

PRACTICE GUIDE
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH DCF POLICY 41-1

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Recruitment The Department of Children and Families shall seek to establish foster and adoptive family resources by planned local and statewide recruitment.

Recruitment means the process by which DCF, in collaboration with community groups, agencies and organizations, makes a diligent effort to reach out, within targeted populations, to families who can best meet the needs of children requiring temporary or permanent placement.

DCF believes that children are best raised in families where they:

- can establish positive, healthy relationships;
- can preserve and nurture their physical and mental health; and
- are encouraged to develop skills that will help them become healthy, balanced and productive adults.

If it is determined that a child is not safe in his or her own home, DCF has the responsibility to remove the child from that home and place the child in a safe, temporary home.

If the child cannot be reunified with his or her family of origin, DCF shall determine and implement a permanency plan for the child based on the child's best interests.

**Responsibility
for
Recruitment
Efforts**

The Office of Children and Youth in Placement (OChYP) and the Regional Offices shall collaborate to conduct statewide recruitment efforts which may include:

- planning, developing, coordinating, implementing and evaluating annual recruitment campaigns; and
- providing technical assistance to the Regions regarding local recruitment efforts.

The Regions shall carry out recruitment for their respective Area Offices in accordance with the Regional Recruitment and Retention Plans.

The Regional FASU units report through the Regional chain of command.

**Recruitment
by Licensed
Families**

A licensed family may refer potential applicants for foster care or adoption to a Regional Office representative for consideration. If the referred family becomes licensed, the licensed family that made the referral will receive a \$500.00 finder's fee.

This fee is payable from the Region's recruitment budget.

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Application Process

A person who is interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent shall be assessed to determine if he or she can meet regulatory and DCF requirements for licensure.

During this process, if a decision is made to pursue licensure, the applicant must submit the application (DCF-047, "Application for Foster Care License") to the Regional Foster and Adoption Services Unit (FASU) Social Worker.

Time Frame for Licensing Decision

When an applicant meets compliance with licensing regulations and DCF requirements, a foster care license is issued, effective for two years.

The decision to grant or deny an initial foster care license shall be made within 150 days of the date of application.

Stages of Assessment Process

The assessment process for general use (core foster or pre-adoptive care) consists of the following stages:

- inquiry;
 - informational open house;
 - personal interview;
 - group or individual preparation;
 - assessment; and
 - recommendation for licensure.
-

Documentation

The FASU staff shall use LINK to:

- track the assessment process for all foster care license applicants;
- record a family's licensing status;
- perform matching functions; and
- generate statistical reports.

The FASU staff shall document activities related to foster parents in the Provider Narrative in LINK within five days of the occurrence.

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Inquiries

DCF contracts with a private provider to answer inquiries from potential foster or adoptive parents thru the 1-888-KID-HERO line. This telephone number is the central number statewide that families are instructed to call to begin the licensing process. Families also may call a Regional Office directly.

Either the private provider or DCF staff who answers the inquiry shall:

- discuss with the caller his or her interests in foster care or adoption;
- discuss with the caller the cohorts of children he or she is most interested in caring for;
- explain the targeted groups of children most in need of homes;
- explain the steps in the licensing process;
- identify the next open house the caller can attend;
- provide contact numbers for Regional Office FASU; and
- complete the DCF-699, "Foster Care and Adoption Inquiries," and
- forward it to the appropriate contact person in the Regional Office.

Regional Office FASU units will maintain a monthly log of all inquiries made regarding foster care and adoption. This log will also identify where the applicant is during each phase of the process including the dates that he or she has attended events.

It is the responsibility of the FASU staff to track each applicant from the time he or she attends an open house, provide timely information and outreach, and actively engage the family in the licensing process.

Open House Presentations

A foster parent open house shall include the following information:

- a display of flyers, brochures, articles, photos and other relevant materials;
- an opportunity for prospective applicants to meet DCF staff and other licensed foster parents and to ask questions;
- a welcome by and introduction to DCF staff and other foster parents;
- an explanation of the goal of the open house, *i.e.*, to provide prospective foster parents with a better understanding of DCF and the purpose and role of foster care and adoption;
- an overview of DCF;
- a discussion of how children and their families become involved in foster care;
- a profile of the children entering the system including possible traumatic experiences, trauma-related reactions and behavioral health concerns;
- an explanation of the role of foster parents and a review of the various types of foster care, including pre-adoptive placements;
- an explanation of the supports available for foster families, including post-licensing training and certificate training;
- a review of the assessment and licensing process and purpose, including:
 - an explanation of the requirement for a personal interview in the applicant's home prior to participation in the process;
 - a description of how families are prioritized to attend the group process;
 - identification and review of licensing regulations and criteria; and
 - distribution, review and collection of the DCF-2109, "Authorization for Release of Information for Foster Care License;" and
- an invitation to prospective foster parents to stay, review materials and ask questions about their individual situations.

Some of those present will decide to continue with the process of becoming foster parents, while others may choose not to continue at that time.

**Open House
Foster Care
Information
Packet**

At an open house, the FASU Social Worker or contracted staff shall distribute an informational packet to the prospective applicants, and keep a log of those applicants who receive the packet.

The packets shall contain:

- general information about DCF foster care and adoption;
 - information regarding the children needing placement; and
 - a list of private adoption, therapeutic foster care and Family and Community Ties agencies in Connecticut.
-

**Scheduling
an Open
House**

An open house shall be:

- offered at least monthly in each Region; and
- held at a variety of locations and times, including evenings and weekends.

Daytime sessions may be scheduled to enhance the evening schedule.

