



Nebraska Children's Commission
1225 L Street, Suite 401
Lincoln, NE 68508

August 14, 2018

Mr. Matthew T. Wallen
Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Director Wallen,

This letter is a status update on the Nebraska Children's Commission's (NCC) "Kinship Workgroup" created in response to the Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children & Family Services (DCFS) request for NCC recommendations for licensing "approved" relative and kinship homes, as well as training recommendations that could increase the safety of foster children.

Enclosed with this letter is the final recommendations of the Kinship Workgroup as amended by the Nebraska Children's Commission at their July 31, 2018 meeting.

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with DCFS on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Newell".

David Newell, CSW, ACSW
Chairperson

Kinship and Relative Care Workgroup Report of Recommendations

The Kinship and Relative Care Workgroup (Workgroup) was created by the Nebraska Children’s Commission (Commission) in response to a request from the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (DHHS, DCFS) Director, Matthew Wallen. The purpose of the Workgroup was to partner with DCFS to make budget neutral recommendations regarding licensing for relative and kinship homes that included a stable payment structure for non-licensed homes. The Workgroup was also tasked with developing specific training for all licensed homes that will improve prevention of sexual abuse. A timeline was established for work to be completed by June 30, 2018.

The Workgroup consisted of numerous stakeholders as outlined in [Attachment B](#). These members met a total of three times to review current data and make recommendations. After careful consideration the group outlined the below recommendations.

Recommendations for Kinship and Relative Licensing

Recommendation 1:

Alter statutory definitions to reflect traditional foster family homes as non-child specific foster homes with kinship and relative placement defined as child specific foster homes.

Recommendation 2:

Alterations to 395 NAC Chapter 10 should include the following –

- For section [3-001.03C Health Information](#), strike the requirement for the health information form to include the signature of a health practitioner, unless deemed necessary.
- Language in section [3-001.22 Waiver of Licensing Requirements for Relatives](#), should be altered to reflect child specific foster homes.
 - Within this section, training should be removed from the list of waived requirements. A description of the varying training requirements for child specific and non-child specific licenses should be included in section [3-001.28 Training](#).
- Section [3-001.28 Training](#) should outline the following requirements for child-specific licenses:
 - A minimum initial and renewal requirement of 6 clock hours of Department approved training.

Recommendation 3:

Training for child specific licensing should be provided in a one-on-one basis either in the home or via live webinar and should be individualized to the needs of the youth and home.

Recommendation 4:

Child specific foster homes have a 90-day timeline from placement to complete the licensing requirements.

Recommendation 5:

DHHS should develop a foundation of strengths based curriculum for each of the following core training requirements for child specific foster homes –

1. Trauma Impact
2. Developmental age appropriate needs of specific placement
3. Collaborating and navigating family relationships
4. Child Welfare, Juvenile Court System Navigation/ Information
5. Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standards
6. Human Trafficking
7. Sexual Abuse

Recommendations for Kinship and Relative Payment Structure

Members of the Workgroup felt that the implementation of the above recommendations would result in a positive shift in the licensing trends of child specific foster homes. Until data could be collected on the effect of the recommended changes, members felt that it was premature to consider incentive or disincentive options for this population of foster homes. While members were cognizant of the budgetary impact of the IV-E Waiver expiration, they hesitated to recommend a disincentive for unlicensed child specific foster homes. The workgroup felt that a significant or drastic reduction to the payment amount would not be in the best interest of Nebraska's children.

Recommendation 4:

The statutory and regulatory changes proposed above will provide a pathway for licensure. DHHS will need to create an implementation plan to roll out the licensing requirements for all new families. An evaluation should be conducted by DHHS to determine if there is further need to consider either an incentive or disincentive for unlicensed child specific foster homes by June 1, 2019.

Recommendations for Sexual Abuse Prevention Training

Recommendation 5:

The Kinship and Relative Care Workgroup supports the use of the sexual abuse training sessions outlined in [Attachment A](#) and recommend the following:

- A shortened, one-hour version of the modules should be offered to child specific foster homes.
- Foster homes should be provided the opportunity to complete one of the modules as an initial (pre-service) training requirement with the remaining two modules as resources for license renewal (in-service) hours.

Recommendation 6:

[The National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth](#) should be utilized as a resource for license renewal (in-service) hours.

Recommendation 7:

All training opportunities for sexual abuse prevention should be easily accessible to foster parents on the DHHS website.

