

CHILD WELFARE TRAINING CONSORTIUM

Licensing Counselor's Field Activity Guide

2012



CWtC

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Introduction

The Licensing Counselor's Field Guide is a component of the **Integrated Child Welfare Pre-Service training**. The activities are broken down into Phase I and Phase II. Phase I activities may be completed prior to the post test. Phase II activities may be completed after passing the written test, while working your protected case loads.

The Integrated Child Welfare Pre-Service training consists of the following components:

- Classroom training
- On-Line courses
- Field Activities
- FSFN courses

Field training is your introduction to child protection work in the field. During these sessions you will apply many of the concepts learned during the classroom training to the actual job. The field experience is a chance for you to:

- observe, question, and practice doing the work.
- implement program specific tasks within the job environment.
- implement "best practice" tasks and decisions that support Florida Statute and ASFA requirements.
- practice job tasks while learning the specific protocol of the unit/agency of employment.\
- increase your knowledge of CFSR/QPS/Peer Review Tools
- use actual procedures/paperwork related to actual cases.
- observe quality samples of program specific work products

All of the field activities are designed to bridge the knowledge, skills and tasks taught in the classroom with the situational application in the field. The activities will require you to shadow, interview, document, and review a wide variety of job related tasks. All of the activities can stand alone and each activity is designed for job skill application and Performance Assessment preparation.

The classroom and on-line training experience helps introduce you to the basic competencies of child protection and your job responsibilities. Using various supervised, agency-specific field activities is intended to help illustrate and augment the specific content in addition to providing you with a forum in which you can observe, question and practice on-the-job application of these concepts.

Field activities include opportunities for you to shadow or be mentored by experienced certified staff and may take place in the agency unit or in the field, provided that you are accompanied by and under the direct and constant supervision of a Child Protection Professional at all times. These activities allow you to shadow/observe all major functions of your specific job responsibilities and practice all tasks related to your shadowing experiences utilizing actual case files.

While you are attending the classroom training and completing the Phase I field activities you are not permitted to:

- carry a caseload,
- be assigned responsibility for any cases,
- conduct any unaccompanied or unsupervised home visits,
- perform any unsupervised home studies or interviews of children or adults,
- be ultimately responsible for any assessment of risk, or
- otherwise have primary responsibility for any investigation, child, family or case.

These requirements remain in effect until you have successfully completed the pre-service training, including having passed the post-test.

In order to meet your need for a variety of opportunities in the practical application of concepts learned in pre-service training, you may be assigned as a “secondary” worker (licensing counselor) in FSFN.

However, this is limited to no more than four (4) active cases during your pre-service training, and is for the sole purpose of performing and practicing newly-learned skills while accompanied and supervised at all times by a Child Protection Professional.

While you may be assigned as “secondary” worker, you do not in any way bear ultimate responsibility for any aspect of the case.

Every piece of casework you complete must be reviewed and approved by either the primary worker on the case, the supervisor of

the primary worker on the case or other Child Protection Professional, prior to the piece of casework being included and saved in the active case file or FSFN case record.

Your Role in Completing the Field Activities

Prior to each OJT shadowing experience, you must use the statute, code, best practice, and handouts relevant to the tasks that will be performed by the Child Protection Professional being shadowed.

You will document shadowing & practice activities in the Field Guide and must collect and utilize agency forms in relation to the specific on the job training experience.

- date and summarize shadowing experiences
- write questions to ask during daily debriefing sessions
- retain and use written mentor/supervisor feedback to implement continuous improvement

Plan your activities and follow your plan. It will take time and effort on your part to complete these activities successfully.

Be proactive in getting feedback, asking questions, and completing the work.

It is important for you to follow these guidelines as you shadow:

Your supervisor/Child Protection Professional is in charge of all interactions. Do only what you are specifically asked to do while you are in the field.

- Always be respectful and courteous of the families with which you come in contact. Many people may have lifestyles, cultures, and beliefs different than your own. Remember that your job is to ensure child safety, well-being and permanence.
- Feel free to ask your supervisor/Child Protection Professional questions, but do it at appropriate times. Never interrupt an interaction with a family, child, or other person.
- Do not judge or second guess the decisions made or work done by the individual you are shadowing. You will be taught a lot of skills and knowledge in the classroom, but there are many ways counselors personalize their approach while still working within the bounds of law.