**Personal
Interviews**

When possible, there shall be sufficient FASU staff at the open house to conduct personal interviews with those participants who request one.

**Scheduling
and Location
of Interview**

The FASU Social Worker shall contact the applicant within one week of his or her attendance at an open house to schedule a personal interview.

The interview shall be:

- no later than three weeks after attendance at the open house unless the applicant has requested a delay;
 - conducted prior to inviting the applicant to the assessment group; and
 - held at the applicant's home.
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**Topics
During
Interviews**

Whether a prospective foster parent is interviewed during an open house or in his or her home, the FASU Social Worker shall:

- assure the applicant that his or her interest is highly valued and seriously considered;
- provide an overview of the foster care and adoption systems, the increased role relatives and fictive kin play in the placement process, the licensing assessment process, and the support and training systems available to licensed foster care providers;
- allow for an open discussion of licensing requirements;
- discuss relevant factors in the applicant's background which will enhance his or her ability to care for children;
- clarify any issues in the applicant's history which may result in the need for additional information or which may be an impediment to licensure; and
- explain the next steps in the process.

During the interview, the FASU Social Worker will discuss with the applicant the targeted homes for which DCF is recruiting and gain an understanding of the family's interest in providing a home for children needing priority placement services, which include but are not limited to:

- adolescents;
- siblings groups;
- children with complex medical needs;
- infants placed directly from the hospital; and
- other groups as identified by the Region.

**Families Who
are
Interested in
Adoption**

For families who are interested in adoption, the personal interview will provide the applicant with a brief overview of the adoption process and give DCF an understanding of the family's willingness to engage in the following priority activities for adoptive homes:

- accept high legal risk placements;
 - understand that reunification is the primary goal;
 - be willing to be a permanent resource for the child if the child is reunified with his or her birth family;
 - agree to have and maintain contact with birth families throughout the placement process;
 - actively engage in post-licensing loss and grief work; and
 - be able to accept a child from the above-mentioned priority groups for placement.
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**Consent
Forms**

Each applicant and household member aged 16 and over shall be requested to sign the following forms at the beginning of the assessment process:

- DCF-2109, "Authorization for Release of Information for Foster Care License;" and
- DCF-2125, "Authorization for Local Police Records Search" (required by some local police departments).

The FASU Social Worker will proceed with the licensing process once the individuals sign the consent forms.

**Pre-
Licensing
Assessment**

All applicants for licensure are required to attend pre-licensing assessment and training sessions.

The FASU Social Worker shall make a home visit prior to the applicant being invited to attend a licensing assessment and training session.

Exceptions may be made by the FASU Program Manager on a case-by-case basis when unusual circumstances prevent an applicant from attending a group session.

When necessary, qualified families who cannot be accommodated promptly by DCF may be referred to private agencies under contract to DCF for completion of an assessment and for approval of the placement of a foster child in their home.

Note: Relative and fictive kin applicants (child-specific) will participate in a different pre-licensing assessment and training model from general use (core foster or pre-adoptive care) applicants. This pre-licensing assessment and training model will be designed to meet the unique needs of relative and fictive kin families.

**Purpose of
Pre-
Licensing
Assessment**

The tasks expected of foster parents are so critical that applicants need a thorough understanding of the program and of its effect on foster children and their families. The applicant must be actively involved in assessing his or her ability to provide a physically and emotionally safe home for a child.

The pre-licensing assessment process is designed to:

- provide information to applicants to ensure they can make responsible decisions regarding their level of participation in the foster care and adoption processes;
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**Purpose of
Pre-
Licensing
Assessment
(continued)**

- encourage sharing, participation and mutual respect in order to demonstrate and allow for the teamwork which is one of the foundations of the relationship between foster families, DCF Social Workers and biological families;
- provide an opportunity for families to explore their feelings and reactions to the Home Study assessment;
- encourage group participants to interact with DCF in a mutual assessment process;
- provide the FASU Social Worker and foster or adoptive parent co-leader with information necessary to make an informed assessment of the applicant and his or her family's ability to foster or adopt DCF children; and
- provide the FASU Social Worker with documentation to recommend or deny licensure.

**Licensing
Assessment**

The licensing assessment curriculum includes such topics as:

- introduction to DCF;
- exploration of a family's motivation and ability to provide foster or adoptive care;
- working as a member of a team (teamwork and partnership);
- helping children maintain connections with birth family;
- understanding gains and loss (being a loss expert);
- understanding toxic stress and trauma as it relates to a child's developing brain;
- sexual issues and concerns;
- helping children learn healthy behaviors;
- helping children make attachments;
- helping children leave foster care; and
- understanding the impact of fostering and adopting.

During the group assessment process, the FASU Social Worker shall provide the following information to the participants:

- copies of relevant statutes, regulations, policies and procedures;
- the foster care rate structure;
- the availability of adoption and guardianship subsidies;
- support services for foster and adoptive care; and
- the internet address for the national adoption photo site.

Home Visits

During the licensing assessment process, the FASU Social Worker shall make at least two required home visits to discuss issues which arise during the sessions and are pertinent to the family's assessment for licensure.

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Home Study for Licensure During the assessment process, the FASU Social Worker shall complete a written Home Study of the applicant and household members.

Purpose of Home Study The Home Study is designed to:

- collect and assess data about the applicant and household members;
- provide a framework for DCF staff to assess all areas of healthy family functioning;
- provide consistency in the assessment process; and
- enhance the study process by:
 - promoting a greater understanding of applicant families;
 - strengthening the process for approving or denying an applicant for a foster care license; and
 - determining the applicant’s ability to successfully parent children in DCF care based on his or her overall functioning and the characteristics of foster and adoptive families.

