

Module 6: Retention and Re-Licensing

Licensing Pre-Service Curriculum



Trainer Guide

Office of Child Welfare

12/1/2019

Module 6:

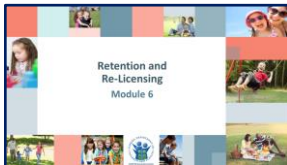
Retention and Re-Licensing

Time:

5 hours

Module Overview:

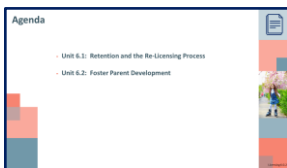
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The purpose of this module is to provide an overview of the placement, retention, and re-licensing processes.

Agenda:

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Unit 6.1: Retention and the Re-Licensing Process (TG: 3 , PG: 2)

Unit 6.2: Foster Parent Development (TG: 28, PG: 16)

Materials:

- Trainer's Guide (TG)
- Participant's Guide (PG)
- PowerPoint slide deck
- Markers and flip chart paper
- Video:
 - *I Like Adoption*
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgrootXfZOI>

Module References:

- Fostering Perspectives Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 2, May 2009
<http://fosteringperspectives.org/fpv13n2/transition.htm>
- Department of Children and Families employees must follow the Florida Code of Ethics, Operating Procedure No. 60-5, Chapter 5, October 9, 2013.

Activities:

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

Unit 6.1:

Activity A: Keeping Foster Parents – A Retention Campaign (TG: 8, PG: 5)

Unit 6.2:

Activity B: Licensing Specialist - Development Level and Needs (TG: 34, PG: 19)

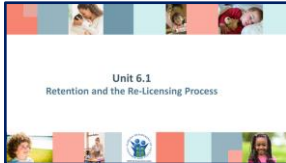
Activity C: Creating a Professional Development Plan for Foster Parents (TG: 38, PG: 22)

Activity D: Mini-Lesson (TG: 49, PG: 32)

Unit 6.1: Retention and Re-Licensing Process

Unit Overview:

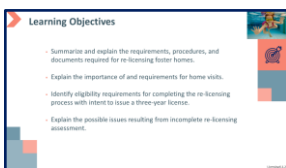
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The purpose of Unit 6.1 is to explore the retention, and re-licensing stage of assessment and licensing including how to assess for strengths and needs in order to provide support and training, the steps foster parents must take, and the requirements parents must meet in order to be eligible for re-licensure. Licensing Specialists are expected to use professional judgment to ensure that on-going assessments are conducted and supports are provided to prevent placement disruption and encourage foster home retention.

Learning Objectives:

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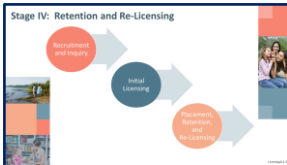


1. Summarize and explain the requirements, procedures, and documents required for re-licensing foster homes.
2. Explain the importance of and requirements for home visits.
3. Identify eligibility requirements for completing the re-licensing process with intent to issue a three-year license.
4. Explain the possible issues resulting from incomplete re-licensing assessment.

PG: 2

Stage IV: Retention and Re-Licensing for All Levels

Slide: 6.1.3



It is the responsibility of the Licensing Specialist to gather and interpret the results of assessments and communicate findings to appropriate parties to ensure that members of the team are knowledgeable regarding the strengths and needs of foster parents so that children receive excellent parenting and foster parents are provided with the support and resources they need.

Retention of foster parents is an essential piece throughout the licensing process. Some areas will have actual placement teams who are responsible for making placement decisions and communicating with team members regarding placement. Keep in mind that these professionals may or may not have a full understanding of a foster parent's strengths and needs and they may not have visited the foster parent's home. Because the Licensing Specialist has the key relationship with the foster parent, it is important that Licensing Specialists participate in as many of the following tasks as possible:

PG: 3

- Review and evaluate the foster parent profile to assist with the proper matching and placement of children.
- Conduct purposeful home visits as required.
- Provide effective and timely interventions to prevent placement disruption and retain foster parents.
- Identify and communicate needs of the foster parent or children to appropriate parties to ensure that services are rendered in a timely manner.
- Serve as a liaison between the foster home/children and Case Managers.
- Assess foster parents to identify and provide for on-going training needs.
- Inspect the home to assure continued compliance with home inspection standards in Chapter 65C-13, F.A.C.
- Develop and implement strategies to encourage foster parent peer-to-peer support.
- Investigate reported safety concerns in a foster home.
- Develop and implement corrective action plans to respond to identified safety concerns in a foster home.

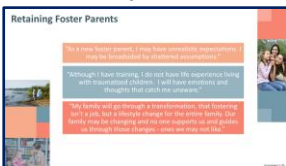
How can the Licensing Specialist increase other team member's understanding of the foster parent's strengths and needs to ensure informed placement decision-making?

Endorse:

- Create one-page profile summaries of each foster parent/home.
- Provide the team with a summary of strengths and needs.
- Ensure that photographs of the home are accessible to team members.
- Alert the team to any current information that is relevant to placement that may not be known to team members.
- Share any changes in the home or with the foster parent.

Retaining Foster Parents

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PG: 3

When foster parents are strong partners with the Child Welfare System, when they have effective relationships with birth families, and when their role as an integral part of the professional team is undisputed, they are much more satisfied and more likely to continue to care for children and support birth families.

Adopt Us Kids, identified three things foster parents wished their agencies knew:

1. “As a new foster parent, I may have unrealistic expectations. I may be broadsided by shattered assumptions.”
2. “Although I have training, I do not have life experience living with traumatized children. I will have emotions and thoughts that catch me unaware.”
3. “My family will go through a transformation, that fostering isn’t a job, but a lifestyle change for the entire family. Our family may be changing and no one supports us and guides us through those changes - ones we may not like.”

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PG: 4

Being aware of the challenges facing new foster parents can help Licensing Specialists and Case Managers begin to have conversations that will help new parents navigate the changes in their family.

Reasons Foster Parents Leave

Understanding the reasons why foster parents leave agencies is key to foster parent retention. In the Breakthrough Series Collaborative: Recruitment and Retention of Foster Families, Casey Family Programs identified these core reasons why foster parents leave:

- **Lack of Support and Responsiveness from the CBC or Subcontractors**
 - In some cases, foster parents are only given a portion of the available information at the time of placement and, without full disclosure, they are unable to meet the child's needs. Additionally, foster parents often do not receive a copy of the Case Plan and thus do not know what the overall plan for the family is or how they can best support the child or family to achieve the plan.
 - Calls from the foster parents to the agency are not returned for days, and situations can turn into crises before a response comes.
 - Some foster parents report that children in their homes are not visited as required or agreed upon by the Case Manager. These foster parents are left to handle very difficult children “on their own” and they sometimes find themselves unable to meet the challenge.
- **Lack of Clarity around Role and Inclusion of Foster Parents**
 - In many cases, foster parents are not included in the case planning process, so their roles and the roles and responsibilities of other team members are unclear.
 - Foster parents may fear that, if they really speak their minds, the children in their care will be removed from their homes, and they will not receive other placements. So they do not communicate their concerns, and consequently, the children's needs are not fully met.
 - Foster parents sometimes do not feel that they are treated or viewed as equal members of the professional

team. As such, their perspectives and concerns are not acknowledged or honored.

