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|  <b>VERMONT</b><br>DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES<br>Family Services Policy Manual |   | <b>93</b>           |
| Chapter:  | Placing Children and Youth                        |                     |
| Subject:  | Kinship, Foster, and Pre-Adoptive Parent Training | Page 1 of 3         |
| Approved:   | Cynthia K. Walcott, Deputy Commissioner           | Effective: 9/1/2014 |
| Supersedes:   | Family Services Policy 93                         | Dated: 6/18/2014    |

## Purpose

To outline training requirements for kin, foster and pre-adoptive parents, and the documentation requirements for resource coordinators.

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## Definitions

***Kin, Foster, or Home Studied (Pre-Adoptive) Parent:*** Relative and non-relative caregivers who are licensed for foster care or approved for adoption.

## Policy

### Foundations Training for Foster and Kinship Caregivers

All licensed foster parents caring for an unrelated child must complete foundations training before the end of the first year of licensure. Kinship caregivers are required to attend foundations training unless the Residential Licensing and Special Investigations (RLSI) Unit grants an exemption due to unusual circumstances or approves an alternate training.

Each district office will offer the in-person segment of foundations training a minimum of twice per year. Kin and foster parents are expected to attend all teleconference and in-person sessions. Individual training sessions may be acceptable substitutes for attending training sessions at the discretion of resource coordinators.

Individuals who did not complete the training may complete the requirement by making

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up sessions at the next foundations training. If extraordinary circumstances prevent completion of this requirement, resource coordinators may request that RLSI approve an extension.

RLSI will confirm attendance at the time of licensing renewal. If kin or foster parents have not attended and there is not an adequate reason, the license may be revoked if there is no child in care in the home. If there is a child in the home, the license will be limited to that child and will be closed when the child leaves.

#### **Advanced Training for Foster and Kinship Caregivers**

Kin and foster parents are required to attend 40 hours of training in two years to move from one level of reimbursement to the next level. The 40 hours of training can be a combination of hours completed by caregivers in the household. Those hours should include foundations training unless the kinship caregiver or foster parent can document the comparable training or attainment of the competencies of a module. Training opportunities may include formal training, workshops, relevant conferences, reading books, viewing videos, or other similar activities.

District offices may require other training necessary to provide appropriate care for children in placement. Families providing specialized care may also have additional requirements depending on the responsibilities of the kinship caregiver or foster parent to meet a child’s specific needs. Training requirements for families providing specialized care will be outlined on the Caregiver Responsibility Tool.

#### **Advancement to Next Reimbursement Level for Foster and Kinship Caregivers**

Kinship caregivers and foster parents at level 2 and level 3 must do 10 hours of training per year to maintain the current level of reimbursement.

After four years of experience and 80 hours of training, 10 hours of training per year is required to maintain the current level of reimbursement.

#### **Documenting the Completion of Training Requirements for Foster and Kinship Caregivers**

Resource coordinators requesting a level change must ensure that the completion of training requirements is specifically documented in the caregiver’s record. Continuously licensed foster parents who attained levels prior to the effective date of this policy are exempt from documentation of that attainment.

#### **Pre-Adoptive Training Requirements**

Any family who signs an Intent to Adopt Form signifying their intention to adopt a child or youth in DCF custody must complete the Fostering to Forever Training before the

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adoption is finalized. Fostering to Forever is a one-session training delivered by the University of Vermont's Child Welfare Training Partnership. A certificate of completion must accompany the application for adoption assistance.

Families who can show good cause to not take this class may request a waiver. To request a waiver, a family should discuss with the Project Family permanency counselor why they cannot take the class. Project Family staff will submit a request for a waiver in writing to the Adoption Unit. The request should include reasons why the family cannot take the class, the date of the next available class, and certification the family has taken the four online sessions through Adoption Learning Partners. The certificate of completion for the online sessions must be included in the application for adoption assistance.

Effective 12/1/2014, adoption subsidy packets must include certification of attendance at Fostering to Forever class or a signed waiver and certification of attendance of an online course through Adoption Learning Partners.

**Resource Coordinator Tasks:**

- Provides information about fostering children and youth in DCF custody to interested members of the community, following local protocols for pre-screening of potential applicants;
- Informs the CWTP training coordinators of all families needing foundations training;
- Requests a list of graduates, including any individual sessions missed by participants, from the CWTP training coordinators;
- Ensures the list of graduates of the foundations training is sent to RLSI;
- Sends requests for any necessary exemptions or extensions for foundations training to RLSI;
- Sends the Record of Kin or Foster Parent Training Form to the kinship or foster parents;
- Keeps documentation of completed trainings in the kin, foster, or adoptive parent file;
- Keeps track of completed hours of training in the kin or foster parent file;
- Sends the Request for Kin or Foster Parent Level Change (Form 600) to the business office when the training hours indicate a level change.