Approved Home Study Formats The FASU Social Worker shall utilize the written Home Study formats approved by OChYP:

- DCF-472, “Connecticut Family Assessment” (for core foster care and adoption); or
- DCF-805, “Assessment for Licensure for a Relative, Fictive Kin or Independent (Interstate Compact) Home.”

Primary Assessment Areas The primary assessment areas for the Home Study of the prospective foster or adoptive parents and their family members are as follows:

- parent functioning, history and interpersonal relationships;
- protecting and nurturing children in the home;
- meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays;
- ability to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care;
- supporting relationships between children, their birth families and fictive kin;
- connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime;
- family functioning, extended family relationships and demographics of the home;
- past history of trauma and impact on parenting;
- understanding of placement issues and viewpoints of birth parents and foster children;
- family’s preparation and motivation;
- family’s ability to seek help and utilize resources; and
- working as a member of a team.

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Foster Care Manual	<p>OChYP will maintain a Foster Care Manual that will include information on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the foster care program;• the adoption program;• relevant statutes, regulations, policies and procedures;• foster care rate structure;• adoption and guardianship subsidies;• training opportunities;• trauma and related intervention services;• promotion of well-being;• reasonable and prudent parent standard;• support services for new foster and adoptive parents;• information regarding children needing placement; <i>e.g.</i>, emotionally disturbed, sexually abused, HIV positive; and• such other information as is appropriate.
Support Groups	<p>Support groups shall be established and maintained for all licensed foster parents to meet the special needs of the families and the children in their care.</p> <p>Support groups shall be conducted in a trauma-informed manner. The groups may be initiated by the foster parents, DCF or a contracted agency.</p>
Purpose of Groups	<p>The support groups shall provide a private environment for foster parents to receive support from other foster parents.</p> <p>Group members offer each other help, encouragement and assistance in solving problems.</p>
Types of Groups	<p>The types of support groups include those for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• families caring for a particular type of child; <i>e.g.</i>, children with complex medical needs;• multiethnic placements;• legal risk placements; and• foster parents in a specific geographical area.
Frequency and Location of Meetings	<p>Support groups shall meet monthly or as needed in locations throughout the state.</p>

Role of DCF The FASU Social Worker shall assist in the establishment and maintenance of support groups and may attend meetings at the request of the group membership.

The group may ask the FASU Social Worker to:

- function as co-leader;
- provide clarification of DCF mandates, policies or other issues; and
- provide other assistance or training as the group requires.

The FASU Social Worker shall:

- maintain a list of support groups to be provided to the foster parents by the child's Social Worker in the Placement Portfolio at the time a child is placed in the home;
- notify the Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families (CAFAF) of existing support groups for publication in the CAFAF newsletter;
- assist in the arrangement of a meeting space;
- provide technical assistance at the times needed, including at evening meetings or weekend functions;
- assist with training by:
 - informing the group of training opportunities and encouraging member participation;
 - encouraging suggestions for training topics;
 - providing or arranging for the specific training needs of the group; and
 - encouraging the participation of FASU and CPS staff and other licensed foster parents in training offered by or for a particular support group; and
- supply paper, copying, mailing labels, postage and other items as needed to facilitate the smooth functioning of the group.

Selection of Group Leader

The group leader may be selected by the membership only or with the assistance of the FASU Social Worker, as requested by the group.

Leaders may be foster parents or a FASU Social Worker. They may serve alone or as co-leaders.

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Requirements for Foster Parent Group Leader A parent leader or co-leader shall:

- be a currently or formerly-licensed foster parent;
- demonstrate a basic understanding of the FASU and CPS process and be willing to seek answers and clarification when necessary;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- have the confidence of the group members and DCF.

Duties of Leaders and Co-Leaders The leader or co-leaders shall:

- emphasize the need for respect, trust and confidentiality among group members;
- demonstrate group process and organizational skills; and
- collaborate with a co-leader to discuss group functioning, plan agendas, problem solve, assess training needs and determine other needs of the group.

Problem Resolution The following sections outline problem resolution process for licensed families.

The problem resolution process described below shall be used to resolve issues when foster parents are aggrieved by the actions of DCF staff that are not covered by the administrative hearing process.

If the complaint is covered by the administrative hearing process, the foster parent shall be informed of how to access that process.

Documentation of Process The FASU Social Worker or Social Work Supervisor shall document in the Provider Narrative in LINK the need to initiate the process and shall record the results at each stage of the process.

Stages of the Process There are three stages to the problem resolution process:

- informal communication;
- informal mediation; and
- formal problem resolution.

The foster parent shall have the opportunity to express his or her concerns at each stage of the process. (See chart below.)

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Problem Resolution Process The chart below explains the stages in the problem resolution process.

Stage	Person Responsible	Action
Informal communication to settle minor issues that, if not resolved, could become more serious	Foster parent	Notify DCF Social Worker or Supervisor of the complaint.
	FASU Social Worker or Supervisor	Discuss the problem informally through a trauma-informed lens with the foster parent to attempt a resolution. If the problem cannot be resolved at this point, the FASU Program Manager shall be contacted for further assistance.
Informal mediation to involve the Program Manager as a mediator	FASU Program Manager	<p>The FASU Program Manager shall telephone the licensed family to mediate a resolution to the problem through a trauma-informed lens.</p> <p>If telephone contact is not sufficient, the foster parent, FASU Social Worker, Supervisor and Program Manager shall meet informally to discuss a resolution.</p> <p>If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage, a formal problem resolution meeting shall take place.</p>
Formal problem resolution to bring all parties together to reach a final agreement and resolution	FASU Program Manager	<p>The FASU Program Manager shall ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a formal problem resolution meeting is held with the foster parent, Social Worker, Supervisor and Program Manager (the foster parent may bring a representative); • if an agreement and plan for resolution cannot be reached at this point, the foster parent fully understands his or her rights and responsibilities; • a letter confirming the outcome of the formal problem resolution meeting is sent to the foster parent; and • a copy of the letter is filed in the licensed family's FASU record, and in the child's record if the issue is child-related.

