WAFCA Meeting – April 13, 2022

The Human Services Research Institute is conducting a kinship navigator study now through the end of June. Data is being tracked so that the best kinship model can be chosen for the state of NC.

An initiative has begun to look at the Diligent Recruitment and Retention planning across the state and what can be put in place systemically in order to recruit and then retain licensed foster parents.

Legislative Rule Change: foster parents should receive information on their roles and obligations in courts. A training is being developed by FosteringNC.org. A Dear County Director letter will go out outlining the legislative change and the need for proof of completion of the training to be submitted with all new license requests.

Fostering Perspectives will have a focus on foster parents' role in partnering to achieve reunification, Shared Parenting, etc.

Kimmarie Sanders is the interim director for licensing and regulatory. ICPC has moved over into their section as well. Tammy Shook is the new deputy director for Regulatory and Licensing.

Heads up, see a lot of: Be sure foster parents are communicating changes within the household specifically when new household members move in. Make sure to assess how often a significant other is in the home and be diligent about reflecting this information accurately.

Q: I am relicensing a foster parent who was licensed several years ago. Her husband passed two years ago. Should I attempt to make the change for this home in NCFAST now or wait until home is licensed and let the state make the change for me?

Q: Boys and Girls Homes of NC is in the process of allowing unmarried couples to get licensed. Prior to this, they required that couples be married for at least one year prior to getting licensed. Are there any suggestions for unmarried couples. i.e....should they have lived together for at least one year or have been a couple for a certain amount of time to show stability as a couple? **A. There is no state guideline which dictates the length of time a couple must be in a relationship. Look at the stability, how long have they been a couple, how long have their previous relationships been, do they have children. Get a feel for the whole household.**

Another agency makes everyone have at least a one year relationship but then also assess them.

Wait time for major life events: it's a call to workers to sit down and have a conversation about the changes the major life event has brought. Discuss concerns, how the event will impact their ability to foster. Assessing how the family feels and how the family feels they can handle things.

Q: A foster parent has asked me if they can fence/gate just their front door area outside, versus their entire yard, to protect from a water hazard, (in this case a pond): **A. Yes this would be OK if you have looked and assessed the safety of this arrangement. Is there a safe space for the children to play, will the fire inspector approve it?**

Q: Joint home visits were not documented in section V. (last page) of the application. I have typically indicated when separate interviews were conducted, but have never been asked to clarify when joint interviews were conducted. (I typically complete joint interviews on the same day that I complete individual interviews). Is this a new expectation when documenting home visits and interviews?

A. Make sure that the required visits are documented in this section and specified separate/together/joint/individual.

Q: If a home has a pool in their backyard and there is a fence around the entire yard, does the entire fence have to be 48 inches tall? **A: The way the rule is written, it would all have to be 48 inches.**

Pools with a removable ladder does not have to be fenced all the way around. Where it becomes complicated is when people buy the Intex above ground pools that cannot be emptied at the end of the day. Look for what barriers can be put in place to keep children from being able to gain unsupervised access.

Q: A family recently got a new pet, is a change request application be submitted? **A: Jodi advised that this would be good. There are a lot of discussions within the licensing office whether or not workers need to submit change requests for new pets (conversations spurred by many renewing families who are fostering puppies). Do not have to submit a change request for a change in bed sizes.**

Q: If a foster parent has a change in their medical/mental health history, does a change need to be submitted for that? **A: In general, no. however, if it effects their ability to foster, it was recommended that the applicant have their doctor complete a physical form.**

Q: Best practice for families who foster dogs? **A: There is no clear guideline on this in rule. It would be good to speak to the company the family fosters with to make sure that the animals coming into the home have current vaccinations and have had a behavioral assessment. Also, can ask: How often are they taking animals? How would you be introducing a child in foster care to the new animal? There is nothing in rule that dictates the number of pets a family can have. Assess space in the home, cleanliness, etc. Situationally dependent.**

Q: Pet rabbit and sugar glider: have not taken them to the vet. Will they have to get rabies vaccinations? **A: Seek veterinarian guidance on this.**

Q: Snakes: **A: families with snakes can be licensed. Assess how they are stored, what are they feeding them, etc.**

Q: What if a family breeds dogs? **A: Where are those puppies staying? Do you have any safety concerns around this? Again up to individual worker's assessment.**

Q: When we are completing the 5204 for the fictive kin for licensing, does the family history section in NCFast also need to be completed. **A: Put in "see attached document" or something along these lines to get NCFast to complete the application process.**