- **Lack of Effective Partnerships between Foster Parents and Birth Families**

- Without full disclosure, an opportunity to connect with the birth parents, and support in developing a relationship with the birth parents, foster parents are unable to support the child and family toward reunification or another permanency goal.
- Some foster parents are not given information about what progress is expected of the birth families, their own expected role in assisting the birth family to meet their goals within the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) time frames, or the success of the birth families in their efforts to reunite with their child.

Foster Parent Turnover in Florida

Slide: 6.1.6



PG: 4

- Florida, like many states, is experiencing a shortage of foster parents. Although some foster parents stop caring for children because of typical life changes, it is believed that many others leave because of a lack of support from members of the professional team and a general feeling of being unappreciated.
- In order to determine the reasons foster parents leave the system of care, data from the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) was reviewed and telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of foster parents who no longer foster.
- For the most part, those interviewed indicated the licensing process was a positive experience; this included the home study, training, and availability of the Licensing Specialist. When asked how the Child Welfare System could improve, almost half of those interviewed cited better communication and case worker support, and the need for additional services, including more respite care.

Activity A: Keeping Foster Parents – A Retention Campaign

Time: 30 minutes

Purpose: To emphasize how important it is for Licensing Specialists to make retention a priority.

Resources: *Slide: 6.1.7*

- **PG: 5-6, Keeping Foster Parents worksheet**

Trainer Note: The answers to this activity listed below are found in the Breakthrough Series Collaborative: Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families by the Casey Family Programs.

Trainer Instructions:

- If a large group, divide participants into three groups and assign each group one of the following topics:
 - Support and Responsiveness of Child Placing Agency
 - Role Clarity for and Inclusion of Foster Parents
 - Foster Parent-Birth Family Relationships
- Ask participants to answer the questions on their worksheet. Explain that many of the questions refer to system responses and include what the Licensing Specialist and/or supervisor can do. These questions include:

Support and Responsiveness of CBC or Subcontractor

 - How can you provide foster parents with necessary information about the child and family?
 - How can you ensure that responses to foster parents' issues and concerns are timely and supportive?
 - How can you ensure regular and frequent visitation of children in placement by the workers?

Role Clarity for and Inclusion of Foster Parents

 - How can you train staff on facilitation of difficult relationships?
 - How can you raise awareness about the need for birth family–foster parent connections?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How can you increase understanding of confidentiality issues? <p>Foster Parent–Birth Family Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How can you connect foster parent and birth families shortly after placement? – How can you support birth families in the relationship with foster parents? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct each group to present their strategies. • Debrief activity with large group.
<p>Trainer Note: Refer participants to Breakthrough Series Collaborative: Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families by the Casey Family Programs for more information. (http://www.casey.org/resources/publications/pdf/BreakthroughSeries_RecruitmentRetention.pdf)</p>	
<p>Participant Instructions:</p>	<p>1. Given your assigned topic, answer the following questions.</p> <p>Support and Responsiveness of CBC or Subcontractor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How can you provide foster parents with necessary information about the child and family? – How can you ensure that responses to foster parents' issues and concerns are timely and supportive? – How can you ensure regular and frequent visitation of children in placement by the workers? <p>Role Clarity for and Inclusion of Foster Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How can you train staff on facilitation of difficult relationships? – How can you raise awareness about the need for birth family–foster parent connections? – How can you increase understanding of confidentiality issues? <p>Foster Parent–Birth Family Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How can you connect foster parent and birth families shortly after placement? – How can you support birth families in the relationship with foster parents?

Trainer Version

Support and Responsiveness of CBC or Subcontractor

- **How can you provide foster parents with necessary information about the child and family?**
 - Create a child information sheet completed prior to placement and give to foster parents at the time of placement.
 - Develop a foster parent policy and procedure handbook.
 - Ensure the foster parent is aware of judicial hearings and plan to attend
 - Encourage the foster parent to take part in the case planning process.
 - Encourage foster parents to use respite care when needed and maintain balance in all areas of life.
- **How can you ensuring that responses to foster parents' issues and concerns are timely and supportive?**
 - Develop two-call policies that allow foster parents to contact the supervisor if they do not hear back from their Child Welfare Professional within 24 hours.
 - Use e-mail, in addition to phone calls, to communicate with foster parents.
 - Respond to initial inquiries from potential foster parents within 24 hours.
 - Staff all phones with live people, rather than relying on voice mail systems.
 - Conduct orientation sessions on a regular and ongoing basis so that potential foster parents do not have to wait longer than one month for a new session to begin.
- **How can you ensure regular and frequent visitation of children in placement by the workers?**
 - Implement surveys to learn about the quality and frequency of visitation as perceived by the foster parents.
 - Implement a worker shadowing program.
 - Conduct follow-up calls by supervisors.

Role Clarity for and Inclusion of Foster Parents

- **How can you train staff on facilitation of difficult relationships?**
 - Develop guides, checklists, and formats for facilitating post-placement meetings.
 - Provide experiential training for staff at various levels.
 - Train clerical staff on the administrative needs of these meetings so that facilitators can focus on the facilitation of the meeting.
- **How can you raise your awareness about the need for birth family–foster parent connections?**
 - Use staff meetings to talk about the foundation of this work and what it means to families. Have conversations about values and how both birth families and foster parents must be valued.

- Talk with workers who have facilitated or attended these meetings.
- Sit and observe the meetings first-hand to experience the power of the meetings and connections.
- Invite foster parents and birth families who have attended these meetings to speak to the staff about how it affected them and their relationship
- **How can you Increase understanding of confidentiality issues?**
 - Make a list with your supervisor of what you “wish” you could share with foster parents. Identify which of those things we think we are not allowed to share. Debunk misconceptions about facts that we actually are allowed to share.
 - Make a list with foster parents of what they “wish” could be shared with them. Have them identify which of those things they have been told cannot be shared. Compare this list to the list above.

Activity STOP

Slide: 6.1.8



PG: 7

Common Expectations

Even the best Pre-Service training will not prepare families for all of the challenges they will face as foster parents. Foster parents often believe that their experience with foster care will be different. It is important for Licensing Specialists to be aware of the common expectations foster parents have and to address them with families through open dialog so the gap between what the family expects, and reality does not overwhelm new families leading them. These expectations include:

- Our love will be enough.
- We will feel love for and connection with this child quickly.
- This child will step into our family and easily function with our rules, goals, and ambitions.
- Our biological children will embrace this new child as a sibling.
- Our child will fit well into our extended family and be welcomed by them.
- Our friends and acquaintances will validate our role as parents and support us through this fostering process.
- We will never feel regrets or ambivalence in fostering this child with a traumatic past.

Home Visits

Slide: 6.1.9



PG: 7

After a child is placed within a foster home, the foster parent(s) will require ongoing support and assessment in order to meet the needs of the child in their home. The purpose of home visits is to first ensure the child's safety in the home and to ensure the child's needs are being met properly.

- The Licensing Specialist serves as a liaison, advocate, and support system between the family and the system of care. The Licensing Specialist provides on-going support to the foster parent(s) by visiting the home at a minimum quarterly. In some cases, these visits may be increased based on the needs of the family.
- Whenever possible, the Licensing Specialist should schedule home visits to accommodate the foster parent's schedule, unless there are concerns, referrals, or institutional allegations that require a more timely visit which may include

an unannounced visit that is accompanied by a Child Protective Investigator. Licensing Specialists may conduct unannounced visits due to foster care referral received by the Abuse Hotline. Licensing Specialists must conduct unannounced home visits in addition to scheduled home visits.