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**FASU Program
Manager
Responsibility
for Tracking
and
Documenting**

The FASU Program Manager shall:

- be informed whenever the problem resolution process is activated at the second stage (informal mediation);
 - record and track all complaints covered by this process;
 - ensure that a response and resolution is attempted; and
 - document the result in LINK.
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**Content of
Licensing
Record**

The foster family's licensing record contains DCF's official documentation which is utilized in determining if a license may be granted, denied, renewed, suspended or revoked.

In addition to the documentation filed in the FASU hard copy record, the family's licensing status shall be entered in LINK.

The licensing record **shall** include the following documents:

- child protective services check results;
- local police check results (DCF-2125, "Authorization for Local Police Records Search");
- State Police Fingerprint Results (DPS-125C);
- FBI Standard Fingerprint Form (FD-258); and
- Department of Motor Vehicles records check results.

The licensing record **shall** include the following information in the assessment, as applicable to the individual or family:

- license;
 - documents and correspondence related to licensing actions;
 - DCF-047, "Application for Foster Care License;"
 - DCF-005, "Background Searches;"
 - DCF-008, "Emergency Home Assessment for Child-Specific Placement" (only for relative or fictive kin placements);
 - marriage license;
 - legal separation or divorce decree (for adoptive placements only);
 - DCF-020, "Physician's Statement for Foster Care Application;"
 - DCF-0091, "Prospective Foster Family Budget Worksheet;"
 - DCF-048, "Request for Inspection of Well Water;"
 - DCF-472, "Connecticut Family Assessment" (for core foster and adoptive homes) or DCF-805, "Assessment for Licensure for a Relative, Fictive Kin or Independent (Interstate Compact) Home;"
 - DCF-0043, "Verification of Requirements for Licensure;"
 - DCF-334, "Family Registration;"
 - DCF-425A, "Application to Renew a License for Foster Care,"
 - DCF-425B, "Recommendation for License Renewal;"
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**Content of
Licensing
Record
(continued)**

- DCF-2109, "Authorization for Release of Information for Foster Care License;"
- DCF-2236, "Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPPA);"
- copy of Social Security card, driver's license and proof of residency; and
- copy of training certificate.

**Requesting
Police
Searches by
Name and
Date of Birth**

Use the following procedures to request searches of local police and State Police records by name and date of birth.

Person	Action
Applicant and Household Members Over the Age of 16 Years	Complete and submit to the FASU Social Worker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCF-2109, "Authorization for Release of Information for Foster Care License;" and • DCF-2125, "Authorization for Local Police Records Search."
FASU Social Worker or Child's Social Worker for Relative and Fictive Kin Placements	Complete an in-state COLLECT check for State Police criminal records. Complete the DCF-2125, "Authorization for Local Police Records Search" for a search of local police records. Forward the DCF-2125 to the appropriate local police department. Upon receipt of the search results from the police, file the DCF-2125 and DCF-2109 in the applicant's FASU licensing record. When the provider's record is created in LINK, enter the search results in the screen and scan the document(s) to eDocs.

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**Requesting
Fingerprint
Searches
(State Police
and FBI)**

Use the following procedures to request fingerprint-based criminal history records checks from the State Police and FBI:

Person Responsible	Activity
FASU Social Worker for Relative and Fictive Kin Placements	<p>Have each applicant and household member aged 16 years and older submit their fingerprints via the Live Scan process.</p> <p>All fingerprints will be submitted electronically via Live Scan from the DCF Area Office or a portable location site (<i>e.g.</i>, TIPS-MAPP session) to the SPBI division at DESPP.</p> <p>Fingerprint submissions will clearly identify the statutory authority for the submission as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCF core, kin and fictive kin foster care: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-114; • emergency placement: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-115a (within five days of placement); • child placing agency: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-151; or • adoption only: AWA (Adam Walsh Act).
Applicant or Adult Household Members Aged 16 and Older	<p>Submit to Live Scans taken at DCF Area Office or at a portable location site (<i>e.g.</i> TIPS-MAPP session).</p>
FASU Social Worker, Child's Social Worker	<p>Ensure that the fingerprint results are processed through DESPP via Live Scan. Results will be electronically transmitted back to the Live Scan portal in the requesting Area Office.</p> <p>Upon receipt of the search results, scan the document into eDocs and immediately shred the hard copy using the dedicated shredder located near the COLLECT terminal.</p> <p>When the provider's record is created in LINK, enter the search results on the screen and scan the document(s) to eDocs.</p> <p>Note: Fingerprint results for private child placing agencies will be forwarded from the Area Office designee to the Central Office designee for proper tracking and dissemination of the results to the CPA.</p>

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Granting an Initial License

The table below presents the general procedures for granting an initial foster care license.