- Use this time seriously and efficiently. Much of your success will depend on what you put into your field experience.
- While you are in the field, you are to behave as if on the job; this means to start on time and put in a full day's work.

Your supervisor/Child Protection Professional will meet with you or will talk with you on a regular basis throughout the training, and will periodically evaluate your work in order to give you feedback and assistance. You should contact your supervisor/Child Protection Professional when you need help.

How to Use this Guide

The **Phase I** activities in the **Field Guide** provide activities that will help orient you to your job, create readiness to learn by acquainting you with the nature and scope of the job, the mission, values, and philosophy of the agency, the community with which the agency must interact, and the families the agency serves. It also provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities associated with your job and link you to federal and state requirements, quality tasks, and curriculum materials related to job tasks.

The **Phase II** activities of the **Field Guide** are to be used on your training caseloads. These activities provide the opportunity for you to use the information gained in the classroom training to complete the actual region/circuit/agency tools, paperwork and processes that guide effective practice, while under the guidance of a Child Protection Professional.

The activities may be completed out of order and the completion of some of the tasks (i.e. documentation) are repeated.

Phase I

Activity	Completed	
Phase 1	Licensing Counselor	Trainer/Supervisor
Agency Protocols and Procedures		
Case Receipt		
Background Screening Requirements		
Initial Contact		
Pre-Service Training for Potential Licensed Caretaker		
Foster Parent Licensing Process		
Interviewing		
Placement Services		
Initial Licensing Procedure		
Ongoing Services and Support		

Agency Protocol and Procedures

Obtain and review policies and procedures that are considered essential for all staff. This includes, but is not limited to:

Agency system of care

Human resources

Personnel standards/working hours/on call/dress code

Agency training schedule

Working hours

Safety/contacting law enforcement

Confidentiality of records/records storage

Professionalism/ethical conduct

Facility accessibility

Loss prevention

Emergency procedures

Accessing office equipment

Computer access/confidentiality

Car seat usage/safety

Other policies

Agency Protocol and Procedures

- The completion of this activity will provide you with information on:
- The overall functioning of the agency.
- Any written unit or agency policy regarding worker safety.
- Information on how to contact human resources; services provided.
- The agency policies on working hours, dress code, on call requirements.
- The specific agency training schedule and expectations.
- Specific actions to take to assure your safety and necessary actions to take when your safety is jeopardized.
- Explain the unit policy on contacting law enforcement to accompany you on a home visit.
- Where case files are stored; how to access the case files; restrictions to removing case files from the office.
- Professional expectations; ethical conduct; how to report; what happens if you are investigated
- Accessing the building; after hour procedures; locking office
- How to report lost/stolen equipment
- Emergency procedures; preparation for hurricanes, flood, etc.
- Assignment of office equipment; responsibilities; usage limitations/requirements
- Computer confidentiality
- How to effectively use car seats
- Use of agency vehicles; practices to follow when transporting children
- Copy/information of Agency Human Resources Guide
- Review the Foster Parent Handbook (if applicable)

Case Receipt

Identify the agency specific case assignment process for your agency.

Case Receipt

The completion of this activity is to help you understand:

- How cases are received in your agency.
- How cases are assigned to your unit.
- How cases are assigned to you.
- How cases are transferred within your agency.
- FSFN assignment/notifications of case assignments.
- How you are notified of new case assignments.

Background Screening Requirements

Background screenings for all persons considered for initial licensure or re-licensure as an out-of-home caregiver and all adult household members must be completed.

The supervising agency has the discretion to request background screening for other individuals if there is reasonable belief that the person(s):

may be a household member presence in the foster home may adversely affect the health, safety and welfare of the children in the home has or may have had unsupervised contact with the children

Persons who are currently licensed must be rescreened annually as part of the application for re-licensing.

QPS #8

Background Screening Requirements

Observe a Child Protection Professional conduct background screenings on a potential licensed caregiver. Document the process for the completion of:

- Fingerprinting
- Statewide criminal and juvenile records checks through FDLE
- Federal criminal records checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigations
- Local criminal record checks through local law enforcement agencies
- Any responses to the home by law enforcement that did not result in criminal charges
- Record checks through FSFN (priors/providers)
- Civil court record checks regarding DV and active DV injunctions
- "Affidavit of Good Moral Character" signed by each applicant and household member screened
- "Release of Information" signed by each applicant and household member screened

Pre-Service Training for Potential Licensed Caretakers

All prospective out-of-home caregivers must successfully complete an approved parent preparation training as a condition of licensure.

Pre-Service Training includes training for out-of-home caregivers on decision-making related to the balance of normalcy for children in care and their safety.

Each pre-service class is conducted by a Child Protection Professional.

After the potential caretaker has completed the pre-service training and homestudy process they are provided an application for licensure.

QPS #43

Pre-Service Training for Potential Licensed Caretakers

Observe a Child Protection Professional conduct approved parent preparation training for potential licensed caretakers.

During the observation of the training focus on:

- Eligibility Requirements
- Information on the referral process, location and schedule
- Child development and behavior characteristics of children in out-of-home care
- The resources available to the children in out-of-home-care
- The approved parent preparation training used for licensure by your agency such as MAPP, PRIDE, etc.

Initial Licensing Procedures

Once a potential caretaker has completed the pre-service training and homestudy process they are provided with an application for licensure.

The supervising agency is responsible for advising the applicant of all rules, regulations, and standards applicable to the licensure process.

Initial Licensing Procedures

Review an "Application for License to Provide Out-of-Home Care for Dependent Children"

- Identify any timeframes for completion, the process for returning the application, where the applications are stored, etc.
- Determine documentation requirements in FSFN for licensure

Observe a Child Protection Professional review an application with a potential licensed caretaker

Focus on the information disseminated by the Child Protection Professional and the information obtained from the applicant.

- References required:
 - Minimum of three non-related personal references (known to applicant at least two yrs)
 - Adult children of each applicant
 - Current employer reference for each applicant (if less than 2 yrs secondary employment references must be obtained)
 - School personnel/child care provider of each school aged child residing in the home
 - Minimum of two neighbors or two community members
- Verification of:
 - Current marriage license (if applicable)
 - Divorce decree (if applicable)
 - Proof of legal residency
 - Driver's license
 - Auto insurance coverage
 - Financial capability and income
 - Child support
 - Pet vaccinations

Foster Parent Licensing Process

The license reflects the name of the licensee, the licensee's physical address, city and county, the name of the supervising agency and the license number along with its beginning and expiration dates.

The approved capacity and any limitations placed on the licensed out-of-home caregiver are also displayed.

An initial license is valid for one year from the date of issuance unless the license is revoked or voluntarily relinquished.

Foster Parent Licensing Process

- Shadow a Child Protection Professional and observe how the potential foster parent is prepared for the licensing process. Document your observations regarding these processes:
- Collecting all required background checks on household members.
- Completing the profile of a potential foster parent.
- Completing the initial Licensing File.
- Observing MAPP or other approved pre-service foster parent training.
- Conduct an initial home visit with the potential foster parent.
- Prepare the potential foster parent of the home study process.

Interviewing

You must understand the basic concepts and obtain skills necessary to interview children, families, caregivers, professionals, etc. Interviewing is an important skill that must be developed effectively in order to successfully fulfill job responsibilities.

QPS # 48, 50, 52, 57

Interviewing

- Observe a Child Protection Professional completing an interview at a home visit and note each skill that you observed during the interview process.

Core Conditions

- Genuineness/Authenticity
- Respect
- Empathy

Exploring Skills

- Active Listening
- Attending Behaviors
- Reflecting
- Encouraging
- Allowing Silence

Focusing Skills

- Reframing
- Clarifying
- Questioning:
 - Open-ended Questions
 - Closed-ended Questions
 - Indirect Questions
 - Solution-focused Questions
- Summarization

Directing Skills

- Give Options or Suggestions
- Give Advice, Support, or Direction
- Provide Effective Feedback

Placement Services

The total number of children placed in each family foster home is based on the recommendation of the supervising agency, using the following criteria:

- a) The needs of each child in care;
- b) The ability of the licensed out-of-home caregiver(s) to meet the individual needs of each child, including any adoptive or legal children living in the home;
- c) The amount of safe space;
- d) The ratio of active and appropriate adult supervision to the number of children; and
- e) The background, experience, and skill of the licensed out-of-home caregivers.

QPS #54

Placement Services

- Meet with the Placement Coordinator in your agency and obtain an understanding of the placement process and the roles and responsibilities of the placement unit.
- Observe a placement worker completing their job responsibilities.
- Review the FSFN case and child record to understand how placement information is documented.
- Was the placement information for the child updated in FSFN within the required 48 hour timeframe?
- Who is responsible for the FSFN placement documentation?
- Identify the contact person for whom you can report any FSFN placement documentation discrepancies?
- Observe a Child Protection Professional as they assist or conduct the placement process
 - How do they prepare the child? The family?
 - What belongings are packed and how is that process handled with the child? The family?
 - How is the process explained to the child? The family?
 - Were visitation rights addressed?

Ongoing Services and Support

The licensed out-of-home caregiver must be provided with ongoing support to ensure that they are given the assistance and services needed to provide the most appropriate, safe and stable home environment for children in substitute care.

Ongoing Services and Support

- Familiarize yourself with available community resources for foster parents.
- Gather information to provide to foster parents such as available support groups, resources, online training and other additional information about your agency's system of care.
- Inform the foster parent of respite services and review:
 - The respite placement approval process?
 - The respite placement licensure process pursuant to Section 409.175, F.S?
 - The required information for the respite placement:
 - Telephone numbers for the Case Manager in the event of an emergency;
 - Medical authorization and instructions on seeking medical care;
 - Medications, instructions for administering, and the log for recording proper administration of the medications;
 - Physician's name and telephone number;
 - School;
 - Medicaid number; and
 - Medical, physical or behavioral concerns.
- Locate the agency information regarding the use of babysitters by foster parents.
- Inform the foster parent of the babysitting service requirements.

Phase II

Activity	Completed	
Phase II	Licensing Counselor	Trainer/Supervisor
Unified Home Study		
Foster Home Visits		
Re-Licensing		
Licensing Concerns		
Capacity/Waivers		
Revoking Licenses		

The Home Study (Unified Home Study)

A written report (Unified Home study) must be prepared for each family who is seeking to become a licensed out-of-home care provider.

A social study involving careful observation, screening and evaluation must be completed on the potential out-of-home caretaker prior to the placement of the child.

At a minimum you will conduct two visits to the applicants home, inspect the entire indoor and out door premises, document the conditions, include photos of interior and exterior conditions of home, and conduct face to face interviews with all household members

QPS #8

The Home Study (Unified Home Study)

Review a completed Unified Home Study and examine the documented information found in the home study.

Determine:

- when the Home Study is completed
- sources used to obtain the required information
- if the information contained is found/recorded anywhere else in the file
- parties to the case that receive copies of the completed Unified Home Study

Observe a Child Protection Professional conduct a Unified Home Study. During the observation pay close attention to the types of questions asked and other resources used to obtain the following information:

- Demographics
- Dates of pre service training
- Home visit dates and persons interviewed
- Family composition and description
- Home and neighborhood
- Animals
- Safety Requirements including (water safety)
- Social history/background & family history
- Medical history
- Parenting experience
- Discipline techniques
- Employment/Financial Capacity and Income

Draft an (Foster) Unified Home Study

- Access the Unified Home Study in FSFN.
- Review the information needed in the assessment.
- Draft the actual assessment document (unified home study) based on your observation of the interaction.

Foster Home Visits

Initial contact with a family who is requesting licensure must be completed within specific timeframes and involves mandated actions on your part.

Proper documentation is required when home visits are conducted

The Licensing Counselor conducts a home visit with the licensed out-of-home caregiver within 7 calendar days of a child's placement to ensure that all appropriate identified services are in place to support the out-of-home caregiver.

