

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 12: Foster Family Home Licensing	Effective Date: June 1, 2019
	Section 7: Licensing Home Visits	Version: 3

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS), its designee, or a licensing worker will conduct a minimum of two (2) visits to the home of the prospective foster family for the purpose of assessing the physical environment of the home and engaging in a thoughtful dialogue with all members of the household about foster parenting or adoption.

Dually licensed homes are licensed to provide both foster care and licensed child care or adult foster care. Licensing of child care homes is done by Family Social Services Agency (FSSA) Division of Family Resources and adult foster care homes is done by the Bureau of Developmental Disability Services (BDDS). In the event that a licensed home is a foster family home and a child care home/adult foster care home, licensing workers from each agency are to coordinate the licensing process. A foster family home must have DCS approval prior to being licensed for daycare/adult foster care. A waiver will be required for homes seeking to be dually licensed.

Code References

1. [IC 31-27-4-4: Consultation with fire prevention and building safety commission](#)
2. [IC 31-27-4-10: Investigation of applicants](#)
3. [IC 31-27-4-16: Duration of license; limitations; renewal](#)
4. [IC 31-27-4-18: Inspection of foster family homes](#)
5. [IC 31-27-4-19: Records of monitoring activities and inspections](#)
6. [IC 31-27-4-20: Cooperation by licensees](#)

PROCEDURE

The licensing worker will:

1. Ensure the applicant has received the forms in the licensing packet prior to the first licensing visit using the [Initial Licensure Checklist for Foster Family Homes \(SF53153\)](#). See separate policy, [12.03 Initial Licensing Packet](#);
2. Schedule the first home visit concurrently with the Pre-service Training phase;
3. At the home visits:
 - a. Ensure the applicant has received the [Foster Parent Resource Guide](#);
 - b. Review and discuss the content of all forms with the applicant and answer any questions;
 - c. Provide the applicant with assistance in completing the forms, if necessary; and
 - d. Collect all completed forms.

Note: The medical forms, child care plan, residential pool requirements/body of water safety plan and water analysis forms may be completed and returned as late as at the second home visit.

4. Discuss family members' feelings (attitudes, expectations, concerns) about resource parenting;
5. Discuss the family's [Child Care Plan \(SF54608\)](#);
6. Conduct an assessment of the physical environment of the home, documenting findings on the [Resource Family Home Physical Environment Checklist \(SF53186\)](#);
7. Discuss any concerns about the physical environment of the home with the applicant;
8. Verify the identity of all household members. See separate policy, [2.09 Verifying Identity](#);
9. Verify marriage and divorce status, if applicable;
10. Complete the [Financial Profile](#), included in the [Foster/Adoptive Family Inventory \(SF54607\)](#);
11. Ensure appropriate background checks have been completed. See separate policy, [13.9 Conducting Background Checks for Foster Home Licensing](#); and
12. Request a waiver from the Central Office Foster Care Licensing Unit for the home to be dually licensed if needed. See separate policy, [12.19 Waivers](#).

When the licensing worker receives the forms from the applicant, copies of the [Child Care Plan \(SF54608\)](#) and [Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement \(SF54642\)](#) forms should be:

1. Given to the applicant; and
2. Placed in the licensing file.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Discussing Family Member Feelings About Fostering

When adults make a decision to become foster parents they also make the decision for their children to become part of a family that fosters. Fostering is a very significant change in anyone's life, even more so for the children within the family. Children, even within the same family, will often have very different views about the prospect of becoming a family that fosters.

Initially, many children are very enthusiastic about the idea of fostering. During the course of the assessment, if the child is capable of understanding, the licensing worker must talk to him or her about the idea of a foster child coming to stay. The licensing worker will evaluate how realistic the child's expectations are and how difficult or easily they might adapt to life within a family that fosters. The licensing worker must talk to them regularly throughout the application process. The parents should have regular family meetings to discuss how becoming a resource family will affect each family member and how current or future difficulties will be addressed.

Children's views may change from loving fostering to hating it, particularly in the early stages when the expectations of the children come up against the realities of the situation. For example, a child may have been looking forward to a new playmate that they could play football and other sports with, but then later find out that the foster child is not interested in sports and only wants to play computer games. This kind of disappointment may be quite hard on him or her.

The licensing worker should also bear in mind that many children will not want to tell their parents about their dissatisfactions with fostering, for fear they might be seen as letting their parents down. The licensing worker should continuously explore how the children are feeling and coping with fostering. This should continue even after they have fostered for a few years. As children mature, they may be more open to the idea of having foster children in their home at certain times and less open at others. It is not uncommon for a foster family to take a break from fostering for short periods of time to focus on their family and children.

Evaluating a home for dual license

The Licensing Unit should evaluate and update the following information annually to determine whether a family or individual should be granted a waiver to be dually licensed:

1. How many biological children does the foster parent have in the home and what are their ages?
2. Have any of the household children been adopted, and if so, what are their current needs?
3. How many children does the foster parent provide daycare for and what are each of their ages? If it is adult foster care, how many adults do they provide care for or plan to provide care for and what are each of their needs?
4. Does the foster parent have anyone who works in the daycare on a regular basis, and if so, what is their schedule? Does this person provide care for daycare children and foster children?
5. What is the family structure within the home?
6. Who are the foster family's support system?
7. Check the following link: www.childcarefinder.in.gov and note if there are any concerns regarding the daycare license.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement \(SF54642\)](#)
2. [Child Care Plan \(SF54608\)](#)
3. [Initial Licensure Checklist for Foster Family Homes \(SF53153\)](#)
4. www.childcarefinder.in.gov
5. [Foster Parent Resource Guide](#) – Available in hard copy
6. [Resource Family Home Physical Environment Checklist \(SF 53186\)](#)
7. [Foster/Adoptive Family Inventory \(SF 54607\)](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

N/A