

Handouts for the Webinar

Enhancing Your Foster Home Licensing Skills

October 23, 2012

Presented by

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North Carolina Division of Social Services

Produced by

Family and Children's Resource Program, part of the
Jordan Institute for Families
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work

Sponsored by

North Carolina Division of Social Services

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TYPICAL LICENSING ISSUES/ERRORS

- 5015 not submitted or all fields not completed. A 5015 needs to be submitted for every licensure request.
- Applicants who are 21-25 typically should be licensed for children birth to 12. Young adults should not be licensed for teens. We are aware of too many instances of sexual activity between teen-age foster children and young adult foster parents.
- Applicants who are unemployed and are receiving unemployment benefits will have to wait until they are employed before we will process the application. We will not terminate a license of a current foster parent if the applicant/applicants lose their jobs. However the supervising agency has to be diligent in monitoring the family to make sure the stress levels do not result in abuse or neglect of a child. We also ask that if a foster parent has become unemployed and a foster child is removed from the home that another child not be placed in the home until the foster parent becomes employed.
- Homes with 4 or 5 dogs in the house as well as large number of dogs outside the house, must carefully be assessed. Are dogs aggressive? How do dogs react to child pulling their tail, reaching for their food bowl?
- Applicants who have been sexually abused—no treatment. Serious discussions should be held with these individuals concerning their parenting of sexually abused/reactive children. Are there unresolved issues, PTSD, etc.? Will foster parent support therapy for sexually abused foster child?
- Areas on the 5016 (Application) not checked, left blank. The 5016 is interactive we do not want attachments, we want explanations in the areas provided on the form.
- Except for medicals all documents, findings, clerk of court, department of corrections, etc. have to be current within 180 days. This means current within 180 days that it is date stamped at the Black Mountain office.
- On the local background check some folks still state minor traffic violations, nothing serious – we need to know the specific violations and the dates.
- Family assessment and 12 skills not thorough. The individual who did the training on the 12 skills needs to be the one to write those. We have received some applications where it is obvious the foster parents wrote these—not allowed. We have also received applications where the 12 skills are cut and pasted from other foster parent applications. (The workers forgot to change the name of the foster parent.) Recent changes in family circumstances need to be thoroughly discussed—death, divorce, birth of child, pregnancy, etc.
- 5016 not signed by foster parent applicants, social worker, agency director/designee.
- 1515 (Fire Inspection) not complete (areas left blank). If Fire Inspector makes a comment on the form about a concern, it needs to be corrected before sending the form to BM. Foster parents need to be trained about the form so they can review it with the Fire Inspector before he/she leaves their home. If there are areas not checked or checked that shouldn't be the foster parent needs to discuss with the Fire Inspector. Please note that under the Foster Parent's signature there is a statement that says if any area checked NO on the form, it will result in non-approval of the home until the items in question are brought into compliance.
- 5150 (Environmental Conditions Checklist) items left blank, no signatures.

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- 5017 if the foster parent checks yes to any of the conditions on the form, he/she needs to elaborate.
- 5156 MD needs to fill out form in entirety, again train foster parents that before they leave the MD's office he/she has filled out the form in its entirety.
- The information the applicant puts on the 5017 and the information the MD puts on the 5156 should be the same information.
- If the applicant or the MD indicates health issues (physical or mental) the agency needs to explain these on the 5016, Item X under the Grid where you check YES/NO for Good Physical Health, Good Mental Health. If an applicant lists their state of health as fair or poor on the 5017 this needs to be explained. If there is a MH diagnosis need full explanation. For example someone lists depression. What does this mean? Does condition affect activities of daily living? How does the condition manifest? What happens when applicant becomes depressed? How is it treated? ETC.
- We are getting the impression that licensing workers are not reviewing the fire inspection form, medical forms, etc.
- RIL document (5268) not attached. The 5268 first has to be sent to the Raleigh office and then the results sent with the licensure request to the BM office.
- Fingerprint clearance letters not attached.
- For relicenses you really need to get the 5157 to us at least two months before the license expires. Again changes in family circumstances since initial or last relicensure need to be thoroughly discussed—death, divorce, birth of child, pregnancy, etc.
- Agencies have asked us to increase capacity in family foster care and therapeutic foster care for “false” sibling groups. For example, a Therapeutic foster home is licensed for two children, there is one child there now. The agency wants the capacity increased to three in order to place two siblings in the home. This request is denied. The two siblings are not related to the other foster child already in the home. This also applies to family foster care. A FFC home is licensed for three. There are three foster children in the home. They have one child of their own. The home is licensed for three and the agency requests an increase in capacity to place two siblings in the home. This is denied. The two siblings are not related to the other foster children already in the home. Our rule refers to increasing capacity to keep siblings together this means all the foster children in the home are siblings.

Change # 02-2012 **Foster Home Licensing** **July 1, 2012**

- C. Assessment Process
- D. Use of References
- E. Periodic Reassessment of Home
- F. Agency Foster Parent Agreement

V. FORMS - SECTION .0900

- A. The License Application
- B. The Agency Foster Parents' Agreement
- C. The Department of Social Services Intercounty Agreement

VI. CAPACITY - SECTION .1000

- A. Family Foster Home
- B. Therapeutic Foster Home
- C. Exceptions
- D. Providing Community Alternative Program Services for Disabled Adults (CAP/DA)
- E. Household members **18 years of age and older** ~~over the age of 19~~

VII. STANDARDS FOR LICENSING - SECTION .1100

- A. Client Rights
- B. Medication
- C. Physical Restraints
- D. Criteria for the Family
- E. Conflict of Interest
- F. Day Care Center Operations
- G. Relationship to Supervising Agency
- H. Fire and Building Safety
- I. Health Regulations
- J. Environmental Regulations
- K. Room Arrangements
- L. Exterior Setting and Safety
- M. Licensing Compliance Visits
- N. Criminal Histories
- O. Responsible Individuals List
- P. Criminal History Checks
- Q. Training Requirements

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Non-Discrimination Policy
- B. Foster Parent Public Information
- C. Best Business Practice for Transferring Families
- D. Recruitment and Retention
- E. Regulatory and Licensing Website
- F. Supplemental Guide to Foster Home Licensing
- G. Foster Home Licensing: The Keys to Success
- H. NCDSS Child Welfare Services Training Calendar

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services | Division of Social Services
Child Welfare Services Section
Foster Home Licensing

Change # 02-2012

Foster Home Licensing

July 1, 2012

Director
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F HHH Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20201
202-619-0403 (voice) or 202-619-3257 (TTY)

B. G.S. § 131D-10.6C Maintaining a register of applicants licensed foster homes by the Division of Social Services. (Effective October 1, 2012)

(a) The Division of Social Services shall keep a register of all licensed family foster and therapeutic foster home applicants. The register shall contain the following information:

- (1) The name, age, and address of each applicant. ~~applicant.~~ foster parent.
- (2) ~~The date of the application.~~
- (3) The applicant's foster parent's supervising agency.
- (4) ~~Any~~ The number of hours of mandated training completed by the applicant and the dates of training. ~~applicant.~~ foster parent.
- (5) ~~Whether the applicant was licensed and the~~ The date of the initial licensure.
- (6) The current licensing period.
- (7) Any adverse licensing actions.
- (8) ~~Any other information deemed necessary by the Division of Social Services.~~

(b) The register shall be a public record under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. However, the Division, without penalty, may withhold any specific information about a foster parent to the extent the release of the information would likely pose a threat to the health or safety of the foster parent or a foster child. A person who is denied access to information under this section may seek a court order compelling disclosure or copying in accordance with G.S. 132-9(a). Information not specified in subsection (a) of this section shall be considered confidential and not subject to disclosure."

