

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

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*Licensing Pre-Service Curriculum*



## **Trainer Guide**

Office of Child Welfare

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**12/1/2019**

## Module 3:

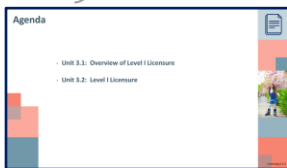
### Licensing Level I Foster Homes

**Time:**

1.5 Hours

**Module Overview:***Slide: 3.0.1*

This module focuses solely on Level 1: Child Specific Foster Homes for relatives, non-relatives, and fictive kin.

**Agenda:***Slide: 3.0.2***PG: 1****Unit 3.1: Overview of Level 1 Licensure (TG: 3, PG: 2)****Unit 3.2: Level 1 Licensure (TG: 7, PG: 5)****Materials:**

- Trainer's Guide (TG)
- Participant's Guide (PG)
- PowerPoint slide deck
- Flip chart paper and markers
- Handouts: Waivable Items Tip Sheet and Background Screening Tip Sheet.

**Module References:**

*Trainer should have printed copies or access to the following references/resources to use while presenting this module:*

- Chapter 39, F.S.
- Section 409.175, F.S.
- Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C.
- DCF Operating Procedures
  - CFOP 170-11, Chapter 12
- All legal references are available on Florida's Center for Child Welfare website under the policies tab.

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/index.shtml#>

**Activities:**

No activities

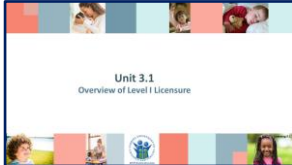
**Trainer Note:** Due to ongoing changes to licensing laws and policies, each trainer is expected to consult all legal and policy references in this curriculum with the most current information posted on the Center for Child Welfare website: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/> It is the trainer's responsibility to maintain accurate information as published curriculum may not reflect current changes.

**9/1/2019 Trainer Note:** CFOP 170-11, Chapter 16 is in the process of being replaced by Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C.

## Unit 3.1: Overview of Level I Licensure

### Unit Overview:

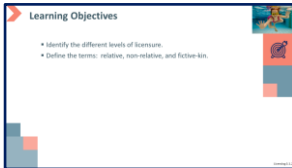
Slide: 3.1.1



The purpose of this unit is to explore Level I licensure for foster homes.

### Learning Objectives:

Slide: 3.1.2



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

PG: 2

## Overview

**Trainer Note:** Begin by reviewing the Levels of licensure. Explain that this module will focus solely on Level I – Child Specific Foster Homes for relatives, non-relatives, and fictive kin.

Slide: 3.1.3  
s. 409.175, F.S.



PG: 3

As explained in Module 1, the Department established different levels of licensure to receive more federal funding and to provide and enhance the benefits for the relative/non-relative population.

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.

Slide: 3.1.4



PG: 3

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

The Level I - Child Specific Foster Home is designated as a child specific license for relative/non-relative/fictive kin caregivers that are seeking to be licensed.

Let's start with the definition of relative, non-relative, and fictive kin.

Slide: 3.1.5



PG: 3

Relatives are defined as a person who is related by whole or half-blood, by affinity, or by adoption.

Examples include:

- grandparents
- great-grandparents
- siblings
- first cousins
- aunts
- uncles
- great-aunts
- great-uncles
- nieces or nephews

### ***Have you ever heard the term fictive kin? What does it mean?***

Fictive kin is a new term. It is defined as 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. Fictive kin can be godparents or a close family friend.

### ***What about the term non-relatives? What does that mean?***

Non-relatives are defined as individuals who are unrelated to the child either by birth or marriage but have an existing relationship with the child or family. This could include; teachers, neighbors, coaches, and people outside of the fifth degree.

#### ***Slide: 3.1.6***



**PG: 4**

The difference between fictive kin and non-relative is an emotionally significant relationship.

- 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.

**FSFN Note:** *Keep in mind that the caregiver can be marked in FSFN as non-relative first but can be changed to fictive kin if the child and caregiver start building a close relationship over time.*

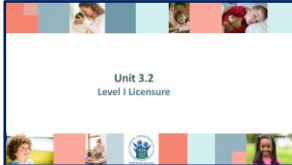
**Unit Transition:**

Unit 3.1 is an overview of the Levels of Licensure and clarified new terminology. Unit 3.2 will cover the specifics for the new Level 1 licensure.

