worker should use critical thinking in determining whether to continue to place children in a home on a Corrective Action Plan. The licensing worker should consider recommending revocation to the Local Office Director if the home fails to meet the requirements of the Corrective Action Plan after one (1) year, unless the foster family voluntarily withdraws their license.

The licensing worker will document information in ICWIS for foster family homes that will be placed on a Corrective Action Plan without probation. For DCS licensing workers only, on the 'Provider Detail' screen in ICWIS, enter the signature date of the most recent application in the 'Applied on Field.' On the Narrative Screen, the licensing worker should will add a new narrative with the title of 'Corrective Action' and upload a copy of the Corrective Action Plan or copy and paste the text of the plan. In the case of a Corrective Action Plan and probation, once requirements for relicensure have been completed, a request for a regular license should be processed in ICWIS within 24 hours.

Please note that if a foster family home is placed on probation, no new placements can be made in the home until the home is removed from probation.

Updates will be made to the DCS Policy Manual to reflect these changes. If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this administrative letter, please address them to the DCS policy mailbox at DCSPolicy@dcs.in.gov.

Sincerely,

James W. Payne, Director
Department of Child Services