If the Licensing Authority receives a request for foster parent information the Licensing Authority will contact the supervising agency before releasing this information. The purpose of this contact is to determine whether the release of the information will pose a threat to the health or safety of the foster parent or foster child.

It is important for foster home licensing social workers to inform foster families of G.S. § 131D-10.6C and the fact that under this law certain information about the family can be released to the public. It is also a good time to reinforce that foster parents are to keep information about children in their care confidential.

C. Best Business Practice for Transferring Families¹:

When a current foster family reaches out to your agency with hopes of transferring it is important to keep these things in mind:

¹ Best Business Practice for Transferring Families was developed by Jessica Shanor, Eliada Homes for Children

the applicant and have contact with foster children are considered members of the household and must be evaluated as a household member.

When a spouse is out of the home for extended periods of time such as a member of the armed services who is deployed, the licensing social worker may request (of the Licensing Authority) that consideration be given to listing this spouse as a household member rather than a foster parent until he/she returns. When such approval is granted the spouse must immediately begin the process to license when he/she returns to the home. The Licensing Authority will presume any adult over 21 will be fostering unless the licensing social worker provides information explaining otherwise. If a relative or friend is living in the home full time it is likely that they will assist in parenting and if they do so they must be licensed. If the household member is living there because they need care themselves this should be explained.

It is up to the applicant to convince the licensing social worker that an adult in the home is not providing care, supervision, or discipline. Individuals responsible for the care, supervision, and discipline of children in foster care must meet all licensing requirements. Adults who are considered other household members must meet all criminal history and background checks, fingerprint checks, RIL checks, and medical requirements (DSS-5156 and DSS-5017).

The agency/foster parent agreement addresses the requirement of notifying the supervising agency when someone moves into or out of the home. The supervising agency in turn should notify the Licensing Authority by means of submitting a Foster Home Change Request Application (DSS-5159) indicating this. When the family has someone who is a frequent guest in the home they should discuss this occurrence with the supervising agency. The licensing social worker should discuss in pre-service training and throughout the process that single foster parents should make the supervising agency aware of people who are in frequent contact with foster children. Background checks should be done on dating partners who are in the home and in contact with foster children on a regular basis whether or not they spend the night in the home. Licensing social workers should have open and honest discussions with applicants and single foster parents who may want to date different people and help them to assess whether the timing is right for them to foster.

The supervising agency must include anyone ~~over 18~~ **years of age or older** in the home ~~in~~ **on** the DSS-5016 and provide the following documents on them: fingerprint clearance letters, local background checks, RIL checks (DSS-5268), physicals (DSS-5156) medical histories (DSS-5017) and should add their names to the DSS-5015 as a household member. If someone ~~over 18~~ **years of age or older** moves into the home or someone in the home turns 18 they must be added to the DSS-5015 and a change request (DSS-5159) **must be** submitted on them. This change request must be accompanied by the same documents mentioned for an initial application (**fingerprint clearance letters, local background checks, RIL checks (DSS-5268), physicals (DSS-5156), medical histories (DSS-5017).** Foster parents must report these changes within 72 hours of their **occurrence to their supervising agency and the supervising agency must report this information to the Licensing Authority within five business days.**

- (b) In addition to Subparagraphs (a)(1) through (5) of this Rule, foster parents who provide therapeutic foster care services shall:
- (1) be trained as set out in [10A NCAC 70E .1117](#); and
 - (2) allow weekly supervision and support from a qualified professional as defined in [10A NCAC 27G .0104](#) and [10A NCAC 27G .0203](#).

The major difference between a family foster home and a therapeutic foster home is the needs of the children placed in the home. Children who need therapeutic care have severe emotional and psychological needs that require intensive supervision and intervention by the foster parents. Often this level of care requires someone to be with the child all the time.

Therapeutic foster parents must meet all the requirements to be licensed as a family foster home. In addition, they must complete ten hours of training in behavioral mental health treatment services before they may be licensed. These requirements are outlined in [10A NCAC 70E .1117](#).

Once licensed, therapeutic foster parents must agree to at least weekly supervision and support by a qualified professional. During this visit the qualified professional reviews the progress of the child's treatment, reviews the foster parent's performance, and provides support, guidance, and training to the foster parents. These weekly visits **with the foster parents** usually last over an hour, and must occur in the **foster** home ~~with the child and foster parents present~~ unless specified differently in the person-centered-plan.

Some family foster parents ask why they are not licensed at the therapeutic level. Such inquiries often come after a crisis with a child or after a period of difficulty. Licensing social workers can respond to this question by reviewing these additional requirements; if appropriate, point out that the child currently in the family foster care parents' home does not require intensive, therapeutic care on an ongoing basis. In addition, review capacity rules with the family, pointing out that while family foster homes may provide care for up to five children if there are no other children in the home, therapeutic foster homes may provide care for only two children who require intensive therapeutic care. It is a good idea to address the distinction between family and therapeutic foster care during pre-service training.

H. [10A NCAC 70E .1108](#) FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY

For a foster family, the local fire inspector is the authority on home and child safety. Foster families are expected to maintain the house and its attached buildings in the same safe condition as when the house was built. If the licensing social worker has any doubt about the safety of an item or condition of the home, he or she should consult the building codes in force when the house was built. Local county building inspectors are a good resource for such inquiries.

If a local fire inspector checks no to any questions on the Fire Inspection Report ([DSS-1515](#)) the Licensing Authority will not license the home until the fire inspector documents that the situation has been corrected. Even when items are marked yes, any

If a fence surrounds a pool or hazard, the pool or the hazard may not be accessed directly from the house. If the fence joins the house, then an additional gateway must separate the pool area from the house. It is not acceptable to block a designated egress door to limit access to a pool. The egress door must be open and the pool must be protected behind a fence. Above ground pools are a special case. If the sides of the pool are sufficiently high to prevent access without a ladder, the ladder should be secured using a lock when not in use and being supervised. If this is done, a fence is not required.

The licensing social worker guarantees the interior and the exterior ground of the home is safe for children. This responsibility may not be delegated. The licensing social worker is expected to inspect personally the installation of required safety measures, including measures to restrict access to water and other hazards. Keeping children safe is the number one promise child welfare professionals make to birth parents when they place their children in foster care. The licensing social worker ensures this promise is kept.

M. [10A NCAC 70E .1113](#) LICENSING COMPLIANCE VISITS

Quarterly Visits. Licensing social workers of supervising agencies shall visit with the foster family on at least a quarterly basis for the specific purpose of assessing licensing requirements. Two of the quarterly visits each year shall take place in the foster home. The licensing social worker may require the remaining visits to occur at a location of the licensing social worker's preference.

The licensing social worker must meet with the foster family at least four times a year. This responsibility may not be delegated to assistants or non-social work staff members. At least once a quarter, the foster family needs the opportunity to talk with their licensing social worker about concerns and progress in caring for children in care. At least once a quarter, foster parents deserve to hear what they are doing well and what needs to be improved. These visits are excellent opportunities to determine if there are any new household members. These visits still need to occur even if there are no foster children in the home. The licensing social worker still needs to assess the foster homes continued compliance with licensing regulations. If the foster family has not accepted any foster children discussions need to be held to determine their continued interest in providing foster care services.

This requirement is the minimum expectation. If the foster family needs additional attention, the licensing social worker is expected to make additional visits. It is recommended that the licensing social worker visit a newly licensed foster family **families** as often as needed **in order** for the family to feel confident about **its** **their** skills and abilities **with children placed in its care to provide foster care services.**

At a minimum, the licensing social worker must visit the foster family twice a year in the family's home. During these visits, the worker should make sure that health, sleeping space, fire safety, and environmental standards continue to be met. Two of the four required visits may occur away from the foster family's home. These off-site visits should include everyone involved in the care of children in care. Licensing social

workers are encouraged to have these “off-site” visits exclusively with individual families so that the family has the worker’s undivided attention and so that sensitive or private matters can be discussed.

