



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**  
1500 Jefferson Street, SE • P.O. Box 40975 • Olympia WA 98504-0975

**POLICY MEMO**

September 22, 2023

TO: DCYF Employees

FROM: Frank Ordway, Chief of Staff

RE: Update to Practice-Initial Licenses for Approved Relative and Suitable Person (Kinship) Caregivers memo dated July 1, 2023

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

SUNSET REVIEW DATE: July 1, 2024

This memo replaces the Practice-Initial Licenses for Approved Relative and Suitable Person (Kinship) Caregivers memo dated July 1, 2023.

On July 1, 2023, [RCW 13.34.065](#) was revised and began requiring the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to start an assessment for an initial license to qualified relative and suitable person caregivers within 10 calendar days if the court orders the assessment at the shelter care hearing and the caregiver indicates a desire to become foster licensed.

Effective October 1, 2023, DCYF will issue initial licenses to qualified relatives and suitable person caregivers without a court order. However, if a court orders DCYF to initiate an initial license for caregivers, it must be prioritized over those not court ordered and must meet the 10-day initiation. This change allows caregivers, including DCYF employees that are caregivers, to become eligible for foster care maintenance payments (FCMP) starting on the date DCYF issues the initial license.

This memo includes the following new policies and procedures that will be reflected in the following policies at a future date:

- Child Welfare [Kinship Care: Searching for, Placing with, and Supporting Relatives and Suitable Other Persons](#)
- Operations [Background Checks](#)
- Licensing Division [Licensing State Foster Homes](#)
- DCYF Administrative 11.25 Child Care Licensing or Approval, Program Payments and Enrollment, Foster Care Licensing, Placement, and Adoption for DCYF Employees

## Policy

When children and youth are placed with qualified relatives or suitable person caregivers:

1. Caseworkers must notify the court within seven days upon receiving notification from the Licensing Division (LD) worker when initial licenses are denied if the initial license is court ordered.
2. LD workers must:
  - a. Issue initial licenses to qualified relatives and suitable person caregivers when the following is verified:
    - i. Caregivers agree to the initial license.
    - ii. NCIC checks are started for all household members 16 years and older.
    - iii. The [Home Inspection Checklist \(Kinship\) DCYF 10-453](#) is completed.
    - iv. The [Placement Agreement DCYF 15-281](#) is completed.
  - b. Issue initial licenses:
    - i. For a maximum of 90 days. No extensions are allowed.
    - ii. To include the youngest child's or youth's age up to the oldest child's or youth's age at the 90-day expiration date.
    - iii. Using the date that all requirements have been verified as the initial license start date.
  - c. Modify initial licenses when additional children or youth are placed into the home and the initial license has not expired.
  - d. Place on a FamLink "Voluntary No Referral" once the initial license has been issued.
  - e. Approve or deny in writing.
  - f. Notify caseworkers if the initial license is denied.
  - g. Complete the full kinship license process within 90 days of the initial license being issued to avoid a lapse in payments.
  - h. Notify caseworker if the initial license is not issued within 90 days and continue working with caregiver to complete the full kinship license process.

## Procedures

When placing children or youth with relatives or suitable persons:

1. Caseworkers must:
  - a. Follow child welfare policies:
    - i. [Kinship Care: Searching for, Placing with, and Supporting Relatives and Suitable Other Persons](#)
    - ii. [Placements with Unlicensed Relatives or Suitable Persons](#)
  - b. Complete the [Placement Agreement DCYF 15-281](#) form with caregivers and explain the initial license and other financial resources to them, including:
    - i. The option and process for applying and receiving Non-Needy Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) immediately for the months until the FCMP is received.
    - ii. Notifying caregivers that if they receive TANF, they must notify the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Community Service Office (CSO), by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month following their receipt of their first FCMP to either:
      - A. Report the change of income, which will count the FCMP as income against their family benefits.

