

FOSTER CARE SERVICES

Foster Care Services Overview

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Policy The Department of Children and Families' foster care, adoption and guardianship service system shall serve children who require placement into a family setting that will allow them to grow up healthy, safe, smart and strong.

OChYP and FASU The Office of Children and Youth in Placement (OChYP), located in the DCF Central Office, shall be a coordinating, planning and support office ensuring uniformity in the implementation of statewide foster care, guardianship and adoption initiatives.

Each of the six DCF Regions shall have a Foster and Adoption Services Unit (FASU) that shall report to the Regional chain of command. FASU units shall be responsible for implementing statewide initiatives and procedures related to foster care and adoption at the local level.

Documentation and Supervision Documentation of activities and decisions regarding individual foster parents shall be timely (within five days of the occurrence) and thorough.

Supervision of FASU staff shall be in accordance with DCF Policy 2-3-2, "Supervision."

Collaboration with Other DCF Divisions and Units Foster care staff shall collaborate and consult with other DCF units and divisions to address child-specific issues, including but not limited to:

- CPS staff;
 - the Careline and Special Investigations Unit;
 - Regional Resource Groups;
 - Health and Wellness;
 - Human Resources Management;
 - the Office of Legal Affairs; and
 - the Ombudsman.
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Legal Authority for Licensing Foster Homes The statutes and regulations of the State of Connecticut confer on DCF the legal authority and responsibility to provide safeguards for those children who must be removed from their own homes and placed in another family home to protect them or to provide them with specialized care.

No child in the custody of the Commissioner of Children and Families shall be placed with any person, unless such person is licensed or approved for that purpose. Any person licensed by DCF to accept placement of a child is deemed to be licensed to accept placement as a foster family or prospective adoptive family.

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-114(b)(1).

DCF foster families, including those wishing to adopt, are licensed in accordance with the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (R.C.S.A.) §17a-145-130 through §17a-145-160.

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Legal Authority for Licensing Foster Homes (continued)

There are exceptions for placing a child with a relative or fictive kin caregiver who is not licensed pending completion of the licensing process [Conn. Gen. Stat §17a-114(c)] or in a foster or adoptive home approved by a private, DCF-licensed child placing agency (Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-149).

Cross reference: DCF Policy 24-1 "Foster Care Practice Guide."

DCF may use other foster homes approved by private child placing agencies in accordance with state regulations.

Cross reference: The subsection on Therapeutic Foster Care at the end of this policy.

Categories of Foster Care Providers

DCF issues only one standard foster care license, but has established different categories of foster care providers:

A **foster parent** is a person licensed by DCF or approved by a DCF-licensed child placing agency to provide care for a child in a private family home.

A **pre-adoptive parent** is a foster parent who is licensed by DCF or approved by a DCF-licensed child placing agency and who is awaiting the placement of, or who has, a child placed in the family home for the purpose of adoption.

Any person licensed by DCF or approved by a child placing agency as a foster parent may accept placement of a child to provide temporary care or as a pre-adoptive placement. A written licensing assessment, known as the Home Study, shall specify which type of care is appropriate for the foster family.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 24-1 "Foster Care Practice Guide." for the proper format for Home Studies. Use, as appropriate to the case, 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."

DCF shall categorize the license for a particular foster parent as one of the following:

- general use (core foster or pre-adoptive care);
- relative care (child-specific);
- fictive kin care (child-specific, formerly known as special study care); and
- independent interstate care (child-specific for a child from outside of Connecticut).

Definitions of child-specific categories

Relative or kin: The person who provides foster care is doing so for a specific child related to the person by blood, marriage or adoption descended from a common ancestor not more than three generations removed.

Fictive kin (formerly Special Study): The person who provides foster care is doing so for a specific, unrelated child with whom the person has an emotionally significant relationship amounting to a familial relationship.

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Definitions of child-specific categories (continued)

Independent interstate: The person who provides foster care or pre-adoptive care is doing so for a specific child who is in the custody of another state or a private, out-of-state child placing agency and who is placed into a Connecticut home in accordance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-175 *et seq.*).

Purposes of Licensing

The purposes of foster care licensing are to:

- protect children in out-of-home care from abuse and neglect;
 - ensure that all foster care providers who are required by statute to be licensed conform to minimum regulatory requirements and DCF-established standards of quality;
 - ensure the health and well-being of children in out-of-home care; and
 - continuously improve the quality of childcare through DCF regulations and technical assistance.
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Who May Apply for a License

A person may apply for a foster care license if he or she:

- is a resident of Connecticut;
- is at least 21 years old;
- has a sufficient source of income to meet the needs of his or her family;
- has adequate space in the family's home for a foster child; and
- meets the requirements of the foster care regulations.