The licensing social worker is required to document these visits, including the dates they occur and notes about the content of the visits.

Quarterly visits can be completed by someone other than the licensing social worker as long as the visits are for the purpose of assessing foster home licensing requirements. Foster parents will need to understand that the visits are for the purpose of discussing licensing requirements. Quarterly visits must be separate and apart from any child specific visits or supervision visits. If done on the same day as a supervision visit, one could have 60 minutes of supervision and then once completed then spend time conducting the quarterly visit and covering all required topics with the foster parent. The Licensing Office can provide a suggested checklist for licensing visits. If someone other than the licensing worker conducts the quarterly licensing visit the agency must have procedures in place that insure the licensing worker will receive the information from the quarterly visits in a timely manner.

It is important for agencies to understand that any staff member (social workers, case managers, qualified professionals, supervisory staff, etc.) who visits the foster home or visits with foster children in the home has a responsibility to continually assess safety and risk factors. DSS Form 5295 (<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5295-ia.pdf>) provides guidance related to foster care visits.

N. 10A NCAC 70E .1114 CRIMINAL HISTORIES

Individuals convicted of certain crimes are prohibited from providing foster care. These crimes include abusing children, spousal abuse, crimes against children, and crimes of serious violence. To ensure each person granted a license has not been convicted of such crimes, every applicant’s criminal history must be assessed. If any person in the applicant’s home ~~over the age of 18~~ **years of age or older** refuses to allow such a background check, the home is not eligible to be licensed. Criminal background checks must be performed in three areas: local, state, and federal. Applicants and adult household members must reveal all criminal charges and convictions as well as any pending convictions to the supervising agency at the time of their initial licensure. Failure to do this may result in the revocation of their license if these charges and convictions are discovered after the foster home has been licensed.

Local criminal background checks are done using records of the Superior Court with jurisdiction of the foster home. Typically these records are kept at the county court house. This check is usually performed by supervising agency staff, although some supervising agencies contract with private companies to do this check. Supervising agencies can use private companies to conduct criminal background checks as long as the company is listed on the website of the NC Administrative Office of the Courts <http://www.nccourts.org/citizens/gotocourt/documents/cbcccompanies.pdf>.

In order to use a private company to conduct a criminal background check the agency must submit a waiver request to their licensing consultant. Private agencies must submit a waiver request to the licensing consultant assigned to their agency. County departments of social services will need to submit a waiver request to the licensing consultants at the Black Mountain office.

The results of the local check should be recorded on the Foster Home License Application ([DSS-5016](#)). This check must be performed prior to initial licensing and at every relicensure. Foster parents must inform the supervising agency of any criminal charges and convictions of adult household members within 72 hours of a charge or conviction. Supervising agencies must report this to the Licensing Authority within five business days of receipt of the information on the Foster Home Change Request Application ([DSS-5159](#)).

State level criminal background checks are done by checking internet databases for any criminal conviction or substantiated report of harming persons in care. These checks must be performed prior to initial licensing and at every relicensure. To conduct this check, the supervising agency checks the following sites and records the results on the Foster Home License Application (DSS-5016):

- NC Department of Public Safety Offenders:
<http://www.doc.state.nc.us/offenders>
- NC Sex Offender and Public Registry:
<http://sexoffender.ncdoj.gov>
- NC Health Care Personnel Registry:
<http://www.ncnar.org/nchcpr.html>

Federal criminal records checks are done using fingerprints. Each person at least 18 years of age or older in the applicant family must be fingerprinted and the results sent to a nationwide check of criminal records.

Inform applicants that these extensive searches will be conducted. Applicants need to understand that it is imperative that they reveal any findings before the supervising agency conducts these searches. If findings are revealed that were not disclosed by applicants, a thorough explanation must be provided to the Licensing Authority.

(a) An applicant shall not be licensed if the applicant, or any member of the applicant's household 18 years of age or older, refuses to consent to a criminal history check required by [G.S. § 131D, Article 1A](#).

Anyone age 18 and older who may be caring for children in foster care must consent to a criminal history check. This includes adult visitors who stay for more than two weeks. Help foster parents understand that this requirement applies to anyone who becomes a member of their household, including their parents, adult children, other relatives, friends, **boyfriends/girlfriends**, etc.

- (2) length of time since the conviction;
- (3) circumstances surrounding the commission of the offense or offenses;
- (4) number and type of prior offenses;
- (5) evidence of rehabilitation;
- (6) age of the individual at the time of the commission of the offense or offenses;
and
- (7) letter of support for licensure from the executive director of the agency.

If the supervising agency wishes to recommend licensure or relicensure in spite of the applicant's criminal record, the licensing social worker should meet with the applicants to discuss the matter. This requires at least a two level staffing decision and a written recommendation from the agency's executive director must accompany the request for a license.

The letter must state the details of the criminal record, why the agency recommends licensure in spite of the criminal record, and why the person's past criminal behavior does not adversely affect his/her ability to care for children in foster care. Once it is received by the Licensing Authority, this letter is in the public domain, so the executive director should write this letter as if it will be printed in the local newspaper.

Supervising agencies shall also inquire if any juvenile members of the household have any charges and conviction that were processed in Juvenile Court. Juvenile Court records are sealed; however, it is the responsibility of the foster parent to discuss these charges and convictions with the supervising agency. It is the responsibility of the supervising agency to assess these charges and convictions and make a recommendation to the Licensing Authority regarding the impact of these charges and convictions as they relate to the safety of foster children. The supervising agency shall discuss this issue in Skill 10 of the Mutual Home Assessment. **Foster parents must report any charges and juvenile convictions to their supervising agency within 72 hours of their occurrence.** ~~If charges and juvenile convictions occur between licensing periods that foster parents must report this information to their supervising agency within 72 hours of the occurrence.~~ The supervising agency must report this information to the Licensing Authority on the Foster Home Change Request Application ([DSS-5159](#)) within 5 business days.

Following are some of the things that might be considered by an agency and included in a letter recommending licensure:

- The nature, magnitude, frequency, and duration of the crime. Be sure to note whether the crime is non-violent in nature;

Enhancing Your Foster Home Licensing Skills


Welcome!

Please click on the colored link below to download the
handout for today:
10-23-12 webinar handout



Agenda


- Brief Orientation
- Introductions
- Foster home licensing manual update
- Enhancing licensing skills
- Q & A



October 23, 2012 Webinar • UNC-CH School of Social Work 2

Panel Participants today are:

- Bob Hensley
- Rhoda Ammons
- Nicole Jensen



Your facilitator is:
John McMahon

Technical support is provided by:
Phillip Armfield
Mellicent Blythe

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Goals of this Webinar



- Save you time, make your life easier
- Do same for us

Ultimate Goal
Ensure children in foster care are safe and well cared for.

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AREA OF CONCERN Substantiations

July 2, 2011–June 30, 2012: **38** substantiations

14 from County DSS' s	24 from private agencies
➤ 12 neglect	➤ 18 neglect
➤ 1 sexual abuse	➤ 2 sexual abuse
➤ 1 neglect and sex abuse	➤ 2 physical abuse
➤ 0 physical abuse	➤ 1 neglect and sex abuse
	➤ 1 neglect and physical abuse

Source: NCDSS, 2012

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AREA OF CONCERN Revocations

July 2, 2011–June 30, 2012: **36** revocation actions

11 from County DSS' s	25 from private agencies
➤ 6 neglect	➤ 13 neglect
➤ 1 sexual abuse	➤ 1 sexual abuse
➤ 4 rule violations	➤ 1 physical abuse
	➤ 10 rule violation

**Trend: Revocations on the increase
Underscores the importance
of your assessments!**

6



AREA OF CONCERN
High Application Error Rates

50%

See handouts for a list of the most common errors that lead to returned applications.

