

NWF Health Network

Policy & Procedure

Series: 700: Provider Network & Licensing

Policy Name: Kinship Caregiver Program

Policy Number: 719

Origination Date: 04/18/19 **Revised:** Board Meeting of 02/27/2025

Regulations: 39.6225, F.S., CFOP 170-11, 65C-45 F.A.C.

Reference Documents: Caregiver Discipline Policy

Policy

It is the policy of NWF Health Network (NWFHN), to meet the individual needs of children in out-of-home care and to ensure that all foster homes are licensed appropriately. Further, it is the policy to license and relicense all Relatives, Non-Relatives, and Fictive Kin who meet the eligibility requirements and indicate a desire and willingness to participate in the program for a Level I License.

Procedure

NWFHN Kinship Program Team Responsibilities

1. Licensing Process.
 - a. NWFHN's Kinship Team will conduct licensing studies plus compile and submit completed licensing packets for submission to DCF for all Kinship homes interested in completing Level I Licensure.
 - i. The NWFHN Kinship team will make contact with the perspective Kinship Caregiver within 48 business hours of receiving a referral. The caregiver will be provided with information concerning all of the benefits of licensure. The program is voluntary, therefore, the caregiver has the right to opt out of participation.
 - a. If the caregiver opts out of participation in the program the Kinship Navigator or Kinship Specialist will request the family sign the "Notice of Non-Participation in Licensure" (DCF form CF-FSP 5443) form and upload the signed form to the provider file cabinet in FSFN.
 - b. When the caregiver is interested in participating in the program, the Kinship Navigator will schedule a meeting with the family.
 - c. The Kinship Navigator will complete the Kinship Assessment with the family to identify the family's strengths and needs. The Kinship Navigator will assist the family in accessing community resources for any immediate needs.
 - d. The Kinship Navigator will begin the licensing process by providing the family with required forms to complete and reviewing forms with the family during their visit.
 - e. The Kinship Navigator will prepare the family's packet and notify the supervisor that the family is ready to be assigned to a Kinship Specialist for completion of the licensing packet.
 - ii. The NWFHN Kinship Program Supervisor will assign a Kinship Specialist to the family. The Kinship Specialist will be provided a due date for initial contact and for submission of the family's licensing packet.

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- iii. The assigned Kinship Specialist will complete the Unified Home Study and Licensing Packet within sixty calendar days of assignment unless otherwise noted by the Supervisor.
 - iv. Upon review of the completed packet the program supervisor will submit the packet to NWFHN's designated Licensing and Attestation Specialist for review.
 - b. Upon satisfactory review and signature, the NWFHN Licensing & Attestation Specialist will complete the Attestation form and submit the application to DCF for issuance of the license.
 - c. During the licensing year the Kinship Specialist will complete quarterly contacts with the family and document those contacts in a provider note in FSFN. All notes must be entered within 48 hours of the activity completion.
2. Background Screenings.
- a. Upon assignment of a family to a Kinship Specialist, the Kinship Program Administrative Assistant will begin background screenings for each caregiver, household member and frequent visitor.
 - b. The Kinship Administrative Assistant will ensure background screenings are initiated and completed timely.
 - c. The Kinship Specialist will review background screenings and assess the impact of background screenings on the caregiver's ability to meet licensing standards and safely parent. The Kinship Specialist will mitigate any background history and staff with the supervisor for guidance.
 - d. The Kinship Administrative Assistant will ensure all background screenings remain current. Background screenings may need to be completed during the licensing year prior to relicense. The Kinship Administrative Assistant will complete the mid-year screenings and provide the completed background screenings to the Kinship Specialist to upload in FSFN.
 - e. Any periods of non-compliance with background screenings will be reported to the Regional Licensing Manager and the agency's Revenue Maximization Supervisor.
- . Changes During the Licensing Year.
- a. Level I Licensed Caregivers will report to the Kinship Specialist any changes that occur during the licensing year. The Kinship Specialist will also discuss changes with the family at each quarterly contact. Changes include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Occurrences of law enforcement involvement with the licensed caregiver or any household members.
 - ii. Changes to the household composition
 - iii. Changes in physical environment or sleeping arrangements
 - iv. Change of address
 - v. Change of sleeping arrangements, financial situation, contact information, significant change of work,

