

# **Module 3: Licensing Level I Foster Homes**

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## *Licensing Pre-Service Curriculum*



### **Participant Guide**

Office of Child Welfare

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*12/1/2019*

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<b>Module References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casey Foundation: <i>Breakthrough Series Collaborative</i></li> <li>• Quality Parenting Initiative</li> <li>• All legal references are available on Florida’s Center for Child Welfare website under the policies tab. <a href="http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/index.shtml#">http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/index.shtml#</a></li> </ul>
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## **Unit 3.1: Overview of Level I Foster Homes**

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify the different levels of licensure.
2. Define the terms: relative, non-relative, and fictive-kin.

## Overview

The levels of licensure are classifications of the foster homes licensed by the Department. These levels include:

- Level I – Child Specific Foster Home for relative, non-relative, and fictive kin.
- Level II – Non-Child Specific Foster Home which is currently traditional foster homes.
- Level III – Safe Foster Home for human trafficking victims.
- Level IV – Therapeutic Foster Homes
- Level V – Medical Foster Homes for medical conditions.

Level I - Child Specific Foster Home licensure has tailored requirements and licensure processes including:

- Background checks (Ch. 39, F.S. vs Ch. 435, F.S.)
- Waivable non-safety items (*will cover in 3.2*)
- Streamlined educational resources (*will cover in 3.2*)

## Definitions



### RELATIVES

A person who is related by the whole or half-blood, by affinity, or by adoption.

- Grandparent
- Great-grandparent
- Sibling
- First cousin
- Aunt, uncle
- Great-aunt, great-uncle
- Niece or nephew



### FICTIVE KIN

An individual who is unrelated to the child by either birth or marriage but has such a close emotional relationship with the child that he or she may be considered part of the family.

- Godparents
- Close family friends



### NON-RELATIVES

An individual who is unrelated to the child either by birth or marriage but has an existing relationship with the child or the family. This may include;

- Teachers
- Neighbors
- Coaches

## Fictive Kin and Non-Relative

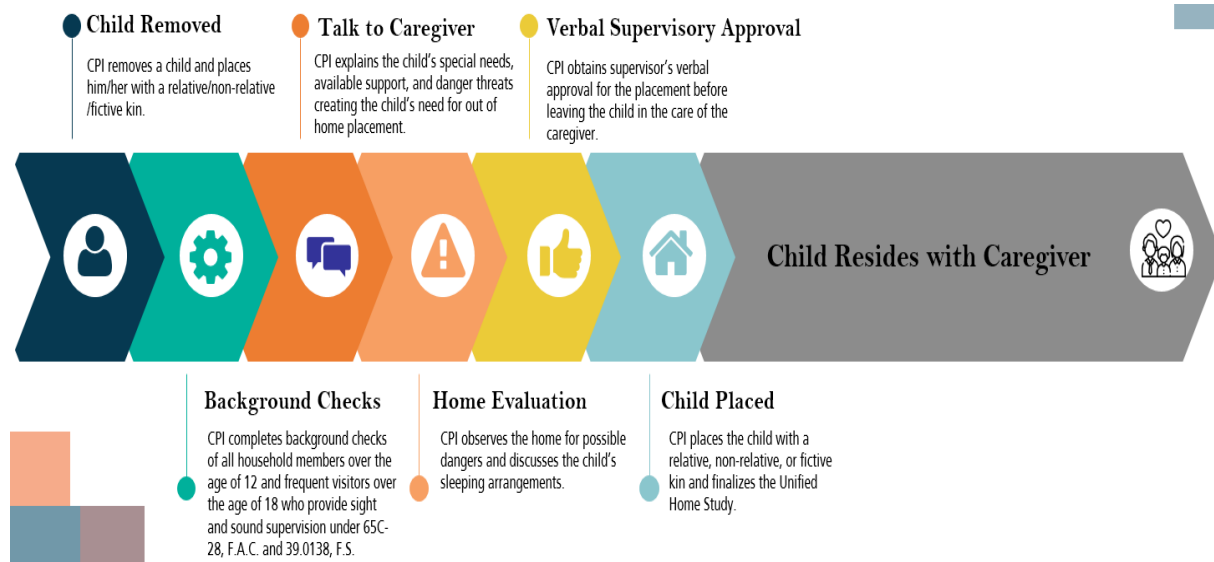
- If the child has an emotionally significant relationship, the caregiver is considered as fictive kin.
  - If there is not an emotionally significant relationship, the caregiver is considered as non-relative.
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## **Unit 3.2: Level I Licensure**

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Describe the Unified Home Study process.
2. Identify the specific requirements for Level I licensure including: background checks (Ch. 39, F.S. vs Ch. 435, F.S.), streamlined educational resources, and waivable non-safety items.