7

New Manual Available

➤ <http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/ds/csm-94/man/>

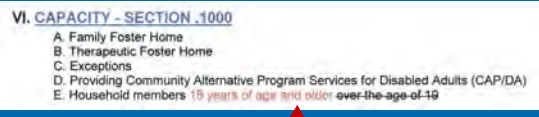
➤ Published June 2012

Corrections and Updates



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Table of Contents *(and elsewhere)*



Age 18 or older

A change made in multiple places:

- Household members over the age of 18, not 19

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VIII. Miscellaneous Section, p. 3
Register of Licensed Homes

B. G.S. § 131D-10.6C Maintaining a register of applicants licensed foster homes by the Division of Social Services. (Effective October 1, 2012)

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- (3) The applicant's foster parent's supervising agency.
- (4) Any The number of hours of mandated training completed by the applicant and the dates of training, foster parent.
- (5) Whether the applicant was licensed and the The date of the initial licensure.
- (6) The current licensing period.
- (7) Any adverse licensing actions.
- (8) Any other information deemed necessary by the Division of Social Services.

(b) The register shall be a public record under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. However, the Division, without penalty, may withhold any specific information about a foster parent to the extent the release of the information would likely pose a threat to the health or safety of the foster parent or a foster child. A person who is denied access to information under this section may seek a court order compelling disclosure or copying in accordance with G.S. 132-9(a). Information not specified in subsection (a) of this section shall be considered confidential and not subject to disclosure."

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VII. Section .1100 Standards for Licensing, p. 44
Weekly Supervision of TFC

Once licensed, therapeutic foster parents must agree to at least weekly supervision and support by a qualified professional. During this visit the qualified professional reviews the progress of the child's treatment, reviews the foster parent's performance, and provides support, guidance, and training to the foster parents. These weekly visits with the foster parents usually last over an hour, and must occur in the foster home with the child and foster parents present unless specified differently in the person-centered plan.

Note

- Weekly visits should usually last 1+ hours
- Must occur in the home with foster parents unless specified otherwise in the PCP.

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VII. Section .1100 Standards for Licensing, p. 57
Quarterly Visits

Quarterly visits can be completed by someone other than the licensing social worker as long as the visits are for the purpose of assessing foster home licensing requirements. Foster parents will need to understand that the visits are for the purpose of discussing licensing requirements. Quarterly visits must be separate and apart from any child specific visits or supervision visits. If done on the same day as a supervision visit, one could have 60 minutes of supervision and then once completed then spend time conducting the quarterly visit and covering all required topics with the foster parent. The Licensing Office can provide a suggested checklist for licensing visits. If someone other than the licensing worker conducts the quarterly licensing visit the agency must have procedures in place that insure the licensing worker will receive the information from the quarterly visits in a timely manner.

It is important for agencies to understand that any staff member (social workers, case managers, qualified professionals, supervisory staff, etc.) who visits the foster home or visits with foster children in the home has a responsibility to continually assess safety and risk factors. DSS Form 5295 (<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5295-la.pdf>) provides guidance related to foster care visits.


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Enhancing Your Assessment Skills

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Points to Remember about Foster Parent Assessments

- Ask personal questions
 - Gives you a clear picture of the family and how circumstances may affect children in the home
- Provide more than a “cookie-cutter” description of the 12 skills
 - Illustrates strengths and needs



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1 Single Foster Parents

New applicant OR re-licensing

What questions should you ask to get a full assessment?

Use the chat pod to share your answers



Relevant Policy
III. Section .0700, Licensing Regulations and Procedures, p. 12
VII. Section .1100, Standards for Licensing, pp. 36-37

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2

Criminal History

New applicant OR re-licensing

What questions should you ask to get a full assessment?

Use the chat pod to share your answers



Relevant Policy
IV. Section .0800, Mutual Home Assessment, p. 9
VII. Section .1100, Standards for Licensing, p. 43 and pp. 57-66

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3

Life-Changing Events

New applicant OR re-licensing

What questions should you ask to get a full assessment?

Use the chat pod



Relevant Policy
IV. Section .0800, Mutual Home Assessment, pp. 7-8
VII. Section .1100, Standards for Licensing, p. 43

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4

Physical and Mental Health Conditions

New applicant OR re-licensing

What questions should you ask to get a full assessment?

Use the chat pod



Relevant Policy
VII. Section .1100, Standards for Licensing, pp. 32-33

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5 Young Applicants

- Foster parent should be at least 10 years older than child in home
- Exceptions for kinship care

Relevant Policy
VII. Section .1100, Standards for Licensing, pp. 31-32

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6 New Transfer Policy

DSS-5158
FOSTER HOME TRANSFER REQUEST APPLICATION
NC DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES





Relevant Policy
III. Section .0700, Licensing Regulations and Procedures, pp. 13-17

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Implications for Practice


- Use your chat pod:
What have you learned today that will be helpful?

- What questions do you still have about North Carolina's foster home licensing process?

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Q & A



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Licensing Office Contact Info

➤ Rhoda Ammons and Nicole Jensen

NC Division of Social Services
Regulatory and Licensing Services
952 Old U. S. 70 Highway
Black Mountain, NC 28711
828/669-3388

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Final Steps

1. Please take a brief survey
 - We will provide link for those logged on
 - Can also access thru ncswlearn.org
2. To receive training credit, you must do "Complete Course" **WITHIN ONE WEEK**
 - ✓ Log in to www.ncswlearn.org
 - ✓ Select "PLP"
 - ✓ Select "Webinars"
 - ✓ Click "Enter"
 - ✓ Click "Complete Course" button

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Follow-up Document from the Webinar

Enhancing Your Foster Home Licensing Skills

Webinar delivered October 23, 2012

Follow-up document date: November 19, 2012

Presented by

Bob Hensley, Rhoda Ammons, Nicole Jensen, and John McMahon

Produced by

Family and Children’s Resource Program,
part of the Jordan Institute for Families
School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Sponsored by

North Carolina Division of Social Services

Handouts. Be sure to consult the handouts for this webinar:

https://www.ncswlearn.org/webinar/handouts/24_Webinar_10_23_12_Handouts.pdf

Recording. If you missed the webinar or want to view it again, you can access a recording of this event

by going to: <http://fcrp.unc.edu/webinars.asp>

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Recommendations, Questions, and Answers from the Webinar

*Note: The Division of Social Services encourages licensing professionals who have not already done so to attend three-day curriculum **Foster Home Licensing in Child Welfare Services**. To learn more about this course, class times, or to register, log in to your account on www.ncswLearn.org.*

I. New Policy Manual

NOTIFICATIONS ABOUT MOVES

Did the manual change regarding foster parents moving (amount of notification time to the state)?

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg.43

WEEKLY SUPERVISION OF TFC

Can we get clarity on the weekly supervision meetings? Is each meeting supposed to occur in the home because we thought they could occur in the office or community setting as well?

The majority of the meetings should occur in the home. Some of the meetings can occur in the supervising agency's office or another setting. The QP needs to make regular visits to the foster home in order to assess the home environment, etc.

Can the training received during the weekly supervision visits count towards the yearly training requirement?