An undocumented immigrant who otherwise meets the regulatory requirements may be licensed as a foster parent for purposes of relative or fictive kin care if the person has obtained an ITIN (Individual Tax Identification Number).

DCF shall not deny any person the opportunity to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation or natural origin of the person or child involved.

Protective Services and Criminal History Records Search

As a requirement of the licensing assessment process, a search of child protective services and criminal history records, both historical and pending, shall be completed for the following persons:

- each applicant for licensure;
- each household member age 16 years and older who resides in the applicant's home; and
- at the FASU Supervisor's discretion, any person age 16 years and older who is not residing in the home but has regular unsupervised access to the child in the home.

Regular unsupervised access means periodic interaction with a child in the home for purposes of unsupervised child care, medical or other services to the child.

Note: These requirements also apply to foster and adoptive homes approved by DCF-licensed child placing agencies.

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What Checks are Required?

Initial licensing requires, for all household members age 16 years and older:

- FBI fingerprint-based checks;
- SPBI (COLLECT) checks;
- state child abuse and neglect registry checks, in each state of residence for the preceding five years;
- State of Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) checks.

Renewal of licensing requires, for all household members age 16 and over:

- SPBI (COLLECT) checks;
- state child abuse and neglect registry checks, in each state of residence for the preceding five years;
- local police checks;
- DMV checks; and
- FBI fingerprint-based checks for persons who have not previously had an FBI check.

In addition, when issuing an initial license or renewing a license, DCF in its discretion may conduct checks of any person who is not a household member and who is age 16 or older and who has regular unsupervised access to the child in the home. (**Note**, however, that the reasonable and prudent parent standard is applicable; for example, it is not necessary to check the child's occasional babysitter unless a specific concern is noted.)

The following **interim** checks may be conducted in the two-year period between the initial licensing check and the license renewal check for new household members or others with regular access to the child, age 16 or over:

- name/DOB COLLECT checks for in-state criminal records;
- local police checks;
- DMV checks; and
- state child abuse and neglect registry checks, in each state of residence for the preceding five years.

Granting of a License

A license to provide foster care shall be granted when the applicant:

- is a resident of Connecticut;
- is at least 21 years old;
- has a sufficient source of income to meet the needs of his or her family;
- has adequate space in the family's home for a foster child; and
- otherwise meets and is in compliance with the pre-licensing requirements and the foster care licensing regulations.

A foster care license shall be issued within 150 days of the signing of the initial application and is effective for two years.

Provisional Licenses

Provisional licenses shall not be granted.

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License Renewal

A FASU Social Worker shall assess the foster parent every two years to determine if his or her foster care license should be renewed.

A foster care license shall be renewed when the foster parent has completed DCF's licensing renewal requirements and is in continued compliance with the foster care licensing regulations.

Cross reference: DCF 24-1, "Foster Care Services" Practice Guide.

Mandatory Post-Licensing Training Requirements

Each core foster parent shall attend six modules of training per year. One module a year shall be on a topic related to trauma and one module a year shall be related to crisis intervention. A CPR module is required every two years. Each training shall last at least one hour and may include conferences, classes, symposiums or other types of training that will enhance the skills needed to care for children.

Child-specific caregivers, i.e., relative, fictive kin and independent foster parents, shall be provided with current training information and attend post-licensing training in accordance with his or her individualized training plan, as applicable, and based on the child's specific needs.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 21-5, "Health Care Standards and Practice for Children and Youth in Care," Practice Guide for training requirements specific to foster parents caring for a child with complex medical needs.

