

# Module 7: Resolving Foster Parent Concerns

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*Licensing Pre-Service Curriculum*



**Trainer Guide**

Office of Child Welfare

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*12/1/2019*

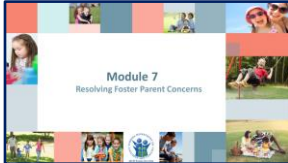
## Module 7: Resolving Foster Parent Concerns

### Time:

5 - 6 hours

### Module Overview:

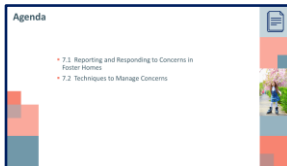
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The purpose of this module is resolve concerns identified in a foster home and to address foster parent concerns and motivation.

### Agenda:

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**Unit 7.1:** Reporting and Responding to Concerns in Foster Homes (TG: 2, PG: 2)

**Unit 7.2:** Techniques to Manage Challenges (TG: 24, PG: 18)

### Materials:

- Trainer's Guide (TG)
- Participant's Guide (PG)
- PowerPoint slide deck
- Flip chart paper and markers
- No videos

### References:

- *My Foster Truth: Recollections of Life in State Care:*  
<http://www.childrensrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CR-Blog-Brochure-2015-spreads-FINAL.pdf>

### Activities:

#### Unit 7.1:

**Activity A:** Referral or Abuse Report (TG: 15, PG: 11)

**Activity B:** Foster Parent Perspective (TG: 23, PG: 17)

#### Unit 7.2:

**Activity C:** Developing a Corrective Action Plan (TG: 29, PG: 22)

**Activity D:** Endings and Beginnings (TG: 38, PG: 26)

## Unit 7.1: Reporting and Responding to Concerns in Foster Homes

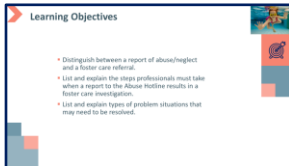
### Unit Overview:

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### Learning Objectives:

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PG: 2

The purpose of Unit 7.1 is to review the primary events and elements of reporting and responding to concerns in the foster home including calls to the Abuse Hotline which lead to investigations and foster care referrals.

1. Distinguish between a report of abuse/neglect and a foster care referral.
2. List and explain the steps professionals must take when a report to the Abuse Hotline results in a foster care investigation.
3. List and explain types of problem situations that may need to be resolved.

## Foster Care Referrals and Abuse/Neglect Investigations

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PG: 3

Despite best efforts, abuse/neglect investigations (assessments) and foster care referrals do happen.

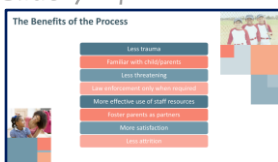
- The agency has the right to inspect a foster home at any reasonable time and must investigate all complaints and foster care referrals alleging licensing violations.
- Licensing Specialists must have the skills and knowledge to receive, manage, and respond to concerns in the home. They must be able to assess whether there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect in a foster home. If reasonable cause is determined, they should immediately report it to the Abuse Hotline.
- The vast majority of foster parents understand that investigations of foster parents are absolutely necessary when the allegations rise to the level of abuse/neglect. However, they do express frustration, hurt, confusion, and a reluctance to continue fostering when multiple investigations with no findings are damaging to the children in their homes and to their own families.

### The Benefits of the Process

Here are a few things to keep in mind about how Florida's QPI approach to investigations/assessments and referrals is beneficial to children as well as foster parents:

- Children are less confused or upset by an "investigation" when it mirrors an "assessment" and they experience less trauma because these approaches are less intrusive and are more closely matched to the severity of the allegation or concern reported.
- Licensing issues are handled by Child Welfare Professionals who are familiar with the child and foster

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PG: 3

parents.

- Foster parents have the opportunity to develop skills without feeling threatened.
- Law enforcement is involved only in abuse/neglect reports (when required). They may be involved in a foster care referral if the allegation is a child-on-child sexual abuse case (COC).
- Limited staff resources are used more efficiently and, therefore, more effectively.
- Volunteer foster parents are recognized as partners in the system of care and treated as such.
- Foster parents are less likely to leave fostering because they are better satisfied with their experience.
- More quality foster parents are available to provide the care that children need because there is less attrition.

### Abuse/Neglect Assessments or Foster Care Referrals

Foster care referrals are “calls to the Abuse Hotline regarding concerns about the care provided in a licensed foster home, group home, or emergency shelter that do not meet the criteria for acceptance of a report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

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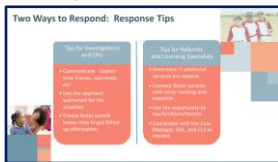


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- Foster care referrals are not handled by CPIs, but by Licensing or Foster Home Support Professionals.
- Foster care referrals are most often licensing violations.
- Abuse/neglect investigations must meet criteria specified in law and must be handled by CPIs.
- Abuse Hotline Counselors are trained to ask questions to determine the difference.

**Trainer Note:** Explain that judges also make placement decisions that may not necessarily align themselves with the assessment of a good match (and foster parent strengths and needs). As such, the Licensing Specialist should be encouraged to identify retentive supports that can be installed to support the placement while remaining in communication with the Case Manager and judiciary through appropriate channels of communication.

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PG: 4

## Two Ways to Respond: Response Tips

There are two distinct ways to respond to concerns in foster homes:

1. Abuse/neglect investigations are conducted by CPIs.
2. Foster care referrals are handled by Licensing Specialists in the CBCs.

Here are some response tips for investigations conducted by CPIs:

- Communicate – explain time frames, outcomes, etc.
- Use the approach warranted for the situation.
- Ensure foster parent knows how to get follow-up information.

