



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

POLICY MEMO

June 23, 2023

TO: DCYF Employees

FROM: Frank Ordway, Chief of Staff

RE: New Practice-Initial Licenses for Approved Relative and Suitable Person (Kinship) Caregivers

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

SUNSET REVIEW DATE: July 1, 2024

Effective July 1, 2023, [RCW 13.34.065](#) requires 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. This change allows the caregivers, including DCYF employees that are caregivers, to become eligible for foster care maintenance payments starting on the date DCYF approves 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 a court orders an initial license be issued to a qualified relative and suitable person caregiver at a shelter care hearing:

1. Caseworkers must notify the court within seven days upon receiving notification from the Licensing Division (LD) worker when initial licenses are denied.
2. LD workers must:
 - a. Issue initial licenses to qualified relative and suitable person caregivers when:
 - i. The 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 form is signed and uploaded.
 - iv. The [Placement Agreement DCYF 15-281](#) form is signed and uploaded.
- b. Initial licenses must be:
- i. Issued for a maximum of 90 days. No extensions are allowed.
 - ii. Issued 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. Modified when additional children or youth are placed into the home and the initial license has not expired.
 - iv. Placed on a "Voluntary No Referral" in FamLink once the license has been issued.
 - v. Approved or denied in writing.
- c. Notify caseworkers if the initial license is denied.
- d. Complete the full [kinship license process](#) within 90 days of the initial license being issued.

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 to the them, including:
 - i. The option and process for applying and receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) immediately for the months until the foster care maintenance payment is received.
 - ii. Information that caregivers receiving TANF benefits for a child or youth in their care must report a change of income by the 10th of the month following the change of income.
 - c. Notify NCIC immediately whether the placement has 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" (date of inspection).
 - ii. [Home Inspection Checklist \(Kinship\) DCYF 10-453](#), name "Inspection Checklist MM/YY" (date of inspection).
 - e. Verify placement care and authority is open in FamLink, in order for NCIC to enter placement.
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 identified household members.
 - 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. Conduct a Search Provider/Person.
 - B. Create/edit Provider/Person to reflect accurate address, phone number, email address, etc., if needed.
 - C. Add persons as Members to Provider, as needed.

- D. Document the initiation of background check.
 - E. Enter the child location and tracking (unpaid) placement code.
3. Caseworkers must:
- a. Inform the court at the shelter care hearing of the caregiver's interest in an initial license.
 - b. Respond to LD workers' inquiries asking if the initial license was court ordered.
4. LD Kinship Notification Unit (KNU) must, upon the 10-day FamLink notification of placement:
- a. Verify with caseworkers whether the:
 - i. Child or youth is still in the home. If not, notify NCIC.
 - ii. Initial license is court ordered.
 - b. Review the following forms for completion under "file upload" in the child's or youth's case in FamLink, the:
 - i. [Home Inspection Checklist \(Kinship\) DCYF 10-453](#)
 - ii. [Placement Agreement DCYF 15-281](#)
 - c. Request the following, as needed:
 - i. Additional NCIC background checks on additional household members.
 - ii. Completed forms listed in 4.b.ii from the caseworker.
 - iii. Social Service Payment System (SSPS) number from the SSPS team.
 - d. Create an intake for the caregiver into WA CAP and immediately assign them to the Assessment and the Administrative Support Team.
 - e. Complete [Kinship License Process Map](#) steps 5-8.
 - f. Review completed documents and determine if the initial license can be issued. If the requirements for the initial license:
 - i. Can be validated:
 - A. Launch and approve the initial license in FamLink for 90 days.
 - B. Place the initial license on a "Voluntary No Referral" in FamLink.
 - C. Apply the initial license tag in WA CAP.
 - D. Inform the caregiver of the 90-day expiration date using the [New License Letter \(Initial License\) DCYF 10-429D](#).
 - E. Email a screenshot of the approved license to the:
 - I. Fiduciary supervisor
 - II. Caseworker
 - III. Caseworker's supervisor
 - ii. Cannot be validated, notify assigned LD assessment worker and skip to Procedures 5.a.ii.
5. LD assessment workers must complete the following when assigned in WA CAP:
- a. Verify if the initial license was issued in FamLink. If the initial license was:
 - i. Issued, complete the license process for a kinship license, per the [Kinship License Process Map](#).
 - ii. Not issued, continue to work with the:
 - A. Caseworker to validate the requirements for the initial license. As soon as the requirements are met:
 - 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](#).
 - V. Email a screenshot of the approved license to the:
 - i. Fiduciary supervisor
 - ii. Caseworker
 - iii. Caseworker's supervisor

- B. Family and complete the license process for a kinship license, per the [Kinship License Process Map](#).
 - iii. Denied, notify the caseworker and their supervisor in writing and proceed with denial of the kinship license, per the [Kinship License Process Map](#).
 - b. 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, the:
 - i. Fiduciary supervisor
 - ii. Caseworker
 - iii. Caseworker's supervisor
6. 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 90th 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 90th day.

If you have any questions, please contact the following:

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

Cc: Brenda Villarreal