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To: Regional Managers
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director
Angela Green, Deputy Director of Practice Support
David Judkins, Deputy Director of Field Operations
MB Lippold, Deputy Director of Staff Development
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Department of Child Services

Subject: Legislation Changes - Foster Family Home Licensing
DCS-11-05

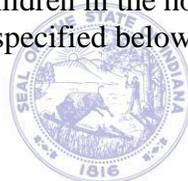
The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) continues to improve partnerships with the children and families we serve. In fulfilling the value that “We believe that the most desirable place for children to grow up is with their own families, when these families are able to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes,” recent changes in state and federal legislation will enhance our achievement of this value. With the recent passing of SB 465 - the DCS Child Welfare Bill, DCS will make updates to policy to revise the definition of a Therapeutic Foster Family, reflect the new Licensing capacity for Foster Care homes, and the new requirements for Pre-Service training. These changes will be effective July 1, 2011.

Amended Definition of Therapeutic Foster Family Homes

The definition for a Therapeutic Foster Family Home has been amended to include a foster family home that provides care for an individual at least 18 years old, but less than 21 years of age receiving foster care for older youth who has serious emotional disturbances, significant behavioral health needs and functional impairments, or developmental or physical disabilities.

Licensing Capacity

DCS has the authority to license three (3) types of foster homes: regular, special needs, and therapeutic. Each type of license has different capacity requirements for the number of foster children and the number of household children in the home. The statute has been amended to reduce the capacity for foster homes, as specified below.



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Regular & special needs foster homes will now have a capacity of five (5) total children, including household and foster children.

Therapeutic foster homes will now have a capacity of four (4) total children (household and foster children), with only two (2) of the four (4) being therapeutic foster children.

An exception may be granted for the placement of siblings in the same foster home, when the foster child has a meaningful relationship with the foster family, or it is in the foster child's best interest. A request for an exception must be submitted to the Central Office Licensing Unit. All placements made prior to July 1, 2011 will be exempt.

Pre-Service Training

DCS requires adoptive family applicants to successfully complete 16 hours of Pre-Service Training prior to initiation of the adoption home study.

DCS will require foster family home applicants applying for a regular or special needs license to successfully complete 10 hours of Pre-Service Training prior to initial licensure.

DCS will require 10 additional training hours for all applicants applying for a therapeutic license for a total of 20 hours of Pre-Service Training.

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