Here are some response tips for foster care referrals handled by CBCs or the supervising agency:

- Determine if additional services are needed.
- Connect foster parents with other training and supports.
- Use the opportunity to teach/inform/mentor.
- Coordinate with the Case Manager, GAL, and CLS as needed.
- Communicate next steps.

Specifically:

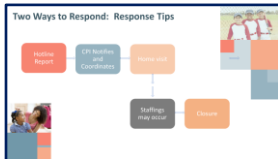
- Foster parents express the need for more information. They want to know the status of their investigation as soon as possible. They share stories of how hard it is to wait even if it “seems” like the investigation will result in no findings.
- Experienced CPIs, Case Managers, and Licensing Specialists understand the value of the teamwork and sharing information. This leads to better decisions and improved relationships.

- The division of roles is not only better in terms of workload management, it also provides opportunities for foster parents to obtain needed services for children and learn additional skills.
- Collaborative approaches in both response types are credited for informed planning and decision making.
- Foster parents may be cross-referenced in FSFN regarding a child they have in their home because they are the caregiver. They may be concerned when they see this on SACWIS or their abuse registry check.

### CPI Foster Care Institutional Investigation Intake

In accordance with section 39.302, F.S., if the Abuse Hotline determines the concern meets the criteria for an investigation, the CPI coordinates as needed with the Licensing Specialist.

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PG: 5

- The CPI is the lead during the investigation and all communication relating to the open investigation must be authorized and coordinated by the CPI, including discussions with the foster parent and alleged child victim.
- When investigating the allegations involving foster parents, all parties must be sensitive to the fact that there may be other children placed in the home who may be traumatized by the unannounced arrival of the CPI, Case Manager, Licensing Specialist, or law enforcement.
- The CPI notifies the Case Manager, CLS attorney, GAL, and alleged victim's birth parents (if rights remain intact) with pertinent information.
- The time, place, and manner of home visit(s) depend upon a variety of factors so it is important for the Licensing Specialist to maintain consistent communication with the CPI and be knowledgeable about their process.
- During initial contact, the CPI must explain the investigative process to the foster parent. The foster parent has the right to ask questions and raise concerns and contact the CPI at any time.

- Staffing’s must occur during this process according to policy and local protocol.
- A follow-up staffing will occur if the investigation closure decision is not known at the time of the staffing.
- Foster parents will be notified at the close of the investigation.

### The Licensing Specialist’s Role during CPI Intake

A Licensing Specialist should prepare foster parents for potential allegations by understanding what to do if it happens and how to avoid it to the extent possible.

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PG: 6

- Licensing Specialists should partner with the CPI who is investigating abuse in a foster home.
- The CPI takes the lead when there is an abuse report. Going out together may ‘soften the blow’ since the family has relationship with the Licensing Specialist.
- The CPI may contact the Licensing Specialist for information about the home by asking:
  - Who is in the home?
  - How many children are in the home and what is their relationship in relation to the foster parent?
  - What are the additional demographics?
  - Are there frequent visitors or supports that may act in a caregiver role that do not reside in the home?
- There are tools available which help the Licensing Specialist gather information for assessment purposes and to help the team improve. These tools, which were covered previously, include:
  - Case Manager’s Review of the Foster Parent
  - Investigator Review of Foster Parent
  - Foster Parent Review of Investigator
  - Youth Exit



- The Licensing Specialist should participate in a staffing that determines the actions that may be requested of the foster parent.
- If licensing violations are found which do not pose an immediate threat to the health, safety, or well-being of the child, the Licensing Specialist is responsible for writing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to correct the deficiencies. This plan should be written with the foster parent and approved by the agency.

***What measures can we take to be sensitive to the fact that there may be other children placed in the home who may be traumatized by the unannounced arrival of a CPI, Case Manager, Licensing Specialist, or law enforcement?***

***Endorse:***

- Conduct interviews without the children present.
- Find supports to take care of the children during the investigation.
- Conduct investigation while children are at school.

**Trainer Note:** Refer participants to **PG: 7-8, Child Protective Investigations Involving Foster Parents Information Sheet.**

*Discuss this information sheet and how it can be used to help communicate the investigation process with foster parents.*

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## Child Protective Investigations Involving Foster Parents

### Information Sheet

#### What is the goal of Florida's Child Protection System?

The goal of Florida's Child Protection system is to ensure that children are safe from abuse and neglect while doing everything we can to keep families together.

#### How do I know the person at my door is really a Child Protective Investigator?

The Child Protective Investigator (CPI) should present proper identification before entering your home. You may verify that the person is employed as a Child Protective Investigator by calling the CPI's local office or the statewide Florida Abuse Hotline Command Center's toll-free number at 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). The Child Protective Investigator and Supervisor's name and phone numbers are provided on the back of this information sheet. You are encouraged to contact the CPI or supervisor with any questions/concerns you may have during the investigation.

#### What is a Child Protective Investigation and how am I involved as a Foster Parent?

An investigation results when someone has reported a concern to the Florida Abuse Hotline Command Center claiming a child under your supervision has been abused or neglected. The incident resulting in the allegations of abuse or neglect may have occurred while the child was in the care of a biological parent, other caregiver, or while in your care. When such an allegation is received, state law requires that it be investigated by a Child Protective Investigator who will explain what the allegations are and your involvement in the investigation.

When allegations are reported against you or an adult member of your home, the CPI will advise you of the allegations and address them with you as state law requires. The CPI will talk to you and other individuals who may be associated with the child. You can help the CPI by being truthful and by providing information that is necessary to determine whether a concern exists that affects the safety and well being of the child in your care.

***Note, state law specifically directs visits and interviews with the child, family, and caregivers to be unannounced whenever possible, which may result in your child being interviewed without you being present. The law also requires you to notify the CPI within two business days if you move or if your child's location or living arrangement changes.***

You may video or audio tape your interview with the CPI, using your own equipment, if it is immediately available. An attorney may represent you at any point during the investigation. Even if you choose to delay your interview with the CPI in order to be represented by an attorney, the investigation will continue.