## Scenario – Unified Home Study with an Emergency Placement



This example is based on a Unified Home Study with an Emergency Placement.

- The CPI removes a child because of unsafe circumstances in the home.
- The CPI finds a relative or non-relative to place the child, and the relative or non-relative agrees to be the caregiver for the child.
- The CPI conducts background checks for all of the household members over the age of 12, and any frequent visitors over the age of 18 who provide sight and sound supervision under 65C-28, F.A.C. and s. 39.0138, F.S.
- There are no concerns related to the background screenings.
- Next, the CPI has a conversation with the caregiver regarding the child.
  - *The circumstances that caused the CPI to remove the child from his/her house and place with the relative/non-relative*
  - *If the child has any special needs*
  - *If there are any danger threats that the caregiver should be aware of*

The CPI also explains the caregiver's rights and responsibilities, and the support and resources that are available.

The discussion concludes, and the caregiver is in agreement with the placement.

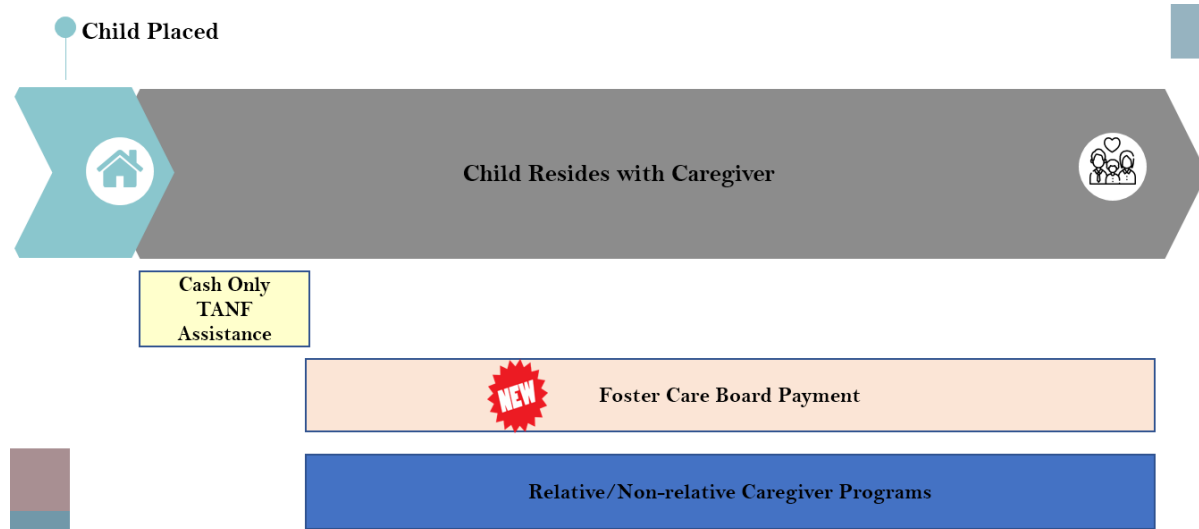
- The CPI then evaluates the house, including a walk-through, and makes observations as to whether there are any potential hazards in the house. The CPI also discusses the sleeping arrangements for the child.

For purposes of this example, the CPI does not observe any danger threats or hazards in the home and the caregiver has an existing extra bed or appropriate sleeping arrangements for the child.

- In accordance with protocol, the CPI then calls their supervisor. They discuss the background check results, their observations, and sleeping arrangements. Once the supervisor gives verbal approval, the CPI is then ready to place the child with the caregiver.
- The child is then placed in a home that is safe and the relative or non-relative caregiver will take care of them.

The CPI then completes the Unified Home Study and transfers the case to case management.

