



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Division of Licensed Resources/Child Protective Services
1115 Washington St. SE OB2 • PO Box 45700 • Olympia, WA 98504-5700

January 5, 2015

To: Licensed Foster Parents
From: Darcey Hancock, DLR Administrator
RE: Licensing Requirement Updates

I hope this new year finds you and your family well. As many of you are aware, we have been in process of updating our current administrative rules for licensing requirements. These requirements have changed for all licensed facilities. However, we bring this information to you about the foster care WACS only, for foster families licensed directly by the department, or certified by private child-placing agencies. These rules have been finalized and go into effect January 11, 2015. It will take approximately two weeks for the legislative web site to be updated, but when they are posted, they can be found here:

<http://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388>

We also have a plan to add a link to the foster parent web page.

Our goals in rewriting the administrative rules included making the rules easier for you to read and interpret, removing group care and agency regulations from the foster care requirements, and updating the rules as to new statute, policy and important workgroup recommendations. We also held usability focus groups with foster parents, and of the foster parents tested, we found they were able to find information in half the time it took to find them in the old rules, and they were more accurate in their interpretation. The WACs for foster care have been reduced to 25 pages of rules.

Following you will find the most significant changes in the rules.

- **Pertussis and Influenza Immunizations**-Pertussis vaccinations have been required for some time in order for the department to place a child under the age of two. If you are licensed to accept children under the age of two, everyone in your home must be immunized for pertussis and influenza. If you do not want to become immunized, please contact your licensor about changing the age range on your license.
- **Immunizations for your own children**-If your own children are not immunized, you must follow the exception process that requires a statement from a medical professional or a declaration of religious faith. Your licensor will have the document needed for this.
- **First Aid/CPR**-Medical professionals may now submit an active medical license or certification to satisfy the First Aid/CPR training requirements.

- **Capacity**-Children of a teen parent in care will count toward capacity, even if the teen's child is not dependent.
- **Training Plan**-An individual training plan will be developed with you relevant to the children in your home and your interests. (Training policy must still be followed.)
- **Reporting**-There are a few additional reporting requirements that have been added. You must report to the social worker any assaults of the foster parent by a foster child, drug/alcohol use or inappropriate sexual behavior by a foster child, or medication incorrectly consumed by a foster child. These reports do not have to be made to intake.
- **Prudent Parenting**-Prudent parenting standards have been included throughout the rules, giving authority to foster parent to make decisions concerning certain activities, travel plans, overnight stays, babysitters, etc.
- **Swimming**-Children must swim in designated swimming areas, or use U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal floatation devices if the child is age thirteen or younger. Children age four and younger must be within touching distance of a supervising adult or the child's parent.
- **Bedroom Sharing**-Youth age eighteen or older in the Extended Foster Care program may now share bedrooms with other children age ten or older. Exceptions can be made for younger children to share rooms with extended foster care youth with approval by the licensor and social worker.
- **Natural Disasters**-Your family should be prepared with supplies in the event of a natural disaster.
- **Alcohol and Marijuana**-Alcohol and marijuana must be kept inaccessible.
- **Gun Safety**-Keys to locked gun storage must be kept secure. Adults supervising a foster child's use of a gun must have a gun safety course.
- **Electronic Monitoring** is now included in the licensing rules, rather than solely in policy.
- **EPSDT**-Children placed by the Developmental Disabilities Administration are no longer required to obtain an EPSDT exam within thirty days.
- **First Aid Supplies**-One-way resuscitation masks are no longer required. Thermometers must be mercury-free.
- **Non-prescription medications** can be given freely, as long as product instructions are followed, and foster parent seeks advice about possible interactions with child's prescription medications.
- **Discipline**-Adds positive methods of guidance as a guideline for foster parents.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact your licensor. Thank you for your service to our community's children.