#### What are the possible results of the investigation?

When the allegations are not alleged against you or any adult member of your home, your involvement may be limited.

If allegations are alleged against you or an adult member of your home, it is possible that the investigation will reveal that there is no indication of child abuse or neglect and the investigation will be closed with no further action. The child protective investigation is required to be completed within 60 days, except for investigations involving a child death, missing child, and/or when law enforcement has an open criminal investigation. Investigations may be staffed by the

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ATTACHMENT I

CPI with licensing staff, case managers, law enforcement, Guardian ad Litem, Children's Legal Services, and any other parties with pertinent information relating to the investigation. The recommendations of the staffing will be forwarded to the supervising agency's licensing staff which may result in a corrective action plan, suspension or revocation of your foster parent license. If the CPI determines that it is in the best interest of the child's safety and well being, the child may be removed from your care.

**If you have any questions, you may contact the CPI or CPI Supervisor below.**

**Child Protective Investigator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CPI Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

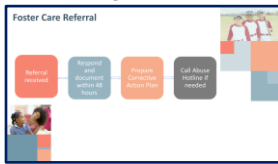
**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Intake Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Inc. Support Team (F.A.S.T.) is available to provide support to a foster parent when an allegation has been or might be brought against him or her. You may contact F.A.S.T. at 1-800-327-8119 or [fast@floridafapa.org](mailto:fast@floridafapa.org)**

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PG: 9

## Foster Care Referral

Sometimes referrals do not meet the criteria for an abuse investigation, but concerns are still present. These concerns may result in a report to the Abuse Hotline or may result in a foster care referral. The most common types of licensing concerns include:

- Quality of care
- Foster parent not working in partnership
- Inappropriate methods of discipline

Upon receipt of a foster care referral by the Child Protection Investigation Unit, the foster care referral shall be immediately forwarded to the appropriate Licensing Specialist. The Licensing Specialist receiving the foster care referral shall:

- Respond to the foster care referral and document any needed actions within forty-eight hours.
- Prepare a written Corrective Action Plan to correct the deficiencies that are a result of a foster care referral. The plan shall be developed by the supervising agency in conjunction with the licensed out-of-home caregivers and shall be approved by the Regional Licensing Authority.

If there are concerns regarding abuse or neglect, a call shall be made to the Abuse Hotline. The Abuse Hotline Counselors shall immediately notify the placement unit or on-call unit if after hours.

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**PG: 9-10**

## The Licensing Specialist's Role during Investigation (Assessment) or Referral

Remember, in cases where Licensing Specialists receive a foster care referral that they believe they cannot handle or believe it may meet the criteria for an abuse report, they must notify their supervisor who may then instruct them to call the Abuse Hotline and report concerns.

During the investigation or referral process, the Licensing Specialist/staff is responsible for:

### Cooperating and Investigating:

- Investigating complaints against the foster parent that meet the criteria for acceptance of a report of abuse or neglect jointly with the Child Protective Investigator whenever possible.
- Working in cooperation with the lead agency and supervising agency to ensure a thorough investigation is conducted.
- Limiting the focus of the investigation or assessment to the violations of licensing standards.
- Completing all complaint investigations or foster care referrals within five working days of the receipt of the complaint unless otherwise authorized by the licensing authority.

### Interviewing and Contacts:

- Thoroughly documenting all contacts.
- Interviewing the child or children listed as subjects of the referral and visiting the family foster home or emergency shelter home within twenty-four hours of receipt of the referral by the licensing unit unless a staffing is held with the Licensing Unit Supervisor and a determination is made (and documented in the licensing file) that a home visit is not necessary.
- Contacting the foster parent to discuss the referral within twenty-four hours of receipt of the referral if a home visit is not made.

**Staffing:**

- Participating in staffing's regarding complaints.

**Assessing and Corrective Action:**

- Completing the assessment of the referral within five working days of receipt of the referral.
- Documenting the results of the assessment and any necessary Corrective Action Plan in the licensing file with a copy forwarded to the licensing authority within seven working days of receipt of the referral.
- Developing and monitoring Corrective Action Plans in conjunction with the supervising agency. Corrective Action Plans must be in writing and identify specific dates by which corrective measures shall be completed. The written Corrective Action Plan shall also state that failure to comply with the corrective measures within the time frames identified may result in administrative actions including suspension, revocation, or denial of the license.
- Thoroughly documenting the complaint investigation or foster care referral assessment information in the licensing file. The supervising agency must give written notification to the foster parent and the Department of the outcome of the investigation as it relates to the licensing violations, and, if appropriate a Corrective Action Plan.
- The Corrective Action Plan should also be recorded in FSFN and discussed in the Unified Home Study if the home remains licensed.

