

One Administrative Rule:

As of January 1, 2011, Ch. DCF 38 Administrative Rule was incorporated into Ch. DCF 56 Administrative Rule to create one foster care licensing code. The purpose of this change is to have one rule for foster care regardless of the Level of Care certification of the foster parents. Foster parents will be required to follow all licensing requirements in DCF 56 that apply to them. Additionally, the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool was incorporated to provide a consistent means to assess the needs and strengths of children in foster care and their caregivers. The implementation of the Levels of Care structure will lead to improved outcomes for both foster parents and children in out-of-home care. If you have questions regarding this change, please contact your Foster Care Coordinator.

How is my Level of Care Certification Determined?

All foster parents licensed in the state of Wisconsin will be assigned a Level of Care certification during the foster care licensing process based on meeting specific requirements in each of these categories:

- Qualifications
- Training
- Caregiver references
- Caregiver experience

Each of the five Levels of Care certifications has been assigned a specific number of training hours, personal references, and experience requirements.

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Tool

- All children placed in care will be assessed using the Child and Adolescent Needs & Strengths (CANS) tool. The tool uses outcome measures to assess the child's status on permanence, well-being, level of functioning and quality of life.
- Each child will be given a Level of Need based on their CANS scoring.

- Placement of children will be informed by using the Level of Need determination of the child and the foster parents' Level of Care certification. This will lead to more stability in placement and promote positive outcomes.
 - The placement of children currently in your care should not be disrupted because of these changes.
 - This simply means there will be an increased emphasis on what supports the agency is putting in place to ensure children who are placed in your home and the caregivers who are supporting these children are receiving the necessary supports and services to continue to care for the child.
- The CANS tool will better inform caseworkers, Foster Care Coordinators, licensing agencies, families and foster parents on the needs and strengths of the child being placed in out-of-home care for case planning purposes.

Changes to the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting Process:

- The standardized CANS tool will lead to improved consistency for the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting process across placing agencies in Wisconsin.
- Supplemental Rates will be determined using the CANS scoring of the child, the child's Level of Need, and Level of Care certification of the provider.
- There is a new provision under the Exceptional Rates which allows rates that were in existence prior to the implementation on February 21, 2011 to remain the same if the child's needs have not significantly changed.



Additional Resources:

- Learn more about the Levels of Care at (this includes more specific resources related to the CANS tool in WI):
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/loc>
- Learn more about the CANS tool at:
<http://www.praedfoundation.org>
- DCF Foster Care Memos:
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>
- DCF Foster Care Contacts:
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/about-us/contact-us>
- WI Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center:
<http://wifostercareandadoption.org/>
- WI Department of Children and Families:
www.dcf.wisconsin.gov



DCF is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, please contact (608) 266-8787 or 711 TTY. For civil rights questions call (608) 422-6889 or 711 TTY (Toll Free).

DCF-P-2644 (R. 04/2017)



Levels of Care: Foster Care Licensing

What does this mean for Foster Parents?

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is making changes to the Foster Care program to continue to promote positive outcomes for children placed in foster care. To do this, DCF has implemented the Levels of Care (LOC) initiative in order to improve stability, safety, and permanence of children by matching their assessed needs with the skills, abilities and capacities of caregivers.

Changes to Federal and State laws, along with additional factors related to placements of children in out-of-home care, contributed to the Department's moving forward with the changes to the Foster Care Program. DCF would like to express gratitude to all caregivers and those caregivers who are considering caring for a child who is in the Child Welfare system.