- Case Managers must visit all children on their caseloads every 30 days. Licensing Specialists must conduct quarterly visits, to share information and provide support as needed.

How can you make the most of a home visit?

Endorse:

- Schedule visits with the Case Manager and family to open the lines of communication and avoid triangulation.
- Build rapport early so that you can build trust and respect with the foster family.
- Observe the family.
- Talk with the children as well as the foster parents together and separately.
- Document your visit (required) and input into FSFN.

Trainer Note: As you read each question below, ask participants to identify possible responses that may cause concern. Explain that if foster parents indicate that they do not feel safe, this may be a reason to contact law enforcement or mental health professional working with the child. Also, it may indicate a need to contact the Abuse Hotline, as well, depending on the response. Provide examples as needed.

Questions to Start Conversations During the Home Visit

Slide: 6.1.10



PG: 7-8

Home visits with foster parents provide a good opportunity to address issues before they reach a crisis situation and can help improve the retention of the foster home. Here are some questions that can help get the conversation started about the changes the foster parents may be experiencing.

- How do you see your family? How has that changed since the child entered the family?

- What does your support system look like? How have your social activities changed?
- How have you been impacted by the responses from family and community regarding the issues you face with the child? How have these responses made you feel?
- How are you managing strong feelings? How do you see your spouse managing strong feelings? Has that changed since the child has entered your family?
- Do you feel competent as a parent? If not, when did it change for you?
- If you have other permanent children in the household, how would you describe changes you've seen in them? Positive? Neutral? Negative?
- Do you feel safe? Do your children feel safe?
- Discuss any responses to trauma triggers you have noticed in yourself, the child, and others in the family.
- How effective do you feel you are in managing behaviors of children in your home?
- Share any changes you or others have noticed in yourself as a result of stress that may be caused by your role as a parent (numbing, hypersensitivity, or increased sleeplessness).
- Discuss any outside resources or supports you find helpful in parenting and decision-making.

Trainer Note: You will need to engage in a high degree of preparation for the section on re-licensing. In addition to obtaining the legal/policy knowledge, you are encouraged to become familiar with any specific forms, processes and systems guidelines around re-licensing from the lead agency. You are also encouraged to obtain a sample of an approved re-licensing packet that they can share with the group. During this section, if technology is available, navigate through FSFN to explore re-licensing home studies and supporting documentation. While reviewing examples of home studies and supporting documentation on FSFN, identify examples that are both eligible and ineligible for re-licensure approval, asking participants to determine eligibility for re-licensing and justify the recommendation.

Re-Licensing Requirements

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Re-Licensing Requirements



Licensing 6.1.11

PG: 8

Trainer Note: Allow participants at least one hour to look up and review 65C-45.012, F.A.C., before reviewing the re-licensing requirements, process, and procedures. During the large group review, invite questions and clarify the information. Again, ensure that they are using the current version from the Center for Child Welfare website:

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/>

Slide: 6.1.12



PG: 8

Re-Licensing Procedures

If the caregiver chooses to be re-licensed, the Licensing Specialist must ensure that all requirements for re-licensure are met. The following steps are required to complete the re-licensing process for a licensed foster home:

- A notification to the foster parents that the re-licensing process will begin and their need to schedule a convenient time to meet.
- Updated Background Screenings: Ensure that all background screenings have been completed within 60 days of licensure expiration.
- Re-licensing Packet and Supporting Documentation should be uploaded separately. The naming conventions for re-licensing is as follows: name of the document, re-licensure, and year of the licensure.

- Licensing Checklist: The list should be completed and submitted to the Regional Licensing staff within 30 days of the licensure expiration date.

The home visit shall occur within a prescribed window that allows for follow-ups. This may vary based on the child placing agency as some will have contractual relationships with the lead community-based care provider. Florida Administrative Code 65C-45, however, prohibits the initiation of the re-licensing process more than 90 days of when the foster parent license is due to expire.

The supervising agency shall conduct a minimum of one face-to-face visit in the home and interview all household members prior to re-licensure.

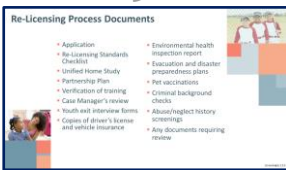
The supervising agency shall review and discuss the “Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care” with the applicants and document the date of the discussion in FSFN.

- The Licensing Specialist shall inspect the entire premises of the home, including all interior and exterior areas, for continued compliance with licensing standards. A narrative shall be included in the Physical Environment section of the Unified Home Study.
- Vehicles used for transporting children shall be observed for seatbelt compliance and any obvious safety hazards documented and addressed in a corrective action plan, if necessary. Observations, including compliance, shall be included in the Unified Home Study.

Fire drill logs shall be reviewed and discussed to ensure continued compliance with licensing standards. The evacuation plan and disaster preparedness plan shall be reviewed and discussed.

If re-licensure is not recommended, the applicant must be made aware of the appeal process by the Regional Licensing Authority. Attempts must be made to assist the licensed out-of-home caregiver in overcoming identified deficiencies. The denial of re-licensure and reason(s) for denial shall be recorded in FSFN by the supervising agency.

Slide: 6.1.13



PG: 9

Re-Licensing Process Documents

Requirements for re-licensing (always use the most current forms from the Center for Child Welfare website:

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/>

- Application for License to Provide Out-of-Home Care for Dependent Children
- Re-Licensing Standards Checklist
- Unified Home Study (capturing information from the past licensing year including new information about new household members)
- Review of Partnership Plan
- Documentation (in FSFN) of at least eight hours of in-service training, including Psychotherapeutic Medication
- Case Manager's Review of licensed out-of-home caregiver's performance (to be completed by the Case Manager)
- Youth exit interview forms (to be completed by the Case Manager)
- Copies of driver's license and validation of vehicle insurance
- Satisfactory environmental health inspection report from the local health Department or agency (may include radon and water sample testing, if applicable)
- Evacuation and disaster preparedness plans
- Pet vaccinations (if applicable)
- Criminal background checks (statewide FDLE and FBI are every 5-years or if there is a 90-day in service), local law checks, juvenile delinquency checks (youth ages 12-17) and abuse history checks completed annually
- Any documentation requiring review to ensure continued compliance (i.e., new income generated) if there is change in employment or information related to a "change" that occurred during the licensing year

Re-Licensing Unified Home Study

PG: 10

The Re-Licensing UHS is completed when a license is set to expire, and the foster parent wishes to continue to be a licensed placement. The assessment includes all of the same elements that were assessed during the Initial Licensing UHS and some

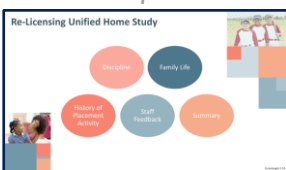
additional elements that are specific to the re-licensing process. The re-licensing checklist includes:

- The re-licensing file has to be submitted to the licensing authority at least 30 calendar days prior to expiration of the current license. If the attestation model is used, the re-licensing file can be submitted to the licensing authority at least ten business days prior to expiration of the current license.
- Foster Parents requesting to be re-licensed must complete the “Application for License to Provide Out-of-Home Care for Dependent Children,” and provide documentation of at least eight hours of continuing education annually, a current driver’s license, driving record, and auto insurance coverage information, as applicable.
- Licensing Specialists need to:
 - Complete a home environmental health inspection report.
 - Ensure the foster parents obtain a radon test.
 - After two radon measurements with negative results, no further testing is required unless the home has significant structural changes.
 - Ensure that all required background screening have been completed.
 - Obtain required references.
 - The supervising agency responsible for completing the re-licensing home study shall obtain and review information about the home from the:
 - “Case Manager/Case Worker Review of Foster Parent” form
 - “Quality of Foster parent’s Home – Community Input” form
 - At least one of each of the above forms is required for every child who has been placed for a minimum of 30 calendar days in the home.
 - “Exit Interview about Foster Parents” form
 - This form must be completed for every child over the age of five who exits the home

following a placement of 30 calendar days or longer.