No, there is no consistency to what is covered during supervision visits. All of these visits are not training. If a specific training curriculum is provided then it may be considered for training hours. You will need to discuss with the Licensing Authority. If you are providing training it appears that the weekly time may go beyond the 60 minute requirement. Specific issues related to the behavior, progress, caring for the foster child, etc. must be discussed.

QUARTERLY CONTACTS WITH FOSTER PARENTS

Document attached.

Can someone other than a licensing professional conduct quarterly contacts with foster parents?

Yes, as long as it truly is a visit with foster parents to assess foster home licensing requirements. If someone else conducts the quarterly visit, information and documentation needs to be provided to the licensing worker. It is the responsibility of everyone in your agency that visits a foster home to assess safety and environmental factors. This includes the social worker, case manager, supervisor, etc. Special attention needs to be given to determining whether the household composition has changed. Has someone moved into the home? Where do they sleep? Staff members who have regular contact with the foster children in the home should routinely ask the foster child who lives and visits regularly in the home, where do these people sleep, where do you sleep, etc.

Must both foster parents be seen at every quarterly contact?

It may be necessary to see them separately if their circumstances warrant, but each should be seen quarterly.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 56-57

2. DocVault

During the webinar there were a number of questions about the use of DocVault (<http://www.docvault.org/agency-sign>), an electronic foster home licensing submission system

endorsed by the NC Division of Social Services and offered by ChronoSolutions, an independent company. The Division of Social Services encourages agencies to use this electronic foster home licensing system, which offers agencies a number of advantages over the existing system. Questions about electronic licensing should be addressed to Ben Fink at ben.fink@chronosolutions.net or Wayne Wallace wayne.wallace@chronosolutions.net. (See pg. 15.)

3. Assessing Single Applicants

Please refer to the end of this document for a list of questions webinar participants suggested using to ensure a thorough assessment of single applicants. In general, agencies should ask the same things of single applicants they ask of married couples, including who frequents the home and who is moving in and out.

Can we license a single person who has been separated over a year?

There is no rule that says that you cannot license someone who is separated. If this has occurred recently (such as less than a year ago) the need to grieve this appropriately must be considered. Another angle to this is whether or not there is ongoing conflict between the partners. If there is current conflict it may not be a good time to license either of them.

FHL Manual Section .0800 pg.7-8

4. Assessing Criminal History

Please refer to the end of this document for a list of questions webinar participants suggested using to ensure a thorough assessment related to applicants' criminal histories.

How far back should we look on the criminal charges?

You should look at all the criminal charges/convictions throughout the applicant's adult life. Old charges and convictions are usually less significant than more recent ones depending on the severity. However, reviewing the entire history may reveal a pattern of criminal behavior and bad judgments, etc. that precludes someone becoming a foster parent.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 57-66

COMMUNICATING FINDINGS TO BLACK MOUNTAIN (LICENSING AUTHORITY)

What form should we use to notify the Division (Licensing Authority) if there is a new criminal charge?

Report any changes on DSS-5159.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 43

What types of charges need to be reported to the state office (Licensing Authority)? Does this include minor traffic violations such as speeding ticket? What about civil charges?

Foster parents must inform the supervising agency of any criminal charges and convictions of household members within 72 hours of a charge or conviction. Supervising agencies must report this to the Licensing Authority within five business days of receipt of the information on the Foster Home Change Request Application (DSS-5159). This includes all traffic violations. It does not include civil charges.

WHO TO CHECK

Is a CRC required for ALL persons visiting the home? What if a person is visiting for a week or two?

Foster homes are not institutions, nor should they be. Families and friends visit each other and it is natural and expected for this to occur in the homes of foster parents. However, foster parents are responsible for what happens in their homes and should be selective and careful about who visits. Page 58 of Section .1100 states anyone age 18 and older who may be caring for children in foster care must

consent to a criminal history check. This includes adult visitors who stay for more than two weeks. The foster parents should advise the supervising agency of any visitors staying two weeks or more and the role (if any) these individuals will have in supervising or caring for foster children. It is the responsibility of the supervising agency to further determine the role of the visitors in caring for/supervising foster children, assessing safety related to visitors in the foster home and concluding if background checks are necessary.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 36-37 and pg 58.

Is it necessary for extended family members to have criminal record checks if the foster child is going to spend the night with them?

Please note that therapeutic foster care is different than family foster care in that overnight visits should be in the therapeutic child's PCP (Person-Centered-Plan). Foster parents should inform their supervising agency if a foster child is spending the night with extended family members. Foster parents need to understand that they are responsible for making safe and appropriate choices for foster children. If there is any question about the safety of a foster child then criminal checks should be completed.

Do babysitters need SBI fingerprints, and the other website checks to be cleared to assist with children in the home?

Babysitters need to be approved by the supervising agency. Foster parents should understand that they are responsible for the choices that they make and should be very selective about who babysits and should share this information with the agency and get their approval.

What if a grandchild is temporarily staying in the foster parent's home? What would be required?

The foster parents must report this to the supervising agency within 72 hours and the supervising agency must report this to the Licensing Authority within five workdays. The supervising agency must determine the following: Why is the grandchild staying with the foster parents? What is meant by temporary? What is the anticipated length of time the grandchild will be residing in the foster home? What is the age of the grandchild? Where will the grandchild sleep? Does this change the capacity of the foster home? What kind of background checks and assessments will be required?

FHL Manual Section .0700 pg. 10-12

Must we conduct background checks on a birth child in the home that turns 21 but who is not parenting?

You must complete background checks as soon as the birth/adoptive/relative child turns 18.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 36-37

If someone is coming to visit from out of the country legally, do you need to do background checks? They have gotten VISA's and other required checks in order to visit.

If the individuals have passed the necessary requirements to legally enter the United States further background checks are not needed. However, the supervising agency should contact ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to make sure the visitor's status is current. If an individual with a VISA has been residing in the US, then moves into the foster home, US background checks will need to be completed.

How serious does the foster parent's relationship need to be before asking for the boyfriend or girlfriend to have a criminal history check done?

If someone is a frequent visitor in the home they must have background checks. This applies to boyfriends and girlfriends as well as other individuals who visit frequently. A foster parent should be able to tell the supervising agency if the individual is their boyfriend or girlfriend and the intensity of the relationship. If they do not know then they need to delay their application to be a foster parent.

Individuals who have multiple “non-serious” relationships need to delay their application to be a foster parent until their personal life is more stable.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg. 36-37 and page 58

DECISIONS BASED ON CRC FINDINGS

What if a foster family's birth child has charges/convictions—can they still live in the home?

It depends on the situation and what the charges/convictions are. Your agency must assess the risk to the safety and well-being of a foster child as well as the overall effect of the criminal behavior on the family. It may be a time when the family should take a break from fostering and support their child through this time in their lives. You must assess each individual circumstance and provide this information to the Licensing Authority. This would be a case by case decision. However, if a birth/adoptive/relative child is living in the prospective foster home and they have criminal convictions that occurred within the last year then the foster parent application needs to be delayed for at least a year.

FHL Manual Section .0800, pg 7-8

What do we do if an out-of-state CRC will not provide a hard, certified copy but only respond via email?

You need to determine the validity of the CRC. You may also need to discuss with the Licensing Authority.

How should we view adult children who do not live the home, but have very serious charges? What if the applicant says there is limited contact?

Your agency must assess this and be able to assure that the adult child will not present a risk to the safety and well-being of foster children. The supervising agency's primary priority is the safety and protection of the foster children who reside in the home.

If you have a foster parent and one of them has been charged for sexual assault on the foster child, can the other parent continue to be licensed if they move and are legally separated from the offender?

This will require an individual assessment of the situation. You may need to discuss with the Licensing Authority.