## Unit 3.2: Level I Licensure

### Unit Overview:

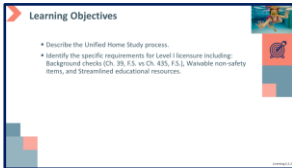
Slide: 3.2.1



The purpose of this unit is to explore Level I licensure for foster homes.

### Learning Objectives:

Slide: 3.2.2



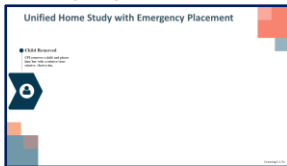
1. Describe the Unified Home Study process.
2. Identify the specific requirements for Level I licensure including: background checks (Ch. 39, F.S. vs Ch. 435, F.S.), streamlined educational resources, and waivable non-safety items.

PG: 5



**Trainer Note:** Explain to the participants that the following scenarios will help them understand the overall picture of Level 1 licensure. The remaining units in this module will provide the details in the process.

Slide: 3.2.3a-h



PG: 6

## 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.

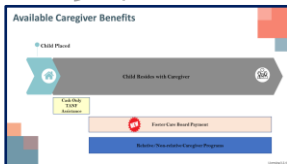
- In accordance with protocol, the CPI then calls their supervisor. They discuss the background check results, their observations, and sleeping arrangements. Once the supervisor gives verbal approval, the CPI is then ready to place the child with the caregiver.
- The child is then placed in a home that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

As mentioned in the above scenario, during the home study, the CPI talks to the caregiver about the possible benefits and resources for the child.

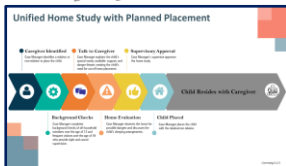
- If the caregiver is a relative and needs financial assistance to take care of the child, the caregiver can receive Cash only TANF until the caregiver receives the Relative Caregiver Program benefits.
- If the caregiver is a relative/non-relative and becomes licensed (under the new levels of licensure) 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.

Slide: 3.2.4



PG: 7

Slide: 3.2.5



PG: 8

- 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.

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

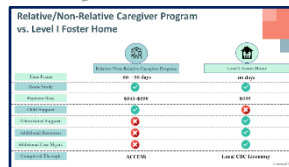
It is important to understand the difference between the relative/non-relative caregiver program to Level I-Child Specific Foster Home program.

- 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

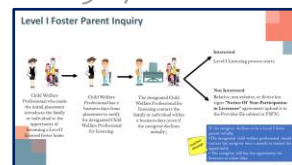
Once the child is placed with a relative/non-relative/fictive kin, the Child Welfare Professional who made the initial placement informs the caregiver about becoming a Level I-Child Specific Foster Home, and provides the caregiver a brochure about Level I Licensure. Should the caregiver have additional questions, the Child Welfare Professional will refer them to the

Slide: 3.2.6



**PG: 10**

Slide: 3.2.7



PG: 11

Slide: 3.2.8



PG: 11

Licensing Specialist for more information and will explain that a Licensing Specialist will come to their home to explain the process and benefits of becoming a Level I – Child Specific Foster Home

Within 2 business days of placement, the Child Welfare Professional who made the initial placement should inform the CBC Lead Agency about the placement.

### 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?*

If the caregiver is interested in becoming a Level I- Child Specific Foster Home, the process will begin.

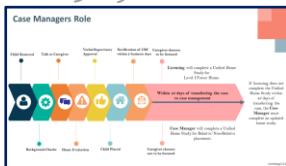
If the caregiver is not interested in becoming a Level I - Child Specific Foster Home, the Licensing Specialist will have the caregiver sign the “Notice of Non-participation in licensure” agreement and upload it to the Provider file cabinet in FSFN.

If the caregiver opts out, a Case Manager will complete the second home study.

However, if the Licensing Specialist could not complete the home study within 45 days of transferring the case, the Case Manager must complete an updated home study.

Remember, if the caregiver changes his or her mind to

Slide: 3.2.9



PG: 12

become a Level I-Child Specific Foster Home, he or she still has the opportunity to do so.

In addition, the designated Licensing Specialist should contact the caregiver once a month about becoming a Level I-Child Specific Foster Home, even if the caregiver declined initially.

