

Kinship Care Protocol for Licensing Kin

The South Carolina Department of Social Services Kinship Care Protocol for Licensing Kin will provide a process for Case Managers, Kinship Care Coordinators, and Licensing Staff to communicate effectively to provide support and a cohesive process for kin and fictive kin to care for children who are involved with the agency.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this protocol, a “child known to DSS” is a child who is receiving services in an Investigation or Family Preservation case or who is in the custody of the department.

For the purpose of this protocol, “kin” includes both relatives by blood marriage, or adoption and fictive kin, who is someone of emotional significance to the child and can include a neighbor, family friend, godparent, or others.

Case Manager includes investigators, family preservation case managers, foster care case managers and adoption case managers.

Protocol:

During the review and ongoing assessment necessary to license kin who are caring for a child, the Case Managers, Kinship Care Coordinators, and Licensing Staff must focus on these core guiding principles, in alignment with the Child Welfare GPS Practice Model:

1. Family-Centered
2. Trauma-Informed
3. Individualized & Strength-Based
4. Culturally-Responsive

Case Manager (Investigation, Family Preservation, Foster Care and Adoption)

There will be two tracks to submit a kinship referral for licensure:

- The child is not in the legal custody of the agency, but court has been scheduled, the child plans to come into the legal custody of the agency, and a foster care line will be open.
- The child is in the legal custody of the agency and a foster care line is open.

The child is not in the legal custody of the agency, but court has been scheduled, the child plans to come into the legal custody of the agency, and a foster care line will be opened (Investigations and Family Preservation Case Managers).

- As required by South Carolina Code Section 63-7-735, before the department places a child with a relative who is not licensed as a foster parent, the department shall inform the relative of the procedures for licensure as a foster parent, the benefits of licensure as a foster parent, including eligibility for financial assistance and supportive services, and the risk that the relative may be ineligible for that assistance and services if the relative is not licensed as a foster parent. The case manager will provide the kinship caregiver with DSS Form 1002 (Acknowledgement of Licensing of Kinship Foster Parents).

- If the kin initially declines licensure they remain eligible throughout the life of a case.
- The case manager will make a written referral and attached all background check information by submitting the following:
 - A completed DSS Form 1218 (Kinship Care Referral Form)
 - CLEAR search results (on all household member over the age of 18)
(Fingerprints are required, but CLEAR search can be utilized in lieu of fingerprints due to the current State of Emergency of the pandemic.)
 - CPS/Central Registry (on all household members over the age of 18)
 - Sex Offender (on all household members over the age of 12)
- Once all of the above information has been completed, the case manager will submit this information via email to the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator.
- The case manager will send an email to the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator when the child is in the legal custody of the agency and a foster care line has been opened. Please be advised that the referral will not be sent to licensing until the child is in the legal custody of the agency and a foster care line has been open.

The child is in the legal custody of the agency and a foster care line is open (Foster Care and Adoptions).

- As required by South Carolina Code Section 63-7-735, before the department places a child with a relative who is not licensed as a foster parent, the department shall inform the relative of the procedures for licensure as a foster parent, the benefits of licensure as a foster parent, including eligibility for financial assistance and supportive services, and the risk that the relative may be ineligible for that assistance and services if the relative is not licensed as a foster parent. The case manager will provide the kinship caregiver with DSS Form 1002 (Acknowledgement of Licensing of Kinship Foster Parents).
- If the kin initially declines licensure they remain eligible throughout the life of a case.
- The case manager will submit a referral for licensing to the Regional Foster Family and Licensing team by completing the following:
 - CLEAR search results (on all household member over the age of 18)
(Fingerprints are required, but CLEAR search can be utilized in lieu of fingerprints due to the current State of Emergency of the pandemic.)
 - Central Registry Check on all (18 years and over) and Sex Offender Check on household members (12 years and over)
 - Home visit Summary of a Face to Face Walkthrough or an Unlicensed Relative Assessment (URA) home study ***(A URA is not necessary to obtain a provisional or standard license).***
 - DSS Form 1513 (Original Licensing/Relicensing/Changes for Foster Home Licensing) signed by Caseworker and Applicant. The applicant will need to sign Section B. The Caseworker will sign Section C. ***(This can be provided after staffing).***
- The Regional Foster Family Licensing and Support team will schedule a provisional license staffing with the case manager. The case manager must be prepared to discuss the following:

- Name and DOB of Foster Children that will be placed
- Foster Care Case Number
- Reason the child initially entered foster care
- Current case status (parents completing treatment, case plan etc.)
- What are the issues/concerns with the placement (if any)? (example: opposition of the bio parent or concern of protectiveness)
- Basic summary of the foster child's care needs? (example: any mental or physical health needs)
- Can family meet the child's needs?
- What is household composition?
- Criminal charges/ CPS History of anyone residing in the household?
- What are the current sleeping arrangements?
- Are the finances/employment concerning (If receiving SSI for Income, what is the disability?)
- The Regional Foster Family Licensing and Support will determine if a provisional license will be offered to the kinship caregiver and will send an email to the case manager confirmation or denial of provisional license. If the kinship caregiver has been denied the provisional, the kinship caregiver still has the opportunity to complete the standard license.