What is the process if an applicant is the victim of identity theft or other criminal charges?

When fingerprints are used it is almost impossible for someone else to be the applicant or adult household member. For local background checks the applicant or adult household member must provide proof that the person identified is not them.

5. Assessing Life-Changing Events

Please refer to the end of this document for a list of questions webinar participants suggested using to ensure a thorough assessment related to life-changing events.

I had an applicant that finished MAPP and then her brother passed away. He had been sick for a while and his death was expected. Can we still proceed with licensing her?

Yes, but you need to assess how she is coping. There is a greater need to delay licensing when the family member is a spouse or child of the applicant or another household member. There is grief involved with any loss but when the person is a part of one's daily life it is usually a more intense and lengthy process.

Should miscarriages be reported?

The agency needs to assess how the person is coping. If it is a new applicant they may need time to grieve prior to continuing with the process immediately.

6. Assessing Physical and Mental Health Conditions

Please refer to the end of this document for a list of questions webinar participants suggested using to ensure a thorough assessment related to medical and physical histories.

Is a medical history completed by an urgent care facility acceptable?

In general, no. Medical information is not considered reliable if the urgent care medical provider has no history with the applicant and answers questions on the 5156 by stating “as reported by patient.” You may need to discuss with the Licensing Authority.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg.32-33

If an applicant has no medical issues and does not have a regular primary care physician, where can the applicant get a physical that the Division (Licensing Authority) will accept?

Encourage applicants to get a regular doctor, even if they don't have medical concerns. They should go to the same doctor or medical practice to build a history with a medical professional. You may need to discuss this issue with the Licensing Authority.

What do we need to obtain from foster parents who have a positive a TB test?

Individuals with positive TB tests must have a follow-up x-ray. The children of parents who test positive must be tested also.

What medical issues does the state (Licensing Authority) need know within 72 hours?

What about heart surgery?

You must report medical issues that could cause the foster parent not to be able to parent. Medical issues for single foster parents must always be reported. The supervising agency needs to assess whether the person is still able to parent. When in doubt it is usually better to report than not.

What should we do if the doctor says a person is fit to provide foster care but we have concerns about their health?

You should address those concerns with the applicant and get further information from the medical professional. Be honest about your concerns. Licensing is a mutual selection process and no one has a constitutional right to be a foster parent. Your first priority must be the safety and well-being of children.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 32-33

Relicensure—a mental health condition has only been reported after 6 years—what information from medical provider does Black Mountain (Licensing Authority) need?

The foster parent is responsible for providing correct information in a timely manner. There must be documentation as to why the foster parent did not report this initially and was not honest with you and the Licensing Authority. You should report this to the Licensing Authority with specifics. You may need to provide a report from the psychiatrist or therapist who is treating (or who has treated) the foster parent. You may need to discuss this issue with the Licensing Authority.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 32

Can an applicant get their physical from a chiropractor?

No! Form 5156 is very specific, the form must be completed by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner. These are individuals who can legally make medical diagnoses, write prescriptions, etc.

FHL manual Section .1100 pg 32-33

Can we use the school physical for a birth child living in the home?

No, in most cases these forms are designed to show whether or not the child is healthy enough to participate in sports etc. The perspective from the DSS-5156 form includes other physical and mental health conditions that are usually not addressed on the school physical.

FHL Manual pg 32-33

How do you assess applicants who appear to be limited intellectually?

Foster parents must be in good physical and mental health. Being a foster parent is a challenging role and foster parents need to have the ability to deal with challenging behaviors. Depending on the extent of their limitations they may not be able to reason abstractly, make appropriate use of training and ultimately make good decisions regarding the safety and well-being of foster children. The agency must be able to recommend with confidence that the applicant is capable of meeting the health, safety and well-being needs of foster children. Assess the applicant carefully and thoroughly. Using the pre-service training and assessment process should bring this information to light. How well they can answer the skills questions, how well they can read and understand their training homework should shed some light on this.

Agencies must be careful and not rush to judgment when assessing foster parent applicants with disabilities. Agencies must make decisions about whether to recommend licensure based on their assessment of the individual's or family's ability to meet foster home licensing requirements and particularly their ability to meet the 12 skill requirements.

FHL Manual Section Miscellaneous pg 1-3

If a foster parent has a heart attack, do we need to get a release from the doctor for them to resume fostering?

When a foster parent has a significant change in health it must be reported. Yes, you need to use the expertise of the doctor to know when the foster parent is well enough to parent again.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 32-33

What if a household member does not have a primary doctor due to just moving to the state? Can the primary care physician be located out-of-state if the applicant just moved to NC?

Yes, if they are a licensed medical provider (physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner) and they use form 5156. Make sure the phone number and address are documented appropriately so that it can be verified.

What if the foster parent doesn't have a regular doctor because they don't have health insurance?

Foster parent applicants and household members are required to obtain medical evaluations (Form 5156) whether they have medical insurance or not. The supervising agency may elect to pay for the medical evaluations.

What about medicals for military families? Many of them use the doctor on base. This doctor may not know their complete history.

In general, no. Medical information is not considered reliable if the medical provider has no history with the applicant and answers questions on the 5156 by stating as reported by patient. You may need to discuss with the Licensing Authority.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg.32-33

Some cultures use natural resources to address health issues, not Western medicine. May people from these cultures use urgent care?

In general, no. Medical information is not considered reliable if the urgent care medical provider has no history with the applicant and answers questions on the 5156 by stating as reported by patient. You may need to discuss with the Licensing Authority.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg.32-33

What should we do for applicants who are Jehovah's Witnesses—their religious beliefs prohibit blood transfusions?

It is unclear what the question is here. Foster parents cannot make independent decisions about foster children's health and medical needs. Should a foster child need a blood transfusion their parent, guardian or custodian will make that decision in conjunction with the child's doctor. If someone's religious beliefs prevent them from cooperating with medical needs of foster children, they cannot be foster parents. Whether or not they agree to a blood transfusion for themselves is not pertinent. If they do need and refuse a blood transfusion there are likely other health factors that would prevent their fostering during that period of time.

7. Assessing Young Applicants

Does the Division's recommendation that foster parents should be at least 10 years older than the children placed in their homes apply to respite care?

Respite care is viewed no differently than other foster care. A home does not receive a different license for respite care.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 31-32

Can an agency make the decision not to license someone under a certain age?

Refusing to license someone strictly on the basis of age is not appropriate. You can choose to not place a foster child with a foster parent based on the age of the foster child and foster parent. For example it is appropriate that foster parents should be ten years older than the foster children placed in their home.

FHL Manual Section Miscellaneous pg 1-3

What is too old to license?

There is no maximum age limit for foster parents. However, they must be in good physical and mental health.

If you choose to not license someone who is over 21 but younger than the age you think is appropriate, can you be sued for age discrimination?

Refusing to license someone strictly on the basis of age is not appropriate. You can choose to not place a foster child with a foster parent based on the age of the foster child and foster parent. For example, it is appropriate that foster parents should be ten years older than the foster children placed in their home.

FHL Manual Section Miscellaneous pg 1-3

8. Transfers

What form should agencies use to communicate with Black Mountain (Licensing Authority) about transfers?

The DSS-5158 (<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5158-ia.pdf>).

Can you provide a checklist of items to address in mutual home assessments for transfers?

FHL Manual Section .0700 pg 13-17; the Miscellaneous Section pg. 3-7 for the Best Business Practice for transferring families

Is there anything that can be done when an agency is "slow" in getting paperwork to the receiving agency in a transfer?

FHL Manual Section .0700 pg. 13-17

If a new family wants to be transferred soon after they were licensed and have had not fostering experience with their current agency, should the family be assessed all over again by the agency they want to transfer to?