## Available Caregiver Benefits

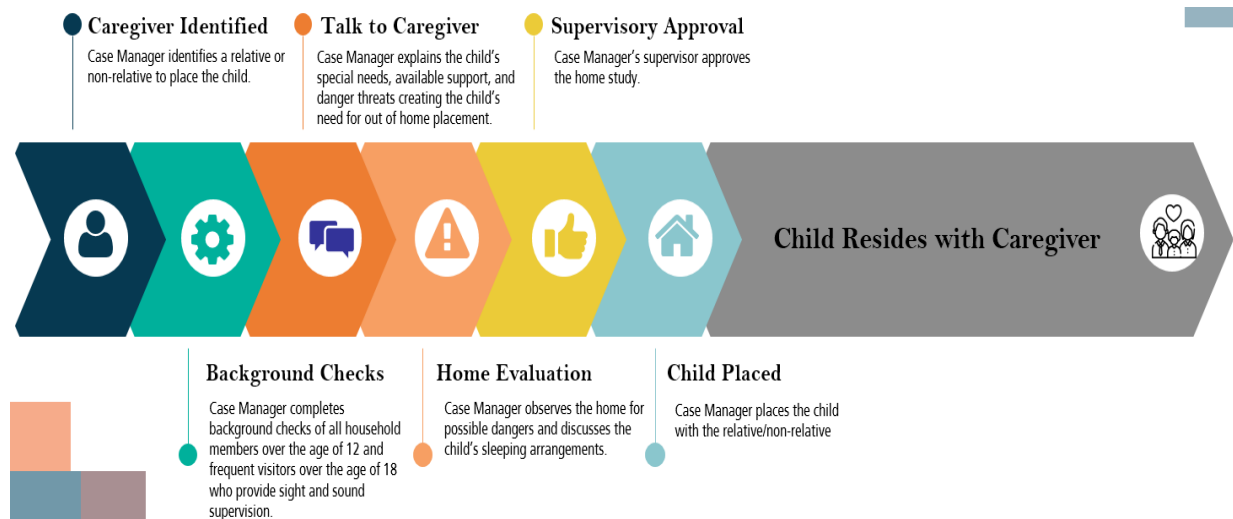


- If the caregiver is a relative and needs financial assistance to take care of the child, the caregiver can receive Cash only TANF until the caregiver receives the Relative Caregiver Program benefits.



- If the caregiver is a relative/non-relative and becomes licensed (under the new levels of licensure) they will receive a foster care board payment.
- If the caregiver is a relative, they can receive monthly payments under the Relative Caregiver Program after the court adjudicates the child dependent and a home study has been approved.
- If the caregiver is a non-relative, they can receive monthly payments under the Non-Relative Caregiver Financial Assistance Program after the court adjudicates the child dependent and a home study has been approved.

## Scenario - Unified Home Study with a Planned Placement



Here is an example of the same process as above, however, this is a Unified Home Study with a Planned Placement.

- The Case Manager identifies a relative or non-relative to place the child.
- The Case Manager completes background checks of all household members over the age of 12 and frequent visitors over the age of 18 who provide sight and sound supervision.

- The Case Manager then has a conversation with the Caregiver to explain the child’s needs, available support, and danger threats creating the child’s need for out-of-home placement.
- The Case Manager conducts a home evaluation for possible dangers and discusses the child’s sleeping arrangements.
- The Case Manager seeks supervisory approval of the home study.
- The Case Manager places the child with the relative/non-relative.

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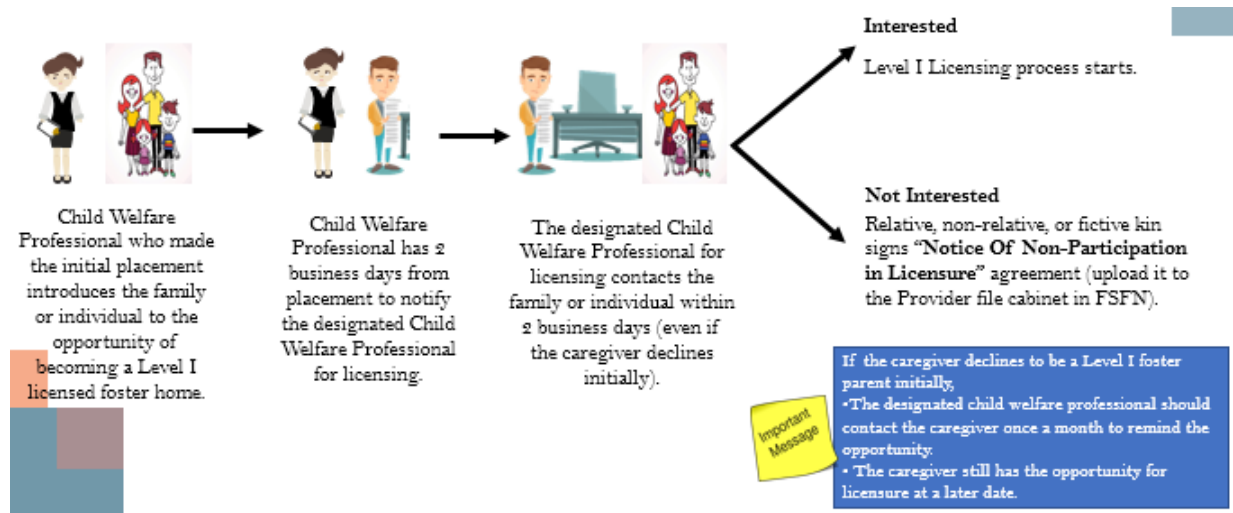
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## Relative/Non-Relative Caregiver Program vs. Level I-Child Specific Foster Home

