

CHANGE NOTICE: 03-2013
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V. SECTION .0900 | FORMS

Forms are very important in the licensing processing as they convey the necessary information to the Licensing Authority to make accurate decisions on approving foster home licenses. Supervising agency licensing social workers have the benefit of actually knowing the applicants. They see the applicants interact with children. The licensing social worker hears the words the applicants use in class. They can ask applicants questions and get a reply in a short period of time. It is the job of the licensing social worker to use the system of forms to convey this experience to the Licensing Authority so it may make an accurate decision.

- Foster Home License Application Form ([DSS-5016](#)),
- Foster Home Relicense Application ([DSS-5157](#)),
- Foster Home Transfer Request Application ([DSS-5158](#)),
- Foster Home Change Request Application ([DSS-5159](#)),
- Foster Home Termination Application ([DSS-5160](#)),
- Agency Foster/Parents' Agreement form ([DSS-1796](#)),
- Inter-County Agreement on Placement of Children form ([DSS-1797](#))

Other forms necessary for the licensing process are listed and detailed in The Guide to Completing Foster Home Licensing Forms.

A. [10A NCAC 70E .0901](#) LICENSE APPLICATION

Application for a license shall be made on a form provided by the licensing authority. The supervising agency director or his/her designee shall sign the form and thereby indicate both that the home meets the licensing standards, and that the supervising agency intends to use the home in accordance with the license and provide services to the foster parents. The foster parents shall sign the application indicating their agreement with the information provided, declaring it is true and accurate and understand that according to G.S. 132-1, the information may be furnished to others upon request. The form shall be submitted to the licensing authority at least biennially.

This rule involves two required forms:

- Foster Home License Application ([DSS-5016](#))
- The Foster Home Relicense Application ([DSS-5157](#))
- The DSS-5016 is the initial form for licensure
- The DSS-5157 is the form to continue the licensure after two years.

The DSS-5016 and the DSS-5157 become legal contracts between the state, which issues the license, the supervising agency that oversees the foster home and the foster parents who care for children. The DSS Foster Home License Application (DSS-5016) and the DSS Foster Home Relicense Application initiate the licensing and relicensing processes for the applicant. It is crucial that these forms are completed correctly.

B. [10A NCAC 70E .0902](#) THE AGENCY FOSTER PARENT'S AGREEMENT

Having a good relationship between foster parents and their supervising agency is extremely important. One of the key indicators of a productive placement for a child in foster care is a home that works well with its supervising agency. The supervising agency shall have a written agreement with each foster parent that covers the items in this rule. The Agency/Foster Parents' Agreement ([DSS-1796](#)) covers this requirement. The DSS-1796 is an interactive form. It provides a listing of each of the required elements in this rule as well as a space to include other items that may be unique with specific foster parents.

The form opens in adobe and has spaces to enter the names of the foster parents, the agency, and amount of payments, other provisions and dates of signatures. Print the form and have it signed by all parties. A signed copy of this form remains in the supervising agency file for reference. Give a copy to the foster parents for their records. It is very important that the foster parents understand each item in the agreement.

The subsections of this rule read:

(a) Foster parents shall sign an agreement under which the foster parents shall:

- (1) allow the representative of the supervising agency to visit the home in conjunction with licensing procedures, foster care planning, and placement;

Help applicants understand that they give up a degree of family privacy and autonomy when they become licensed foster parents. They become part of a larger child welfare system and serve as team members and service providers for the children placed in their home. Licensing social workers, foster care social workers, qualified professionals, clinicians as well as other professionals will be visiting in their home and observing interactions between foster parents and foster children.

- (2) accept children into the home only through the supervising agency and not through other individuals, agencies, or institutions;

A foster home is licensed as an agent of a specific child-placing agency. They are not independent contractors who may do business with other agencies. Nor are they freelance child-care providers who may take in children off the street. Any child that comes into their home as a foster child must be placed with the permission of the supervising agency. In fact, if they allow a child who is a relative to come and stay for a long period of time, the licensing social worker should be informed; there should be no surprises about who resides in the home.

- (3) treat a child placed in the home as a member of the family, and when so advised by the supervising agency, make every effort to support, encourage, and enhance the child's relationship with the child's parents or guardian;

Help foster parents understand that the child is placed with them on a temporary basis. Foster care is not intended to be a forever home for a child in care. Children in foster care already have a family; it is hoped they may return to that family. The role of the

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foster home is to provide a safe, supportive family experience for the child. To do this, they open up a place in their home, in their family and in their hearts.

- (4) Maintain continuous contact and exchange of information between the supervising agency and the foster parents about matters affecting the adjustment of any child placed in the home. The foster parents shall agree to keep these matters confidential and discuss them only with the supervising agency staff members, or with other professional people designated by the agency;

Foster parents are members of the professional child welfare team. As such, they keep their team members informed and expect their team members to keep them up to date. There should be no secrets among team members. Foster parents are privy to a lot of sensitive information. They are expected to keep this confidential. The social worker, which operates in an environment where confidentiality is reinforced, can help the foster parents develop ways of discussing their role as caretakers in a way that preserves each child's privacy. Violation of confidential information can result in the revocation of a foster home license.

