

Department of Social and Health Services
Olympia, Washington
EAZ Manual

Revision 1179
Category Living with a Relative or Guardian
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Summary

See below for edited text:

Living with a Relative or Guardian

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Purpose:

This category explains the requirements for a child to live with a relative, guardian, or custodian to be eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or State Funded Assistance (SFA).

WAC 388-454-0005 Can I get TANF or SFA benefits for the child living with me?

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

WAC 388-454-0006 The department makes background checks on adults who are acting in place of a parent without court-ordered custody.

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

[WAC 388-454-0010](#) Do I have to be related to a child in order to get TANF or SFA for the child?

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

[WAC 388-454-0015](#) Temporary absence from the home.

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

[WAC 388-454-0020](#) Temporary absence to attend school or training.

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

[WAC 388-454-0025](#) The department notifies a child's parent when we approve assistance and the child is living with someone other than their parent.

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

Clarifying Information - WAC 388-454-0006

The background check must be completed and reviewed before ~~-opening~~[approving](#) TANF/SFA for a child when no adult in the household is related to the child and the adult does not have court-ordered custody.

What is a Certificate of Parental Improvement?

- [A Certificate of Parental Improvement removes a barrier for individuals with a founded finding of child abuse or neglect made by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families \(DCYF\) or a Washington state court.](#)
- [Certificates of Parental Improvement are accepted as part of the TANF *In Loco Parentis* background check process.](#)
- [The DSHS Background Check Central Unit \(BCCU\) verifies these Certificates directly with DCYF – so there is no need for an applicant to provide a copy to the worker.](#)
- [For more information, refer to the DCYF Certificate of Parental Improvement website.](#)

Worker Responsibilities - WAC 388-454-0006

Take the following actions when no adult in a TANF/SFA household is related to a child as required in [WAC 388-454-0010](#) and the adult(s) does not have court-ordered custody:

1. Have the primary caregiver acting *in loco parentis* complete the **Background Authorization form** (DSHS 09-653). Workers access this form through Barcode - CBI Application.

2. When a caregiver reports a conviction or being charged with a crime and does not indicate a degree, ~~the DSHS Background Check Central Unit (BCCU) will assume~~ the highest degree. This may affect the background check decision. If the caregiver knows the degree of the crime:
 - a. Have them complete the **Applicant Affidavit form (DSHS 27-109)**.
 - b. Send the form to DSHS BCCU
 - c. BCCU reruns the background check and issues a result letter based on the updated information provided by the caregiver.
3. After the adult caregiver completes and submits the Background Check Authorization form, a background check request is submitted to DSHS BCCU by CSD Headquarters.

NOTE: When needed, DSHS BCCU may request additional information directly from the caregiver to complete the background check.

4. Once the background check results are received by CSD Headquarters, staff are notified of the results and eligibility for TANF/SFA is determined.
 - a. A child is not eligible for TANF/SFA benefits when the background check shows that the adult:
 - i. Has a pending charge for a disqualifying crime ([WAC 388-06-0170](#)),
 - ii. Has a conviction for a disqualifying crime,
 - iii. Is not of sufficient physical, emotional, or mental health to meet the needs of the child, as determined by CSD Headquarters review, or
 - iv. Is considered at risk of harming the child based on available information.
 - b. TANF/SFA benefits are denied when the background check disqualifies the adult(s).

NOTE: If the primary caregiver discloses they were issued a DCYF Certificate of Parental Improvement, and it is verified by DSHS BCCU, the finding will not show up as part of the background check record.

5. If the background check shows there is a record but no disqualifying crime, CSD Headquarters is notified and will:
 - a. Review the information and determine whether the individual has the character, suitability and competence to take care of the unrelated child.
 - b. Notify staff of the decision so that TANF/SFA eligibility determination can be completed.

NOTE: When a background check record exists for a caregiver, DSHS BCCU provides the caregiver a copy of their background check results, directly. Results are provided by mail or email (the latter, if authorized by the caregiver on the **DSHS 09-653**). For more information, see [BCCU - Applicant Resources](#).

6. If there is **any** reason to suspect that the child is at risk of abuse or neglect, immediately notify the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Child Welfare, Child Protective Services (CPS) [Regional Contact](#) or call the statewide [Child Abuse and Neglect Mandatory Reporter](#) hotline (**1.886.ENDHARM [1.886.363.4276]**). Examples of when the child may be at risk include:
 - a. The background check shows the adult caregiver has a disqualifying charge or conviction for a violent crime.
 - b. The background check **or other information** shows that the adult caregiver has a DCYF founded finding of abuse or neglect.
 7. If more information is needed before deciding about a DCYF referral, refer the case to social services for further evaluation of the home situation. Workers are to document if action is taken, including whether the Social Service Specialist made a DCYF referral or completed an evaluation of the home situation.
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