	 Relative/Non-Relative Caregiver Program	 Level I Foster Home
Time Frame	60 – 90 days	60 days
Home Study	✓	✓
Payment Rate	\$242-\$298	\$333
Child Support	✓	✗
Educational Support	✗	✓
Additional Resources	✗	✓
Additional Case Mgmt.	✗	✓
Completed Through	ACCESS	Local CBC Licensing

- Caregivers that get licensed, are eligible to receive foster care board payments within 60 days of placement. On the other hand, caregivers that opt not to get licensed but enter the Relative/Non-relative caregiver program may not receive a payment until up to 90 days after placement.
- Both the relative/non-relative caregiver program and Level I-Child Specific Foster Home licensure require an updated Unified Home Study.
- If the caregiver receives Relative/Non-relative caregiver benefits, he or she can receive child support, but when receiving Level I - Child Specific Foster Home benefits, the caregiver cannot receive child support.
- When receiving Relative/Non-relative caregiver benefits, the caregiver does not get any educational support, additional support, and case management help. When the caregiver receives Level I-Child Specific Foster Home benefits, the caregiver also receives educational support, additional support, and case management help.
- Relative/non-relative caregiver program is completed through ACCESS while Level I-Child Specific Foster Home is completed through a local CBC Lead Agency.

## Level 1 Process for Foster Parent Inquiry



## First Child Caregiver Visit

Within two business days of notification of the placement, the Licensing Specialist will need to reach out to the caregiver to explain the benefits of becoming Level I - Child Specific Foster Home.

Questions to consider regarding the first visit with the caregiver to explain Level I licensure include:

*Who will contact the caregiver?*

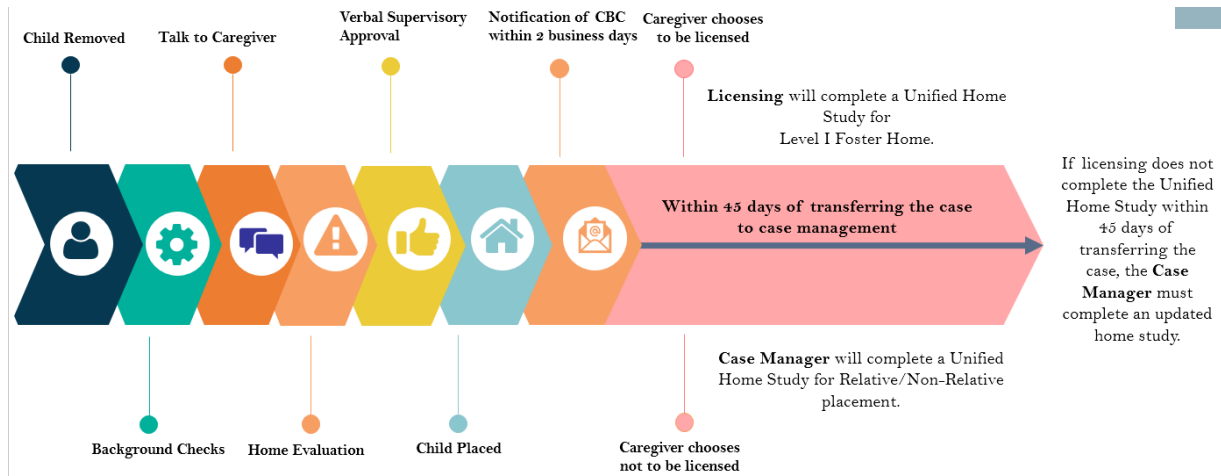
*How will the caregiver be contacted?*

*Who will conduct the briefing? How will the process be described?*

*Where will the briefing take place?*

*What is process of contacting the caregiver again if the caregiver initially declines to be licensed?*

## Case Manager's Role



After placement, the CPI who made the placement notifies the CBC lead agency within 2 business days.