- (5) obtain the permission of the supervising agency if the child is to be out of the home for a period exceeding two nights;

Children are expected to make friends and to want to visit these friends in their homes. Foster children are no different. A sleep over of one or two nights should be an ordinary event. However, foster parents need to understand that they are responsible to assure that anyone that foster children spend time with is safe and responsible themselves. They should take the same precautions for foster children as they would for their own children. Some agencies require foster parents to advise their workers anytime a foster child spends a night with someone else. This is particularly true of therapeutic foster care. Longer periods of time need prior permission. This includes when the foster parents take the child with them on a trip. 'Out of the home' means out of the physical house and not under the oversight of the foster parents. If the child is going with the family on vacation, the child's social worker needs to know and approve the trip.

- (6) report to the supervising agency any changes in the composition of the household, change of address, or change in the employment status of any adult member of the household;

As team members, foster parents are expected to keep the supervising agency up to date on any changes in the family. If someone moves into the foster home, records checks must be done and training may need to be conducted. Foster parents need to advise the supervising agency of changes in employment and income. If any member of the family is charged with a crime or convicted of a crime during the licensing period they will report this to the supervising agency. The supervising agency must report these changes to the Licensing Authority by submitting the Foster Home Change Request Application ([DSS-5159](#)).

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- (7) make no independent plans for a child to visit the home of the child's parents, guardian, or relatives without prior consent from the supervising agency;

Foster parents are members of a professional team; they are not free agents or freelance childcare providers. Occasionally, foster parents feel they know what is best for the child. When they begin thinking this way, encourage them to call their licensing social worker. Occasionally, foster parents may not understand what the child's social worker is doing for the child. When they feel like they are not included in the planning, have them call the licensing social worker. Stress upon the foster parents they are not to arrange for visiting members of the birth family without prior consent. Such visits have ramifications for treatment and services for the child as well as legal ramifications.

- (8) adhere to the supervising agency's plan of medical care, both for routine care and treatment, and emergency care and hospitalization; and

Many children come into care with a history of unmet medical needs. Foster parents need to understand they may be spending time making sure the child receives the medical care needed. In meeting this need, the foster parents are the agents of the supervising agency; they are expected to follow the medical plan of care developed by medical providers and the supervising agency.

- (9) provide any child placed in the home with supervision at all times while the child is in the home, not leave the child unsupervised, and adhere to the supervision requirements specified in the out-of-home family services agreement or person-centered plan.

Children need to be supervised. Sometimes the supervision may be extensive and beyond what is expected normally for a child of a particular age. The out-of-home family services agreement or person-centered plan sets the level of supervision for the child in care.

- (b) The supervising agency shall sign an agreement under which the supervising agency shall:
 - (1) assume responsibility for the overall planning for the child and assist the foster parents in meeting their day-to-day responsibility towards the child;

Every child in foster care will have an Out-of-Home Family Services Agreement or person-centered plan. These documents are developed by a team serving the child and family. Foster parents are also members of this team. All team members will have specific activities assigned to them that are outlined in the Out-of-Home Family Services Agreement or person-centered plan. The supervising agency is responsible for making sure all parties are following the goals, objectives and activities delineated in the agreement or plan. They are also responsible for helping foster parents understand their day-to-day responsibilities in caring for a foster child. This may include training, counseling, guidance, trouble shooting, etc.

- (2) inform the foster parents concerning the agency's procedures and financial responsibility for obtaining medical care and hospitalization;

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It is the responsibility of the supervising agency to make sure foster parents understand what is expected of them when medical care is needed for a foster child. This includes routine medical care, emergency medical care and hospitalization. Most foster children have Medicaid to pay for their medical needs. Foster parents need to have access to Medicaid information as well as any other financial resources for medical care.

- (3) pay the foster parents a monthly room and board payment, and if applicable, a respite care payment for children placed in the home;

The supervising agency is responsible for reimbursing foster parents for room and board. Therapeutic foster parents receive reimbursement for the provision of therapeutic foster care services. Foster parents should receive their payments on a monthly basis at a set time. Some supervising agencies provide a respite care payment for foster children. This possibility needs to be discussed with foster parents.

- (4) discuss with the foster parents any plans to remove a child from the foster home;

Foster care is temporary. Foster parents need to understand that the child will leave their care. As team members, foster parents need to know the long-range plans for the child. Inform foster parents about the role of the court as far as having the final decision regarding permanent plans for foster children. Foster parents need to be apprised of court dates and encouraged to attend court hearings. Many children in therapeutic foster care are not in the custody of a county department of social services. Foster parents need to understand that once the treatment needs of the child are met discharge from foster care will occur.

- (5) give the foster parents notice before removing a child from the foster home;

Keep foster parents informed of plans and actions. Foster parents deserve to know when a child will leave their care. Such notice encourages the foster parents to prepare the child and to prepare themselves for a significant event in their lives. Encourage the foster parents to think through and to feel through how they wish to say good-bye to the child. Help foster parents prepare for this event.