## Activity A: Referral or Abuse Report

<p><b>Time:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><b>Materials:</b> <i>Slide: 7.1.11</i></p> <p><b>Trainer Instructions:</b></p>	<p>30 minutes</p> <p>To ensure Licensing Specialists clearly understand the difference between a foster care referral and an abuse report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PG: 11-13, Referral or Abuse Report worksheet</b></li> <li>• <i>Divide participants into groups.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ask each group to discuss the given scenarios which represent common problems and concerns among foster parents to determine if they think the act should/would result in a referral or an abuse/neglect report.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not ensuring the child receives the proper medical care in a timely manner (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>2. Unsafe conditions in the home (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>3. Not allowing for visitation. (<b>Response:</b> referral)</li> <li>4. Not providing for the child's safety and well-being (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>5. Cruel, severe, or unusual forms of discipline (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>6. Corporal punishment (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>7. Delegating discipline or permit punishment of a child by another child or by an adult not in a caregiver role (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>8. Withholding meals, clothing, or shelter (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>9. Ridiculing or punishing a child for bed-wetting or other lapses in toileting (<b>Response:</b> referral)</li> <li>10. Mechanically restraining or locking a child in any enclosure, room, closet, bathroom or area of the house or premises, for any reason (<b>Response:</b> abuse report)</li> <li>11. Threatening a child with removal from the home or with a report to authorities as consequences for unacceptable behavior (<b>Response:</b> referral)</li> <li>12. Prohibiting visitation with family and significant others (<b>Response:</b> referral)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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<b>Participant Instructions:</b>	<p>13. Withholding child's allowance (<b>Response:</b> referral)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Debrief activity with large group.</i></li></ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Review the scenarios to determine if the act should/would result in a referral or an abuse/neglect report.</li><li>2. Be prepared to discuss with the class.</li></ol>
<b>Activity STOP</b>	



## Foster Allegation Support Team (FAST)

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PG: 14

The Foster Allegation Support Team (FAST) supports foster parents through the pain and fear of the allegation, clarifies the process, provides clearer communication, helps the children avoid the trauma, and helps retain foster homes.

The purpose of FAST is to:

- Provide an immediate response as well as support to foster parents when an allegation has been, or might be, brought against them.
- Be there when any foster parent asks for help or support.
- Keep foster parents informed of the procedures and the processes a foster parent can expect during an investigation.
- Work toward better investigations and more compassion, tolerance, and respect for foster parents, children, and families.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the reports.
- Offer support and help, which means listening to foster parents when they have a need to vent a sense of hurt, anger, and shock at what has happened to them.
- Never allow themselves to get involved in name calling, accusations, or other counterproductive behaviors which may cause foster parents to stray.
- Help foster parents learn the concept of "fair fighting", by treating the other side with absolute respect and insisting on the same.
- Help foster parents gain an attitude of honesty and straightforward integrity which allows their point to be heard.

### **As a Licensing Specialist, how can you best help foster parents utilize the services of FAST?**

#### **Endorse:**

- Make sure foster parents are aware of the service.
- Make sure foster parents follow the FAST recommendations, including:
  - Beginning a dated, written journal of events and communications
  - Keeping good records
  - Insisting on giving full input into the investigations
  - Calling the FAST Hotline for immediate support
  - Requesting assistance from the Department in explaining to the children what is happening and why
  - Maintaining their sense of professionalism as foster parents
  - Cooperating with the investigation

### **Consequences of Abuse/Neglect Reports and Referrals**

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**PG: 14**

#### **What are some of the consequences involved when allegations against foster parent are determined to be false?**

- Though not substantiated, the allegation becomes part of the family's case file and the stress family members experienced lingers.
- Many foster parents describe allegations and the subsequent investigation as a process of loss and grief.
- Parents may lose their sense of identity, their self-esteem, and their trust in the Licensing Specialist or agency.
- Children may be removed which is another painful loss for both the children and foster parents.
- Even after the case is closed, a foster parent may feel that the family's good name is forever tarnished and the episode will never be resolved.

### **What are some of the consequences involved when allegations against a foster parent are determined to be true?**

- Allegations that uncover licensing violations or substantiated abuse claims can cause additional stress.
- Depending on the severity of the infraction, foster parents may be placed on probation, be issued a correction order, or have their license temporarily suspended or permanently revoked.
- Serious allegations may result in a criminal charge that could land a parent in jail and forever ruin chances of fostering or adopting another child.

### **Impact of Allegations against Foster Parents**

Foster parents accused of neglect and abuse experience the accusation of integrity as a form of assault or victimization. People who have been accused of abuse often experience the same types of symptoms as those who have actually been abused.

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PG: 15

- **Trauma:** Many foster parents express shock and disbelief.
- **Betrayal:** They feel their main source of support can no longer talk to them.
- **Stigma:** Foster parents report feeling shame, humiliation, inadequacy, and a decline in self-esteem.
- **Powerlessness:** The process can be lengthy and complex and foster parents often feel they have little information regarding the allegation.

### **As a Licensing Specialist, how can you best help foster parents accused of neglect and abuse, while maintaining your role in the investigation?**

#### **Endorse:**

- Make sure they know their rights and obligations BEFORE an accusation is made.
- Listen to how they feel.
- Demonstrate empathy.  
Encourage them to contact FAST or experienced foster parents or mentors.

**Trainer Note:** *The following Allegation Prevention Strategies were developed by a foster/adoptive parent as a guide for other parents. Encourage Licensing Specialists to share this guide with foster parents as a demonstration of support, mutual respect, and partnership.*

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PG: 15-16

## Allegation Prevention Strategies

It is important for Licensing Specialists to be aware of allegation prevention strategies for foster parents and provide this information to foster parents during pre-service training, in-service training, and during subsequent conversations.

All families who care for children with special needs face some risk and every parent can take steps to keep situations from turning into allegations. The following strategies were developed by a foster/adoptive parent as a guide for other parents:

1. **Know your limits.** If you are not comfortable handling children with certain challenging backgrounds and behaviors, don't set yourself up by bringing such children into your home.
2. **Learn all you can about each child before placement.** You have a right to know about previous abuse and allegations. Ask: "Has this child been abused? In what way? Who were the perpetrators? Have there been any abuse allegations?" Example: Had the foster family whose 13-year-old girl charged the grandfather with abuse known about her abuse history, they would never have left the foster grandfather alone with her.
3. **Make sure that men and boys in your house are never alone with a girl who has been sexually abused.** Proactive precautions are very important in this situation, especially at the beginning of the placement. Talk with your partner and others in the household about this safety plan and stay proactive.
4. **Give each sexually abused child his/her own bedroom.** I know this is difficult, but why put another child in your home at risk? If a child's boundaries have been invaded, he/she needs to re-learn proper boundaries.
5. **Be crystal clear about rules for dress, privacy, touching, etc.** Caregivers must agree on house rules, boundaries, and

consequences. Each child comes from a different culture of parenting, sexuality, sleeping habits, dress, touch, and more, and needs to learn what is appropriate.