Foster Parent Training – Sexual Abuse Module

Training Proposal

ABOUT US:

Project Harmony is committed to providing up-to-date, innovative training opportunities to professionals that interact with children and families. As part of this community, foster parents are an invaluable resource that provide care for children when they are unable to safely remain in the home. This role requires dedication and training that supports not only the experience of the foster parent(s) but also the experiences of the child(ren) they care for. Children that enter these homes may have experienced sexual abuse and/or display sexually acting out behaviors. In order to safely navigate these circumstances, it is important foster parents have the knowledge and skills they need to successfully care for children.

TRAINING SESSIONS:

| Training Session | Session Duration | Session Delivery | Session Capacity | Intended Audience |
|---|------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Darkness to Light | 2 hours | Live/Synchronous or Asynchronous Webinar | Live: 40 Webinar: 100 | All Foster Parents |
| Sexual Health, Behaviors, and Abuse of Children | 1.5 hours | Live/Synchronous or Asynchronous Webinar | Live: 40 Webinar: 100 | All Foster Parents |
| Bringing it Home: Managing Sexual Abuse and Behaviors | 1.5 hours | Live/Synchronous or Asynchronous Webinar | Live: 40 Webinar: 100 | All Foster Parents |

Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children – 2 hours

Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children is a prevention training program that teaches adults how to recognize, prevent, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The program is designed for organizations that serve youth and for anyone concerned about the safety of children. It is the only nationally distributed, evidence-based program proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes, and change child protective behaviors.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will learn the three skills of empowerment.
2. Participants will learn the five steps to “Protecting Our Children”

Number of Trainers: 1

Methods of Delivery:

English or Spanish

Live Classroom (Onsite or Offsite) and Synchronous Webinar/Asynchronous Online

Training Capacity:

Live: 40

A/Synchronous Webinar: 100

Sexual Health, Behaviors, and Abuse of Children – 1.5 hours

Sexual Health, Behaviors, and Abuse of Children is a training that focuses on these topics as they relate to children at different stages of development. The training increases the participant's awareness of sexual behavior based on the child's stage of development, their ability to disclose information, as well as steps that should occur after the disclosure.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will learn healthy versus unhealthy sexual behaviors.
2. Participants will learn strategies for responding to problematic behaviors.
3. Participants will identify ano-genital anatomy.
4. Participants will identify signs of sexual abuse.
5. Participants will learn how to report concerns of sexual abuse.

Number of Trainers: 1

Method of Delivery:

English

Live Classroom (Onsite or Offsite) or Synchronous Webinar/Asynchronous Online

Training Capacity:

Live: 40

A/Synchronous Webinar: 100

Bringing It Home: Managing Sexual Abuse and Behaviors - 1.5 hours

Bringing It Home: Managing Sexual Abuse and Behaviors provides participants with the application of previously acquired knowledge as well as an understanding of the child's experience. Participants will gain strategies to manage these circumstances within the home, promoting a healthy and safe environment for the whole family.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will learn the impact of sexual abuse on children.
2. Participants will identify behaviors that are associated with sexual abuse.
3. Participants will practice applying skills and strategies for sexualized behavior management and/or prevention.

Number of Trainers: 1

Method of Delivery:

English

Live Classroom (Onsite or Offsite) or Synchronous/Asynchronous Webinar

Training Capacity:

Live: 40

A/Synchronous Webinar: 100

Kinship Workgroup Membership

| Member Name | Title and Organization |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Robin Chadwell | Operations Support Director PromiseShip |
| Peg Harriott (Co-Chair) | President & CEO , Child Saving Institute |
| Mary Ann Harvey | Project Specialist , Nebraska Court Improvement Project |
| Kim Hawekotte | Executive Director , Foster Care Review Office |
| Felicia Nelsen | Executive Director , Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association |
| Mike Puls | Northern Service Area Administrator , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services |
| Cindy Rudolph | CFO/Treasurer , CEDARS Youth Services |
| Nanette Simmons | Administrator , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services |
| Stacy Simonsen | Probation Programs And Services Specialist , Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division |
| Theresa Starr Starr | Program Specialist , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services |
| Lana Temple-Plotz | Chief Program Officer , Nebraska Children's Home Society |
| Bill Williams (Co-Chair) | Chief Operating Officer , COMPASS |