Causes for the Suspension or Revocation of a Foster Care License

A foster care license, including a license that is scheduled for renewal, may be suspended or revoked if the foster parent:

- fails to comply with applicable statutes and regulations regarding child placement and childcare;
 - fails to comply with applicable state and local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations relating to building, health, fire protection, safety, sanitation and zoning;
 - violates any of the provisions under which the foster care license has been issued or granted;
 - furnishes or makes any false or misleading statement to the Commissioner or designee in order to obtain or retain a foster care license;
 - refuses or fails to submit reports or make records available when requested by the Commissioner or designee;
 - fails to submit to a physical, mental or psychological examination or testing regarding the use of drugs or alcohol when requested by DCF;
 - fails or refuses to admit the Commissioner or designee to the property;
 - fails to discuss regulatory issues with the Commissioner or designee; or
 - fails or refuses to adhere to training requirements as set forth by DCF.
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Complaints and Regulatory Violations

Whenever DCF receives a complaint about or identifies a regulatory issue or other significant event (e.g., multiple Careline reports or unsubstantiated allegations) involving a foster home that is licensed by DCF, DCF shall respond promptly and, in no case, in more than five business days. This includes non-accepted calls to 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 shall 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, regulatory issue and/or significant event and all follow-up activities using the DCF-013A, "Assessment of Regulatory Compliance."

Note: Complaints and concerns about foster homes approved by private child placing agencies are handled by the approving CPA.

Summary Suspension

If DCF determines that the health, safety or welfare of a foster child requires emergency action, DCF may summarily suspend a foster care license.

DCF shall immediately remove any foster child residing in a foster home for which the license has been summarily suspended. The Social Worker shall provide the foster home with a written notice of the reasons for the summary suspension and the licensee's right to an administrative hearing. (An administrative hearing shall not be required prior to removal in the case of a summary suspension.)

Upon summary suspension, DCF shall, within ten business days, issue a foster care license revocation notice by certified mail to the foster parent whose license is summarily suspended. Such notice shall include the facts and conduct which warrant the license revocation and shall provide an opportunity for an administrative hearing.

The summary suspension shall remain in effect pending the completion of the administrative hearing or until further order of the Commissioner or designee.

No additional foster children shall be placed in a foster home under summary suspension until a final decision is rendered in the matter.

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Hearing on Summary Suspension, Revocation or Non-Renewal of License

Any foster parent may, within ten business days after receipt by certified mail of notice of summary suspension or intended revocation or non-renewal of a foster care license, request an administrative hearing. The hearing shall be held within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the foster parent's request for a hearing. A hearing may be postponed beyond 30 calendar days by agreement of the parties or, at the discretion of the hearing officer, upon the request of the foster parent for good cause shown. Revocation of the license shall be stayed until such hearing is held.

If no hearing is requested within ten business days of the foster parent's receipt of the revocation notice, the action of DCF is final.

Foster Care Placements

Relative and fictive kin families are the preferred placement options for children who require out-of-home care. In all instances, placement decisions shall be determined by a child's specific needs and best interests.

Siblings shall be placed in the same foster home unless the documented special needs of one or more of the siblings preclude placing them together.

In a conflict between proximity of the foster home to the child's parents and keeping siblings together, the principle that siblings shall be placed together takes precedence, and DCF shall ensure visitation with the birth family.

When placing a child in foster care, DCF shall not discriminate on the basis of the race, color, sexual orientation or national origin of the foster parent or the child.

DCF shall act in accordance with the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) to:

- decrease the length of time that children wait to be adopted;
- prevent discrimination in the placement of children on the basis of race, color, or national origin; and
- facilitate the identification and recruitment of foster and adoptive parents who can meet children's needs.

Legal Reference: P.L. 103-382, § 551-554, "The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994" (MEPA); 42 U.S.C. §5115a and 42 U.S.C. §622(b) (9), as amended by the Small Business Job Protection Act, P.L. 104-188, August 20, 1996.

Foster Care Immunizations

DCF's expectation is that children in care are placed in homes where the foster family is fully immunized consistent with ACIP/AAP guidelines and the recommendations. The department will not place children in homes where the foster parents and/or their children are unimmunized or under immunized.

Cross Reference: DCF Practice Guide: "Health Care Standards and Practice for Children and Youth in Care".

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Foster Family Profiles and Surveys

FASU staff and private child placing agencies shall create a Foster Family Profile for each foster family using the DCF-4928, "Foster Family Profile." The Profile shall be distributed to each child who is 12 years of age or older at least seven calendar days prior to the placement or, in the case of an emergency placement, as soon as possible.

The Foster Family Profile shall contain information including but not limited to:

- the name, age and gender of each person living in the household;
- information about pets in the household;
- the race and ethnicity of the family and the primary language spoken in the home; and
- a brief summary of the household and neighborhood, including family schedule, hobbies and expectations.

When a child age seven years or older leaves or is removed from a foster home, the OChYP shall, within 15 calendar days, provide the child with a Foster Family Survey. The results of such surveys shall be used to gather information relevant to the recruitment, training and retention of foster families.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen Stat. §17a-114e.

Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

A foster parent shall have the authority, without prior approval from DCF or Superior Court for Juvenile Matters, to allow a child in his or her care to participate in normal childhood activities that are age- appropriate or developmentally-appropriate for the child based on the reasonable and prudent parent standard, provided:

- such activities comply with provisions included in any existing case plan established by DCF or court order; and
- the parent or guardian of the child is afforded the opportunity to provide input into the development of the case plan.

Normal childhood activities means extracurricular, enrichment and social activities that may include but are not limited to overnight activities outside the direct supervision of the caregiver for periods of up to 48 hours.

Age-appropriate and **developmentally-appropriate** means activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or maturity level or that are determined to be appropriate for a child based on the cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age group, or in the case of a specific child, activities or items that are suitable for a child based on the child's cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral capacities.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-114d.

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Maximum Number of Children in the Home/ Population Limits

The maximum number of children who may reside in a foster home is five children, including foster children and the family's birth and adopted children.

Except when a sibling group is placed together, or in special circumstances as deemed appropriate through the waiver process, children shall not be matched to a foster home if that placement results in:

- more than three foster children in the home;
- more than two children under two years of age in the home; or
- more than three children under six years of age in the home.

In no case shall the foster family care for more than two non- ambulatory children who are not capable of self-preservation.

Note: When local ordinances specify that fewer children may reside in the home, the local ordinance shall prevail.

Cross reference: DCF 24-1, "Foster Care Services" Practice Guide.

Waivers

A foster parent shall comply with all relevant regulations unless a waiver for a specific requirement of a regulation has been granted by the Commissioner or designee.

Except in the case of non-compliance with a statutory requirement or a safety-related regulation, a waiver for a specific requirement may be granted if a foster parent is in substantial compliance with the intent of the specific requirement being waived or if the intent of the specific requirement being waived will be satisfactorily achieved in a manner other than that prescribed by the requirement, provided that such waiver is consistent with the needs of the foster child placed or to be placed in the home.

No waiver shall be granted for non-compliance with a statutory requirement or a safety-related regulation.

A waiver shall specify the particular requirement being waived, the duration of the waiver and the terms under which the waiver is granted. If the foster parent fails to comply with the waiver in any way, the waiver shall be subject to immediate revocation at the discretion of the Commissioner or designee. There is no right to appeal the denial of a waiver request or the revocation of a previously-granted waiver.

Note: The placement of a household member on the Central Registry of Abuse or Neglect of Children is a safety requirement that cannot be waived. Prior to the placement, the Regional Office must review any such Central Registry finding and, if appropriate, reverse the decision and remove the person from the Central Registry. A substantiation without placement on the Central Registry may be waived provided that, prior to the placement, the underlying facts have been assessed and it has been determined that the person is not currently a risk to children.

Waiver approvals shall be documented in the DCF-009, "Foster Care Licensing Placement Waiver Request." The chart below outlines the approval level for each type of waiver.

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Waivers
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Type of Waiver	Approving Authority
Physical Requirements of the Home (egress, pools, lead paint for children less than six years old)	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Telephone	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Children's Bedroom, Clothing, Privacy	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
In-home Daycare	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Financial Condition	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Food and Water	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Animals	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Health Standards	CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Simultaneous Licensing by the Department of Developmental Services or Another Child-Placing Agency	Director of OChYP
Criminal History and Pending Criminal Cases	Commissioner if precluded by RCSA §17a-145-152. Otherwise CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Substantiated Child Protective Services History or Pending CPS Cases	Commissioner if precluded by RCSA §17a-145-152. Otherwise CPS Program Supervisor and FASU Program Supervisor
Over-capacity	Regional Administrator
More than One Therapeutic Foster Care Placement	Regional Administrator (with notification to Director of OChYP)

Extra-ordinary Expenses

DCF may pay extraordinary expenses determined to be in the child's or foster parent's best interests and not included in the foster care reimbursement rate or covered by Medicaid or contracted services.

DCF, at its sole discretion and within available appropriations, may fund extraordinary expenses for a child or foster parent in order to purchase:

- tangible and concrete supports for a relative or fictive kin caregiver to facilitate a placement;
- specialized services or opportunities in order to meet the child's psychological, behavioral, medical and emotional needs; or
- equipment or necessary environmental adaptations to a home or vehicle as a result of the child's medical condition.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 24-1 "Foster Care Practice Guide." for examples, procedures and approval processes.

