



South Carolina Department of Social Services

Child Welfare Services Manual

700 Introduction to Foster Family Licensing and Support Policy

Effective Date: 09/01/2022

The South Carolina Department of Social Services is committed to providing placement environments for children in foster care that promote their safety, stability, and wellbeing. The Foster Family Licensing and Support Unit within the agency is responsible for contributing to this objective through the recruitment, licensing, monitoring, and support of foster families.

This process begins with the setting of Standards of Care for foster family homes. These standards address a number of aspects regarding a child's life in care, including matters like safety requirements, discipline practices, and parenting principles.

The process continues with the comprehensive, effective, and diverse recruitment of foster family applicants. Refer to [730 Recruitment Policy](#). The agency will, from statewide to local levels, conduct strategic planning for individual and widespread recruitment of families. The goal of such activities is ultimately the formation of an effective partnership between the agency and a wide array of competent, well- supported, and diverse families who can provide care for the state's most vulnerable children

Once a family is successfully recruited, they must complete the intake process through initial contact with the South Carolina Foster Parent Association or Heartfelt Calling. Refer to [740 Intake and Background Checks Policy](#). At this phone interview, initial information is collected, referrals for training and inspections are made, and preliminary background checks are begun to confirm that applicants are suitable for further assessment. The family is then contacted by the State Initial Licensing Unit for assessment and, ultimately, a fair and timely determination regarding their application. Refer to [741 Foster Family Initial Licensing Assessment Policy](#) and [742 Application Determination Policy](#).

After a family is issued their original license, the family will be assigned a Regional Foster Family and Licensing Support Coordinator (FSC). This individual will manage the family's license (see Section 750 et seq.) and support the family (see Section 760 et seq.) On an ongoing basis through periodic contact, administrative assistance regarding the family's license, and

guidance regarding the care of the children in each family's home. The FSC shall also be responsible for assisting Foster Care Workers with the placement of foster children in DSS-managed placements while continuing to support the families who provide such homes. Refer to [510.2 Placement of a Child Policy](#).

At all points in the agency's partnership with foster families, staff personnel shall treat families and children with respect and fairness. As part of this mission, staff personnel shall avoid any and all forms of discrimination, with consideration of a child or family's race, color, national origin, religion, state of residence, age, disability, political belief, sex, or sexual orientation only occurring when, after a thorough and individualized assessment, such consideration is the only manner of serving a child's best interests. Refer to [710 Non-Discrimination Policy](#). In the event that a foster family disagrees with an adverse decision made by the agency regarding their application, license, or placement status, the agency shall provide appeal procedures that guarantee fairness and accuracy. Refer to [780 Appeal of an Adverse Agency Decision Policy](#).