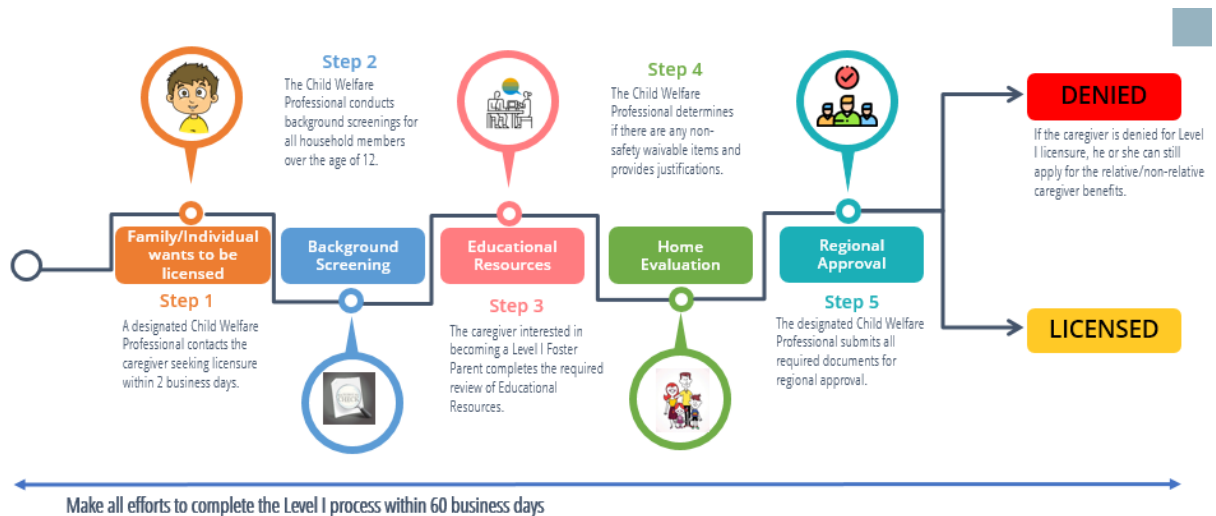
### Case Manager's Role

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.

## Level I – Child Specific Foster Home License Process

Slide: 3.2.10



PG: 13

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.

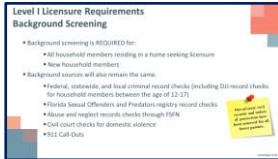
**STEP 3:** The caregiver completes the foster care licensing educational resources.

**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.

Slide: 3.2.11-12



PG: 14

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

## 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.

**Trainer Note:** Proposed legislation for 2019 seeks to amend language specific to Level I-Child Specific Foster Homes to be screened ONLY under F.S. 39.0138.

Currently the process for Level I-Child Specific Foster Home background checks is the same as the process for Level II Foster Home background checks. Right now, when there is an emergency placement for the child, the Child Welfare Professional initiates the fingerprint-based check under Florida Statute chapter 39, including federal, state, and local criminal background checks. If there is a child in the house between 12 to 17 years old, the Child Welfare Professional looks at the Florida



Department of Juvenile Justice records. The child welfare professional will also check the abuse registry.

Then, if the caregiver agrees to care for the child long term, the designated Child Welfare Professional for licensing does all background checks under Florida Statute chapter 435: federal, state, and local record checks, abuse registry, sexual offenders and predator record checks, civil record checks, and 911 callouts.

If the legislature passes new language, the Child Welfare Professional who does the initial placement will do background checks under Florida Statute chapter 39 for federal, state, and local record checks, and abuse registry. To be more efficient, the designated Child Welfare Professional for licensing will not duplicate background checks that require fingerprinting.

If the caregiver chooses to become a Level I-Child Specific Foster Home, the designated Child Welfare Professional for licensing will only conduct sexual offenders and predators, civil records check, and 911 callouts Florida Statute chapter 39. The professional does not need to duplicate the federal, state, and local criminal check and abuse registry.

**Trainer Note:** Provide everyone a copy of the background screening tip sheet. Make note that the federal and state records checks are valid for five years while the abuse registry, DJJ, Civil records, 911 callouts, and sexual offenders and predator checks are only valid for one year.

## Educational Resources

The required number of educational resource (training) hours for Level I licensure is two hours.

It is important to remember to document all training activities in FSFN.



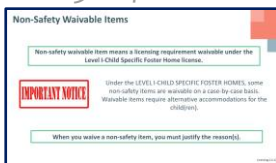
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## Non-Safety Waivable Items

### What are non-safety waivable items?

Non-safety waivable items are licensing requirement waivable for Level I - Child Specific Foster Homes. Some non-safety items can be waived if alternative accommodations can be made.

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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).

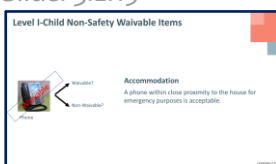
Waiving a non-safety item, requires justification as to why it was waived.