Regional Kinship Care Coordinator

When the Kinship Care Coordinator receives a referral from a case manager, the Kinship Care Coordinator will determine the status of the case and ask the following questions:

- What's the current plan for this case?
- Is the child in the legal custody of the agency and a foster care line is open?
- Is the child currently in the home with the kinship caregiver?
- Is this kinship caregiver the only identified kinship caregiver for placement of this child?
- Is the plan to bring these children into the legal custody of the agency, has this case been staffed with legal?
- Has a court date been scheduled?

If it is determined that the child is not in the legal custody of the agency, but court has been scheduled and the plan is for the child to come into the legal custody of the agency, the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator will begin the licensing process by completing the following:

- Contact the kinship caregiver and explain the licensing process (share with them the kinship caregiver booklet, brochures, training and other resources available)
- Complete DSS 1572 (Intake and Application for Services)
- Schedule Fingerprints
- Create and update a new provider in CAPSS

The Regional Kinship Care Coordinator will hold and track these referrals (upload in Kinship Care SharePoint site). Once the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator has received a message from the case manager that the child is in the legal custody of the agency, the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator will send the above information to the Regional Foster Family and Licensing Support team to process for licensure.

If the Kinship Care Coordinator receives a referral from Constituent Services or Heartfelt Calling, or an inquiry from family, the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator will research the case in CAPSS. If this case is in CAPSS, the Kinship Care Coordinator will contact the case manager and supervisor via email or by phone to inform them to contact the kin who is interested in becoming a licensed kinship foster parent. Based on the case status, the case manager will complete the steps outlined in their role of this process.

Regional Foster Family Licensing and Support Team

For children who are already in the legal custody of the agency and a foster care line is open, the licensing team will complete the following:

- Schedule staffing for provisional license
- Review information received from case manager to include:
 - CLEAR Search results (***Fingerprints are required, but CLEAR search can be utilized in lieu of fingerprints due to the current State of Emergency of the pandemic. The Licensing Coordinator will schedule fingerprints***)
 - CPS/Central Registry Check results
 - Sex Offender Check results
 - 1513(Original Licensing/Relicensing/Changes for Foster Home Licensing) signed by case manager and Applicant. The applicant will need to sign Section B. The case manager will sign Section C.
- Once staffing is complete and the provisional license has been approved, the Regional Licensing Coordinator will submit an email to the Case Manager.

Example Email:

A Provisional License has been approved for (insert start date and end date-90 days) to care for the minor child (insert child's name).

A Provisional License is only valid for a 90 day timeframe to allow the family to have some financial assistance while continuing the Kinship Care Licensure Process. The Provisional License board payment is ½ of the traditional board rate. Calculated by the age of child the kinship caregiver will be eligible for a payment of (insert payment amount) per month while provisionally licensed. The Kinship Caregiver is entitled to an Initial Clothing Voucher Check, if applicable. A Kinship Initial Licensure worker has been assigned to continue the Licensure Process with the family.

Please enter child's placement in CAPSS under Provider Number (insert provider number).

- If the provisional license has been denied, the Regional Licensing Coordinator will submit an email to the Case Manager explaining reason for denial and will begin process for standard license.
- The Regional Foster Family and Licensing Coordinator will complete process for kinship caregiver to obtain a standard license (Responsibilities will be determine by the Coordinator):
 - Create provider and pending license in CAPSS (This may have already been completed by the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator, if not please complete)
 - Conduct initial home visit

- If DSS Form 1513(Original Licensing/Relicensing/Changes for Foster Home Licensing) hasn't been completed, complete DSS Form 1513
- Consider whether there are non-safety elements that must be waived to facilitate licensure and complete the non-safety waiver form DSS Form 37210 (Licensed Kinship Home Waiver Request)
- Prepare the family for the Fire/Safety Inspection requirements and schedule the inspection
- Answer questions and complete required forms
- Schedule second home visit within 30 days from the initial home visit
- Conduct a second home visit to gather outstanding paperwork and answer any additional questions
- Complete home study to submit for licensure
- Once a standard license has been approved, the Regional Foster Family and Licensing Coordinator will inform the case manager and kinship caregiver of the approval.
- If this is a placement change, please complete placement change form, DSS Form 37508 (Foster Care Placement Notification Form) and submit to state office for entry in CAPSS.

If you have any questions regarding this process please contact the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator or Regional Foster Family and Licensing Coordinator.

Contact for Regional Kinship Care Coordinators:

Upstate: Tamra.Scott@dss.sc.gov

Low country: Arnetta.Washington@dss.sc.gov

Midlands: Chasiti.Washington@dss.sc.gov

Pee Dee: Jada.Moody-Davis@dss.sc.gov

Contact for Regional Foster Family Licensing and Support:

Upstate: Jocelyn.Gibson@dss.sc.gov

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