

Department of Social and Health Services

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION POLICY 05-01

SUBJECT: *Interim* Initial Foster Home License

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AUTHORIZATION: RCW 74.15.120

EFFECTIVE DATE:

REVISED: N/A

APPROVED: 
Assistant Secretary

SUNSET REVIEW DATE:

Interim Initial Foster Home License Policy

I. PURPOSE

In making early placement decisions and after considering the parent(s) as a resource, CA regards appropriate relatives, as defined by statute, RCW 74.15.020(2)(a) and RCW 13.34, to be the first priority for placement of a child.

DCFS recognizes that children removed from their home have had a traumatic experience and that this trauma may be lessened by placement of the child(ren) with someone they know and are comfortable with who but do not meet the definition of relative.

The purpose of this policy is to establish the use of an Initial Foster Home License to expedite a safe, appropriate placement of a child or children with an individual who has an existing relationship with the child and with whom the child is comfortable and, by statute, RCW 74.15.020, is required to be licensed to provide care for a child or children.

This policy does not include relatives or families referred to DCFS under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). Relatives are not required to be licensed (RCW 74.15.020) to provide care for their related child(ren). However, they may choose to pursue foster home licensure.

II. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

“Initial License” or “Initial Foster Home License” is a conditional or temporary license to provide foster care for a specific child(ren) for 90 days, pending the completion of the foster home application process and the issuance of a full foster home license. The basic parameters for eligibility consideration are outlined in RCW 74.15.120.

“Applicant for Initial License” is a person who has a relationship with the child and with whom the child feels comfortable.

“Relative” as defined in statute [RCW 74.15.020(2)(a)] as:

1. Any blood relative, including those of half-blood, and including first cousins, nephews or nieces, and persons of preceding generations as denoted by prefixes of grand, great, or great-great
2. Stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother and stepsister
3. A person who legally adopts a child or the child’s parent as well as the natural and other legally adopted children of such persons, and other relatives of the adoptive parents in accordance with state law
4. Spouses of any person named in 1, 2 or 3, above,-even after the marriage is terminated
5. Extended family members, as defined by the law or custom of the Indian child’s tribe or, in the absence of such law or custom, a person who has reached the age of eighteen and who is the Indian child’s grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, niece or nephew, first or second cousin, or stepparent who provides care in the family abode on a twenty-four hour basis to an Indian child as defined in 25 U.S.C. Sec. 1903(4).

III. POLICY

To expedite the placement of a child or children with someone who they have a relationship with and with whom they are comfortable, but who does not meet the definition of relative, the DCFS social worker may refer the individual to the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) to pursue an Initial License. An initial licensee must comply with all minimum licensing requirements prior to receiving a full foster home license.

DCFS may **NOT** place a child with the person until the Initial License or full foster home license is approved.

A. Approval of Initial Foster Home License

General Conditions for an Initial Foster Home License

1. The DCFS social worker has made a recommendation to DLR that pursuing initial licensing for a family is appropriate to expedite the placement of the child or children with the family.
2. The DCFS social worker may not assume that the Division of Licensed Resources will be able to issue an Initial License or be able to respond on an emergency basis to a request for an assessment for an Initial License. However, DLR will prioritize

the approval of initial licenses in order to maintain children within their support networks.

3. For DLR to consider an applicant(s) for an Initial License, the applicant(s) must meet all requirements of this section and not be disqualified by a background check, including criminal history (per Chapter 388-06 WAC) or CAMIS history. This includes providing at least one reference and completion of the unified home study, Initial License section, which includes a face to face interview with the applicant.
4. Any applicant having a previous Initial or full license to care for children or vulnerable adults denied or revoked is not eligible for an Initial License.
5. The DLR supervisor, through the family foster home licensor, may, at his or her discretion, issue or deny an Initial License.
6. In accordance with RCW 74.15.120, the Initial License may be issued to a prospective applicant for a period not to exceed 90 days. After 90 days the Initial License is void and cannot be renewed. The child cannot remain in the home after the 90 days if the home is not fully licensed by that time.
7. No waivers or exceptions to the 90-day limit on the completion of an Initial License may be granted. (RCW 74.15.120)
8. The applicant is able to meet the needs of the child.
9. The best interest of the child would be met by placement with the applicant.
10. Placement with the applicant would not appear to pose a safety risk to the child.
11. The applicant has registered for Pre-Service training.
12. The applicant is authorized to provide care only to the identified child(ren).
13. The applicant agrees to expeditiously file an application and all related documents for a full foster home license.
14. If any issues arise during the Initial License period that would preclude issuing a full foster home license to the holder(s) of the Initial License, the child's assigned social worker and the Licensed Resources licensor, with their supervisors, will staff the situation, as soon as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to expiration of the Initial License.
15. If the family is not approved for a full foster home license within 90 days or at any time DLR determines that the family home is not safe for the child and the Initial License is terminated, the child or children must be moved immediately.