- “Foster Parent’s Review of the Case Worker/Care Manager” form to review information from Case Managers who supervised children in the home during the previous thirty days.
- Conduct a minimum of one face-to-face visit in the home and interview all household members prior to re-licensure.
- Inspect the home, including all interior and exterior areas, for continued compliance with licensing standards.
 - A narrative shall be included in the Physical Environment section of the UHS.
- Assess the vehicles used for transporting children for seatbelt compliance and any obvious safety hazards
 - Observations, including compliance, shall be included in the Physical Environment section of the UHS.
- Review fire drill logs and ensure continued compliance with licensing standards. Also review and discuss the evacuation plan and disaster preparedness plan.
 - A narrative shall be included in the Physical Environment section of the UHS.

Slide: 6.1.14



PG: 10-11

As a part of the re-licensing application file, the supervising agency shall make a thorough assessment and evaluation of each licensed out-of-home caregiver and document this evaluation using the Unified Home Study module in FSFN. The updated home study shall include all of the assessments required for an initial licensing home study as specified in rule 65C-45.003(3), F.A.C., as well as an assessment of fostering experiences over the past licensing year.

Discipline. Description of how the licensed out-of-home caregiver has managed behavior with children placed in the home.

Family Life.

- Documentation of the licensed out-of-home caregiver's support and integration of children into the family, such as attendance at and involvement with children's activities, ensuring children have reliable transportation to school, social events, medical appointments, and inclusion in other family activities. The supervising agency will describe the licensed out-of-home caregiver's attentiveness to the provision of clothing and allowances to the children in their care
- Documentation of the level of cooperation of licensed out-of-home caregivers with the children's families, including visitation for any children placed in the home during the previous licensing year. Describe how the family has worked with the supervising agency and other service providers
- Documentation of the licensed out-of-home caregiver's compliance with proper administration and monitoring of medication, cooperation with medical directives and appointments
- Documentation of the maintenance of school and resource records for each child in placement

History of Placement Activity. Placement activity during the previous licensing year shall be identified and discussed. If the family requested that a child be moved, the reasons and circumstances must be addressed. The narrative must provide detail about each child who has left the home and address how the family has worked with each child.

Staff Feedback. A summary of feedback from the lead and/or supervising agency staff members as it relates to the family's continued suitability and performance as a licensed out-of-home caregiver and Investigations, Special Condition Referrals, Concerns, or Complaints. A summary assessment of investigations and special condition referrals, incident reports, accidents, and complaints during the previous licensing period must be included.

Summary. A summary of the family's ability to continue the provision of foster care services shall be completed and should encompass the following:

- A recommendation concerning the appropriateness of continued licensure including a professional development plan.
- The UHS shall be completed, reviewed, and approved in FSFN. The home study shall also be signed and dated by the Child Welfare Professional responsible for completing the study and his/her supervisor. The licensed out-of-home caregiver shall be offered an opportunity to sign the home study and must be provided a copy. The signature pages shall be uploaded as an attachment to the UHS in FSFN.

Continuing Education

Slide: 6.1.15



PG: 11

s. 409.175, F.S.

Prior to licensure renewal, each foster parent and emergency shelter parent shall successfully complete eight hours of In-Service training. Periodic time-limited training courses shall be made available for selective use by foster parents and emergency shelter parents. Such In-Service training shall include subjects affecting the daily living experiences of foster parenting as a foster parent or as an emergency shelter parent, whichever is appropriate. For a foster parent or emergency shelter parent participating in the required in-service training, the Department shall reimburse such parent for travel expenditures and, if both parents in a home are attending training or if the absence of the parent would leave the children without Departmentally approved adult supervision, either the Department shall make provision for child care or shall reimburse the foster or emergency shelter parents for child care purchased by the parents for children in their care.

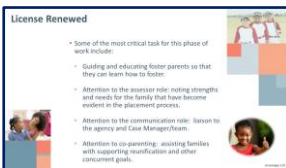
- Licensed out-of-home caregivers shall be offered continuing education opportunities by their supervising agency. For those licensed out-of-home caregivers unable to attend, other methods shall be developed for satisfying this requirement.
- Continuing education materials shall be approved by the supervising agency if they meet the requirements set forth in Section 409.175(14)(d), F.S., and must be approved prior to use. Completion must be documented in FSFN.

- If the absence of the caregiver during training would leave children without approved adult supervision, the supervising agency shall make arrangements for child care or shall reimburse the caregiver for child care purchased by the caregiver.
- The supervising agency shall require therapeutic and medical foster homes to comply with additional continuing education hours required by Children's Medical Services and the Agency for Health Care Administration.

License Renewed

With thorough, ongoing support and assessment throughout the year, there should be limited unforeseen barriers or concerns when the re-licensing process commences resulting in the issuance of a license based on the Licensing Specialist's recommendation.

Slide: 6.1.16



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- The bulk of the Licensing Specialist's assessment with a family occurs during the initial licensing phase. At the re-licensing phase, the Licensing Specialist's goal is to revisit the family's quality parenting over the past year prior to making a recommendation for continued licensure.
- Families may not need as much encouragement and support at this stage, however, they will need to see the Licensing Specialist not only as an assessor, but also as a teacher and guide.
- The Licensing Specialist's ability to be a keen observer and to proactively address issues that come up is critical to set the stage in this phase of work.
- Some of the most critical tasks for this phase of work include:
 - Guiding and educating foster parents so that they can learn how to foster.
 - Attention to the assessor role: noting strengths and needs for the family that have become evident in the placement process.

Slide: 6.1.17



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- Attention to the communication role: liaison to the agency and Case Manager/team.
- Attention to co-parenting: assisting families with supporting reunification and other concurrent goals.

Three-Year License

A three-year license can be granted to foster homes (including medical or therapeutic) meeting specific criteria, which includes:

- The family has been licensed for three years or longer.
- The family has not been the subject of a report of child abuse or neglect or foster care referral with findings of maltreatment and is recommended by the assigned Child-Placing Agency and the lead agency for a three-year license.
- The family has not been placed on a performance improvement plan/corrective action plan.
- The family has clear background checks.
- The home is not licensed for more than five children.
- The family has no infractions of good moral character.
- The number and frequency of placements that result in disruptions is considered and used in the decision as to whether or not to issue a three-year license.

If a family has a three-year license, the Licensing Specialist continues to assess for safety and documents via the Provider Note in FSFN. A brief, yet concise summary that is completed annually using the Unified Home Study module in FSFN will replace the Re-licensing Summary for Licensed Homes for Dependent Children. This summary must address all changes that have occurred in the household during the licensing year and allow foster parents to discuss any issues, concerns or triumphs they experienced during the licensing period.

Changes During the Licensed Year

65C-45.009, F.A.C.

