

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Non Discrimination Policy

The North Carolina Division of Social Services, county departments of social services, and private licensed child-placing agencies are prohibited from discriminating against any applicant desiring to serve as a foster family, family foster care, therapeutic foster care (relative and non-relative) for reasons of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or political beliefs. All applicants must be afforded their rights specified in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b), and the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901 et seq.

Following recruitment, each potential foster family must receive pre-service training and be evaluated based on North Carolina Administrative Rules ([10A NCAC 70E](#)) and this Foster Home Licensing policy. Foster parent applications are accepted or denied based on their compliance with North Carolina Administrative Rules (10A NCAC 70E) and this Foster Home Licensing policy.

Foster parents shall be persons whose behaviors, circumstances, and health are conducive to the safety and well-being of children. Foster parents shall be selected on the basis of demonstrating strengths in the twelve skill areas listed below. These skills permit them to undertake and perform the responsibilities of meeting the needs of children, providing continuity of care, and working with the supervising agency. Foster parents shall demonstrate skills in:

1. Assessing individual and family strengths and needs and building on strengths and meeting needs;
2. Using and developing effective communication;
3. Identifying the strengths and needs of children placed in the home;
4. Building on children's strengths and meeting the needs of children placed in the home;
5. Developing partnerships with children placed in the home, parents or the guardians of the children placed in the home, the supervising agency, and the community to develop and carry out plans for permanency;
6. Helping children placed in the home develop skills to manage loss and skills to form attachments;
7. Helping children placed in the home manage their behaviors;

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8. Helping children placed in the home maintain and develop relationships that will keep them connected to their pasts;
9. Helping children placed in the home build on positive self-concept and positive family, cultural, and racial identity;
10. Providing a safe and healthy environment for children placed in the home, which keeps them free from harm;
11. Assessing the ways in which providing family foster care or therapeutic foster care affects the family; and
12. Making an informed decision regarding providing family foster care or therapeutic foster care.

To assure the availability of foster homes sufficient in number and diversity, on-going recruitment efforts are needed. Creative, non-biased recruitment strategies are needed to attract and retain qualified foster care applicants. County departments of social services and private licensed child-placing agencies must afford every individual and family the opportunity to become a foster parent without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or political beliefs. County departments of social services and licensed private child-placing agencies must make these decisions based on their assessment of the individual's or family's ability to meet the needs of children who are in need of foster care placements and the individual or family's ability to meet foster home licensing requirements. Recruitment and retention strategies are outlined in *A Best Practice Guide To Partnering With Resource Families – Treat Them Like Gold* (http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/publications/docs/Partnering_with_Resource_Families.pdf).

It is the policy of the NC Department of Health and Human Services to provide services, care, benefits and assistance to all qualified persons without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or political beliefs. Information can be obtained about regulations against discrimination and how to file a complaint by writing to:

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services
Attention: Civil Rights Coordinator
325 N. Salisbury Street
2401 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2401

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or political beliefs may file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint contact:

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 licensed foster homes by the Division of Social Services.

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

- (1) The name, age, and address of each foster parent.
- (2) The foster parent's supervising agency.
- (3) The number of hours of mandated training completed by the foster parent.
- (4) The date of the initial licensure.
- (5) The current licensing period.
- (6) Any adverse licensing actions.

(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. We should always encourage families to make the effort to communicate with their current agency about what their problems or concerns are and to see if there is a way to fix those problems. It's the old Golden Rule! "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!" Don't you want your families to approach you first in an effort to improve or fix things before just giving up and transferring?

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

2. If they have tried to make things right with their current agency and still wish to transfer, have the family talk with their current supervising agency and let them know that they are meeting with you in an effort to see if your agency is a better match.
3. You should spend several meetings with the family in an effort to get to know them and for them to get to know you/your agency.
 - Suggested Topics of discussion during these meetings:
 - ♦ How long have you been fostering? How many children have you fostered or provided respite?
 - ♦ Have you transferred your foster care license before? If so, why, when, etc.?
 - ♦ What have you learned from your experience?
 - ♦ What are your family's strengths/needs in fostering?
 - ♦ What are you looking for in future placements?
 - ♦ What are you looking for in your next supervising agency?
 - ♦ Share your experiences with Shared Parenting? What did you learn? What would you have done differently?
 - ♦ Have you had any investigations in your home during your time fostering? If so, what was that process like for you? How did you overcome those obstacles? Did you get support from your agency?
 - ♦ What was your most challenging/most rewarding placement?
 - ♦ What areas of training do you feel you need in order to meet the needs of the children placed in your home?
4. After you have spent some time with this family, and you and the family feel your agency is a good match, then have them sign a release form and send this to the current agency.
5. Once the release form has been received, and you have reviewed the material from the agency schedule a time to speak with the current supervisor of the foster family and discuss the following:
 - What was your experience in working with this family?
 - What are their strengths/needs?

