

**South Carolina Department of Social Services
Human Services Policy and Procedure Manual**

CHAPTER 7, Foster Family Licensing & Support

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760.2 Foster Parent Training

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

As partners in the agency's mission to provide for the safety and wellbeing of children in foster care, foster parents must possess the necessary knowledge and skills. Accordingly, this section describes the procedures by which the agency will apply and monitor foster parent training requirements at initial licensure and on an ongoing basis.

POLICY:

1. Training for prospective and current foster parents shall include, when available by subject matter, evidence- and research-based curriculum and information.
2. Foster parent applicants must obtain a minimum of 14 hours of pre-service training prior to initial licensure. The training will provide information to prospective parents that will promote critical thinking and understanding in the following areas:
 - a. birth family issues (including introduction to the Shared Parenting model);
 - b. children's identities, cultural heritage, and self-esteem (including MEPA requirements);
 - c. permanency for children;
 - d. placement stability;
 - e. child growth and developmental stages (including information pertaining to the reasonable and prudent parent standard and Independent Living Program services);
 - f. grief, loss, trauma, and separation issues; and
 - g. behavioral concerns and discipline.
3. Licensed foster parents must obtain a minimum of 14 hours of training per year prior to license renewal (28 hours total). When two parents are in a home, each must meet this requirement. Training will be received in the following manner.
 - a. Foster parents may obtain up to 8 recertification hours per 2-year licensing period through on-line training from the National Foster Parent Association or any site linked on their website.

- b. Foster parents may obtain up to 8 recertification hours per 2-year licensing period through completing mail-in home study modules provided by the Palmetto Health Special Care Center.
 - c. Foster parents may receive up to 4 hours per 2-year licensing periods of child-specific training or instruction as it relates to a foster child placed in the home (e.g. therapy or medical visits with child, WIC education, IEP or 504 conferences with school).
 - d. Foster parents may receive up to 4 hours training recertification hours per 2-year licensing period through attending family strengthening training.
 - e. No more than 8 recertification hours can be claimed on the same topic delivered by the same presenter during a 2-year licensing period.
 - f. Foster parents may obtain unlimited training recertification hours for attending foster care-related training or conferences offered by a State DSS-approved provider. All 28 recertification training hours may be obtained under this option.
 - g. A maximum of 4 recertification hours may be carried over from one 2-year licensing period to the next.
4. Foster parents who received pre-service training prior to July 1, 2016 must attend specific training related to the reasonable and prudent parent standard.
 5. It is the foster parents' responsibility to meet the minimum training required for initial and ongoing licensing.
 6. Training will be considered to meet licensing requirements if it is a planned and organized activity designed to impart skills, techniques, and methodologies to a foster parent or a group of foster parents to assist in maintaining the safety, stability, and well-being of foster children who reside within their home
 7. Individualized instruction specifically to meet a child's needs is acceptable to meet licensing requirements if the instruction was provided by an authorized source and to benefit a foster child placed in the home at the time of instruction.
 8. The viewing of standard television programs or reading of articles from popular magazines or daily newspapers shall not be viewed as complying with the completion of pre-service or annual foster parent training requirements.
 9. All recertification training must be relevant to:
 - a. the foster care process;
 - b. caring for the child in foster care;
 - c. meeting the emotional, physical, or educational needs of the child in foster care; or
 - d. the impact fostering has on the foster family.

Unrelated training hours will not be accepted toward foster care recertification.

10. All prospective and current foster families must be afforded the same training opportunities. Further, specific training requirements shall not be targeted based on the race, color, national origin, religion, state of residence, age, disability, political belief, sex, or sexual orientation of the foster child or family. Training on cultural diversity and/or transracial placement must be provided to all prospective caregivers and must be provided in a non-biased, non-threatening environment.
11. A license or license renewal cannot be approved if training requirements are not met.

PROCEDURES:

1. All training hours obtained by a foster parent will be documented in the CAPSS Person screen.
 - a. Upon notification that a prospective foster parent has completed the 14 hours of pre-service training, the Initial Licensing Coordinator (ILC) shall update the CAPSS record using the code, "Pre-Service (14 hours)" and the date of completion. Brief comments received from the trainer may be entered into the Training Comments field. It is especially important that the ILC document any concerns the trainer may have had regarding the suitability of the prospective parents.
 - b. The ILC will file notes and correspondence regarding the pre-service training in the file for reference during application determination.
 - c. At each quarterly visit, the Family Support Coordinator (FSC) shall inquire if the foster parents have participated in training. For each new training completed, a copy of the certificate shall be provided to the FSC for the license record.
 - d. The FSC shall annotate the CAPSS record using codes appropriate to the type of training obtained. Most training will fall in the category of "Other" and should be described in the field provided. The date of completion and any comments from the trainer or about the training should be entered into the Training Comments field.
2. The Foster Family and Licensing Support State Director must approve requests for specialized training for foster parents to meet training requirements.
3. Informal training of foster parents is the responsibility of the FSC and shall occur on an ongoing basis. Each conversation with a foster family is an opportunity to provide education about the needs of foster children and relevant systemic issues. These conversations will not be considered as part of the required training. Topics for which the foster families should have knowledge and skills shall include (but shall not limited to) the following:

- a. protection of foster children from harmful experiences while in care;
 - b. relicensing requirements;
 - c. the purposes of foster care (and the expectation that it is temporary);
 - d. services available to the child and family;
 - e. board payment rates and purposes;
 - f. reimbursable expenses and how to request reimbursement;
 - g. working with birth families;
 - h. medical care and expectations for foster children;
 - i. legal matters in the life of a foster care case;
 - j. the role of DSS and its various program areas;
 - k. participation in Foster Care Review Board updates;
 - l. the reasonable and prudent parent standard;
 - m. special considerations for youth eligible for and/or receiving Independent Living services.
4. Conversations with foster parents on any of the above topics and others should be thoroughly documented in the CAPSS Licensing screen using appropriate dictation codes.

DOCUMENTATION:

- Contacts with foster family and training staff/providers
- Copies of training completion documentation
- Approval documentation for non-agency trainings

COLLABORATION:

- Initial Licensing Coordinator
- Foster Family and Licensing Support Coordinator (FSC)
- Foster Family and Licensing Support Supervisor (FSS)
- Foster Family and Licensing State Director
- Private Training Providers

REFERENCES:

Legal Citations:

Multi-Ethnic Placement Act & Interethnic Adoption Provisions

- 42 U.S.C.A. § 671(a)(18): general mandates
- 42 U.S.C.A. § 622(b)(7): diligent recruitment
- 42 U.S.C.A. § 674 & 45 C.F.R. § 1355.38: enforcement

- 42 U.S.C.A. § 1996b: Title VI violation
- 42 U.S.C.A. § 2000a et seq.: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

42 U.S.C.A. § 622(b)(16): disaster preparedness

42 U.S.C.A. § 671(a)(10): RPP requirements

42 U.S.C.A. § 671(a)(24): foster parent training, RPP training

42 U.S.C.A. § 675(10)-(11): RPP definitions

S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-2380: foster parent training

S.C. Code Reg. § 114-550: licensing regulations

Tools:

Forms:

Practice Guidance:

REVISION COMMENTS: