

Child and Family Services Licensing Policy Manual: Resource Family Training Requirements

Preparation

The orientation and pre-service training currently used by the department is Keeping Children Safe. All prospective resource parents, including kinship parents, must attend this 18 hour training to receive a regular foster care license or to be approved for adoption or guardianship unless a specific exception has been granted in writing by the regional administrator or designee.

Applicants do not have to be kin to a child in order to receive an exception from attending KCS training.

Keeping Children Safe covers the following topics:

- goals and objectives of foster care services;
- the licensing assessment and evaluation process;
- licensing requirements;
- department policies and procedures, support services and groups, Medicaid coverage, the payment system, foster parent insurance and confidentiality; and
- other resource material as appropriate or available.

Ongoing Training Requirements for Relicensure

Training is provided or approved by the department. Unless the child protective services specialist supervisor or regional administrator has approved a special exception, at least 15 hours of training is required annually for relicensure for foster parents (including kinship parents).

There is currently no requirement for prospective adoptive parents to meet any prescribed number of training hours in order to be reapproved to adopt. However, prospective adoptive parents should be encouraged to participate in training relevant to the type of child they hope to adopt.

Recommended topics include the following:

- separation and grieving;
- alternatives to physical discipline and a definition of the department's policy on physical discipline;

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- department's and foster parents' roles and responsibilities;
- biological family rights and responsibilities;
- how and why children come into foster care;
- types and behaviors of children in care;
- placement process;
- confidentiality;
- sexual abuse;
- drugs and alcohol; and
- foster parent liability insurance.

Additional training topics may include issues related to family dysfunctions, child maltreatment, addictive disorders, permanency issues, cultural competency, transitioning youth from foster care to adulthood; or effective communication. Training can be in the form of workshop or foster/adoptive parent support group participation, audio or video cassettes, books or any other means by which the foster parent has opportunity to gain further understanding into the issues of child maltreatment, placement and permanency.

Foster parents may claim hour for hour any training they have participated in with the exception of reading books. As a rule of thumb foster parents may claim a maximum of two (2) hours training per book.

Therapeutic Foster Parents

Therapeutic foster parents are expected to receive intensive training from the staff of the therapeutic foster home program with which they are affiliated.

- In addition to the meeting the initial and annual training requirements for a regular foster home found in Admin. R. Mont. 37.97.1019, the therapeutic foster parents must receive a minimum of 15 hours of additional training annually, for a total of 30 hours of annual training. The additional 15 hours of training must be directly related to:

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- the special needs of youth with emotional disturbances receiving treatment for their emotional disturbances in a treatment family environment; and
- the use of non-physical means of controlling youth to assure the safety and protection of youth and others.

Training Record Review

Training information should be recorded by the resource parents and the information entered on the DPHHS-CFS-021 Resource Family Renewal Application at the time of relicensing. The training information should be reviewed with the resource family at the time of the licensing assessment. Training should be varied yet reflect information that will be relevant to the type of children the family is licensed or approved for. If a couple, both foster parents are encouraged to participate in training.

Only unduplicated hours of training are counted toward the required 15 hours, e.g., if both parents in a family attend the same 3 hour training, they are only given credit for 3 hours, not six hours

References

Admin.R.Mont. 37.37.318
Admin.R.Mont. 37.97.1002
Admin.R.Mont. 37.97.1019