




State of Florida
Department of Children and Families


Rick Scott
Governor

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

DATE: January 24, 2012

TO: Regional Directors

THROUGH:  John Cooper, Assistant Secretary for Operations

FROM:  Debra Ervin, Acting Director Office of Child Welfare/Acting Executive Director Family and Community Services

SUBJECT: Child Welfare Certification Update #3

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on child welfare certification. We continue to receive questions from the field about fees, pre-service training curriculum, and the Florida Administrative Code.

BACKGROUND: Section 402.40, F.S. was substantially revised in 2011 and now requires child welfare staff to be tested and credentialed via a third party credentialing entity. The Florida Certification Board (FCB) is currently the only approved credentialing entity. Please refer to attached memorandums dated October 4, 2011 and November 28, 2011 for additional information.

Over the past three months we have been working with the FCB to ensure current employees are granted reciprocity. Regions and Community-Based Care (CBC) lead agencies have been working diligently to ensure current employees have submitted the Child Welfare Certification by Reciprocity application and providing spreadsheets listing employee names and current certification type for validation in Skillnet.

In December the Department developed a working draft of the core competencies for child protective investigators, case managers, and licensing staff. Once approved, the FCB will use these competencies to develop new child welfare tests within their testing system. However, until these tests are developed, the FCB will use Skillnet for administration of the post test for new employees.

ACTION REQUESTED: Please ensure child welfare staff are briefed on this memorandum and the following specific updates.

1. **Certification Fees:** While FCB continues to use the Department's post test, the certification fee is \$100. By the end of this fiscal year, FCB will finalize and implement the new child welfare tests, at which point the fee will be \$150.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

- Additional funds will not be provided to CBC lead agencies for certification. Each CBC should determine if their agency will pay for certification or require the employee to pay.
 - The Department will pay for certification for all child protective investigators and Department employees. Billing will be made directly from the FCB to the Department at central office. Child Protective Investigators who work for Sheriff's will also be paid by the Department at least through June 30, 2012.
 - The reciprocity program will be open until October 31, 2012. There is no fee for certification issued through the reciprocity program. All credentials granted through reciprocity will expire on October 31, 2013. Eligible applicants seeking certification by reciprocity after October 31, 2012 will be required to pay a certification fee.
2. Verifying Current Certification: The FCB is working directly with employers to verify eligibility for certification by reciprocity, so please do not submit copies of certificates to the FCB.
 3. Training: The Department encourages all child welfare providers to use the Department's current pre-service training curriculum. Section 402.40, F.S., requires the Department to review and approve all pre-service training curriculum. The current pre-service curriculum is the only approved curriculum at this time. During the next few months, the Department will establish a steering committee to guide revisions to the current pre-service curriculum.
 4. Skillnet: Skillnet will continue to be operational until June 30, 2012. During the next few months we will explore the use of FSFN as a training tracking system. It is critical that training hours continue to be entered in Skillnet as these hours are used by the Office of Revenue Management for training allocations and reporting training hours to the Administration for Children and Families.
 5. Florida Administrative Code. The Department has received approval to proceed with revisions to the code. The new statute takes precedence over the code where applicable. The Department will make initial changes but will involve trainers and other interested parties in the process.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions, or for additional information please contact Patricia Armstrong at patricia_armstrong@dcf.state.fl.us or 850-717-4430.

cc: Community-Based Care Lead Agencies
Sheriffs' Offices

Attachments (2)



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Rick Scott
Governor

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

DATE: October 4, 2011

TO: Regional Directors, Community-Based Lead Agencies, and Sheriffs' Offices

THROUGH: John Cooper, Assistant Secretary for Operations

FROM: *J Self* Jamie Self, Executive Director, Family and Community Services
Christie Ferris, Director, Office of Child Welfare

SUBJECT: Child Welfare Training and Certification – Effective October 1, 2011

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify you of critical changes to our child welfare training and certification program that are required to implement House Bill 279. This legislation substantially revises s. 402.40, F.S. and requires child welfare staff hired on or after October 1, 2011 to earn and maintain professional certification from a professional credentialing entity.

Effective October 3, 2011, the Department approved the Florida Certification Board (FCB) as a child welfare credentialing entity. Although the law allows the Department to approve more than one credentialing entity, the FCB is currently the only approved child welfare credentialing entity in Florida.

Since passage of this legislation, the FCB has been working with representatives from the Department, Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agencies, case management organizations, state university system, and representatives from the Sheriffs' Offices to identify the child welfare core competencies and standards. These workgroups have been very productive and will continue to guide implementation activities.

Effective October 3, 2011, changes to child welfare certification include the following:

Credentialing

- 1) The FCB will grant reciprocity and award child welfare certification to all individuals who hold a current Department-issued child welfare certification in good standing. In addition, individuals who complete the Phase I Post test and Phase 2 Field Based Performance Assessment by December 31, 2011, will also be granted reciprocity. Reciprocity into the FCB certification system will be completed at no cost to the Department, CBCs, Sheriffs, or certificate holder for a period of 12 months through October 3, 2012.
- 2) All child welfare staff that entered pre-service child welfare training prior to October 1, 2011 will be permitted to complete their current training program. The contract with the University of South Florida (USF) has been extended to December 31, 2011 to ensure a smooth transition from our current certification process to the new requirements. Employees who complete the Phase I Post-test and the Phase 2 Field Based Performance Assessment (FBPA) by December 31, 2011 must submit an application for certification to

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

the FCB that includes a letter from the USF documenting successful completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 training.