Person	Action
FASU Social Worker	<p>Determine if the applicant is in compliance with regulatory requirements based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interviews with household members; • completion of the family assessment process; and • other documentation gathered during the assessment process. <p>Complete the DCF-0043, "Verification of Requirements for Licensure."</p> <p>Forward the applicant's licensing record and the DCF-0043 to the Social Work Supervisor.</p>
FASU Social Work Supervisor and Program Manager	<p>Review the applicant's licensing record.</p> <p>Sign the DCF-0043 indicating approval.</p> <p>Forward a request for a waiver to the appropriate manager or administrator, if applicable.</p> <p>Note: Program Manager approval is not needed if there are no criminal or child protective services history issues, no need for a waiver or no significant trauma history in the applicant's background.</p>
Area Office Staff	<p>Send the original license and a cover letter to the licensee.</p> <p>Maintain a copy of the license in LINK and a copy of the cover letter in the licensee's hard copy licensing record.</p> <p>Document the license information in LINK.</p>

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Renewing a License The table below presents the procedures to renew a license.

Person	Action
FASU Social Work Supervisor	<p>Ensure that, at least three months prior to the license expiration date, the DCF-425A, "Application to Renew a License for Foster Care," is sent to the licensee.</p> <p>At least two weeks prior to the month of expiration, send a reminder letter to those licensees who have not returned the DCF-425A.</p>
Licensee	<p>Submit the completed DCF-425A to the FASU Social Worker.</p>
FASU Social Worker	<p>Enter the DCF-425A in LINK as a pending application.</p> <p>Contact the Social Workers who placed or provided services to children in the foster home during the preceding 24 months to determine if there are concerns that need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Make a home visit to meet with the foster parents.</p> <p>Update documentation with current information as required.</p> <p>Determine whether the licensee has completed mandatory post-licensing training requirements.</p> <p>Assess the licensee's continued compliance with regulations and DCF requirements.</p> <p>Document the family's assessment on the DCF-425B, "Recommendation for License Renewal."</p> <p>Forward the assessment and the DCF-425B to the Social Work Supervisor and Program Manager for review and approval.</p>
FASU Licensing Supervisor and Program Manager	<p>Review and approve or deny the renewal.</p> <p>Sign the DCF-425B indicating approval for renewal of the license.</p> <p>Forward a request for a waiver to the appropriate staff, if applicable.</p> <p>Note: Program Manager approval is not needed if there are no criminal or child protective services history concerns, no need for a waiver and no significant trauma history in the applicant's background.</p>

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Renewing a License (continued) The table below presents the procedures to renew a license.

Person	Action
Office Staff	<p>Prepare a license and forward it to the Program Manager or designee for signature.</p> <p>Send the original license and a cover letter to the family.</p> <p>File a copy of the license and cover letter in the family's record.</p> <p>For pre-adoptive placements, send a copy of the renewed license to OChYP's Permanency Resource Exchange.</p> <p>For an independent (Interstate Compact) license, send a copy of the renewed license to the Interstate Compact Office at Central Office.</p> <p>Document the license renewal information in LINK.</p> <p>Scan criminal and CPS background check documents into LINK.</p>

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Content of License Renewal Record

The following documentation must be updated at the time of each renewal:

- DCF-425A, "Application to Renew a License for Foster Care;"
- license;
- child protective services check results;
- DCF-2125, "Authorization for Local Police Records Search;" and
- Department of Motor Vehicles records check results.

Any outstanding fingerprint requirements for household members must be completed, *e.g.*, a child in the home is 16 years old and has not yet had a fingerprint search completed.

The following documentation **shall** be updated at the time of renewal if applicable:

- documents and correspondence related to licensing renewal actions;
- DCF-005, "Background Searches;"
- marriage license;
- legal separation or divorce decree (for pre-adoptive placements only);
- DCF-020, "Physician's Statement for Foster Care Application;"
- DCF-0091, "Prospective Foster Family Budget Worksheet;"
- DCF-048, "Request for Inspection of Well Water;"
- DCF-011, "Veterinary Statement;"
- DCF-030, "Pool Inspection;"
- DCF-761, "Landlord Notification;"
- DCF-446, "Inspection of Auxiliary Heating Source;"
- DCF-334, "Family Registration;"
- DCF-425B, "Recommendation for License Renewal;"
- DCF-2109, "Authorization for Release of Information for Foster Care License;"
- DCF-2236, "Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPPA);"
- documentation of any waiver approvals; and
- copy of Social Security card, driver's license and proof of residency.

Barriers to License Renewal

The FASU Supervisor shall review the renewal record and identify any barriers to the renewal.

If the time frame for renewal is not met, the FASU Supervisor and Program Manager shall meet to discuss the barriers, determine if the license can be renewed, and set a new date for the FASU Social Worker to complete the renewal.

Once barrier issues have been resolved, the renewal date remains the same as the most recent licensing date.

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Denying an Initial or Renewal Application

The table below presents the procedures for denying an application for a license for foster care:

Person	Action
FASU Licensing Worker	<p>Submit the following to the FASU Supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a written recommendation to deny the application; and • supporting documentation of non-compliance with licensing regulations or other requirements.
FASU Social Work Supervisor	<p>Review the recommendation and documentation with the FASU Social Worker.</p> <p>For renewals, consult with the Area Office Attorney to determine if there are sufficient grounds to deny the application.</p> <p>Forward the recommendation and documentation to the FASU Program Manager.</p>
FASU Program Manager	<p>Review the recommendation and documentation with the FASU Social Worker and Supervisor.</p> <p>Draft the notice of denial in collaboration with the Area Office Attorney, specifying the area(s) of non-compliance and citing the specific Regulations on which the denial is based.</p> <p>Send the notice of denial by certified mail to the applicant.</p> <p>NOTE: No administrative hearing will be granted for a denial of an initial application for licensure. A licensee may request an administrative hearing if a license renewal is denied.</p>
Office Staff	<p>File a copy of the notice of denial in the applicant's record.</p> <p>Document the denial status in LINK.</p> <p>For homes licensed for the purpose of adoption, notify the OChYP Permanency Resource Exchange of any change that will affect the family's registration as an adoptive resource.</p> <p>Process the closed record for storage.</p> <p>NOTE: Retain the record in the Area Office until the appeal process is complete.</p>