6. **Never use physical discipline.** Corporal punishment is not allowed in foster care, but I know some folks think that once the kids are adopted, physical discipline is okay. Don't do it. Children with a history of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse often misinterpret physical discipline and an allegation is likely. Physical discipline can also undermine attachment.
7. **Avoid teasing, horseplay, wrestling, and suggestive language.** These are acts of intimacy and intimacy is just what abused children often resist. In addition, the child may get a different message than you intend during the close physical contact.
8. **Document sexual acting out in writing.** Send reports to the child's social worker and therapist. Then, if another incident comes to light, the worker and therapist can see that there might be a pattern to the child's acting out that perhaps relates to past experiences.
9. **Document behavior patterns.** When a child enters your home, use a calendar to record changes in the child's behavior, such as inappropriate words or actions during birth parent visits, the child's behavior following visits, the cause of scratches, bruises, or other injuries, and any patterns of behavior that seem to follow specific events or times of the year (like anniversaries of certain past events).
10. **Participate in a support group.** As foster and adoptive parents of children with special needs, we need to share the struggles and joys that are a part of our lives with those who can empathize and support us. We need folks who can laugh and cry with us and really understand foster and adoptive parents' journey.
11. **Reserve personal time to reduce stress.** Know what really pushes your buttons and establish a calming plan. Post 20 calming tips on your refrigerator and model stress-reduction techniques for your children. Then, make plans for a weekly—yes, weekly—time away from the children. Take care of yourself; you are the child's greatest gift!

**Trainer Note:** *This is an important time for Licensing Specialists to hear from a foster parent about the fears and concerns related to foster care investigations and referrals. In selecting the foster parent, choose foster parents who are not currently being investigated, do not have active referrals, and are not under a correction action plan. It is important that the speaker is objective and will not experience additional trauma by sharing his/her thoughts and perspective with the class. Prepare the foster parent speaker by making sure he/she has an opportunity to review this module so he/she is aware of the messages that have been shared with Licensing Specialists. Provide him/her with guidance on how much time you would like him/her to share. It is also important to discuss boundaries with him/her so he/she feels supported and knows that his/her personal information will not be shared unless that is his/her decision.*

*Guide the speaker by asking him/her to discuss the following key points that pertain to this lesson:*

- *His/her beliefs about the motives of most foster parents.*
- *What guidance he/she would offer Licensing Specialists who are working with foster parents that are being investigated (assessed) due to abuse/neglect allegations?*
- *How to support foster parents that have experienced false allegations?*

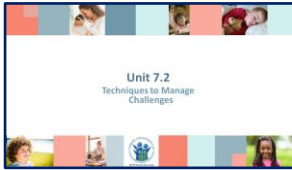
## Activity B: Foster Parent Perspective

<p><b>Time:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><b>Resources:</b> <i>Slide: 7.1.16</i></p> <p><b>Trainer Instructions:</b></p>	<p>45 minutes</p> <p>To be aware of foster parent’s perspective about foster care investigations and referrals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PG: 17, Foster Parent Perspective worksheet</b></li> <li>• <i>Instruct participants to listen to the speaker and ask questions as appropriate. Plan for the speaker to take 30 minutes.</i></li> <li>• <i>Inform participants that the foster parent is supported in setting boundaries so they can choose not to answer some personal questions.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ask participants to reflect on the speaker by answering the questions on their worksheet. These questions include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>What are your beliefs about the motives of most foster parents?</i></li> <li>b. <i>How do you feel about continuing to work with foster parents who have existing allegations?</i></li> <li>c. <i>How can you begin to discern when abuse might really exist versus an unfounded allegation?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Debrief activity with large group.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Participant Instructions:</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Based on listening to the speaker and class discussions, answer the questions:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What are your beliefs about the motives of most foster parents?</li> <li>b. How do you feel about continuing to work with foster parents who have existing allegations?</li> <li>c. How can you begin to discern when abuse might really exist versus an unfounded allegation?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Activity STOP</b></p>	

## Unit 7.2: Techniques to Manage Challenges

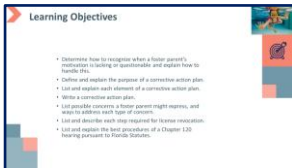
### Unit Overview:

Slide: 7.2.1



### Learning Objectives:

Slide: 7.2.2



**PG: 18**

The purpose of Unit 7.2 is to provide an overview of the events surrounding cases where license revocation is deemed necessary. Specifically, participants will review foster care problem situations requiring resolution and the types of concerns a foster parent might have. In addition, participants will learn how to use Corrective Action Plans and performance improvement plans as a response to problem resolution.

1. Determine how to recognize when a foster parent's motivation is lacking or questionable and explain how to handle this.
2. Define and explain the purpose of a Corrective Action Plan.
3. List and explain each element of a Corrective Action Plan.
4. Write a Corrective Action Plan.
5. List possible concerns a foster parent might express and ways to address each type of concern.
6. List and describe each step required for license revocation.
7. List and explain the basic procedures of a Chapter 120 hearing pursuant to Florida Statutes.



## Foster Parent Motivation

Slide: 7.2.3



PG: 19

Understanding a foster parent's motivation for fostering may be beneficial in resolving concerns. While most foster parents have altruistic motives, some motives may influence questionable practices and parenting.