B. DCFS Social worker and DLR Licensor Responsibilities:

To expedite placement of a child or children with the applicant, the DCFS Area Administrator and DLR Area Administrator may choose to negotiate the responsibilities

identified for the social worker and licensor. With written agreement by the Area Administrators, the responsibilities may be reassigned between DCFS and DLR. When a DCFS social worker completes the Initial License process the Licensing Area Administrator must approve the Initial License.

DCFS Social Worker Responsibilities:

The DCFS assigned social worker will complete the following:

1. The background check for criminal history (chapter 388-06 WAC) and CAMIS history; (See CA Operations Manual, Chapter 5000, Section 5545).
2. A face-to-face interview with the prospective individual or family to discuss the following:
 - a. Their relationship with the child and also with the child's family;
 - b. Their ability to meet the needs of the child;
 - c. Their understanding and willingness to:
 - i. Cooperate with the department in implementing the case plan.
 - ii. Comply with court orders.
 - iii. Facilitate and provide information on contacts with parents of the child or other persons, as requested by the department.
 - iv. Comply with the CA behavior management guidelines policy regarding discipline.
 - v. Complete the foster parent application and provide the supporting documents to DLR in a timely manner.
3. A visual check of the home for general safety hazards.
4. Submit a written referral to DLR for consideration of an initial license.
5. When the DCFS Social Worker has been notified by DLR that the Initial License has been issued, the social worker can facilitate placement with the family. The DCFS social worker will have the caregiver sign a placement agreement within the first 72 hours of placement.

DLR Foster Home Licensor Responsibilities:

The DLR Licensor will treat an initial License application as a priority for licensing activity. Within 72 hours but no longer than five calendar days from receiving the referral for consideration of an initial license, the Foster Home Licensor will complete the following:

1. The licensor will verify the criminal history and CAMIS check have been completed as required by licensing.
2. The licensor will give the applicant(s) an orientation packet for a full foster home license, including all application forms and the schedule of the pre-service training. The licensor will inform the applicant(s) that they are expected to attend the first available orientation class and pre-service class. The applicant must register for the pre-service training before an Initial License is issued.

3. Gather verbal or written reference checks from a minimum of one source and document the results in the licensing file, either in written form or electronically;
4. Complete the unified home study, Initial License section, which includes a face to face interview with the applicant.
5. Confirm the applicant is registered for the next available pre-service training.
6. Document in CAMIS the date the Initial License is issued, with an end date of 90 days from the date the Initial License is approved.
7. Completes the Initial License and passes the file on to his or her supervisor for approval. The licensor updates CAMIS with the initial license information.
8. Inform the following individuals, via electronic mail or telephone, of the effective date and end date of the Initial License:
 - a. The applicant
 - b. The assigned social worker and supervisor
 - c. The fiduciary supervisor
 - d. The regional federal funding supervisor
 - e. The licensor assigned to complete the home study for the full foster home license, if different licensor from the licensor responsible for completing the Initial License.

C. Payments

The purpose of any payment to the family is to directly support the basic and immediate needs of the child(ren). Until full foster home licensure is achieved, all payments are state funds only and thorough consideration of other payment options is required. Since these are state funds only, there is no federal match.

Payments will be made as follows: TANF payment with specific additional CA payments through SSPS for authorized services

1. Refer initial license holders to TANF for financial support. Relatives of specified degree *and* others can receive TANF if CA has legal custody as long as the child is *not* receiving both TANF and IV-E in the same month.
2. In addition, SSPS Payment codes authorized for Clothing, Mileage reimbursement, Respite and Child Care with a reason code for the Initial License may be used.
3. The total amount is not to exceed Basic Rate Maintenance Payment for the age of the child per month with out approval of the Area Administrator.
4. Payments authorized up to 90 days with no extensions.

D. Denial or Termination of an Initial License

1. If an Initial License is denied or discontinued, the licensor must notify the child's DCFS social worker that the application has been denied.

2. The Initial License, by state law, is issued only at the discretion of the department. The applicant has no right to appeal a denial or termination of an Initial License.
Note: The applicant(s) have the right to appeal a denial of a full foster home license.
3. If the decision is made to terminate an Initial License, the child must be removed from the home prior to or at the time the Initial License is terminated. If there is an imminent risk to the child or children's health or safety, the child or children must be removed immediately.

E. Issuing a Full License

1. The full license must be issued prior to the expiration date of the Initial License.
2. The family must meet all the requirements for foster care licensing to become a fully licensed foster home.