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

**Trainer Note:** Hand out the Waivable Items Tip Sheet.

Go through the following slides about what is and is not waivable.

Slide: 3.2.15



PG: 15

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

#### Endorse:

The person's home has a phone within close proximity to the home for emergency purposes.

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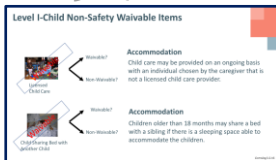
### Is a crib waivable?

#### Endorse:

Yes

### What are alternative accommodations for children?

Slide: 3.2.17



PG: 16

**Endorse:**

Pack and plays and bassinets.

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

Sleeping with a child under the age of 18 months or an adult is not acceptable.

**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?****Endorse:**

Yes. Child care may be provided on an ongoing basis with an individual chosen by the caregiver that is not a licensed child care provider.

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

Yes. You cannot allow the child to sleep with an adult, but you can allow the child to share a bed with a sibling, when there is enough room in the bed for two children.

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

If there is smoke detector in close proximity to the bedroom and there must one in the home that works.

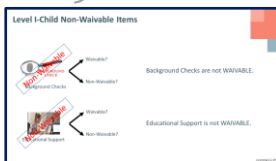
**Is it okay if the caregiver does not have an evacuation plan posted in their home?**

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PG: 16

## Slide: 3.2.20



PG: 16

**Endorse:**

Yes.

**When?****Endorse:**

If there is a documented evacuation plan outlined in the unified home study, the posted plan is not required.

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

If gas and oil equipment is used inside the home, the licensing specialist should review the carbon monoxide information and document it in a provider note.

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

If a radon test is conducted and results are not favorable, the licensing specialist should provide radon referral information and document the information in a provider note.

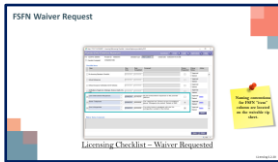
**Can background checks be waived? If yes, when?****Endorse:**

No, you cannot waive any background checks under any circumstances.

**Can educational support be waived?****Endorse:**

No, educational support cannot be waived.

Slide: 3.2.21



PG: 17

### FSFN Waiver Request

The Licensing/Relicensing Checklist is accessed by selecting the hyperlink from the Actions list box on the Person Provider page. The checklist displays with standard checklist items and additional required items can be added by clicking the insert button.

A waiver is requested by documenting accommodations in the comments box and checking the waiver requested box. Region licensing will review, approve/deny, and document Date Completed.

### Ongoing Caregiver Support

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The Licensing Specialist will provide ongoing support throughout the licensed caregiver's process.

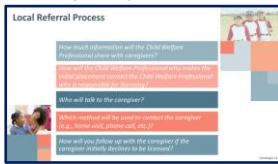
Level I licensed caregivers will have access to the same services and support groups available for Level II foster parents (when applicable). The Licensing Specialist should inform the caregivers about supports through their local foster/adoptive parent association (when applicable).

The Licensing Specialist will complete quarterly home visits to ensure that licensed caregiver meets the requirements for the duration of their licensure year.

If the child needs support, the Licensing Specialist should make necessary support available to the child.

**Trainer Note:** Trainer should make sure they know their local practices. Explain that each CBC decides what type of Level II Foster Parents services will be available to Level I Foster Parents.

Slide: 3.2.23



PG: 18

**Key Points:****Local Referral Process**

The following questions should be used when determining your local referral process for relatives, non-relatives, or fictive kin:

- *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?*

**What are some differences between level I licensure and level II?**

- 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.

### ***What are non-safety waivable items?***

Non-safety waivable items are licensing requirement waivable for Level I - Child Specific Foster Homes. Some non-safety items can be waived if alternative accommodations can be made.

### ***What is the level I inquiry process?***

Once the child is placed with a relative/non-relative/fictive kin, the Child Welfare Professional who made the initial placement informs the caregiver about becoming a Level I-Child Specific Foster Home, and provides the caregiver a brochure about Level I Licensure. Should the caregiver have additional questions, the Child Welfare Professional will refer them to the Licensing Specialist for more information and will explain that a Licensing Specialist will come to their home to explain the process and benefits of becoming a Level I – Child Specific Foster Home

Within 2 business days of placement, the Child Welfare Professional who made the initial placement should inform the CBC Lead Agency about the placement.

### **Module Transition:**

In this module Level I licensure specifics were identified. Module 4 will cover Placement.