**What are some examples of altruistic motives for fostering?**

**Endorse:**

- Make a difference
- Be a parent
- Aware of need
- Feel they will be good at fostering

**What are some examples of questionable motives for fostering?**

**Endorse:**

- Guilt
- Financial incentive
- Meet parent's emotional needs

**What are some indicators that foster parent's motives are questionable?**

**Endorse:**

- Not spending time with the child
- Not providing for the child

**How would you handle it if you discovered a foster parent's motives are lacking or questionable? How would you engage a foster parent to talk about his/her reasons for fostering?**

**Endorse:**

- Interview the child
- Interview the parent, find out why
- Provide training and support
- Consider referral and/or revocation if the motives are not resolvable

## Corrective Action Plan

Slide: 7.2.4



PG: 19

If licensing violations are found which do not pose an immediate threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the children, the Licensing Specialist must prepare a written Corrective Action Plan to correct the deficiencies found during an abuse/neglect investigation or foster care referral.

The plan needs to be developed in a supportive manner that reflects the partnership commitments. Engaging in mutually respectful communication regarding concerns provides an opportunity to maintain positive relationships and build family strengths. Licensing Specialists are expected to utilize QPI resources and training that address foster parent concerns.

- The plan should be written with the foster parents.
- The plan must be approved by DCF Regional Licensing as advised earlier.
- The plan must include tasks designed to rectify the issues substantiated in the allegation.
- If the tasks are not completed within a certain timeframe, the foster care license may be suspended, denied, or revoked.
- Corrective Action Plans are not created for foster parents who have previously committed licensing violations and were unable to benefit from remedial efforts. In these cases, the agency may determine to suspend, deny, or revoke the foster care license.

**Trainer Note:** Refer participants to **PG: 20, Foster Home Corrective Action Plan**. Discuss the components of the Corrective Action Plan.

**Foster Home Corrective Action Plan**

Foster Home:

License Expiration date:

Child Placing Agency:

Region:

County:

**Reasons Corrective Action Plan is Necessary:**

**Standards cited per Florida Administrative Code/Florida Statutes:**

**Date and manner in which foster parent was notified of violation by Child Placing Agency:**

**Date of Corrective Action Staffing/Consultation and names and titles of those in attendance:**

Description of Corrective Actions that need to be taken:	Timeframe to complete Corrective Action

**Person(s) responsible and requested supporting documentation:**

By signing the Corrective Action Plan, I agree to all corrective actions as identified by the agreed upon due date. Failure to comply with the Corrective Action Plan within the identified time frame, may result in the suspension, denial or revocation of the license.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child Placing Agency Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Slide: 7.2.5



PG: 21

## How to Write a Corrective Action Plan

To write an effective Corrective Action Plan, the Licensing Specialist must identify:

- The reasons for the plan
- Each person's specific and observable tasks
- Proper and reasonable deadlines
- Documentation to support the completion of the tasks

***What are some areas of concern that foster parents might bring up during Corrective Action Planning?***

***Endorse:***

- Challenging behaviors displayed by the child
- Lack of birth family involvement
- Lack of partner support
- Loss
- Property damage

***How should you respond and what types of guidance can you offer to alleviate foster parent concerns?***

***Endorse:***

- Address foster parent's concerns with empathy and sensitivity
- Use positive practice
- Help foster parents identify solutions
- Help foster parents identify resources and partners

## Activity C: Developing a Corrective Action Plan

<p><b>Time:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><b>Materials:</b> <i>Slide: 7.2.6</i></p> <p><b>Trainer Instructions:</b></p>	<p>60 minutes</p> <p>Participants will have the opportunity to role-play determining the need for a Corrective Action Plan and writing one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PG: 22, Writing a Corrective Action Plan worksheet</b></li> <li>• <b>PG: 23, Corrective Action Plan</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Divide participants into pairs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Assign each pair one of three scenarios:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Foster parent is using inappropriate discipline techniques because he/she feels the child's behavior is out of control. Foster parent yells at children and uses derogatory language to control behavior. Foster parent has been heard threatening the children with corporal punishment, but there is no evidence that parent has acted on these threats.</li> <li>b. Foster parent is engaging in actions to sabotage visitation between the child and birth parent by not having the child available for visits, demeaning the birth parent to the child, and canceling visits as a child's punishment for acting out behaviors.</li> <li>c. Foster parent's home is so cluttered and unclean it is verging on dangerous and hazardous to the health and safety of the children.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <i>Ask each pair to select one person to be the foster parent and the other to be the Licensing Specialist.</i></li> <li>• <i>Based on the assigned scenario, instruct each pair to present a five-minute role-play that demonstrates effective engagement techniques and partnership to address the identified concerns.</i></li> <li>• <i>Debrief the role-plays.</i></li> </ul>
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<b>Participant Instructions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Following the role-plays, direct each pair to spend an additional 15 minutes writing the Corrective Action Plan.</i></li> <li>• <i>Have each group share their Corrective Action Plans and provide feedback.</i></li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working in pairs, use your assigned scenario to complete the activity.</li> <li>2. Select one person to be the foster parent and the other to be the Licensing Specialist.</li> <li>3. Each pair must present a five-minute role-play that demonstrates effective engagement techniques and partnership to address the identified concerns.</li> <li>4. Debrief the role-plays.</li> <li>5. Following the role-plays, spend an additional 15 minutes writing the Corrective Action Plan.</li> </ol>
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**Foster Home Corrective Action Plan 1**

Foster Home:

License Expiration date:

Child Placing Agency:

Region:

County:

**Reasons Corrective Action Plan is Necessary:** Foster parent is using inappropriate discipline techniques because he/she feels the child’s behavior is out of control. Foster parent yells at children and uses derogatory language to control behavior. Foster parent has been heard threatening the children with corporal punishment, but there is no evidence that parent has acted on these threats.