The licensed out-of-home caregiver shall report any household member's involvement with law enforcement to the supervising agency within one business day of the occurrence.

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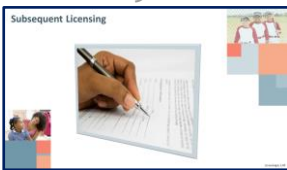


PG: 13

Household Circumstance Changes. In addition, the caregiver shall report:

- change in marital or relationship status, including reconciliation or separation
 - change in household composition, including plans for changes in sleeping arrangements
 - change of physical address
 - changes in financial situation, such as bankruptcy, repossessions and evictions
 - physical or mental health issue that impacts the ability to provide care for the child
 - change in contact information
 - change in employment or significant change in work or school schedule within two business days
-
- The supervising agency shall notify the lead agency within one business day of learning of a household member's involvement with law enforcement or any of the changes above.
 - The supervising agency shall assess and document the impact on the household immediately upon learning one of these events has occurred or is likely to occur.
 - All new household members age 18 and older shall be fingerprinted within two business days of residence and those fingerprints shall be submitted to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement within five business days of the receipt of the fingerprints by the supervising agency. All household members shall meet the requirements for background screening.
 - In cases of separation, divorce, or death of a spouse, or partner, the supervising agency shall update the UHS summary and assess its impact upon the children placed in the home.

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Subsequent Licensing

If the region does not participate in the attestation model for license, the Regional Licensing Authority shall determine if the re-licensing application file is complete and notify the lead agency in writing of the need for any additional materials or information within ten business days of receipt of the re-licensing file. The lead agency must submit the necessary materials or information to the Regional Licensing Authority within ten business days of receipt of the written notice. A license cannot be issued until all information has been received.

- If approved, a license shall be issued to the applicant no later than ten business days from receipt of the complete re-licensing file.
- If the completed file of materials was received prior to the expiration of the existing license upon approval, the renewal date of licensure shall begin on the day the existing license expires.
- If the submitted application file is not complete at the time the existing license expires, the renewal date of licensure shall be the actual date of approval by the Regional Licensing Authority. No child shall be placed or remain in an unlicensed setting.
- A copy of the license shall be provided by the Regional Licensing Authority to the lead agency for dissemination to the supervising agency or directly to the supervising agency if the agency does not contract with the lead agency. The supervising agency is responsible for sending the license to the family.
- If the supervising agency or Regional Licensing Authority determines that the out-of-home caregivers have not satisfactorily met the standards for continued licensure, the licensing authority shall consult with the regional legal counsel.
- If the Regional Licensing Authority denies the application for re-licensure, the applicant shall be notified within ten business

days of the determination, identifying the reasons for the denial, the statutory authority for the denial and the applicant's right of appeal pursuant to Chapter 120, F.S. The applicant shall be afforded the opportunity to withdraw the application. If the applicant elects to withdraw the application, this must be documented in FSFN.

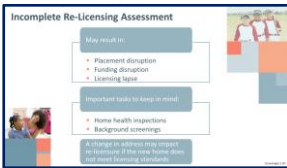
Incomplete Re-Licensing Assessment

If a re-licensing assessment is incomplete, it might result in:

- Placement disruption for the children and subsequent impact
- Funding disruption (Title IV-E) as it is tied to legal status and licensed settings
- Licensing lapse which impacts other areas of licensure (i.e., need for background screening if it results in a break of more than 90 days)
- Other important deadlines to keep in mind throughout the process that could result in an incomplete licensing packet include:
 - Home health inspections which expire one year from the date of a satisfactory result and should be requested 60-days prior to expiration if completed by the local health Department (which include radon testing every five-years)
 - Background screenings which should be completed no more than 90 days prior to the submission of a file and then at the five year re-screening mark for FDLE and FBI unless there is a 90-day break in service as a result of a voluntary closure. Locals and civil records checks are performed annually.

Additionally, a change in address may impact re-licensure if the new home does not meet licensing standards (i.e., environmental concerns that may impact safety, etc.).

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When a Foster Home Is in Violation of Legal Standards

A Licensing Specialist must assist a foster home's ability to meet minimum standards when it is out of compliance or has a licensing violation. Some examples of licensing concerns or violations include:

- Negative Case Manager review
- Negative child exit interview
- Other licensing concerns, such as refusal of placements or continued requests for removals after placement
- Foster care referral or abuse reports from the Abuse Hotline

These licensing concerns, upon assessment, may generate the need to create a corrective action plan. Note that corrective action plans are created for licensed out-of-home caregivers who have the ability to understand and correct the infraction. Corrective action plans are not created for licensed out-of-home caregivers who have previously committed licensing violations and were unable to benefit from remedial efforts. In these cases, the supervising agency shall work with the licensing authority, the Department's legal counsel and lead agency to determine whether action should be taken to suspend, deny or revoke the license.

Unit Transition:

Foster parents have expectations of themselves, the Child Welfare System, and the children they will parent. The Child Welfare System, children and families also have many expectations of foster parents.

In order to meet these expectations, parents and professionals are expected to continue growing and developing to serve the best needs of children in care.

The next unit will address how to assess parents and work together on a Development Plan to meet their needs.

Unit 6.2: Foster Parent Development

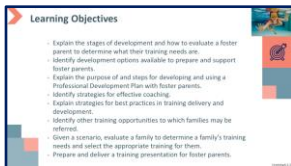
Unit Overview:

Slide: 6.2.1



Learning Objectives:

Slide: 6.2.2



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The purpose of Unit 6.2 is to provide an overview of the process by which Licensing Specialists plan and prepare development opportunities for foster parents.

1. Explain the stages of development and how to evaluate a foster parent to determine what their training needs are.
2. Identify development options available to prepare and support foster parents.
3. Explain the purpose of and steps for developing and using a Professional Development Plan with foster parents.
4. Identify strategies for effective coaching.
5. Explain strategies for best practices in training delivery and development.
6. Identify other training opportunities to which families may be referred.
7. Given a scenario, evaluate a family to determine a family's training needs and select the appropriate training for them.
8. Prepare and deliver a training presentation for foster parents.

Trainer Note: Explain that a foster parent may need to revisit parent preparation pre-service training or portions of the curriculum in the event they become licensed and discontinue licensure for various reasons or completed training but did not move forward with the initial licensure process.

Evaluating a Foster Parent's Development Needs

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As discussed previously, assessment is an ongoing and mutual process. Assessment also goes hand in hand with development. As professionals learn more about the family, they will discover strengths to build on as well as areas to further develop. Additionally, as a family grows in their role, their development needs will change. Licensing Specialists must keep in mind that families will be at various stages of development.

Stages of Development

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The Conscious Competence Ladder was developed in the 1970's by Noel Burch. The ladder highlights two factors that affect thinking during the learning process: awareness (consciousness) and competence (skill level).

The stages include:

- Stage 1: Unconsciously Unskilled
- Stage 2: Consciously Unskilled
- Stage 3: Consciously Skilled
- Stage 4: Unconsciously Skilled

By understanding the ladder, one can begin to have a greater understanding of the emotions we experience during the learning process. This helps to maintain motivation when the process becomes challenging and allows for a better way to gauge expectations and new challenges.

As coaches, teachers and mentors, it reminds a person to be patient, allows one to empathize and encourage others on the road to *Unconscious Skill*, and provides a tool to guide the support of foster parent development.

