



Licensing Standards Updates

DCF 56 Foster Home Care for Children

Why Now?

Various partners who use this rule (such as foster parents and child welfare professionals) have recommended certain areas for improvement and clarification. In response to these requests and to the recent federal guidance around foster care licensure, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is excited to attend to these needs through the rule revision process.

What is Changing?

The DCF 56 work is bringing the licensing code into the 21st century. In collaboration with various partners, the workgroup will explore updates in the following areas:

- Rule clarity
- Relative and kinship licensing
- Technological norms

RULE CLARITY

Identify areas in the current rule that are unclear or duplicative and ensure all areas are aligned with other statute and federal standards. An example of a potential improvement in this area would be clarification around the License Appeal process.

RELATIVE AND KINSHIP LICENSING

In alignment with federal guidance and at the recommendation of various foster parent groups (such as grandparent kin caregivers and agency licensors), the workgroup will identify areas where licensing needs differ for people who are seeking a long-term license to foster multiple potential children versus those seeking to foster a specific child (typically relative or kinship caregivers). These updates will ensure that DCF 56 efficiently and effectively meets the needs of those different populations.



TECHNOLOGICAL NORMS

DCF 56 currently requires landlines and licensing exceptions for households where two caregivers are working outside the home. This work will address technological and social advances and provide updated safety considerations regarding those technologies in foster care licensure (such as cell phones, vaping and rideshare apps, among others).

These updates will not impact current safety standards in licensing or local agency authority in making decisions about when or where children may need an out-of-home placement. They will, however, make it easier for families and licensing professionals to understand the requirements to be licensed and which requirements apply to their specific needs and reduce any unnecessary workload for families that is not applicable to their needs or no longer technologically relevant.

Next Steps

The Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) will continue to collaborate with impacted partners. Over the coming months, watch for opportunities to participate in public meetings or provide feedback on potential changes. For more information, see DSP's [rule revisions webpage](#).

DSP would like to thank the partners who have provided feedback and support for this work. The DCF 56 licensing updates will make it easier to do what is best for families seeking licensure and to help continue Putting Families First.



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