- (6) visit the foster home and child according to the out-of-home family services agreement or person-centered plan and be available to give needed services and consultation concerning the child's welfare;

Make sure foster parents have copies of out-of-home family service agreements and person-centered plans. Visit the foster home on a regular basis as determined by the agreement or plan or needs of the foster child and foster parents. Provide consultation and services to foster parents that will enhance the goals and objectives outlined in the agreement or plan as well as the overall ability of the foster parents to provide foster care services. It is the agency's responsibility to make sure foster parents have help and advice when needed.

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- (7) respect the foster parents' preferences in terms of sex, age range, and number of children placed in the home;

Foster parents know better than anyone the characteristics and number of foster children they can care for. Their preferences should be respected. Foster parents forced or manipulated into accepting children they are not confident caring for can result in disruptions, inappropriate discipline, abuse and neglect, etc.

- (8) provide or arrange for training for the foster parents;

Fostering is complicated work. It is more than long-term childcare. Children come into care with problems. Foster parents need to be prepared for these demands. Training is an ongoing requirement. Child-specific training is essential. Foster parents are required to have 10 hours of in-service training annually and it is the responsibility of the supervising agency to provide or arrange the training. Training should be results oriented. After a foster parent has completed a training program, look for changes in behavior, knowledge or attitude. If you do not see changes, check to see if the training has met the foster parent's needs.

- (9) include foster parents as part of the decision-making team for a child; and

It is imperative to include foster parents as members of any decision-making team for children they care for. They are part of the agency and should be respected as colleagues. Keep foster parents apprised of court dates, team meetings, etc. Team meetings should be held at times that are convenient for foster parents. Childcare arrangements should be provided.

- (10) allow foster parents to review and receive copies of their licensing record.

Encourage foster parents to maintain their own licensing file. Encourage them to examine and review all licensing documents and forms kept by the agency. The foster parent record includes: Agency/Foster Parent Agreement, Discipline Agreement; Local Court Record Check, Health Care Personnel Registry Check, NC Department of Corrections Check, Sex Offender and Public Protection Registry Check, Quarterly Assessments, Training Logs, and the most recent licensing or relicensing packet sent to the Licensing Authority.

- (c) The agreement shall also contain any other provisions mutually agreed by the parties.

This is the opportunity to tailor the agreement to the unique needs of a foster home. List any specific expectations the agency has of the foster parents as well as any specific expectations the foster parents have of the agency.

- (d) The foster parents and a representative of the supervising agency shall sign and date the agreement initially and at each relicensure. The foster parents and the supervising agency shall retain copies of the agreements.

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Make sure all parties sign the agreement and that each party has a copy of the signed agreement.

C. [10A NCAC 70E .0903](#) DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES INTERCOUNTY AGREEMENT

This rule applies to county departments of social services. It does not apply to private child-placing agencies. For more detail on this rule, please refer to the [Chapter V - Jurisdiction in Child Welfare](#). Providing Services when multiple counties are involved. County department of social services social workers placing children in another county are required to complete the Inter-County Agreement on the Placement of Children form ([DSS-1797](#)).

The DSS-1797 is an interactive form that can be completed on screen then printed. The form covers the requirements listed below.

The subsections of this rule read:

- (a) *Before children are placed in a foster home in a county (the supervising county) other than the county of their home (the responsible county), the two county departments of social services shall agree in writing that the supervising county shall:*
- (1) *Accept responsibility for supervising the child;*
 - (2) *Not initiate placement planning for the child without prior agreement from the responsible county, except when an emergency placement in another foster home or licensed facility is necessary;*
 - (3) *Immediately inform the responsible county when an emergency placement in another foster home or licensed facility precludes prior approval;*
 - (4) *Engage in no treatment or planning relationship with the child's parents, guardian, or relatives, except upon request of the responsible county;*
 - (5) *Keep the case confidential; and*
 - (6) *Submit to the responsible county, at intervals specified in the agreement, a written evaluation of the child's adjustment.*
- (b) *In the agreement, the responsible county shall agree to:*
- (1) *Make payments for room and board and difficulty of care or respite care, if applicable, to the supervising county in the amounts and at the times specified in the agreement;*
 - (2) *Take responsibility for placement of the child;*
 - (3) *Make restitution, in accordance with a plan specified in the agreement, for damage that the child causes to the foster parents' property;*
 - (4) *Inform the supervising county concerning future planning for the child; and*
 - (5) *Write the room and board check in a manner specified in the agreement, in order to protect confidentiality.*
- (c) *The agreement shall specify the manner in which payment for clothes, medical costs, and allowances shall be made.*

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(d) The agreement shall specify the dates between which the agreement shall be effective. The agreement shall be signed by the directors of the two county departments of social services. The responsible county and the supervising county shall each have a signed copy of the agreement. The responsible county shall provide the children's services program representative with a copy of the signed agreement, if requested.