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**Interim
Licensing
Activities**

The table below presents the procedures for interim licensing activities:

Person	Action
Licensee	Report to the FASU Social Worker any change in licensed conditions prior to the change or, if that is not possible, no later than one business day after the occurrence of the change in the licensed condition.
FASU Social Worker	Meet with the licensee to discuss and assess any changes. Determine the appropriate interim licensing action. Submit the DCF-006, "Interim Licensing Action," and recommendation to the FASU Supervisor regarding any needed licensing action, <i>e.g.</i> , issuance of an updated license or revocation of the license. Scan any additional documents into eDocs.
FASU Social Work Supervisor	Review the recommendation. Approve or, if the license will be revoked, forward to the Program Manager. Consult with the Area Office Attorney to ensure that the proposed action to revoke is legally sufficient.
Program Manager (For a Revocation)	Review the recommendation for revocation with the FASU Social Worker and FASU Social Work Supervisor. Notify the licensee by certified mail of the proposed licensing action and the right to an administrative hearing.
Office Staff	File a copy of the new license or revocation notice and any documentation in the licensee's record. Document the updated licensing information in LINK. For homes licensed for the purpose of adoption, notify the OChYP Permanency Resource Exchange of any change that will affect the family's registration as an adoptive resource. For a revocation, process the closed record for storage. Note: Retain the record in the Area Office until the appeal process is complete.

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**Voluntary
Closure of a
License**

A voluntary closure is a decision made by the licensee that he or she no longer wishes to provide foster care.

The table below sets forth the procedures for a voluntary closure.

Person	Action
Licensee	Notify DCF in writing of the decision to voluntarily close the license. Return the license to DCF.
FASU Licensing Social Worker	Work with the licensee to effect a proper closing, including moving any foster children in the home to another placement. Send a letter to the licensee confirming the reasons for the voluntary closure.
Office Staff	File a copy of the closure letter in the licensing record. For a home licensed for the purpose of adoption, notify the OChYP Permanency Resource Exchange via e-mail to withdraw the family's registration as an adoptive resource. Enter the closure information in LINK. Process the closed licensing record for storage.

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**Summary
Suspension
of a License**

The table below explains the procedures for a summary suspension of a license:

Person	Action
FASU Worker	Submit a request for a summary suspension to the FASU Social Work Supervisor and Program Manager including sufficient evidence to warrant the suspension.
FASU Social Work Supervisor and Program Manager	<p>Immediately upon receipt of a request and evidence to suspend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the evidence; • consult with the Area Office Attorney and other appropriate staff, as necessary, to determine if there are sufficient grounds to suspend; • coordinate with the child's Social Worker for notification to the licensee and for the immediate removal of any children covered by the license; and • coordinate with the child's Social Worker to notify biological parents, if appropriate, and the child's attorney.
FASU Program Manager	<p>In consultation with the Area Office Attorney, immediately draft a suspension notice to the licensee and send by certified mail.</p> <p>In consultation with the Area Office, draft and send a notice via certified mail of DCF's intent to revoke the license and notice of the licensee's right and the procedure to request an administrative hearing if the licensee does not agree with the suspension.</p> <p>Note: Ideally, the notice of suspension and notice to revoke will be included in the same correspondence to the licensee. The suspension notice, however, must be sent immediately; therefore if the revocation letter cannot be drafted immediately, you may send these notices in separate certified mailings. If this is the case, the notice to revoke must be sent within five days of the notice of suspension.</p> <p>If DCF does not receive a written request for an administrative hearing within ten days after the licensee receives the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notice of suspension, the suspension cannot be appealed; • notice of revocation, the license may be revoked.

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**Summary
Suspension
of a License
(continued)**

The table below explains the procedures for a summary suspension of a license:

Person	Action
Office Staff	<p>File a copy of the certified notice(s) in the licensee's record.</p> <p>Forward a copy of the certified letter(s) to the Administrative Hearings Unit at Central Office.</p> <p>Document the resulting licensing action in LINK.</p> <p>For a revocation of a license issued to a person who intended to adopt, send the DCF-335, "Withdrawal/Placement Notification," to the OChYP Permanency Resource Exchange to withdraw the family's registration as an adoptive resource.</p> <p>Process a closed record for storage.</p> <p>NOTE: Retain the record in the Area Office until the appeal process is complete.</p>

**Licensing
Undocumented
Persons**

DCF can license undocumented persons in the case of relative and fictive kinship care only. Any individual being licensed must have an ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number). The ITIN number requirement cannot be waived.

**Foster Care
Matching**

The following LINK forms are used in the matching process:

- DCF-469, "Child Placement Document"
- DCF-741, "Medical Alert"

The table below presents the steps to request a placement from the FASU matcher by utilizing the DCF-469, "Child Placement Document," in LINK.

Person	Action
Child's Social Worker	In LINK, complete the DCF-469 and DCF-741 as fully as possible using available information.
Social Work Supervisor	<p>In LINK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the DCF-469 request from the Social Worker; • complete the assignment to the FASU matcher. <p>The assignment to the matcher indicates supervisory approval of the request.</p>

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**Matcher
Contact with
Child's Social
Worker**

Upon receipt of the DCF-469, the matcher shall complete the following steps, as necessary:

- telephone or make an in-person contact with the requesting Social Worker or Supervisor to discuss the child's placement needs;
- obtain any further information needed to make the match; and
- log all requests in the foster home requests log.