- Did they work in partnership with CFT members?
 - How did they approach Shared Parenting?
 - Would you place children in their home again? If not, why?
 - How did they treat children?
 - Did they attend and engage in In-Service trainings?
 - What does this family need in order to be a successful foster family?
 - What type of placement would be most successful for this family?
 - Is there anything else I need to know about this family?
6. Ask the foster family to provide you with new reference reports.
7. Once you have received all of the necessary information and your agency and the family are in agreement to the transfer complete the following:
- a. Type up an updated Mutual Home Assessment with a description of your familiarity of the family, their skills and abilities and any other important information
 - b. Have the foster parents sign the Transfer Application
 - c. If applicable complete a relicensure packet
 - d. Complete a cover letter about the transfer. The letter should state whether there are children in the home (if so- then indicate the custodians of the children have been notified of the transfer)
 - e. Complete a new [DSS-5015](#)
 - f. If the family has moved, be sure to include an address change packet.

Sample Foster Parent Release of Information Consent:

FOSTER PARENT RELEASE OF INFORMATION CONSENT

I/We give our consent and authorization to:

(Current Supervising Agency)

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

Foster Home Licensing

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To provide and share information with:

 (Receiving Supervising Agency)

Regarding myself/our family, my/our foster home license, and my/our interaction children placed in our home, and my/our foster parent training. I/We understand that staff from the receiving supervising agency will be in contact with staff from the current supervising agency regarding our strengths and needs as foster parents and will request that the following information be sent to the receiving supervising agency:

- Copy of current Foster Home License
- Copy of original Mutual Home Assessment and any updates
- Copy of DSS-5015 (Foster Care Facility Action Request)
- Most recent copy of DSS-1515 (Foster Home Fire Inspection Report)
- Most recent copy of DSS-5150 (Foster Home Environmental Conditions Report)
- Most recent copies of DSS-5156 (Medical Evaluations and TB Report) for all household members
- Most recent copies of DSS-5017 (Medical History Form) for all household members
- Most recent copies of DSS-5268 (Responsible Individual List – RIL – Information Request) for all adult household members
- Copies of fingerprint clearance letters and background check results on all adult household members
- Copies of training certificates and training logs

Signature of Foster Parent	Date
Signature of Foster Parent	Date
Signature of Current Supervising Agency Worker	Date
Signature of Receiving Supervising Agency Worker	Date

Send documentation to: _____

D. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Treat Them Like Gold: A Best Practice Guide to Partnering with Resource Families
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/publications/>

E. REGULATORY AND LICENSING WEBSITE:

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/licensing/index.htm>

F. FOSTER HOME LICENSING: THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

<https://www.ncswLearn.org>

G. NCDSS CHILD WELFARE SERVICES TRAINING CALENDAR

<https://www.ncswLearn.org>

H. ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ENTER US ON A VISA

When a licensed foster home is planning to have an adult join the household that is in the United States on an approved VISA the supervising agency needs to take the steps outlined below to ensure that appropriate background checks have been completed. The foster family should be able to assist the agency in finding the needed information since it is their family or friend that has completed the process.

1. The supervising agency should consult with the appropriate Consulate or Embassy to inquire about the background check process for the specific VISA that the adult household member has been approved for. The foster family should know this information.

2. The supervising agency should contact the US Citizenship and Immigration Services office to also find out what kind of background checks were completed for the VISA and if the status is current. US Citizenship and Immigration Services offices are in Charlotte and Durham

(https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgwi/go?action=offices.detail&office=CLT&OfficeLocator.office_type=LO&OfficeLocator.statecode=NC).

3. If the supervising agency cannot determine the types of background checks that were completed for the individual entering the US any foster children placed in the home may need to be moved to ensure safety.

I. CITIZENSHIP STATUS OF FOSTER PARENTS

Foster parent applicants must be citizens of the United States through birth or naturalization or be able to verify lawful immigration status. Green cards provide verification of lawful immigration status. A copy of the green card shall be placed in the record of the foster parents that is maintained by the supervising agency. Information about green cards can be found at the following website:

(<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=80f63a4107083210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=80f63a4107083210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD>).

Foster parent applicants and household members 18 years of age and older must meet the fingerprint requirements as outlined in the Foster Home Licensing Manual, VII, Section .1100, Item P (10A NCAC 70E .1116 Criminal History Checks).