Yes, if the new agency does not assess the family they are taking the current worker's assessment and basing their decision on that. In fact an agency should assess any family who is transferring whether or not they have experience. Part of the assessment should include a thorough discussion of the reasons for the transfer. Do not assume that there is only one side to the person's "story."

FHL Manual Section .0700 pg 13-17; the Miscellaneous Section pg. 3-7 for the Best Business Practice for transferring families

Since we are required to check other agencies regarding parents that have been licensed several years ago, what are we to do when the agency tells us that they are not familiar with the family because of the turnover rate at the agency and they are not willing to look up an old file?

Assess the family as if they are a new applicant. Explain in your packet the lack of information from the previous agency.

What should we do during a transfer if we find that the previous agency has lost verification of MAPP training?

The foster parents should have certificates from their training. If they do not you may have to provide the training again.

If a family has been terminated from another agency, what materials does a new agency need?

This question is not clear. If the question relates to the information the new agency needs to get from the previous agency the answer depends on how and when the termination occurred. The word terminated suggested that the family voluntarily ended their license. If this is the case the new agency needs the same information that they would need for a transfer which includes what the previous agency's experience with the foster parents was. If the termination occurred over a year previously the new agency needs to do a new application form and submit the same information they would for a new application. Added to the new application packet should be a summary of the information gained from the previous agency.

FHL Manual Section .0700 pg 5-10

If a person was licensed with an agency and left to go therapeutic and they travel around to several private agencies, do you have to even entertain them returning to the original agency?

No. There is not a constitutional right to be a foster parent. It is a mutual selection process. Certainly you may decide not to license them through your agency a second time. You should be honest with them about the reasons.

I have foster parents whose license expired in October from another agency. Do I do a new license or a relicense?

If the license has lapsed for more than a year you need to submit a 5016 but if it is less than a year you can submit as a relicense. If the license that expired was with another agency you will need to provide similar information to a transfer. You need to assess the home and provide current information about

them including their experience as a foster parent with the previous agency. You will need to contact the former agency to ask about the relationship between the agency and the foster parents.

FHL Manual Section .0700 pg 5-10

9. Economic Assessments of Applicants

I would appreciate more information regarding income guidelines (i.e., disability, public assistance, food stamps). For example, can a person in Section 8 Housing become a foster parent? What about public housing?

Receiving food assistance or residing in public housing does not automatically rule someone out as a foster parent. You may need to discuss with the Licensing Authority.

FHL Manual Section .0800 pg 21-22

10. Training

Do birth children 21 years and older residing in the foster home need to go through trainings if they are not parenting? What about birth kids over age 18 residing in the home?

Birth children 18 years of age and older but under age 21 are not qualified to be foster parents. If your agency chooses to train them that is fine but that is not a rule requirement. NCAC 70E.1104(e) requires the agency to assess whether anyone 21 years of age and older in the home is serving as a foster parent. If they are they must be trained and licensed. If they are not the agency is responsible for explaining that.

FHL Section .1100 pg. 36-37

11. Applicants' Immigration Status

I have a prospective foster parent whose wife does not have her US citizenship. What are the options for his wife? I was told that non-US citizens could be licensed if they had the proper paperwork showing they are in the US legally? Is that true?

Foster parents do not have to be American citizens. They do have to be in the country legally. If they are not legal citizens they can not get fingerprint clearance. Fingerprint clearance is a requirement for licensure.

12. Miscellaneous

Is there any way to add spell check to the 5016?

No. It is a protected document and we are not permitted to unprotect it.

Process for Supervising Therapeutic Foster Care—How can a county DSS agency become eligible to license TFC - Level II homes?

Please contact the Licensing Authority for additional information.

The 180 days that is requested for all forms to be submitted—is it 180 business days or 180 calendar days?

It is 6 months—180 calendar days.

Must prospective foster parents have at least a GED to be licensed?

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 36

One of our foster parents is considering putting a lock on the refrigerator at night so the child can't eat throughout the night. Is this appropriate?

This would be appropriate only if it is in the child's out-of-home family services agreement and/or person-centered-plan. Foster children should be treated as any other member of the family. If they are

eating to the point of endangering their health this should be addressed with the child's team and included as part of the treatment for the child.

Are staffing ratios still 1:32 for foster home licensing workers? Does this include recruitment, training, monitoring, and all duties foster home licensing duties?

See NCAC 70G .0501(d). If a licensing worker has a regular ongoing caseload of 32 current foster homes that they are monitoring, training, etc. then the licensing worker has a full caseload and should not be responsible for recruiting and completing the pre-service training for new foster parents.

Does State (Licensing Authority) desire updates on foster families that the agency has concerns about and decides to discontinue placing children in their home? Concerns might not be related to safety issues warranting a revocation and the family might not be open to a mutual termination.

Yes, the Licensing Authority needs to have information when supervising agencies have concerns about a family and they are not placing children with them. This information will be very useful if the family wants to transfer and the agency workers changed.

When foster children have been adopted by foster parent do we need to notify the state with a change application? Yes Do the children need a physical? Yes.

FHL Manual Section .1100 pg 43; Section .0700 pg 10-12

How long can we expect a return of license if all material is correct?

The Licensing Authority's goal is to have the packet reviewed and keyed within 30 days. The actual license in the hands of agency workers may take longer. Return times depend upon volume of licensure transactions, resources, etc.
FHL Manual Section .0700 pg. 1

If an application is returned with questions, should we expect 50 days for processing to hear if the application has been approved?

The clock (30 days) starts over each time the application is returned to the supervising agency. The Licensing Authority's goal is to have the packet reviewed and keyed or returned within 30 days (this is within 30 days of each submission). The actual license in the hands of agency workers may take longer. Return times depend upon volume of licensure transactions, resources, etc.
FHL Manual Section .0700 pg. 1

Do significant others not residing in the home have to be licensed, or can they just be added as a household member?

They can and should be added as household members if they are not living in the home but are visiting frequently. The primary issue is background checks. These must be done on any frequent visitors who are in contact with the foster children and could present a risk.
FHL Manual section .0700 pg. 12; Section .0800 pg. 4; Section .1100 pgs 36-37 and pg 58

We get marriage license on adoptive parents. Do we need to get them on our foster parents?

This is not a rule requirement. Foster parents do not have to be married even if they are a couple living together. However, it would not be a bad idea to get a marriage license for married applicants. One example of when you should confirm whether someone is married or not is when couples are separated. You would to make sure that there is not a conflictual relationship that might present a danger or a non-nurturing or harmful environment for foster children.

What is the status of looking at any formal home study process (example: SAFE)?

Supervising agencies must complete Section X of form 5016. Other home studies cannot be substituted.