NOTE: In cases in which an emergency exists and the matcher cannot make the required telephone or in-person contact with the Social Worker or Supervisor, the matcher shall document the reason for the lack of contact in LINK and attempt to complete the match.

**When
Placement
Can Be Made**

If the foster parent agrees to the placement, the matcher shall:

- facilitate the match by making arrangements for contact between the child's Social Worker and the foster family;
 - notify the child's Social Worker of the match via e-mail;
 - for all first-time placements, notify the Regional Office Health Advocate or designee to schedule a multi-disciplinary evaluation;
 - update the foster family's record (the child's Social Worker will share information about the foster family with the child);
 - forward a copy of the identified foster family's Profile (DCF-4928) to be given to the child by the child's Social Worker; and
 - notify the foster family's FASU Social Worker of the details of the anticipated placement, including:
 - strengths of the child;
 - the child's trauma history, including nurturing relationships and trauma-related reactions;
 - the need for any appropriate training materials or other family support systems;
 - whether the placement is overcapacity or otherwise non-conforming; and
 - whether there is a need to call a disruption conference for the child if he or she has had multiple placements due to behavioral issues.
-

**When
Placement
Resources
are not
Available**

If appropriate placement resources are not available, the matcher shall:

- notify the child's Social Worker or Supervisor; and
 - discuss alternative options with the Social Worker and Supervisor.
-

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Child's Social Worker Contact with the Foster Family

The child's Social Worker shall:

- meet with the foster family to confirm the appropriateness of the match and complete the placement;
- utilizing the child's Placement Portfolio, provide the family with written information and materials necessary for the child's proper care and supervision, including items that will assist with the child's transition to the foster home;
- review the child's Medical Passport with the foster parent;
- review the child's trauma history, reactions and behavioral health concerns with the foster parent, including a review of any trauma screens that have been conducted and any trauma treatment the child has participated in;
- offer insight for managing trauma reactions and avoiding triggers;
- review the child's educational stability plan with the foster parent;
- provide for the child's specific needs, including special needs;
- provide sufficient information to allow foster parents to make reasonable and prudent parenting decisions regarding the child's participation in age-appropriate, normative activities;
- locate and facilitate the provision of any support services the child and family may need; and
- facilitate a face-to-face permanency team meeting between foster parent(s) and birth parent(s), legal guardian or other lifelong connection.

NOTE: For emergency placements, necessary information shall be provided to the foster parents within one working day of the time the child is placed.

Notification to Matcher of Completed Placement

Within one working day, the child's Social Worker shall confirm the placement with the matcher by e-mail. If the placement did not occur, the e-mail must specify the reason.

The child's Social Worker shall complete the Placement screens in LINK. The family's FASU Social Worker shall visit the home within five days of a new placement.

FASU Supervisor Responsibilities

The FASU Supervisor shall, at least bi-weekly, review the matching log and any pending requests with the matcher and discuss any pending requests with the CPS team.

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**Requesting
Childcare and
Transportation
Costs**

To request reimbursement for childcare and transportation costs, follow this procedure:

Person	Activity
FASU Support Social Worker or Designee	Provide foster parent with the DCF-XXX, "Childcare and Transportation Reimbursement Invoice." Confirm attendance. Submit for supervisory approval. Submit for payment.
Foster parent	Complete and sign the invoice.

**Child's
Profile**

The child's Social Worker shall ensure that blank copies of the DCF-1095, "Child Profile for Respite Care," are included in the Placement Portfolio which is provided to the foster parent at the time of the child's placement.

**Mandatory
Training
Expenses**

The following procedures explain reimbursement for mandatory post-licensing training expenses.

**Reimbursement
for Mandatory
Post-Licensing
Training
Expenses**

Foster parents are eligible for reimbursement for transportation and childcare costs incurred while participating in mandatory post-licensing training.

Those licensees who hold a license to care for a specific child, *i.e.*, kin, fictive kin or independent, shall be required to attend post-licensing training in accordance with their individualized training plan and shall also be reimbursed for associated childcare and transportation expenses.

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Amount of Reimbursement Childcare reimbursement shall not exceed \$25.00 per evening or half day or \$50.00 for a full day of training.

The cost of childcare shall:

- be determined by the individual needs of the licensed family; and
- include the care of all children in the home including biological, adopted and foster children.

Such reimbursement cannot be requested for daycare costs while the foster parents are attending mandatory training if such daycare costs are already covered by Care4Kids or DCF daycare reimbursement.

Mileage reimbursement is provided for a round trip (home to training site and return home) and is calculated in accordance with the current GSA rate applicable to state employees.

Respite Care The following table explains the roles and responsibilities when using respite care:

Person	Action
Foster Parent	<p>Notify child's Social Worker and FASU Social Worker of a request for respite care.</p> <p>Complete the DCF-1095, "Child Profile for Respite Care," with information necessary for the child's care and give it to the respite care provider.</p> <p>Discuss the child's needs with the provider.</p>
Child's Social Worker	<p>Notify the FASU Social Worker of the family's respite request and any special circumstances of the case that could impact the respite home.</p>
FASU Social Worker	<p>Receive the respite request.</p> <p>If requested, assist the foster parent with filling out the DCF-1095.</p> <p>Determine the eligibility to receive respite care (14 days per calendar year).</p> <p>Facilitate a match if one is not identified by the foster family.</p> <p>Maintain a log of requests.</p> <p>Document and track the number of respite days used.</p>

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Respite Care (continued) The following table explains the roles and responsibilities when using respite care:

Person	Action
Foster Parent	<p>Contact the approved respite care provider. Make all the arrangements for the provider to come to the licensed home or facilitate the respite placement in the provider's home (request the Social Worker's assistance when needed). Supply the respite provider with the DCF-1095, the child's medical card and all supplies necessary for the child's care, e.g., medications, medical equipment, special formula, diapers, clean clothes, car seat, portable crib, favorite toy. Share child-specific educational, medical, emotional and social functioning information with the respite provider. Retrieve the DCF-1095 from the provider at the completion of the respite period.</p>

Completion and Documentation of Respite Care The table below sets forth the procedures for documenting the completion of respite care.