- Also, the CPI or Case Manager who did the placement informs relative/non-relative caregivers that a Child Welfare Professional for licensing specialist will be coming out to their home to talk about, in detail, all available benefits to them.
- The caregiver may choose to become licensed or opt out.
- If the caregiver chooses to be licensed, the designated Child Welfare Professional will complete the second home study.
- If the caregiver opts out, a Case Manager will complete the second home study.

HOWEVER, if the designated Child Welfare Professional for licensing could not complete the home study within 45 days of transferring the case, the Case Manager must complete an updated home study.

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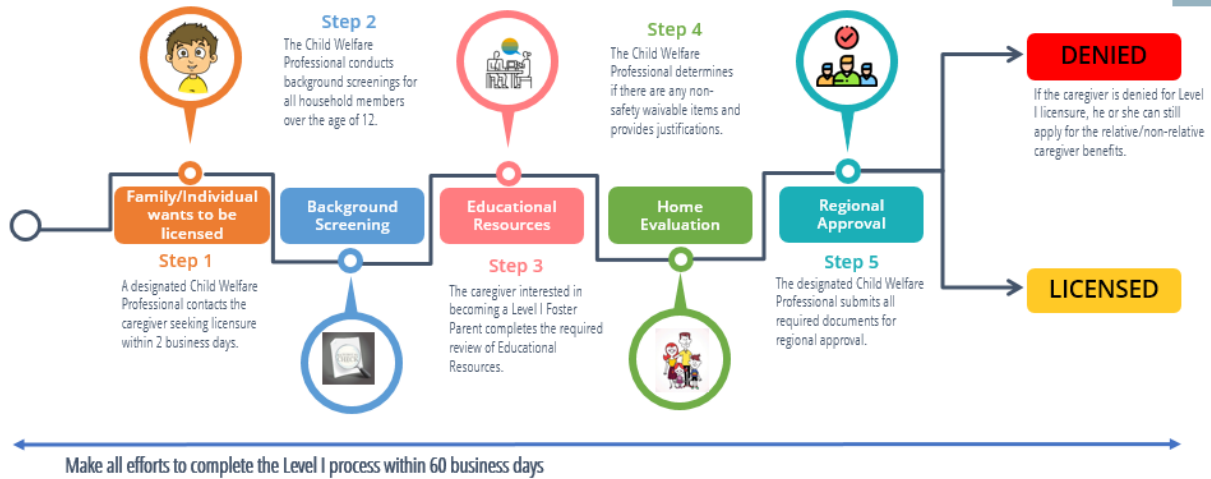


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## Level I – Child Specific Foster Home License Process



Once the caregiver chooses to be Level I licensed, the licensing process begins.

**STEP 1:** A Licensing Specialist contacts the caregiver within 2 business days to see if he or she is interested. Once the caregiver chooses to be Level I licensed, the process starts.

**STEP 2:** A Licensing Specialist conducts background screening for all household members over the age of 12.

**STEP 3:** The caregiver completes the foster care licensing educational resources.

**STEP 4:** The Licensing Specialist evaluates the caregiver’s house. If there are any non-safety waivable items identified, a justification for each item will be provided.

**STEP 5:** After all assessments and documentation has been completed, the Licensing Specialist will provide justification for any non-safety waivable items and submits the licensure packet for regional approval.

**STEP 6:** Upon regional approval, the caregiver is a Level I-Child Specific Foster Home.

The goal is to complete the licensing process within 60 business days.

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## Level I – Background Screening Requirements

Like Level II Foster Homes, all household members living in the house seeking licensure and new household members will go through the background check.