QPS#56

Foster Home Visits

When shadowing a Licensing Professional at a home visit observe the following:

- Interviewing techniques
- Interaction with the family, adults, children, household members
- How the Partnership Plan is reviewed with the foster parents.
- How the importance of the child's Child Resource Record is discussed.
- How the roles and responsibilities of the Case Manager, GAL, and foster parent are explained and discussed.
- How is normalcy addressed and achieved?
- Observe proper documentation requirements during a home visit:
- How are home visits documented? What forms are used?
- What information gets recorded in FSFN?
- If there is a hard copy file, where is it located?
- What is the timeframe for documenting information?

Re-Licensing

Re-licensing procedures are initiated by the supervising agency are initiated at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the current license.

The re-licensing process is not to be initiated more than 90 days prior to the expiration of the current license.

A renewal must be issued for longer than one year but no longer than three years providing that the applicant has maintained current license and all necessary licensing requirements.

Re-Licensing

- Review a case file of a foster home seeking re-licensure. Specifically observe the:
- Re-licensing Summary for Licensed Homes for Dependent Children
 - Documentation of at least eight hours of in-service training;
 - Updated driver's license, driving record, and auto insurance coverage information as applicable.
- Re-licensing Procedures.
 - What are minimum requirements for face-to-face visits in the home?
 - Who must be interviewed?
 - Does your agency use the Bilateral Agreement? If so, what are the requirements for reviewing and signatures?
 - What are the requirements for home inspection?
 - What are the requirements for vehicle inspection?
 - What are the requirements for fire prevention/alerts?
 - What are the requirements for pool safety?
- Re- Licensing Home Study
 - Locate the tool used to complete the re-licensing of a home.
- Complete a Re-Licensing Summary and Home Study on one of you cases under the guidance of a Child Protection Professional.

Licensing Concerns

Licensing staff are responsible for ensuring the investigation of all complaints and foster care referrals alleging a licensing violation.

All complaint investigations or foster care referrals must be completed within five working days of the receipt of the complaint unless otherwise authorized by the licensing authority.

QPS # 3, 17

Licensing Concerns

- Review a case file of a foster home in which a complaint was received and documented
 - What the institutional allegation presented in the report?
 - How was the allegation investigated?
 - How was licensing staff notified of the investigation?
 - Was the lead agency or supervisory agency notified of the investigation?
 - Was the entire premise of the home inspected?
 - What were the findings of the investigation that was conducted?
 - What were the timeframes for initiating and closing the investigation?
- Shadow a Child Protection Professional during an Institutional Staffing.
 - What was observed?
 - What information was gathered for the staffing?
 - What parties were present?
- Was a corrective action plan developed? And how was it monitored?

Capacity/Waivers

The total number of children in the home must not exceed five children, and no more than two infants under the age of 24 months, including the out-of-home caregiver's own children, unless the home is being licensed as a child specific license for a sibling group larger than five.

Over capacity waivers can be approved when written approval is obtained prior to placement when the licensed capacity and recommended ages of children are exceeded.

Capacity/Waivers

- Review your case load for capacity information.
- Do any of your cases have an approved over capacity waiver?
 - What were the circumstances of the waiver?
 - Who approved the over capacity waiver?
 - How are over capacity waiver requests handled by your agency?
 - Are there any staffing/paperwork associated with the capacity/waiver process?
 - What type of assessment factors were evaluated prior to a placement that results in an overcapacity situation?
 - How is capacity/waiver information documented?

Revoking/ Denying Foster Home Licensure

The decision to issue, deny or revoke the agency's license rests with the designated agency administrator or the person that the agency administrator has appointed.

Revoking/ Denying Foster Home Licensure

- Review case files of foster homes that have had the foster care license denied or revoked.
- Note any agency specific tools/documents that are used in the process and obtain copies.
- What were the circumstances regarding the denial/revocation?
- How was the information documented?
- Does your agency use staffings and/or any specific paperwork/tools?
- Is the agency responsible for providing notifications of deficiencies?
- How are out-of-home caregivers notified of the action taken?
- Review the Closing of Licensed Home for Dependent Children form.
 - Who is responsible for completing the form?
 - Has it been completed properly?
 - Who receives the original or copies of the form?