Cross references: DCF Policy 21-20, "Unique Service Expenditure Plans;" DCF Policy 2-2, "Fiscal Services Division".

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Reports of Abuse or Neglect

All accepted Careline reports with allegations of child abuse or neglect in which the alleged perpetrator is a licensed or approved foster parent with an active placement or who had an active placement at the time the event took place shall be investigated by the DCF Special Investigations Unit (SIU).

Cross reference: DCF Policy 22-1-1, "Special Investigations Unit."

Licensed and approved foster parents who do not have an active placement but about whom allegations of suspected abuse or neglect of a birth or adopted child have been made shall be investigated by the Area Office.

Respite Care

Respite care is a support service for foster families, at their request, that identifies an alternate licensed caregiver for a period of up to 14 days. The purpose is to:

- provide a scheduled period of rest and relief from ongoing parental responsibilities usually, but not necessarily, for an overnight period in the alternate caregiver's home;
- allow for the planned care of foster children by alternative providers with no disruption to the foster parent's reimbursement; and
- assist in decreasing placement disruptions.

Note: Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-114d, the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard means that a foster parent may engage an alternative caregiver who is not licensed or approved by DCF for up to 48 hours.

DayCare for Foster Children

When a foster parent works out of the home and requests day care for the foster child, the Department staff shall determine if day care is in the child's best interests in accordance with the child's case plan.

The day care provider shall be:

- licensed by the Department of Public Health (DPH), or
 - a person who is exempt from licensing by the Department of Public Health but who has been approved by DCF.
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Payment Options

Foster parents may request assistance to pay for day care as follows:

- The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) provides funding for day care through the Child Care Assistance Program (Care 4 Kids) Foster parents must apply directly to OEC for these funds. The application for Care 4 Kids shall be done immediately upon placement of children who require day care.
- The Social Worker shall ask the foster parent for a copy of the Care 4 Kids certificate to file in the case record.
- If OEC funds are not available, DCF will pay the cost of daycare up to the rate that would be paid by Care 4 Kids
- If, at the time of placement, the foster parent requests day care assistance by DCF, DCF shall provide funding up to the rate that would be paid for by OEC, Care 4 Kids until OEC Care 4 Kids begins funding.

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Payment Options (continued)

- If daycare costs exceed the maximum allowable funding by OEC, Care 4 Kids, the assigned Social Worker will submit requests for additional funding for approval. This approval is based on available funding and is to be approved by the CPS Program Supervisor responsible for the case.

Please go to OEC Care4Kids website for information and rates.
(www.ctcare4kids.com)

Responsibilities of Foster Parent requesting reimbursement for DayCare

The child's Social Worker shall consider the foster parent's work schedule when determining if the child's needs can be met by placement, or continued placement, in that foster home.

A foster parent must:

- provide proof of employment in the form of a letter from the employer verifying the hours of employment;
 - notify DCF of his/her work schedule at the following times:
 - prior to the placement of a child in the home; and
 - after a placement has been made if the parent then becomes employed or changes his/her work schedule;
 - identify a day care provider that is licensed by the Department of Public Health or approved by DCF; and
 - prior to placing the foster child with a day care provider:
 - discuss the proposed arrangements with the child's Social Worker;
 - obtain the Department's approval of any day care provider; and
 - apply to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) for day care payment through Care 4 Kids.
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To Request Payment by DCF

If OEC funds are not available, the foster parent may request funds from DCF as follows:

Foster Parent:

- Submit a written request for the day care payment to the child's worker, including documentation of the cost of weekly day care.
- Provide a copy of the OEC Child Care Program application and/or denial letter to the DCF Social Worker.

Child's Social Worker:

- Determine the amount of funding that DCF will pay for day care.
- Contact the day care provider to confirm the weekly day care amount.

Social Work Supervisor:

- Review the request with the child's Social Worker.
- Enter the request for the day care payment in LINK to be paid directly to the provider.
- Forward the request to the Program Supervisor.

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To Request Payment by DCF (continued)

Program Supervisor:

- Approve or deny the request for payment and enter the decision in LINK.
- Notify the Social Worker of the decision.
- Provide written notification of the payment decision, including the monthly amount that DCF will fund and the foster parent contribution to:
 - the foster parent,
 - the day care provider, and
 - the FASU relicensing worker.
- File letter in case record.

DCF Responsibilities regarding DayCare

The Department shall ensure that children under its care are supervised by appropriate persons. Day care services for a foster child shall be considered based on the child's best interests in accordance with the child's case plan or a case planning conference.

