

DCFS Policies/Standards that are not Minimum Licensing Standards

DCFS Foster homes/parents have to meet Minimum Licensing Standards and all DCFS Policies/Standards, including but not limited to:

- The requirement of 30 hours of pre-service training. (Licensing only requires 10 hours)
- There must be no more than three children under the age of six in a foster home.
- A Policy Waiver must be obtained if one or both applicants are age 65 or over or when one or both spouses of currently opened foster home reaches age 65.
- DCFS will check the driving record (violation points) for each potential foster parent.
- Applicants and all household members age 18 and older must clear an Adult Maltreatment Central Registry check.
- Annual physical examination documentation by use of the CFS-404 is necessary for foster families.
- Verification that applicant has been divorced for at least one year.
- Verification that applicant has been widowed for at least one year.
- Couples who are separated may not apply.
- Employment: Both parents may be employed outside the home only with certain provisions. We strongly encourage either the husband or the wife to remain at home with a child in foster care for as long as necessary after placement to provide security and initial adjustment for the child in care. Careful consideration will be made before infants and preschool children are placed in a home where both foster parents have outside employment. When placing school age children in a home where both parents are employed, the Division shall do so on the basis of careful evaluation of what is best for the individual child. Suitable plans for the care and supervision of children in foster care before and after school, during school holidays and vacations, and when children are ill and absent from school must be made and approved by the Division. Arrangements for a suitable caretaker must be made ahead of time to prevent last minute arrangements that could result in an inappropriate caretaker. Single parent households where the sole parent is employed outside the home shall be considered the same as a two-parent household where both parents are employed outside the home. Only school age children shall be placed there.
- Corporal punishment is not allowed in a Divisional Foster Home.
- Ownership of Home: If the foster family does not own the home in which they live, the person who owns the home shall verify that he/she has no objections to the applicant caring for children in foster care in the home.
- A child in care must not in any room through which one must pass in order to get to another room.
- Guns must stored separate from ammunition.
- All garbage and other wastes shall be kept in a suitable covered receptacle.
- The home shall contain at least one approved fire extinguisher, readily accessible and in working condition. (Licensing only requires there be an operational chemical fire extinguisher in the cooking area of the home.)
- Emergency phone numbers shall be posted near each telephone, to include at least fire and ambulance (and 911 in areas in which the service is available) and the responsible adult to contact in an emergency.

- Small children shall have access to a play area. Yards shall be large enough to provide simple play space for children.
- Mobile homes used as foster homes shall be properly installed, tied down and stabilized. If the mobile home is located in a trailer park, there must be sufficient fenced play space for children outside.
- Foster parent(s) living in apartment buildings shall give evidence that the building has been approved for building and fire safety within the last two years.
- There shall be a drawn escape plan which shall be posted within the home and outlines the exits in the home.
- Children in foster care will be visited regularly and such visits will take place no less than weekly for the first month of placement into foster care or a new foster home. Visitation after the first month in care will occur monthly in the foster home, with the worker maintaining weekly contact with the child through the following settings: school, parental visits, during transportation to medical appointments, court hearings or via telephone.
- The foster parents shall be notified of all staffings and judicial reviews for children in foster care placed in their home. (Licensing requires that Foster parents shall be included in case planning for each child, and shall be provided a copy of the current case plan and visitation plan.)
- Foster parents shall make every effort to give the Division advance notice if it becomes necessary to request removal of a child placed in their home. When a foster parent requests a child in foster care be removed from their home, excluding an emergency that places the child or a family member at risk of imminent harm, the foster parent must attend a staffing to discuss what services or assistance may be needed to stabilize the placement. The staffing will be held within 48 hours of notification by the foster parent to have the child removed from their home. The child in foster care, the child's attorney ad litem and a CASA, if appointed to the case, shall be notified so that they can attend and participate in the staffing and planning for the child's placement. If the placement cannot be stabilized, the foster parent will continue to provide for the child in care until an appropriate alternative placement is located, but this shall not be longer than five business days after the staffing. These efforts will serve to reduce the number of placements of children in foster care.
- Foster parents shall respect the religious preferences of the child in foster care.
- DCFS shall not place or permit a child in foster care to remain in any foster home if the foster parent smokes or allows anyone else to smoke in the presence of any child in foster care unless it is in the child's best interest to be placed in or remain in the foster home.