- The criteria for disqualification remain the same.
- Background check sources will remain the same.
  - Federal, statewide, and local criminal record checks (including FDJJ record checks for household members between the age of 12-17)
  - Florida Sexual Offenders and Predators registry record checks
  - Abuse and neglect records checks through FSFN
  - Civil court checks for domestic violence
  - 911 Call-Outs
- Out-of-state civil records and orders of protection have been removed for all foster parents.
- When and who conduct certain records checks are different.



### Background Screening Requirements for Foster Parents

The Department shall conduct background screenings for all persons considered by the Department for initial licensure or re-licensure as out-of-home caregivers and all household members age 12 and older, pursuant to Sections 409.175, F.S. and 39.0138, F.S. and 65C-45.001, F.A.C.

Required Background Screenings	Frequency of Screening	Effective Date
FDLE/FBI Criminal Records (Check through fingerprinting)	Results valid for 5 years	March 6, 2014
Abuse and Neglect Records Check	Results valid for 12 months	March 6, 2014
Local Criminal Record Check and 911 Call Out History	Results valid for 12 months	March 6, 2014
Florida Sex Offender & Predator Registry Search	Results valid for 12 months	March 6, 2018
Civil Records Check	Results valid for 12 months	March 6, 2014
Out of State Child Abuse and Neglect Records Check (if applicable)	Required if applicant resided out of state within 5 years upon initial licensure	March 6, 2014

Required Background Screenings for Household Members Ages 12-17 Years Old	Frequency of Screening
DJJ Juvenile Records Check	Results valid for 12 months
Abuse and Neglect Records Check through Florida Safe Families Network	Results valid for 12 months

Questions or Concerns?  
Please Contact Your DCF Regional

## Educational Resources

- The required number for educational resource (training) hours for Level I licensure is **2 (two) hours**
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## Non-Safety Waivable Items

Level I licensure allows for certain non-safety requirements to be waived on a case-by-case basis.

However, waivable items require alternative accommodations for child(ren).

Waiving a non-safety item, requires justification as to why it was waived.

See the Foster Home Licensing Level 1 - Waivable Items Tip Sheet to determine and accommodate waivable items.

***When can you waive if there is no phone in the home?***

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***Is a crib waivable?***

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***What are alternative accommodations for children?***

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***What is not acceptable if the person does not have any alternative?***

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***Should you allow the child to stay with the caregiver when the caregiver does not have access to a licensed child care program for the child's out-of-home care?***

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***Should you allow a child to share a bed with another person or child?***

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***When can you waive a smoke detector?***

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***Is it okay if the caregiver does not have an evacuation plan posted in their home?***

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***When?***

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***What happens with a gas oven?***

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***If the results of a radon test are not favorable, when can the results be waived?***

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***Can background checks be waived? If yes, when?***

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***Can educational support be waived?***

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## FSFN Waiver Request

Item	Due Date	Date Completed	Comment	Waiver Requested	Waiver Status	Action
<input type="checkbox"/> Re-licensing Standards Checklist	00/00/0000	00/00/0000		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied	
<input type="checkbox"/> School References	00/00/0000	00/00/0000		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vehical Insurance Verification All HH Vehicles	00/00/0000	00/00/0000		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied	
<input type="checkbox"/> Verification of legal docs: Marriage, Divorce, Death, Div. Ltr.	00/00/0000	00/00/0000		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement Responses	03/04/2019	02/15/2019	No law enforcement responses to the provider address.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied	Delete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Telephone	03/04/2019	00/00/0000	The caregiver has 24-hour access to neighbors phone. Emergency #s posted. Details in UHS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied	Delete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire Extinguisher	03/04/2019	00/00/0000	Two story home is equipped with one fire extinguisher located in the kitchen.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied	Delete

## Licensing Checklist – Waiver

### Ongoing Caregiver Support

- Support Groups: Local foster/adoptive parent associations
- Ongoing Licensing Compliance Supports:
  - Level I - Quarterly contact (documented in FSFN)
- Supports for Children Placed in Home:
  - Child Care Assistance
  - Clothing Allowance
  - Additional Benefits Identified by CBC

## Local Referral Process

- *How much information will the Child Welfare Professional share with caregivers?*
- *How will the Child Welfare Professional who makes the initial placement contact the Child Welfare Professional who is responsible for licensing?*
- *Who will talk to the caregiver?*
- *Which method will be used to contact the caregiver (e.g., home visit, phone call, etc.)?*
- *How will you follow up with the caregiver if the caregiver initially declines to be licensed?*

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