

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>222</h1>
Chapter:	Residential Licensing and Special Investigations	
Subject:	Foster Care Interventions	Page 1 of 4
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## Purpose

To describe the requirements for conducting child safety interventions (CSIs) and regulatory interventions in foster care.

## Table of Contents

Purpose.....	1
Table of Contents.....	1
Related Policies .....	1
Regulations for Foster Homes in Vermont.....	1
Policy .....	1
Authority Regarding Placement of Children/Youth in Foster Care .....	1
Screening Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect in Foster Homes .....	2
Child Safety Interventions in Foster Homes.....	3
Regulatory Interventions in Foster Homes.....	3
Revocation of Foster Care Licenses.....	4

## Related Policies

Family Services [Policy 50](#): Child Abuse and Neglect Definitions  
Family Services [Policy 51](#): Screening Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect  
Family Services [Policy 52](#): Child Safety Interventions – Investigations and Assessments  
Family Services [Policy 56](#): Substantiating Child Abuse and Neglect  
Family Services [Policy 220](#): Role and Functions of RLSI  
Family Services [Policy 221](#): Foster Care Licensing  
[Regulations for Foster Homes in Vermont](#)

## Policy

### Authority Regarding Placement of Children/Youth in Foster Care

All accepted or open child safety interventions (CSIs) and regulatory interventions regarding a family foster home **results in a hold on new placements**. District office staff are not permitted to place new children or youth in the home OR ask the caregivers to provide additional respite care while the intervention is open or until the hold is lifted by RLSI. This does not impact the current placement(s) in the home or existing respite arrangements.

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>222</h1>
Chapter:	Residential Licensing and Special Investigations	
Subject:	Foster Care Regulatory and Child Safety Interventions	Page 2 of 4

If, during the course of these interventions, the RLSI director or designee believes a child is in danger or at serious risk, district office staff will be notified that the child must be moved from the foster home by the end of the business day (or within a timeframe identified by the RLSI director).

At their own discretion, district staff may choose to remove children or youth from a foster home at any time.

#### Screening Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect in Foster Homes

Reports of suspected abuse and neglect of a child or youth placed in a family foster home are made to Centralized Intake and Emergency Services through the Child Protection Hotline at **1-800-649-5285** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

All reports made to CIES are screened according to [Policy 51](#). If warranted according to Vermont law and division policy, the CIES screener will accept the report as meeting criteria for a child safety intervention and an RLSI supervisor will assign the case to an RLSI Family Services worker.

If the report is not accepted on the first review by CIES, the RLSI supervisor will provide the second review of the report. Upon second review of the report, the RLSI supervisor will do one of the following:

- Accept the report for a child safety intervention and assign the case to a worker for commencement and intervention per [Policy 52](#). A regulatory intervention may occur concurrently if necessary.
- Not accept the report for a child safety intervention – but accept the report for a regulatory intervention based on an allegation of persistent or safety-related regulatory infractions and assign the case to a worker.
- Not accept the report for a child safety intervention or regulatory intervention – but share information of concern with district office staff responsible for the involved child or youth.
  - District office staff will review and discuss the concerns outlined in the unaccepted report with the foster parents.
- Determine that no response is warranted.

RLSI will send notification by email to relevant parties in the district offices with a short description of the situation, a link to the report, and the screening response decision. Upon the closure of any intervention, the RLSI supervisor will resend the original acceptance notification with a summary description or link to the case resolution or report.

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>222</h1>
Chapter:	Residential Licensing and Special Investigations	
Subject:	Foster Care Regulatory and Child Safety Interventions	Page 3 of 4

Special consideration will be given to whether additional child safety intervention cases should be opened when:

- (1) There are multiple non-related foster children placed in the home; and
- (2) Concerns extend to the legal/biological/adoptive children of the foster parents residing within the household.

#### **Child Safety Interventions in Foster Homes**

RLSI will follow division policy regarding child safety interventions in foster homes with no modification except as noted below:

The *SDM Safety Assessment* and *SDM Risk Assessment* instruments are not designed to be utilized in foster care child safety interventions. They are not required when the foster child is the alleged victim. However, in all child safety interventions RLSI will create a safety plan that addresses the immediate safety needs of all children and youth within the home. This will include placed custodial youth and adopted/legal/biological children of the foster parents. Any safety plan will be documented within the investigation file. The SDM tools will be utilized for any assigned child safety intervention solely focusing on the legal/biological/adoptive children of the foster parents residing within the household.

JPA assessments involving adoptive children of former and current foster parents are preferably assigned to the local district office as they imply a need for local services and possible family court action. Consequent regulatory intervention by RLSI will likely be necessary in these situations as significant disruption in the foster home environment is implied.

#### **Regulatory Interventions in Foster Homes**

Regulatory interventions in licensed and district-approved unlicensed foster homes will be accepted when there is an allegation of persistent or safety-related regulatory violations. Regulatory interventions will be commenced within 72 hours. Case-specific commencement tasks are at the supervisor's discretion but must include contact with the foster parent by RLSI staff and interview(s) of placed children or youth. Regulatory interventions will be completed within 60 days of acceptance.

A regulatory intervention will consist of:

- A review of existing information regarding the foster home (including prior intakes, concerns, reports or interventions; and a review of the foster care licensing file);
- An interview and discussion of concerns with the foster parents; and

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>222</h1>
<b>Chapter:</b>	Residential Licensing and Special Investigations	
<b>Subject:</b>	Foster Care Regulatory and Child Safety Interventions	Page 4 of 4

- An interview or observation of the identified child/youth and, at the discretion of RLSI, interviews or observations of the other children/youth placed in the home.

A regulatory intervention may also include:

- A visit to the physical site of the foster home if relevant;
- Interviews of appropriate district office staff; or
- Interviews of collateral parties.

RLSI staff will conclude the regulatory intervention with a report and letter describing:

- The regulatory violations alleged;
- The determination of compliance or non-compliance with regulations;
- Any remediation completed by the foster home to address compliance;
- Any new or revised limitations to the terms of licensure following the intervention; and
- If necessary, the initiation of the revocation or denial process.

Appropriate documentation of response and resolution will be recorded in the foster care licensing file. The resolution letter will be sent to the foster parent and copied to district office staff (to include the district director and resource coordinator), and other appropriate district staff.

#### **Revocation of Foster Care Licenses**

If the RLSI worker, in consultation with the RLSI supervisor, determines that the licensee is not in compliance with regulations the licensing or investigation report will recommend revocation of the license. Though they may seek consultation from the assistant attorney general (AAG) assigned to the division and RLSI supervisory staff, final decisions regarding revocations and denials are approved by the RLSI director. The letter will note specific areas of noncompliance and inform the licensee of the process to appeal the revocation.