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Unconsciously Unskilled

When people are *Unconsciously Unskilled*, they do not yet know enough about the realities of the job to have realistic expectations of themselves or the experience, and therefore they have not yet consciously begun to understand all that they do not know.

- Most potential foster parents met upon initial licensing will fit into this group. They have interest and they believe they have some skills or interpersonal abilities that would make them good foster parents, but they have not yet begun their formal development as a foster parent.
- This is sometimes called the honeymoon period as the excitement of something new, the values and personal drive that brings people in the door, and the romantic ideas about saving children are front and center for this parent.

Consciously Unskilled

By this stage, people have a growing understanding of what is required and begin to understand the difficulty of the task and the skills they have to learn. People may lose confidence or even give up. Therefore, it is important to stay positive at this stage.

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- For foster parents, this level spans the training period and initial stages of placement and is probably the most critical professional development period in terms shaping how they will perform in the fostering role.
- The feelings of incompetence that arise have to do with an increasing understanding of what is required, and a healthy self-assessment about whether this role is a good fit for the family.
- The struggle to integrate a deeper understanding of the role, and to match up what they are learning with their own experiences, provides rich groundwork for future professional identity. This can be the time where tendencies towards bad habits are curbed, and it is a time of self-exploration.

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Consciously Skilled

At this stage, people know that they have acquired the skills and knowledge they need. They put their learning into practice regularly and gain even more confidence as they use their new skills. While they still need to concentrate on performance, these activities become increasingly automatic.

- This occurs when the foster parent understands self and role, and has made a conscious and concerted effort to stay in the field and to increasingly provide good care.
- The unrealistic expectations of the honeymoon stage are over, but the satisfaction in small progress and the intrinsic reward of growing can maintain a drive to keep learning and providing care, perhaps expanding to more challenging populations or situations that previously imagined.
- During this stage, the foster parent becomes increasingly independent from the agency and Licensing Specialist, having learned to secure support in the natural environment, and may be able to provide mentoring and support for other families as this stage is solidified.
- At this stage, the family's attention to and drive to perform becomes a tremendous asset to the system.

Unconsciously Skilled

At this level, people use their new skills effortlessly, and perform tasks without conscious effort.

- During this stage, the family functions in a way that best meets the needs of foster children and the system without even having to think about it.
- This family is always competent at bringing the medical forms to appointments, is prepared for staffings, is ready to meet Case Managers at the door, and knows the routine. This foster parent also knows how to flex and adapt to the needs of children without having to 'study' each time. They now have had enough experience to build a solid knowledge base that

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this family can draw from through prior experience and from professional and informal supports to handle situations without becoming flustered.

- The stable family becomes a tremendous asset to the system for mentoring and recruitment. This family may be called upon in emergencies and may help the agency improve services (advising and representing professional families in policy development and community outreach). The advantage of the stable family is that this family can take a wider range of children, but also knows its limits. This family can function as a partner and mentor to staff and to the community. Ongoing development and education may be a hard sell for some in this stage, but keeping this type of family involved and growing feeds the system and builds the backbone of fostering in the community.

Supporting Foster Parent Development

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While a foster parent may fall within one of the stages most clearly at one point in time, he/she will continue to develop and grow with more experience and skills. Additionally, there may be experiences that may cause a backward slide or perhaps added responsibilities that position the foster parent back a stage in certain areas.

Licensing Specialists need to recognize how to adjust the developmental support they need as they shift within the stages.

Each foster parent has a unique set of strengths and abilities and using developmental stages is not intended to pigeon-hole a family, but to inspire growth in a way that is most meaningful to them.

How can you support a foster parent's development?**Endorse:**

1. Build a development plan
2. Define clear expectations
3. Action planning
4. Provide mentally challenging goals
5. Coaching
6. Mentoring
7. Teachable moments
8. Fully explain responsibilities and roles
9. Identify training opportunities
10. Provide opportunities for self-evaluation
11. Provide manuals and policies

Activity B: Licensing Specialist – Development Levels and Needs

<p>Time:</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <p>Materials: <i>Slide: 6.2.10</i></p> <p>Trainer Instructions:</p> <p>Participant Instructions:</p>	<p>30 minutes</p> <p>This activity helps participants learn how to assess developmental levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG: 19, Development Level and Needs worksheet • <i>If able, working in pairs, instruct participants to interview each other and together determine their developmental level.</i> • <i>The interviewer will continue to explore the additional questions with their partner. Then the other partner will become the interviewer and lead their partner through the same questions, which include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>What is your development level?</i> – <i>What types of development opportunities would be appropriate for you?</i> – <i>How can supervisors, trainers and others help you meet development needs?</i> • <i>Debrief activity with large group.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In pairs, you will interview each other and based on the interview, together decide the most appropriate level. 2. Based on the level assigned, together, create a Development Plan that will move you to the next level(s). Discuss the questions that follow. <p><i>How will assessing your own development level assist you in working with foster parents to determine their development level?</i></p> <p>Endorse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel process – everyone is learning and developing over time. • Understand it may be an intimidating process so a team approach works best.
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- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents and professionals need support and resources. |
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Activity STOP

Slide: 6.2.11



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Key Elements of a Professional Development Plan

Creating a Professional Development Plan with foster parents is like creating a development plan for any profession. Foster parents are professional members of the team and need development like other team members.

The purpose of a Professional Development Plan should not be to assess performance (as there are plenty of tools for that), but rather it should be to establish long and short-term goals to assist foster parents to improve performance. It should be thought of as a partnership between the agency and the foster parent to increase our capacity to care for children in out-of-home care.

A Professional Development Plan can help align foster parent training and development efforts with the agency missions, goals, and objectives. It assists foster parents with accepting responsibility for development and in the acquisition and enhancement of the skills they need.

Some key elements include:

- **Goals:** Short-term and long-term goals with estimated completion dates
- **Development Objectives:** Linked to mission/goals/objectives and foster parent's development needs
- **Training and Development Opportunities:** Activities in which the foster parent will pursue with estimated and actual completion dates. These activities may include formal classroom training, web-based training, rotational assignments, shadowing assignments, on-the-job training, self-study programs, and professional conferences/seminars.
- **Outcomes:** A place to indicate if outcomes were achieved and next steps, if any

Professional Development Plan Process

A recommended process for creating a Professional Development Plan includes:

- **Pre-Planning:** Licensing Specialist and foster parent prepare independently for meeting.

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- **Licensing Specialist/Foster Parent Meeting:** Discuss foster parent strengths, areas for improvement, interests, goals, and agency requirements.
- **Prepare Written Plan:** Foster parent, in consultation with Licensing Specialist, completes plan for individual development.
- **Implement Plan:** Foster parent pursues training and development identified in plan while Licensing Specialist provides coaching, mentoring, teachable moments, and helps identify training opportunities.
- **Evaluate Outcomes:** Licensing Specialist and foster parent discuss usefulness of training and development experiences and determine next steps.

During your career or in an academic setting, recall a time when you created a Professional Development Plan with a supervisor, teacher or peer.

- *What was beneficial about the process of developing the plan?*
- *What made you feel supported during the development of the plan?*
- *What lessons will you use from your experience that will help you in developing plans with foster parents?*

Trainer Note: Navigate to explore several examples of Professional Development Plans (individual development plans) found on the OPM federal website (<https://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/Individual-Development-Plans.ashx>)

Explain to Licensing Specialists that they will need to upload all Professional Development Plans to FSFN by adding them to the UHS as an attachment.