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- b. The Kinship Specialist must assess the impact of the changes on the household within two business days of learning of the change. The assessment of the change will be documented in a provider note in FSFN.
 - c. In situations where there is a change of address, the Kinship Specialist will submit a relocation packet to the NWFHN Attestation and Review Specialist within 25 days. The Attestation Specialist will submit to the DCF Region Licensing Team to issue a new license for the family's address.
4. Re-Licensing Process.
- a. The NWFHN Kinship team will complete all re-licensing activities for currently licensed level I homes.
 - i. Relicensing activities can be initiated ninety days prior to license expiration.
 - ii. The Kinship Specialist will meet with the family at least once prior to completing the Unified Home Study.
 - iii. The Kinship Specialist will meet with the family at least once prior to completing the Unified Home Study.
 - b. Re-licensing studies and associated packets will include all requirements in accordance with 65C-45, F.A.C., and this Policy.
 - c. Re-licensing packets should be submitted to NWFHN's Licensing & Attestation Team at least fifteen business days prior to the license expiration;
 - d. Relicensing packets will be submitted to the Regional Licensing Team within 10 business days of license expiration.
 - e. Upon approval, NWFHN's Licensing & Attestation Specialist will complete the Attestation form and submit the application to DCF for issuance of the license.
5. Licensure Packets. The NWFHN Kinship Caregiver team will submit all completed packets to the NWFHN Licensing & Attestation Specialist.
- a. NWFHN Licensing and Attestation Specialist will conduct a thorough review of the re-licensing packet.
 - b. NWFHN Licensing and Attestation Specialist will complete the attestation for foster home licensing notarized document and submit attestation packet to DCF.
 - c. NWFHN Licensing and Attestation Specialist will assure that a complete and quality product is submitted to DCF.
 - d. NWFHN Licensing and Attestation Specialist will log the receipt and subsequent submission of all licensing packets.
6. Communication. The NWFHN Kinship team, the NWFHN & Attestation Licensing Specialist, Case Management, and DCF will maintain open communication on all foster home related issues.
- a. The above named parties will meet as needed to discuss changes, needs, new initiatives, etc.
 - b. The above named parties will meet on an as needed basis to address concerns related to licensed homes. When applicable, this may include DCF Child Protective Investigations. Corrective Action Plans will be created with input from all parties as needed in accordance with DCF CFOP

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- c. The above named parties will meet as needed to review concerns with any applications and to develop a plan of action as applicable.
 - d. Initial licensing applications that include three or more prior abuse reports in a five year period, or other clearance concerns will be reviewed in accordance with the Licensed Provider Review Committee process developed by DCF. The Licensed Provider Review Committee will determine if concerns have been mitigated to the extent possible a license can be issued.
 - e. When a concern with a family is identified during the licensing process the Kinship Team will communicate concerns with the primary CPI, CPI Supervisor, DCM, DCM Supervisor, DCM Management Team, and the NWFHN Circuit Administrator or designee.
7. Closures. The NWFHN Kinship team will notify the NWFHN Licensing & Attestation Specialist and DCF licensing of all foster home closures. Level I Licensed homes are to be closed at license expiration if there are no longer children placed in the home at relicense. Level I licenses may be closed when children have achieved permanency through adoption or permanent guardianship. Homes should only be closed after final orders are received.
8. Case Reviews. Program Supervisors will review pending initial licenses and current licensed homes on a regular basis. The reviews will inform feedback to staff on performance.
- a. Pending initial home studies will be reviewed with the Kinship Specialist on a monthly basis. Information collected during these reviews will be documented in FSFN. These reviews will ensure families are licensed timely and will create an environment to problem solve any barriers to licensing.
 - b. Current licensed homes will be reviewed quarterly with the Kinship Specialist. Information collected during these reviews will be documented in FSFN. The reviews will ensure background screenings are updated timely and quarterly contacts are completed timely.
 - c. The Kinship Program Supervisor will meet with the Kinship Navigator at least quarterly to assess timely engagement with families and review unlicensed families for follow-up contacts.
 - d. The Kinship Program Supervisor will meet with the Kinship Administrative Assistant at least quarterly to assess timely completion of background screenings and identify any barriers.