Person	Action
Foster Parent	Notify the FASU Social Worker when the respite period is completed.
FASU Staff	<p>Document the number of respite care days utilized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the LINK notes for the licensed family; • in the LINK notes for the respite provider; • in an email to the child's Social Worker; and • in the child's LINK record. <p>Authorize payment.</p>
CPS Program Manager	Pre-approve respite if the family is over the allowable days (14 days each calendar year) or clinical case plan or family preservation is needed.

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Extraordinary Expenses To request approval for extraordinary expenses for foster families, the child's Social Worker shall:

- consult with the FASU Social Worker, the FASU Social Work Supervisor and the FASU Program Manager regarding the resources of the family and availability of community resources to assist;
- determine the stability of the child's placement and anticipated length of time the child will be in the home;
- utilize the DCF-2103 "Extraordinary Expenses to Facilitate and Support a Placement," to document the child's and family's needs and the efforts made to secure the needed resources through other available funding sources;
- submit the DCF-2103 to the Social Work Supervisor and Program Manager for approvals; and
- document in LINK.

NOTE: Pre-approval from the child's Program Manager is required.

To request approval for extraordinary expenses to purchase tangible and concrete supports for a child's psychological, behavioral, medical or emotional needs, the child's Social Worker shall:

- consult with the FASU Social Work Supervisor, FASU Program Manager, Regional Office Health Advocate, RRG staff and other persons as needed, including the child's service providers, regarding the unmet needs of the child and family and the availability of Medicaid, contracted or credentialed providers to perform the needed service;
- locate the service provider;
- determine the scope of service, identify the desired outcome, and document the length of service and costs;
- utilize the DCF-2103 to document the child's and family's needs and the efforts to secure the needed resources through available funding sources;
- submit the DCF-2103 to the Social Work Supervisor and Program Manager for approvals; and
- document in LINK.

**Complaints
and
Regulatory
Issues**

Whenever DCF receives a complaint about or identifies a regulatory issue involving a foster home that is licensed by DCF, DCF shall respond promptly and, in all cases, respond in less than five business days.

Note: A complaint regarding a DCF licensed home or a child placing agency home may involve a regulatory issue even if it does not meet the criteria for acceptance as a report of alleged abuse or neglect as determined by the Careline.

The FASU Social Worker shall provide verbal notification to the foster parent immediately, to be followed by written notification of the facts that have resulted in non-compliance.

The FASU Social Worker must visit the home and discuss the concerns and, if appropriate, a remediation plan. If the complaint is valid or a regulatory violation does exist, the foster parent shall be given 20 business days to remediate the concern and achieve regulatory compliance.

If the foster parent cannot remediate the concern and achieve regulatory compliance within 20 business days of the notice, the Commissioner or designee may allow the foster parent the opportunity to submit a written plan outlining the steps that will be taken and the time necessary to achieve compliance.

The Commissioner or designee may reject the plan or request modifications to ensure regulatory compliance in order to protect the safety and well-being of the child.

The FASU Social Worker shall monitor all compliance activities.

The FASU Social Worker shall document the complaint and regulatory issues and all follow-up activities using the DCF-013A, "Assessment of Regulatory Compliance."

Cross reference: For the procedure regarding an investigation by the Special Investigations Unit of an accepted report involving a foster home, see DCF Policy 34-12-8."

Note: Complaints or regulatory concerns regarding a family approved by a private child placing agency will be handled by that agency in collaboration with DCF.

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LexisNexis

LexisNexis is an advanced search engine that links public records to identify connections between individuals. DCF has purchased several LexisNexis licenses.

The purpose of LexisNexis is to increase the number of children placed with relatives and fictive kin and to provide children in DCF care with a greater degree of placement stability and permanency by:

- identifying and locating relatives and other individuals with close relationships to a child or adult client;
- identifying other people in a child's and family's life who can act as supports in case planning even if they cannot become placement resources;
- recruiting foster parents;
- re-establishing connections between children and the important people in their lives; and
- supplementing official background checks.

Note: LexisNexis background checks do not replace the official criminal and CPS history checks required by law.

**LexisNexis
Authorized
Users**

Only DCF staff who have been designated as authorized users may access LexisNexis.

Authorized users of LexisNexis must be approved by their Regional Administrator or Division Director.

Access to LexisNexis is password-protected and an authorized user's password cannot be shared with an unauthorized user.

Each authorized user must sign the DCF-3017, "Acceptable Use of LexisNexis System."

A training session is required prior to using LexisNexis.

**Acceptable
Use and
Penalty for
Unauthorized
Use of
LexisNexis**

LexisNexis shall be used solely for Department of Children and Families business.

Unauthorized use of LexisNexis includes any activity that is not related directly to DCF business. Unauthorized use is a serious matter and will be referred to Human Resources for investigation, which may lead to discipline up to and including termination.

Other State of Connecticut and DCF Acceptable Use Policies are applicable to the use of LexisNexis.