Activity C: A Professional Development Plan for Foster Parents

Time: Purpose: Materials: <i>Slide: 6.2.13</i> Trainer Instructions: Participant Instructions:	30 minutes For Licensing Specialists to become familiar with the process involved in creating a Professional Development Plan in partnership with foster parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG: 22-28, A Professional Development Plan for Foster Parents worksheet • <i>As a large group, review the Professional Development Plan template for foster parents or if there is a required template in your local area, insert that tool instead.</i> • <i>Discuss any questions participants may have about creating a plan.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Professional Development Plan template for foster parents. 2. You may customize this for your area. 3. Discuss how you can create a plan.
<p style="text-align: center;">Foster Parent Development Plan</p> <p>Foster Parents: _____ Date Completed _____</p> <p>Licensing Staff Name _____</p> <p>Evaluation period: _____</p> <p>This form is intended to assist in identifying the development needs of foster parents. Ideally, the Licensing Specialist will work with the foster parent and use this form as a guide to identify strengths and needs during each licensing cycle or whenever it would be helpful. Together, the Licensing Specialist and foster parent would identify ideas to develop skills, knowledge, and awareness of those areas needing development. Conclude by identifying resources and supports that would help achieve desired outcomes.</p>	
<p>The Foster Parent as Part of the Foster Care Team</p>	

Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
Understanding my role as a member of the child/youth services team and how to work with agency staff and the role of other professionals on the team				
Understanding the reasons for the placement, for maintaining a policy of permanency planning, and for promoting a team approach to family reunification				
Knowledge of policies regarding emergencies, vacation planning, respite care, and record keeping				
Signs and symptoms of neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse; how, when, and to whom to report this information; who is mandated to report; and how to support the child or youth in care throughout the assessment process and policies on confidentiality				
How to participate in case planning, staffings, and court proceedings with team members				
Understanding the Quality Parenting Initiative, the importance of foster parent associations and supports, the importance of mutual respect, and equal partnership among team members				
Fostering Family Connections				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
Family interaction - mentoring and working with birth parents				
Concept of co-parenting				
The importance and maintenance of sibling connections				
Understanding and supporting cultural issues in foster parenting				
Separation and Attachment				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help

The potential negative effects of separation for the child/youth and family and how to help the child/youth handle feelings of sadness, loss, anxiety, and anger				
The importance of reunification and supports for successful permanency planning activities				
How to prepare children/youth for transitions				
How to develop and update life books including how to involve the child/youth in developing the life book				
The Effects of Fostering on the Foster Family				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
How parenting challenging children/youth who have experienced abuse separation and loss can affect both nuclear and extended family members				
How foster parenting can affect parent/child, sibling, marital, or other adult relationships within the family and how to deal with stresses that can potentially affect these relationships				
Identifying the types of children/youth that their family can most effectively foster and the types of children/youth who should not be placed with their family				
Foster Care Related Skills				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
Foster parent's role and responsibility in dependency court, including how to assist in preparing children and how to testify appropriately in court hearings or submit feedback for court				
The principles of behavior modification and how to use positive parenting, time out, shaping of behavior, modeling strategies, extinction, and behavioral				

charts to manage the behavior of a child/youth with emotional problems				
Health, hygiene, and nutrition practices that prevent or reduce the likelihood of illness in children/youth				
Basic first aid and CPR techniques for children and youth				
How to assist the child/youth with problems that result from cultural differences at school, in the neighborhood, and with social service providers, and how to advocate for equal access to services and activities for all children/youth				
The signs and symptoms of infants and children exposed to drugs and alcohol; how to advocate for appropriate treatment, strategies to stimulate development and how to deal with the accompanying physical, social, cognitive, and emotional problems				
The potential negative effects of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse on development, and how to work with the developmental delay or problems				
Age-appropriate and realistic expectations for children/youth with development problems				
How to access and work with community service providers, including school personnel, mental health worker, and doctors, to obtain needed services for the child				
Legal Issues				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
The legal issues that affect child welfare and foster care practice, including confidentiality, liability, reasonable efforts, reunification, and other statutory and regulatory requirements				
The roles and responsibilities of court personnel, including guardians-ad-litem, Children's Legal Services attorneys,				

appointed special advocates, defense attorneys, judges, and the juvenile court processes				
Working with Children/Youth Who Have Emotional Behavioral Problems				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
The signs and symptoms of depression and suicide in children/youth; how to obtain emergency mental health services and how to support the child/youth through the crisis intervention process				
Interventions to assist in treatment and management of children/youth with mental health or emotional problems, including discussion of feelings and concerns, problem solving, empathic listening, behavior management, de-escalation, and assault prevention				
Possible reasons a child/youth might lie, steal, or exhibit destructive behavior and effective strategies to deal with these problems				
Caring for Children/Youth Who Have Been Sexually Abused				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
The signs and symptoms of sexual abuse				
Strategies to decrease sexually provocative or acting out behavior in children/youth; how to assist the child/youth with anger, low self-esteem, and guilt				
Ways that a sexually abused child/youth might affect foster family members and how to appropriately intervene in instances of sexual exploration and exploitation between the sexually abused child/youth and other children or youth				
How to reduce family members' vulnerability to allegations of sexual abuse, and strategies to deal with the social and emotional trauma inherent during sexual abuse assessments				

Supporting Normalcy for Children and Youth				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
Advocating for children's participation in extracurricular activities, exploration of the arts, membership in organizations, sports involvement, etc.				
Supporting age and developmentally appropriate activities and socialization with peers				
How to assist youth in accomplishing the appropriate developmental tasks				
Specialized Focus				
Skill/Knowledge	Yes	No	Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring	Who Can Help
The signs and symptoms of child/adolescent alcohol and substance abuse				
How to work with teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to assess reasons for a child's/youth's school problems or failure and develop a plan for remedial training or tutoring and strategies to help the child at home with school work				
Techniques, including teaching, modeling, coaching and positively reinforcing, to prepare the youth for independent living				
How to recognize when development is delayed or follows abnormal patterns, and the early warning signs of developmental disabilities				
Activity STOP				

Training

Slide: 6.2.14

Training



Licensing 6.2.14

Trainer Note: Keep in mind that you may reduce the amount of time you will need to spend on the train the trainer for Licensing Specialists to deliver pre-service training to foster parents if the content is covered in this course.

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Effective Coaching

The ability to coach foster parents directly impacts their ability to provide quality care for children. Keys to effective coaching include:

- **Build a Relationship:** Trust is key. While the Licensing Specialist's roles as regulator and assessor are extremely important, he/she must also build trust and partnership. Foster parents need to see that he/she truly wants to help them grow... not just assess and regulate.
- **Provide Measurable Goals:** Where are they now? Where do they need to go? Just like in any job performance plan, the Licensing Specialist wants to look at current performance and identify a desired performance. For example, if a foster is struggling with building a relationship with the birth family, identify specific tasks to complete such as sending photos or inviting the birth family to an event.
- **Involve Them in the Process:** For coaching to be successful, the Licensing Specialist needs to get buy-in from the foster parent. They need to see its value. Help them to gain self-awareness and insight into their needs.