Q: As a licensing agency, why can't the agency terminate the home license if the agency deems it appropriate to do so if the foster parent (s) remains out of compliance. instead of waiting for their license to expire? **A: The answer revolves around rights. There are legal rights tied to issuing a license and once that license has been issued, they have the right to keep that license until they decide they would like to terminate their license or a revocation which is a legal process by which the State has to make a legal basis for removing the foster home license. If there is a license that cannot be revoked because there is not enough legal basis, the family has the right to transfer their license to another agency. If a family refuses to sign a termination form or transfer their license and the agency met with**

them to make it clear that the agency will not be placing children with them going forward. Document attempts at contacts with a family and include this as a closing summary.

Q: Two children were placed with a relative and there have been three reports called in that the foster parents with whom the children were previously placed spanked them. Should each report be addressed if it has already been addressed initially? A: **Document that it was addressed when the first report was received.**

Q: An ICPC request for placement of children from sending State is being denied. Can we terminate the foster home license since foster parents were licensed for kinship of specific children? **A: A signature is still needed to terminate their license.**

Q: A family who is at full capacity with five kids due to adoption and they are not answering phone calls or emails regarding quarterly reviews. They will need to terminate because of their home that is not able to be used for placements. They were relicensed in July of 21'. I just keep documenting my attempts to reach out and put those in their file. Is that ok? **A: Documenting attempts at contacts is good; do a closing summary noting they are at capacity. Submit a change request to Regulatory and Licensing updating that the family's capacity is now at 0.**

Q: Is there a new format for quarterlies? **A: Private agencies received an updated quarterly contact form without the twelve skills listed. (Private agencies receive more oversight because the agency itself is licensed. In order to ensure they are doing their quarterlies with families, there was a form developed.) HHP will send this form out with the minutes; Jodi, please send to HHP.**

Q: Foster care workers have been in the home and the licensing worker has been meeting with families at the office. Is this sufficient? **A: Yes. Virtual contacts ended in January but Jodi advised to consult with the regional consultant to ensure this is still the case. A participant offered in the chat: I had the same question Jenny about quarterly reviews with families that do not have kids in home can those visits be virtual and I believe our consultant said no, that those stopped in January**

Re: Virtual Training: **There have not been any updates received re: virtual TIPPS-MAPP; many agencies are continuing to deliver trainings via this format. Deciding Together can still be utilized as a virtual training.**

Q: An agency is working with kinship families and has submitted a few 5204-Comp Provider Assessments. Have you seen any huge "No-Nos" from those submitting the 5204s with the 5016? **A: Consultants have received quite a few of these and are still trying to get a feel for how to navigate these. A conversation around if this is accepted, what if the family wishes to foster non-relative children? No concerns have been voiced by the consultants about any of the 5204s being submitted.**

Q: Our consultant says that we still need to document the 12 skills for new license (in the parent's file), even though we don't need to submit it to the state. Will this be the same for quarterly documents? Or would this be a question for the consultant? **A: Defer back to the agency consultant. In rule, it states that families' 12 Skills are being assessed prior to initial licensure but that is not the language stated for quarterlies.**

No new licenses are being issued via NCFast (or CWS) reflecting change requests.

SBI office will no longer run name only checks on individuals who are unable to physically go get fingerprinted.

There are inconsistencies among the amounts foster parents applicants are being charged for fire inspections for licensure as well as whether or not the individual agency pays for this.

Jodi offered one on one meetings with agencies to discuss any questions or concerns or talk through any difficult situations.

Going well:

- RILs are going great.
- Fingerprints are moving well/average/okay.
- On call consultants are always helpful and patient – *many*, *many* people agreed with this!! Jodi has an awesome team. Cheryl and Rebecca are superstars 😊
- I am going to brag on the Chatham County DSS team here! Two of the licensing social workers are on this meeting! Huge shoutout to them as they are close to being over caseloads (which has NEVER happened in our history). They are working on many licenses between Kinship and Regular Resource parents. Virtual training has been a large part of this success.
    - And it was added that they have the best supervisor!
- Elizabeth Tingen at the state office is great and very responsive when I have had an issue.
- We are having a wonderful experience with Caring for Our Own Training offered through CHS. The agency is accepting our relative referrals for licensing.

Frequently Requested Contacts:

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State Licensing Consultants:

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Call the main number 828-232-3160 for questions and you will be transferred to the on-call consultant or appropriate party.