When a foster parent requests day care for a foster child, the child's Social Worker shall:

- verify the foster parent's employment and the need for day care;
- discuss the request with the Social Work Supervisor;
- collaborate with the foster parents to select an appropriate DPH licensed day care provider or a DCF approved provider;
- verify the cost of the day care;
- notify the assigned Foster and Adoption Services Unit (FASU) worker that the foster parent is utilizing day care;
- verify the foster parent applied to DSS for daycare payment through Care 4 Kids; and
- Document in the computer system:
 - the foster parent's request for day care;
 - the Department's decision; and
 - any conditions for the use of day care.

Quarterly Unannounced Visits to Day Care Provider

The child's Social Worker shall make unannounced visits to the selected day care provider, including both licensed and approved exempt providers, on a quarterly basis.

Pre-School

The department recognizes and supports the importance of early childhood education. In the event that a three and/or four year old child in placement does not attend a daycare, it is expected that the child will be enrolled in a Pre-School Program. DCF will pay the cost of the Pre-School up to the Care4Kids rate.

Approval for Payment of Pre-School Costs

Foster parents must submit documentation of the pre-school monthly tuition cost to the child's assigned social worker.

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Other Forms of Alternative Care

Self-respite: An authorized individual who provides respite in the licensed home for up to 14 days. State and federal criminal history and CPS checks and DCF approval are required.

Exempt daycare: Daycare provided within the foster home for less than three hours a day on a consistent basis by a person who has a relationship with the child. State and federal criminal history and CPS checks may be required. (Note: Exempt daycare providers are not required to be licensed by the Office of Early Childhood.)

Family resource support: A person identified by the foster parent as a resource for the temporary care of the child on an as-needed basis. Criminal history and CPS checks and DCF approval are not required if the person is providing care for a period of less than 48 hours. DCF does not reimburse for this resource.

Babysitting: A person judged to be appropriate by the foster parent to care for the child while the parent attends to personal matters, e.g., medical or school appointments and social functions. Criminal history and CPS checks and DCF approval are not required if the person is providing care for a period of less than 48 hours. DCF does not reimburse for this resource.

Sleepovers: A normal childhood experience available to children in placement. Under the reasonable and prudent parent standard, the foster parent may allow a foster child to attend a sleepover at the home of another person, provided the foster parent has enough information to make an informed decision that the child's needs will be met. Criminal history and CPS checks and DCF approval are not required if the sleepover is less than 48 hours in duration.

Note: Expectations for children with complex medical needs may differ. Refer to Practice Guide: "Health Care Standards and Practice for Children and Youth in Care".

Foster Parent Health Insurance

Any foster parent licensed by DCF for six months or more and his or her dependents, as defined by state statute, shall be eligible to apply for group health and dental insurance as arranged by the State Comptroller.

Eligibility shall continue until such person is no longer licensed as a foster parent.

The State of Connecticut's authorized insurance provider for foster parents shall:

- offer health insurance to those eligible as long as it remains the health insurance provider selected by the Insurance Commissioner;
- bill eligible parents directly and collect all premiums;
- provide all applications, forms, rate sheets and benefit descriptions to DCF; and
- offer a yearly open enrollment period of not less than 30 consecutive days.

At the conclusion of the foster parent assessment process, the FASU worker shall inform the foster care licensee of the availability of health insurance and provide written information explaining the eligibility requirements and how to apply.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §5-259(f).

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Therapeutic Foster Care

DCF shall operate a therapeutic foster care (TFC) system for children with serious emotional disturbances, complex behavioral health needs and complex medical needs.

The Regional Office staff shall identify those children who may meet the criteria for placement in a TFC home, and generate and assess referrals.

TFC foster parents shall be specially-skilled.

The TFC provider agency shall ensure the integration of behavioral, mental health, recreational, cultural and psychological interventions and supports the child needs to succeed in the community using a wraparound services approach.

TFC wraparound service provisions shall be tailored to the child's age, developmental level and educational needs.

The TFC provider may apply for a waiver to allow one additional unrelated, TFC-eligible child to be matched to a home with a current TFC placement. Such waivers shall be reserved for placements in experienced foster homes that have demonstrated a history of successful and stable placements, cooperation with DCF and the requisite skills and training to ensure high level outcomes for all children in or to be placed in the home.

No waiver that results in more than two unrelated TFC-eligible children being placed in the same home shall be granted.