- **Challenge Thinking and Assumptions:** Ask open-ended questions, help foster parents search for alternative solutions to problems, and encourage reasonable risk-taking.
- **Support and Encourage:** If Licensing Specialists keep in mind the ultimate reason for everything they do (the child), it is easy to remember that they are partners in learning. Listen to foster parents. Allow time for them to vent without judgment. Remember, they have a very difficult job. Encourage them to make progress, support them in that progress, and recognize their successes.
- **Drive Results:** Licensing Specialists are coaching to help achieve goals.

Effective Training

Licensing Specialists are often expected to conduct training, such as orientation, parent preparation pre-service, and in-service training. They may even work on a team that develops training for foster parents. There are many training needs for foster parents.

Slide: 6.2.16



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Slide: 6.2.17



PG: 30-31

Becoming an Effective Trainer

Good trainers understand the following main tasks as their responsibility:

- **Prepare:**
 - Know the content
 - Practice
 - Preparation of the training room
- **Know your audience:**
 - **Adult Learning Characteristics:**
 - Adults have accumulated life experiences and prefer practical learning activities that draw upon prior skill knowledge. It is important to acknowledge and respect these characteristics.
 - Most adults learn best by experiencing a blend of activities that promote knowledge acquisition (cognitive), attitudes and beliefs (affective), and practical application (behavioral).
 - Adults have established opinions and belief systems that must be respected.

- Adults learn at different rates and in different ways.
- Adults learn best in a democratic, participatory, and collaborative environment.
- Adults are goal/relevance oriented.
- Adults want to know what is in it for them.
- Motivation to learn is key!
- **Learning Styles:** We retain approximately ten percent of what we see; 30 to 40 percent of what we see and hear; and 90 percent of what we see, hear, and do. Training must appeal to all the learning styles which include: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.
 - **Visual learners** tend to learn by looking, seeing, viewing, and watching.
 - **Auditory learners** tend to learn by listening, hearing, and speaking.
 - **Kinesthetic learners** tend to learn by experiencing, moving, and doing.
- **Use proven facilitation techniques:**
 - Allow participants to talk and share during a session.
 - Asking questions, in addition to the structured activities and demonstrations, can really help keep a training session interactive. It is a great way to get participants involved and gives the trainer a good barometer of what they are thinking and what questions they may have. It is one of the most powerful tools of a trainer.
 - When asking a question, state it clearly and then be quiet. In fact, wait ten seconds. This allows people to think, come up with an answer, and the courage to share it with the group. Always offer a smile and encouragement when participants are brave enough to share in a conversation. Then follow up what they said with affirmation and either acknowledge their statement or gently redirecting to a different point.
 - Illustrate with examples. Through experience, people learn. Trainers will probably have plenty of examples and non-examples to share through their own experience and that of the foster parents. Remember to always keep confidentiality in mind and share the spotlight.
 - Stay on point.
 - Keep things moving. It can be challenging to keep the topic on track and manage tangents both when training as well as in the question and answer session at the end. Learn some helpful statements to help bring things back such as,

“Let me think about that get back with you after we wrap it up”.

- **Be mindful of time:**
 - Beginning sessions at the stated time respects the time of those who made a point to be on time. Ending on time respects everyone’s time.
- **Professional appearance and communication:**
 - Dressing in a manner that elicits respect and leadership assists in establishing professionalism.
 - When selecting clothing, consider that all eyes are on the trainer. Training is a physical activity and there will usually be a fair amount of bending and standing.
 - Using communication that is positive, clear, concise and well-articulated will aid in facilitation of diverse audiences.

It is important to note that while trainers should be fully prepared for each training event, they are not expected to be an expert on all aspects of child welfare. If a question arises, it acceptable to record the question and then follow up with the response.

Developing Training

Slide: 6.2.18



PG: 31

Although many courses are already developed for use in training, occasionally, there is a need that many families have and there are no courses available. In that case, the agency may decide to develop a course. In order to do so, it is important to understand that curriculum design is a profession with scientific processes to guide development. However, when trainers must develop training, try and locate an instructional designer that can assist, or at a minimum, work with someone experienced in developing curriculum. Keep the following in mind for all course development:

- **Outcomes and Expectations:** “What do I want them to be able to DO at the end of the day?”
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSAs):** What are the KSAs that allow them to accomplish the outcomes and expectations?
- **Content:** Select content that is relevant to the audience and supports the goal of competence and confidence. Select activities that will build success.
- **Methodology:** How will participants engage? Individually, small group, team teaching, etc.

- Types of activities to help adult learners process information include:
 - Role playing
 - Homework
 - Guided imagery
 - Group work

Activity D: Mini-Lesson

Time:

60 minutes depending on size of class

Materials:

Slide: 6.2.19

- **PG: 32-33, Mini-Lesson worksheet**
- Flip chart, markers, and participant-selected materials

Trainer Note: Organize this activity based on the number of participants. Four articles have been provided. Make copies of the articles with the asterisk (*) and if you have more than ten participants, you may select additional articles online at Florida's Center for Child Welfare.

Trainer Instructions:

- The article titles:
 - *Quality Parenting Initiative
 - *Normalcy-Don't Say No Until You Know
 - *Parenting a Child Who Has Been Sexually Abused
 - *Understanding Birth Parents with Trauma Histories
 - Understanding Child Welfare and the Courts
 - Helping Youth Transition to Adulthood
 - Helping Your Foster Child Transition to Your Adopted Child
 - Celebrating Holidays with Children You Foster
 - Grief and Loss for Foster Families
 - Pregnancy Prevention for Youth in Foster care
- Instruct participants to select one of the provided articles and develop a five-minute training on the article they selected.
 - Identify outcomes and expectations.
 - Identify knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs).
 - Determine content.
 - Determine methodology.
 - Build a mini-lesson.
- They are to present the article as if they are presenting to a group of foster parents at an upcoming meeting.
- After each person presents, acknowledge his/her strengths in the large group and make suggestions individually using a strengths-based approach. A sample feedback form is provided for the trainer.

Participant Instructions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Debrief activity with large group.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select one of the provided articles and develop a five-minute training on the selected article. 2. Present the article as if you are presenting to a group of foster parents at an upcoming meeting.
Activity STOP	
Key Points:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing quality foster parents and Licensing Specialists takes time, healthy motivation and working in partnership. • Foster parents will need ongoing support and encouragement as they face the challenges that accompany their role. Providing a consistent, supportive system ensures they are getting the resources they need which aids in retention. Supporting ongoing development is essential to everyone's success. Our children deserve the best. <p><i>What are some of the reasons why foster parents leave?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Support and Responsiveness from the CBC or Subcontractors • Lack of Clarity around Role and Inclusion of Foster Parents • Lack of Effective Partnerships between Foster Parents and Birth Families <p><i>Why is a Professional Development Plan important for Foster Parents?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of a Professional Development Plan should not be to assess performance (as there are plenty of tools for that), but rather it should be to establish long and short term goals to assist foster parents to improve performance. It should be thought of as a partnership between the

Module Transition:

agency and the foster parent to increase our capacity to care for children in out-of-home care.

- A Professional Development Plan can help align foster parent training and development efforts with the agency missions, goals and objectives. It assists foster parents with accepting responsibility for development and in the acquisition and enhancement of the skills they need.

Participants have now completed the entire assessment process.

Parents are now trained, licensed, re-licensed, and ready to develop expertise in providing excellent care for children.

Unfortunately, with all of the preparation involved, there is still bound to be challenges.

The next and final module will address foster parent challenges and then conclude with making a difference in foster home licensing and management.