- 3) During the reciprocity period of October 3, 2011 through October 3, 2012, the FCB will award credentials in the following categories:
 - a. Protective Investigator
 - b. Protective Investigator Supervisor
 - c. Protective investigator Specialist
 - d. Case Manager
 - e. Case Manager Supervisor
 - f. Case Manager Specialist
 - g. Licensing Counselor
 - h. Licensing Counselor Supervisor
 - i. Licensing Counselor Specialist
 - j. Child Welfare Trainer

If the employee does not hold certification in one of the above categories, the employee and employer will complete an attestation that identifies the current position held and the category of the new credential that should be awarded. In the near future, the FCB will provide a detailed policy, including criteria for the attestation.

- 4) The FCB is developing entry-level credential standards in collaboration with the Department, CBCs, case management organizations, the state university system, and representatives from the Sheriff's offices this week in Tampa.
- 5) Effective October 3, 2011, the FCB will require that individuals in positions requiring certification be certified within one year of date of hire.
- 6) The employer is responsible for ensuring that only credentialed child welfare staff perform child welfare services. The FCB is responsible for tracking compliance with child welfare certification status. The FCB will develop a database to track timelines and automatically place an individual on inactive status when deadlines are not met. The FCB is in the process of developing notification and reporting protocols.

Re-Certification

Effective October 3, 2011, child welfare professionals will be re-certified every two years. To maintain certification, CEU providers must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Are an accredited college or university;
- b. Are approved for CEUs by another state or national certification or licensing board; or
- c. Hold FCB Approved Provider Status. See http://www.ficertificationboard.org/Training_How-To-Become-An-Education-Provider.cfm for more information.

Curriculum

HB 279 also allows child welfare agencies to have the flexibility to develop pre-service training curriculum based upon the approved child welfare core competencies. New curriculum submitted for approval must be based on these core competencies. The Department is in the process of procuring a vendor to update the statewide curriculum for Child Protective Investigators.

Florida Administrative Code Chapter 65C-33, Child Welfare Training and Certification

The Department will be filing a notice of rule development within the next 30 days. Due to the changes in legislation many rules of Chapter 65C-33 will be repealed.

The FCB will be sending additional certification materials to all child welfare organizations. Questions regarding certification should be directed to the FCB at 850-222-6314. Questions regarding curriculum should be directed to John Harper at 850-717-4643 or email john_harper@dcf@dcf.state.fl.us and questions regarding changes to the Florida Administrative Code should be directed to Eleese Davis at 850-717-4650 or email eleese_davis@dcf.state.fl.us.

cc: Pete Digre, Deputy Secretary
Drew Parker, General Counsel
CBC Contract Managers
Florida Coalition for Children



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

DATE: November 28, 2011
TO: Regional Directors
THROUGH: John Cooper, Assistant Secretary for Operations
Jamie Self, Ed.D. Executive Director, Family and Community Services
FROM: Christie Ferris, Director, Office of Child Welfare
SUBJECT: Reciprocity for Child Welfare Training and Certification

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on child welfare certification requirements.

BACKGROUND: Florida's child welfare certification program is now the responsibility of the Florida Certification Board (FCB). The FCB is working diligently to ensure that individuals who hold current Department-issued child welfare certification in good standing are granted reciprocity and awarded child welfare certification at no cost to the Department, provider organization or the certificate holder. The FCB reciprocity period is from November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2012. To be eligible to participate in the free reciprocity program, individuals must meet one of the following criteria:

- 1. Hold a current Department-issued child welfare certification by September 30, 2011.
2. Have passed the Phase 1 post-test and passed the Field Based Performance Assessment (FBPA) by December 31, 2011; or
3. Have passed the Phase 1 post-test but NOT the FBPA by December 31, 2011.

Reciprocity Application Requirements

Table with 2 columns: Eligibility Status, How to Apply for FCB Certification. Rows describe certification requirements based on whether the applicant has passed the Phase 1 post-test and FBPA by 12-31-11.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

Applicants who are eligible for certification by reciprocity who do not complete the reciprocity process or submit required information by October 31, 2012 will be required to pay a certification fee.

ACTION REQUIRED: Each currently certified Department employee must complete the Child Welfare Certification by Reciprocity application. Supervisors must ensure that employees complete the application and submit it to the FCB or the region may elect to batch the applications for submission to the FCB. Please remember that missing signatures and/or information will delay processing by the FCB. Upon application receipt, the FCB will verify the credential against the region's attestation regarding employee eligibility for certification. Cut and past the link below into your internet browser bar to download the Reciprocity Application.
<http://flcertboard.com/pdf/Reciprocity%20application%20final.pdf>

To ensure this transition is seamless, we are asking that you designate one person in your region to be the "single point of contact" who will work directly with the FCB to ensure all Department child protection staff meeting the above criteria are granted reciprocity. Please send the name of the "single point of contact" to Eleese Davis by COB Thursday, December 8, 2011.

Additionally, we have attached a tracking sheet that must be filled out for each employee denoting their status. The regional "single point of contact" must send the completed spread sheet to the FCB by December 15, 2011. The FCB will use this information to validate the employee's status in SkillNet. Although the FCB is working with the Florida Coalition for Children to obtain information for Community-Based Care lead agencies, it would be prudent for contract managers to develop a process that ensures the local lead agency has completed all requirements.

Please contact John Harper at 850-717-4643 or email john_harper@dcf@dcf.state.fl.us or Eleese Davis at 850-717-4650 or email eleese_davis@dcf.state.fl.us if you have questions or need additional information.

Attachment

cc: CBC CEO's
Sheriffs' Offices
Pete Digre, Deputy Secretary
Drew Parker, General Counsel
CBC Contract Managers
Florida Coalition for Children
Florida Certification Board

