

# DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



*November 3, 2021*

## **TESTIMONY OF**

Scott Henricks, Director of Permanency  
Department for Children and Families

## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON**

Onboarding: Requirements for Becoming a Foster Parent

### **Chair**

Senator Hilderbrand

### **Vice Chair**

Representative Concannon

### **Ranking Minority**

Senator Faust-Goudeau

**and**

**Members of the Committee**

## Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairman Hildebrand, Vice Chair Concannon, and members of the committee. My name is Scott Henricks, and I am the Director of Permanency at the Department for Children and Families.

## Background

In 1919, Kansas passed K.S.A. 65-501, requiring the licensure of programs providing childcare services to children. The law arose from the need to protect children from environments in group settings which put children's health and safety at risk. The state, by its actions, acknowledged its responsibility to protect the health, safety and well-being of children in out of home care. A license is required if providing care for children younger than 16 years of age. If a facility only takes children over the age of 16, Kansas Law does not require the facility/home be licensed.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) has regulatory oversight of childcare facilities; Child Placement Agency is defined in K.S.A. 65-503 and Family Foster Home is defined in K.A.R. 28-4-311.

## Onboarding

An individual(s) who is interested in providing foster care services, selects a licensed Child Placement Agency (CPA) to sponsor their application and licensure as a Family Foster Home (FFH). This sponsoring agency will:

- Assure the potential applicant(s) meets regulatory requirements and assess their readiness to serve children and youth in DCF custody.
  - Are 21 years of age
  - Sufficient income or resources to meet basic needs of foster family
  - Participate in a family assessment
- Ensure the potential applicant(s) completes the pre-service curriculum as provided through the Children's Alliance of Kansas Agency (CAK).
- Provide further training and guidance on the policies of DCF and KS regulations.

Once these tasks are complete, the CPA will submit the FFH application to DCF Licensing Division, which coordinates an onsite inspection of the home. During this inspection, the DCF Licensing Worker ensure all regulations and policies have been followed. If there are areas of the home which need correction, the applicant is provided 5-days to make necessary changes. For instance, the home may need to add more smoke detectors or install a lock on a cabinet. An exception and/or relative waiver request may be submitted with a compliance action plan and may be granted if the exception/waiver does not violate statute, health or safety. Once all items are corrected, the home receives a license, which is valid for the specific address and individual(s) listed on the license. The license issued is non-expiring and renews annually.

Once a Family Foster Home is fully licensed with DCF, they may begin taking children and youth as placements. The home's sponsoring CPA will provide a worker to visit with the family and the children in the home on an at least monthly basis, more if needed. The home is also listed in DCF's Placement Management System, CareMatch, so the Child Welfare Case Management Providers (CMPs) are aware of the home and the available placement for you in their care. DCF, CPAs and CMPs work in collaboration to support children and the families providing foster services.

\*Of note, there are accelerated processes established for placement of children and the submission of FFH licensing applications for non-related kinship and relative placement homes.

On the next page you'll find a flow chart following the Foster Home Licensing process for both a family and individual:

A family or individual wish to become a Licensed Foster Home

1: First stop is for a potential applicant to complete their pre-service training through Children's Alliance of Kansas. (<http://childdally.org>)

Training Practice Note: The approved pre-service training can be one of three options depending on the potential applicant's availability and location in KS. All are also available virtually. They may complete:

- *Trauma-Informed Partnering for Permanence and Safety: Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (TIPS-MAPP)*
- *Deciding Together (DT)*
- *National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC)*

2: Potential applicant then connects with a Child Placing Agency (CPA) to continue their education and training, as well as the licensure process. Please note some are already connected with a CPA in step 1.

CPA Practice Note: All Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) must ensure an applicant completes necessary licensure packet and are familiar with policies and regulations. CPAs have workers assigned to carry a caseload of foster homes and each worker must visit the family and the child at least once a month when a child is placed in the family's home.

3. The applicant and the CPA worker complete the licensure packet and required documents. This includes background checks, inspection of the home, family and health assessments.

Background check requirements for all residents of the home include:

- Federal fingerprint and Sex Offender Registry check (ages 14 and up)
- KBI name-based check (ages 10 and up)
- Kansas Child Abuse/Neglect Central Registry check (ages 10 and up)

4. Once the packet is completed, everything is submitted to DCF for review. An inspection by a DCF Licensing Worker is completed. Once these tasks are done the home is issued a license.

Licensing Practice Note: If there is a non-compliance issue noted during the DCF Licensure Inspection, the applicant and their CPA will have 5 days to make corrections. A home may request an exception to a FFH regulation to the DCF Licensing Division.

5: Once officially Licensed Family Foster Home and can take placement of children and youth. The home's placement preferences are noted in CareMatch (DCF Placement Management System) and the CMPs will begin connecting with the sponsoring CPA for placement.

Privatization Practice Note: CPAs or Child Placing Agencies are the agencies responsible for sponsoring and supporting licensed foster homes who have placement of children and youth in foster care. Child Welfare Case Management Providers (CMPs) have the responsibility of ensuring case management of the children and youth in care. Thus, CPAs, CMPs and DCF work in collaboration to provide care for children and families.