Questions to ask regarding life-changing events

Suggestions from webinar participants

- How are you coping?
- How have you dealt with the loss of a family member?
- Ask to see marriage license.
- What kind of event was it, and what kind of support have you received?
- Has this event caused any stress in your life?
- What significant experiences have helped shaped you to be who you are today?
- Are you considering becoming pregnant?
- How has this change affected you emotionally, socially, and mentally?
- Have you experienced a death of someone close to you? How did you handle that?
- How will you prepare your foster child for changes in your life? (e.g., getting married, divorced, having another child in the home)
- How has your divorce affected your life?
- Identify risk factors
- What led up to the event? How did you handle the stress? How does it affect you today?
- How has the child in care participated in this event?
- How do you deal with change?
- How has this change effect your ability to foster
- Report any changes in employment, changes in health.
- Are you receiving professional help with dealing with this event?
- How have you typically dealt with stressful situations in the past?
- Are you still happy with your job?
- How have you had to adjust your schedule since the birth of your new baby?
- Are you physically, emotionally and mentally able to care for a foster child during this time?
- Look for nonverbal clues when applicants are explaining their event!
- Do you need extra support while going through this crisis? (e.g., sister has cancer and foster parent is her support)
- What support do you need from us?
- Do you have difficulties in your marriage? How do you handle them?
- How are you coping with the children leaving your home and being reunited with their parents?
- How did you overcome your loss? Who did you go to for support? Are you still dealing with your grief?
- Have you ever received marriage counseling?
- Handling an elderly parent having to move in with household
- Do you want to continue to foster? If so how can we help you?
- What is the most significant thing that has happened to you and how did it affect your life?
- Confirmation of infertility, too, can be a life-changing event

Questions to ask regarding mental and physical health

Suggestions from webinar participants

- How do your physical/mental health conditions manifest themselves?
- How are you managing these conditions?
- How do they affect activities of daily living?
- Have you ever received treatment for your depression?
- What medications are you taking or prescribed to you?
- Are you currently under the care of a doctor? If so, please explain.
- What type of treatment are you receiving?
- Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental illness?
- Do you have anyone in your family who has suffered with a mental illness?
- When was your last physical stay?
- Diagnosis; when diagnosed; by whom; crisis going on in life at time of diagnosis
- Have you ever contemplated suicide?
- Are your support systems in place and who are they
- Have you ever been hospitalized, if so, what for?
- How do you view your mental capability?
- What symptoms do you have?
- Prior military with connected disabilities?
- Have you ever been seen for a mental health condition?
- Have there been any health changes?
- How has your illness affected your relationship with your family?
- Are you currently on disability; for what reason?
- What are your stressors? How do children affect your stressors?
- What type of self-care do you practice?
- What do you do to stay healthy? Physically and mentally?
- Have you ever received any VR services
- Do you exercise...if so how often?
- Do you hear voices?
- ask for permission to contact their pharmacy for medication list verification

Questions for single applicants

Suggestions from webinar participants

- Who do you use as a support system?
- Will your extended or immediate family be assisting you w/foster child(ren)?
- Are you dating?
- Who would be your back up persons?
- Any serious relationships presently?
- Why do you want to foster?
- How do you handle stress?
- What do you do to take care of you?
- How do you manage your time and schedule?
- How do you handle anger or frustration?
- What do you do when you become frustrated with your own children?
- How do you handle a crisis?
- Do you have a significant other?
- What would your significant other's interaction be with a foster child?
- Do you allow your significant other to discipline the children?
- Who is coming in and out of the house?
- Who spends the night in your home?
- What daycare/child care options do you have?
- Assess parenting skills
- Have you had previous marriages/relationships?
- What is your work schedule?
- What is your daily schedule?
- Tell me about your lifestyle. Do you stay out late?
- Have you ever been married? Current relationships?
- Who are the people who will be frequenting your home?
- Do you have a desire to marry?
- Who visits in your home in any given day/month?
- Do you have adult children?
- What is your income?
- What are your finances like?
- What do you do for fun?
- Ask about dating cycles—are they stable in relationships?
- Ask about other children
- Do you have overnight guest?
- How would you manage the needs for supervision of therapeutic foster children?
- Number of exes and current relationship with them
- Does your date spend the night? How often is this person around your children?
- Who visits homes of respite providers? Do you know them?
- emergency contact options for child care, hobbies,
- Tell me about your past relationships, marriage.
- Is your divorce final?
- What lead to your divorce?
- Are there any outstanding issues with your ex-husband?
- What are some of their stress factors?
- How/where do you meet prospective spouses?
- Hobbies/interests
- How does being a single parent impact your fostering abilities?
- How do you decide to have someone come to your home?
- Do you pay child support?
- Is fostering going to interfere with your daily activities?
- How does your child feel about you becoming a foster parent?
- Ask about their experience with children that they have kept or babysat.
- How does your partner feel about children?
- Run RIL's on all family members that live in the area
- What type visitors do you have? Overnight visitors?
- Any current or past DV relationship?
- Have you fostered in another state?
- Check the bedroom closets to verify if there are other persons living in the home
- Will respite be provided in your home or elsewhere?
- What is your plan for introducing the people you are dating to your foster child?
- Are they active and willing to invest in a child's activities?
- Give them a series of scenarios to asses level of maturity

Questions to ask regarding criminal histories

Suggestions from webinar participants

- Have you ever had a felony on your record?
- Do you have any DUI's or DWI's
- Have you ever been involved with the law?
- Do you have any history of criminal charges?
- Tell me about your criminal record.
- Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so what are the details about it?
- Have you ever lived out of state?
- How long have you been in NC?
- Do you have a criminal record or any charges that we need to know about?
- Tell me the circumstances surrounding the charge in question. What led up to this particular charge?
- Have you ever had any charges, including minor traffic offenses?
- Ask for explanations even for traffic violations
- Have you been charged with any misdemeanors or felonies?
- Have there been any criminal activities since your last licensure or last contact with DSS?
- Do you have any pending charges?
- Do you have any pending abuse/neglect cases?
- Have you ever had a CPS report?
- Ask about criminal records outside NC.
- How long ago were charges?
- Are there any patterns of charges even if no convictions?
- Why are there a number of related charges over a period of time that all ended up dismissed? Usually a pattern of similar charges with various dismissals or non-convictions still indicate there is an underlying problem somewhere.
- For traffic stops, was child in car?
- Tell me what will appear on your criminal record, even if you believe it may be expunged.
- How many times have you moved in the past five years?
- What is your driving record like...tickets etc.?
- If charges were dismissed, why did the DA make that decision?
- How old were you when the incident happened?
- What has changed in your life since the charge?
- What have you learned from your criminal convictions?
- What have you learned from your experience and how will that affect your life fostering?
- If there were charges, have there been instances where you weren't caught?
- For relicense--has anyone in your household had any involvement with law enforcement since our last quarterly visit?
- Civil history is equally important.
- Have you ever been a victim of a crime?
- Ask about family with criminal records with contact with children
- If applicant has had drug charges— have you had treatment?
- Ever been involved in a domestic dispute but wasn't charged?
- Do you have any DV restraining orders?

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services

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To: County Directors of Social Services
Executive Directors of Child-Placing Agencies for Foster Care

Date: August 3, 2012

Subject: Electronic Foster Home Licensing

ChronoSolutions has developed an electronic foster home licensing system for several private child-placing agencies for foster care that are members of Benchmarks (formerly Child and Family Services Association-NC). This system is also available for county departments of social services and other private child-placing agencies for foster care. This system is optional and the Division of Social Services is not endorsing one provider of services over another.

The Foster Home Licensing Team and several agencies have been using the electronic system for about five months. They have determined that this system is much more efficient than the current paper system. This system is easy to use and very worker friendly. Foster home licensing transactions are processed more efficiently. Agencies have an opportunity to correct errors more timely. Agencies receive notification regarding the issuance of licenses as well as other licensing transactions more quickly. The system has an administrative component that allows supervisors and managers to follow the progress of foster home transactions.

There is a minimal cost to use the electronic system. Agencies that typically have 10 or fewer licensed foster homes will be charged a one time fee of \$125 and an annual fee of \$250. Agencies that typically have more than ten licensed foster homes will be charged a one time implementation fee of \$250 and an annual fee of \$423. Many agencies spend more than this on postage.

More information about the electronic licensing system as well as the process for signing up for electronic foster home licensing can be found at: <http://www.docvault.org/agency-sign>. ChronoSolutions also provides web-based training for the system.

If you have questions about electronic licensing contact Ben Fink at ben.fink@chronosolutions.net.