

**EXCERPTS PUB-30: Foster Parent Handbook**  
**APPROVAL, TRAINING, & SUPPORT OF FOSTER HOMES**

**Training**

DCFS recognizes the child's right to be placed in a home able to deal with the special problems and traumas of out-of-home care. Foster parenting is a specialized field, different from parenting one's own children, and for which special training is essential. As foster parenting is far too complex to be covered in one course, DCFS will provide opportunities for training of prospective foster parents and training related to the special needs of children in out-of-home placements. An individualized training plan will be developed taking into consideration the age and characteristics of children for whom the foster parent has expressed preferences.

**Pre-Service Training**

Successful completion of the assessment and, if applicable, approval of alternative compliance or policy waiver, is necessary before referral to pre-service training. Training of prospective foster parents will be done by using group processes, but may be done on an individual basis when necessary. Foster parents must complete the Division's pre-service training curriculum which includes 27 hours of Foster/Adopt PRIDE training and three hours of DCFS orientation prior to placement of a child. Foster parents shall have current CPR and First Aid Training. No child will be placed in the foster home until each foster parent has obtained CPR Certification and completed First Aid training.

First Aid and CPR training and certification will only be accepted from a certified trainer associated with the American Heart Association, the National Safety Council, or the American Red Cross. Online CPR and First Aid training is acceptable provided the online course is offered through American Heart Association, the National Safety Council, or American Red Cross. In addition, it must require participants to demonstrate the skills learned through the online portion in the presence of a certified trainer in order to complete certification.

Prospective foster parents must obtain a certification card from the trainer representing the certifying national organization. DCFS staff will coordinate the CPR and First Aid training with the national organization.

**Continuing Education**

DCFS will require participation in local educational and training opportunities. Each foster parent shall annually participate in a minimum of 15 hours of approved training. This additional 15 hours becomes due at the end of the second year that a foster home is in operation. The same training classes cannot be repeated yearly. Training classes may cover a wide range of topics related to parenting, child development, behavior problems, medical needs, etc., and may be offered by educational systems (college, university, local school system), Health Department, Community Mental Health Centers, the Foster Parent Association and others. Special TV programs related to child abuse, parenting adolescents, etc. may also be considered training. However, videos, TV programs, online courses and books are only accepted on a

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limited basis. No more than five hours of videos, books, or online courses or TV programs for each foster parent will be accepted per year and must have prior approval by the Area Director or designee. To be considered as training these programs must be discussed with the Resource Worker assigned to the foster parents and receive prior approval before the program is viewed. Participation shall then be documented in the foster home case record. The DCFS County Office will inform all foster parents of any training and educational opportunities known to them. CPR training is not allowed to be counted toward the required 15 hours. Online CPR training is acceptable provided the online course is offered through American Heart Association, National Safety Council, or American Red Cross. In addition, it must require participants to demonstrate the skills learned through the online portion in the presence of a certified trainer in order to complete certification.

A statewide foster parent training conference and area conferences are held yearly, if funds are available, to give foster families the opportunity to obtain the required hours. Both in-state and out-of-state conferences may be considered training. Funds may be available to defray expenses for these educational opportunities. Prior approval is required for reimbursement. Contact a Resource Worker.

The appropriate DCFS County Office will maintain the training record, both DCFS and non-DCFS sponsored. Foster parents are responsible for reporting to their Resource Worker participation in non-DCFS sponsored training. Evidence of attendance (training certificate, etc.) will be needed to document participation.

Both travel and baby-sitting expenses incurred when attending mandatory local and DCFS sponsored training are reimbursable. A Resource Worker must be contacted prior to the training for approval of such expenses.