- B. Remove the child or youth placed in their care from the DSHS CSO Assistant Unit, which will not count the FCMP as income against their family's benefits.
  - c. Notify NCIC immediately whether the placement occurred, if placement has:
    - i. Not occurred, the process for this caregiver ends.
    - ii. Occurred, provide NCIC the additional needed information on the [Unlicensed Caregiver Placement Checklist DCYF 15-280](#) form.
  - d. Upload and name the following signed forms in FamLink under case work, file upload, document:
    - i. [Placement Agreement DCYF 15-281](#), name "Placement Agreement MM/YY" using the date of the inspection.
    - ii. [Home Inspection Checklist \(Kinship\) DCYF 10-453](#), name "Home Inspection MM/YY" using the date of the inspection.
  - e. Verify placement care and authority is open in FamLink for NCIC to enter placement.
  - f. Inform the court at the shelter care hearing of the caregiver's interest in an initial license.
  - g. Respond to inquiries from LD workers about the placement.
  - h. Inform court within seven calendar days if initial license is denied.
- 2. NCIC must complete the following once requests are received from caseworkers:
  - a. Follow child welfare [Background Checks](#) policy.
  - b. Process NCIC background checks for all adult individuals living on the premises.
  - c. Communicate results to the caseworker and supervisor.
  - d. Verify with caseworker if the placement:
    - i. Did not occur, no further action.
    - ii. Occurred, complete the following in FamLink:
      - A. Document the:
        - I. Child Location.
        - II. Tracking unpaid placement code.
      - B. Conduct a Provider or Person search.
      - C. Create or edit the Provider or Person tab to reflect accurate address, phone number, email address, etc., if needed.
      - D. Add persons as Members to Provider, if needed.
      - E. Document the conditional approval in the Background Check tab.
- 3. LD workers must complete the following when:
  - a. They receive, the 10-day FamLink notification of placement:
    - i. Verify with caseworkers whether the:
      - A. Child or youth is still in the home. If not, notify NCIC.
      - B. Initial license is court ordered for prioritization.
    - ii. Verify the following forms are completed under "file upload" in the child's or youth's FamLink case, the:
      - A. [Home Inspection Checklist \(Kinship\) DCYF 10-453](#)
      - B. [Placement Agreement DCYF 15-281](#)
    - iii. Request the following, as needed:
      - A. Additional NCIC background checks on additional household members.
      - B. Completed forms listed in Procedures Section 3.a.ii. from the caseworker.
      - C. Social Service Payment System (SSPS) number from the Provider File Unit.

- iv. Create an intake for the caregiver into WA CAP and immediately assign them to the LD Assessment and the Administrative Support Team.
- v. Complete Kinship License Process Map steps 5-8.
- vi. Review completed documents and determine if the initial license may be issued. If the requirements for the initial license:
  - A. Are validated:
    - I. Launch and approve the initial license in FamLink for 90 days.
    - II. Place the initial license on a “Voluntary No Referral” in FamLink.
    - III. Apply the initial license tag in WA CAP.
    - IV. Inform the caregiver of the 90-day expiration date using the New License Letter (Initial License) DCYF 10-429D form.
    - V. Inform caregivers how to:
      - i. Access:
        - I. Reimbursement
        - II. Direct deposit
        - III. Provider portal
      - ii. Update status if they are receiving TANF by following the [TANF: A Guide to Services](#).
    - VI. Email a screenshot of the approved license to the:
      - i. Fiduciary supervisor
      - ii. Caseworker
      - iii. Caseworker’s supervisor
  - B. Cannot be validated, follow Procedures Section 3.i.B.
- b. Assigned in WA CAP:
  - i. Verify if the initial license was issued in FamLink. If the initial license was:
    - A. Issued, complete the license process for a kinship license following the Kinship License Process Map.
    - B. Not issued, continue to work with:
      - I. Caseworkers to validate the requirements for the initial license and when the requirements are met:
        - i. Launch and approve the initial license in FamLink for 90 days.
        - ii. Place the initial license on a FamLink “Voluntary No Referral”.
        - iii. Apply the initial license tag in WA CAP.
        - iv. Inform caregivers of the 90-day expiration date using the New License Letter (Initial License) DCYF 10-429D form.
        - v. Inform caregivers how to access:
          - I. Reimbursement
          - II. Direct deposit
          - III. Provider portal
        - vi. Email a screenshot of the approved license to the:
          - I. Fiduciary supervisor
          - II. Caseworker
          - III. Caseworker’s supervisor
      - II. Families and complete the license process for a kinship license following the Kinship License Process Map.

- C. Denied, notify caseworkers and their supervisors in writing and proceed with denial of the kinship license following the Kinship License Process Map.
  - ii. Track the 90-day expiration date and notify the following if the kinship license has not been approved by the expiration date on the 90th day:
    - A. Fiduciary supervisor
    - B. Caseworker
    - C. Caseworker's supervisor
5. Fiduciaries must:
  - a. Correct any placements entered in error and notify NCIC of the error, when appropriate.
  - b. Close unlicensed placements and open initial license placements with correct codes when notified by LD workers.
  - c. Track the 90-day expiration date to prevent overpayment.
  - d. Close initial license placements on the 91st day and open either the:
    - i. Child Specific License Placement with the correct codes, when notified by LD workers.
    - ii. Unlicensed Placement with correct codes on 91st day.

## Resources

Kinship License Process Map (Located on the LD SharePoint)

[TANF A Guide to Services](#)

[TANF Reporting Requirements](#)

If you have any questions, please contact the following:

- Licensing Division: Kyler McGee, Foster Care Policy Program Manager at [Kyler.McGee@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:Kyler.McGee@dcyf.wa.gov) or (253) 290-9317
- Child Welfare: Geene Delaplane, Kinship and Guardianship Program Manager at [Geene.Delaplane@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:Geene.Delaplane@dcyf.wa.gov) or (360) 688-0391
- Background Check Unit: Meryl Stride, Provider Supports Administrator at [Meryl.Stride@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:Meryl.Stride@dcyf.wa.gov) or (360) 764-3964
- Fiscal: Tammy Cain, Client Services Payment Program Manager at [Tammy.Cain@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:Tammy.Cain@dcyf.wa.gov) or (360) 310-3044

Cc: Brenda Villarreal