**Standards cited per Florida Administrative Code/Florida Statutes:**

**Date and manner in which foster parent was notified of violation by Child Placing Agency:**

N/A

**Date of Corrective Action Staffing/Consultation and names and titles of those in attendance:**

N/A

Description of Corrective Actions that need to be taken:	Timeframe to complete Corrective Action
Foster parent will take additional training in behavior management techniques and positive parenting to increase their ability to handle problem behaviors appropriately and effectively.	Begin training within one week and complete within 30 days.
Foster parent mentor will make contact with foster parent and maintain weekly contact.	Effective immediately. Reassess in 60 days.
Foster parent will meet with Licensing Specialist and review discipline policy and partnership plan. They will maintain weekly contact to assess progress.	Meet within 24 hours.

**Person(s) responsible and requested supporting documentation:**  
By signing the Corrective Action Plan, I agree to all corrective actions as identified by the agreed upon due date. Failure to comply with the Corrective Action Plan within the identified time frame, may result in the suspension, denial or revocation of the license.

_____ Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver	_____ Date
_____ Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Child Placing Agency Representative	_____ Date

### **Foster Home Corrective Action Plan 2**

Foster Home:

License Expiration date:

Child Placing Agency:

Region:

County:

**Reasons Corrective Action Plan is Necessary:** Foster parent is engaging in actions to sabotage visitation between the child and birth parent by not having the child available for visits, demeaning the birth parent to the child, and canceling visits as a child’s punishment for acting out behaviors.

**Standards cited per Florida Administrative Code/Florida Statutes:**

**Date and manner in which foster parent was notified of violation by Child Placing Agency:**

N/A

**Date of Corrective Action Staffing/Consultation and names and titles of those in attendance:**

N/A

<b>Description of Corrective Actions that need to be taken:</b>	<b>Timeframe to complete Corrective Action</b>
Foster parent will meet with Licensing Specialist and review partnership plan.	Meet within 24 hours.
Case Manager and Licensing Specialist will meet with foster parent and review case plan and court order.	Meet within 24 hours.
Foster parent mentor will make contact with foster parent.	Effective immediately. Reassess in 60 days.

**Person(s) responsible and requested supporting documentation:**

By signing the Corrective Action Plan, I agree to all corrective actions as identified by the agreed upon due date. Failure to comply with the Corrective Action Plan within the identified time frame, may result in the suspension, denial or revocation of the license.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



_____ Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Child Placing Agency Representative	_____ Date

**Foster Home Corrective Action Plan 3**

Foster Home: \_\_\_\_\_ License Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Placing Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons Corrective Action Plan is Necessary:** Foster parent’s home is so cluttered and unclean it is verging on dangerous and hazardous to the health and safety of the children.

**Standards cited per Florida Administrative Code/Florida Statutes:**

**Date and manner in which foster parent was notified of violation by Child Placing Agency:**  
N/A

**Date of Corrective Action Staffing/Consultation and names and titles of those in attendance:**  
N/A

Description of Corrective Actions that need to be taken:	Timeframe to complete Corrective Action
Foster parent will declutter and clean the home.	Meet within 24 hours.
Licensing Specialist will meet with foster parent and review progress.	Meet within 24 hours.
Licensing Specialist will make home visits to the foster home on a weekly basis for four weeks and monthly thereafter for six months.	Effective immediately. Reassess monthly.

**Person(s) responsible and requested supporting documentation:**  
By signing the Corrective Action Plan, I agree to all corrective actions as identified by the agreed upon due date. Failure to comply with the Corrective Action Plan within the identified time frame, may result in the suspension, denial or revocation of the license.

_____ Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver	_____ Date
_____ Signature of licensed out-of-home caregiver	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Child Placing Agency Representative	_____ Date
<b>Activity STOP</b>	

## License Revocation

Slide: 7.2.7



Slide: 7.2.8



PG: 24

Sometimes despite best efforts, a license must be revoked for the safety and well-being of the children and families we serve. This is a team decision and must be done with the department's legal counsel and supervising and lead agencies through a Chapter 120 administrative hearing.

### Problem Situations Leading to License Revocation

The three most common reasons for revocation are:

1. Verified findings resulting in harm or imminent harm (i.e., mentally, emotionally, or physically to the child).
2. The foster home is not in compliance with licensing standards and the nature of the non-compliance and child's circumstances are concerning enough to warrant immediate administrative action.
3. The foster parent has been offered a Corrective Action Plan but has not improved.

***What are the kinds of challenges we've seen and heard about so far in this training that might lead to revoking a license?***

**Endorse:**

- Lack of involvement in the partnership team
- Unable to provide for the child's safety and well-being
- Unable to work towards reunification and unwilling to use family-centered practices

## Slide: 7.2.9



PG: 24

## License Revocation: Notification

Written notification must be approved by the Department's legal counsel and sent through certified mail. This notification must include:

- Identification of the statutory and administrative code violations that were found.
- The actions to be taken.
- The foster parent's right to challenge the action through an administrative proceeding.

## Slide: 7.2.10



PG: 25

## License Revocation: Licensing File

The following must be documented in the licensing file and reviewed by the Department's legal counsel:

- All abuse reports and all reports of licensing violations and the outcome of the investigation(s)
- List of all deficiencies or conditions, other than abuse or neglect of the children, which compromise the safety or well-being of the children
- The length of time and frequency of the noncompliance with the licensing requirements or deficiencies in caring for children
- The date of written notification to the licensee as to the deficiency and time given to the licensee to correct the deficiency
- The Licensing Specialist's efforts to help the licensee to come into compliance
- Barriers, if any, which prohibit the licensee from correcting the deficiencies

## License Revocation: Chapter 120 Hearings

**Trainer Note:** Knowledge about a Chapter 120 administrative hearing is important for Licensing Specialists. The Florida Administrative Code discusses this as a required right of the foster parent when administrative actions are being taken against the foster parent's license.

Slide: 7.2.11



PG: 25

A Chapter 120 administrative hearing provides the foster parent an opportunity to appeal the decision.

The Licensing Specialist's responsibility for the hearing includes:

- Informing foster parents of their rights to appeal and providing them with contact information for the appeals court
- Writing a letter of recommendation for revocation
- Ensuring notifications to all parties are sent on time
- Ensuring documentation of administrative actions are documented in FSFN which includes all relevant and legally sufficient documentation to support revocation
- Being prepared by general counsel and attending the hearing

**Trainer Note:** Ask participants to review Chapter 65C-13.035, F.A.C., Appeals and Closures. Discuss in large group.

As the licensing specialty training comes to a close, make parallel comparisons between foster parents preparing for children coming into their care and their role as a Licensing Specialist preparing to work in full partnership with foster parents. They have an opportunity to model the kind of supportive, respectful, engaging approaches in their work with foster parents that they advocate foster parents demonstrating with children, birth parents, and other partners.

## Activity D: Endings and Beginnings

<b>Time:</b>	30 minutes
<b>Purpose:</b>	For participants to practice transitioning from the role of the trainee to the Licensing Specialist trainer role.
<b>Materials:</b> <i>Slide: 7.2.12</i>	<b>PG: 26-28, Endings and Beginnings worksheet</b>
<b>Trainer Instructions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Begin by discussing the parallel process with participants.</i></li> <li>• <i>Participants will utilize the Endings and Beginnings worksheet to respond to the following questions related to transitioning from the trainee role to the Licensing Specialist/trainer role.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>What are things you anticipate about your new role that you are excited about?</i></li> <li>– <i>What are things you anticipate about your new role that you are concerned about?</i></li> <li>– <i>What are some things you will do to prepare for your first meetings with foster parents?</i></li> <li>– <i>What impression do you want each foster parent you work with to have about you?</i></li> <li>– <i>What will you do to ensure that occurs?</i></li> <li>– <i>How will you handle problems that occur in your relationship with foster parents, colleagues and administrators?</i></li> <li>– <i>What is your motivation for doing this work?</i></li> <li>– <i>How will doing your best work, benefit children directly?</i></li> <li>– <i>When challenges occur, how will you take care of yourself?</i></li> <li>– <i>What are some regular stress relievers that you can put in practice to assist you in maintaining a positive attitude and outlook?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Debrief activity by calling on different people to share their responses or asking for volunteers to share one or two of their responses. There are no correct or incorrect responses.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Participant Instructions:</b>	1. Respond to the questions related to transitioning from the trainee role to the Licensing Specialist/trainer role.

2. Be prepared to discuss as a group.

**Activity STOP**

**Trainer Note:** Now that the content has been covered, this is an opportunity to generate motivation and enthusiasm for the great work ahead. As Licensing Specialists, it is critical that they see themselves as an ongoing team member. Their role does not end with foster care because that is a temporary placement. Collectively, they are expected to be a part of the permanency outcomes for all children.

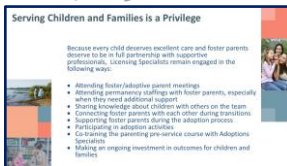
If possible, invite a youth with foster care experiences to share with the group about his/her experiences and what were the most important components of a healthy foster care home as well as what he/she needed to be successful in life.

If youth are not able to attend, use the document, My Foster Truth: Recollections of Life in State Care: <http://www.childrensrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CR-Blog-Brochure-2015-spreads-FINAL.pdf>

Select one or two youth from the document to highlight and discuss their challenges and successes or assign one to each person in the class. Regardless of the experiences they had, there are messages of advocacy and hope. As the trainer, it is those messages you will build on to conclude the training.

## Summary:

### Slide: 7.2.13



- Serving children and families is a privilege.
- Every child deserves excellent care.
- Foster parents deserve to be in full partnership with supportive professionals to make life better for children.
- The permanency outcomes are numerous, but the Licensing Specialist is critical in working with others to make permanency a reality for children.
- Licensing Specialists should remain engaged in the following ways:
  - Attending foster/adoptive parent meetings
  - Attending permanency staffing's with foster parents, especially when they need additional support
  - Sharing knowledge about children with others on the team
  - Connecting foster parents with each other during transitions
  - Supporting foster parents during the adoption process



**Key Points:**

- Participating in adoption activities
- Co-training the parenting pre-service course with Adoptions Specialists
- Making an ongoing investment in outcomes for children and families

***What are the differences between institutional abuse reports and Foster Care Referrals?***

Foster care referrals are “calls to the Abuse Hotline regarding concerns about the care provided in a licensed foster home, group home, or emergency shelter that do not meet the criteria for acceptance of a report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

- Foster care referrals are not handled by CPIs, but by Licensing or Foster Home Support Professionals.
- Foster care referrals are most often licensing violations.
- Abuse/neglect investigations must meet criteria specified in law and must be handled by CPIs.
- Abuse Hotline Counselors are trained to ask questions to determine the difference.

***What is the purpose of a corrective action plan?***

If licensing violations are found which do not pose an immediate threat to the health, safety, or well-being of the child, the Licensing Specialist is responsible for writing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to correct the deficiencies. This plan should be written with the foster parent and approved by the agency.

***What leads to a license being revoked?***

1. Verified findings resulting in harm or imminent harm (i.e., mentally, emotionally, or physically to the child).

2. The foster home is not in compliance with licensing standards and the nature of the non-compliance and child's circumstances are concerning enough to warrant immediate administrative action.
3. The foster parent has been offered a Corrective Action Plan but has not improved.