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RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL

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RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL

For guidance on kinship resource parent approval, see Resource Family guidance section 2. Through training and careful assessment, LDSS should identify and approve those families who demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in supporting relationships between children and their parents. Kinship and *non-relative resource* families should never be viewed as an alternative to children's families, but instead, they must clearly understand their role in supporting family reunification. In making decisions regarding placement, preference should be given to relatives and fictive kin as ***resource parents***, so long as they can meet approval requirements as outlined in *Resource Family Guidance Section* 4.1.4. All *resource parents*, including adoptive families, should complete training and be carefully assessed to ensure that they have the ability to meet the physical, behavioral and emotional needs of children who enter foster care in Virginia.

4.1. Other Criteria (2.3.8.)

4.1.1. Anti-discrimination for approving *resource parents*

According to federal statute, the LDSS may not deny to any person the opportunity to become a *resource* parent on the basis of race, color, nationality, state of residence, religion, age, disability, political belief, sex or sexual orientation.

4.1.2. Age requirements (2.3.8.2.)

Resource parents must be at least 18 years of age. The age of the *prospective resource parent* is one of many considerations in the decision to approve an individual to foster, adopt or provide respite care.

4.1.3. Marital status (2.3.8.3.)

Only individuals or married couples may be approved as *resource parents*. Unmarried/cohabitating couples may be approved with one individual approved and identified on the Certificate of Approval and the other person listed as a household member or adult caregiver.

When prospective resource parents are married, but not dwelling in the same home and do not expect to dwell in the same home, complete the Married with Separate Dwellings *form in place of completed criminal and central registry checks for an absent spouse. Should the absent spouse reenter the household, background*

checks and all other requirements for resource parent approval must be completed for that spouse to remain in compliance with approval standards.

This issue will need to be revisited in detail should the prospective resource parent consider adoption while still legally married without the legal spouse participating in the approval process as a resource parent. As discussed in Adoption Guidance, under Finalizing the Adoption only "a married couple or an unmarried individual shall be eligible to receive placement of a child for purposes of adoption". § 63.2-1225

4.1.4. Maximum Number of Children (2.3.8.4.)

The number of children in foster care in the *resource parent*'s home shall not exceed six (6) unless:

- To allow the child of a parenting youth in foster care to remain with the parenting youth.
- To allow siblings to remain together.
- To allow a child with an established meaningful relationship with the family to remain with the family.
- To allow a family with special training or skills to provide care to a child who has a severe disability.

4.2. Pre-service training

4.2.1. Training curriculum

The LDSS must ensure that pre-service training is provided for *resource parents*, using a VDSS-approved curriculum, and completion of the training must be documented in the *resource parent*'s file. Each *resource parent* must satisfy the pre-service training requirements. Certain curricula have been verified to meet the required competencies: Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE), Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP), and Parents as Tender Healers (PATH). The Department supports PRIDE as the preferred curriculum. **All other curricula must be approved by the VDSS to satisfy the pre-service requirement.**

- If a curriculum has been approved for Title IV-E Pass-Through Training, this is the VDSS's approval.

To obtain approval for a curriculum other than those listed above; an LDSS should submit a copy of the curriculum (outlines, handouts, etc.) to the Regional Resource Family Consultant.

- The curriculum will either be approved, returned with recommendations (for addressing any missing competencies), or rejected.

4.2.2. Core competencies (2.5.3.1.)

Pre-service training must address, but not be limited to, the following core competencies:

- Factors that contribute to neglect, emotional maltreatment, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, and the effects thereof.
- *Factors associated with the delay in the development of children and factors that affect bonding and attachment.*
- Stages of human growth and development (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- Concept of permanence for children and selection of the permanency goal (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- Reunification as the primary child welfare goal; the process and experience of reunification.
- Importance of visits and other contacts in strengthening relationships between the child and their family, including their siblings.
- Legal and social processes and implications of adoption (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- Support of older youth's transition to independent living (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- The professional team's role in supporting the transition to permanency and preventing unplanned placement disruptions.
- Relationship between child welfare laws, the LDSS's mandates, and how the LDSS carries out its mandates (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- Purpose of service planning (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- Impact of multiple placements on a child's development.

- Types of and response to loss, and the factors that influence the experience of separation, loss, and placement (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- *Cultural awareness and sensitivity.*
- Preparing a child for family visits and helping them manage their feelings in response to family contacts.
- Developmentally appropriate, effective, and nonphysical disciplinary techniques.
- Promoting a child's sense of identity, history, culture, and values.
- Respecting a child's connection to their family, previous *resource* families, and/or adoptive families.
- Being nonjudgmental in caring for the child, working with their family, and collaborating with other members of the team.
- Roles, rights, and responsibilities of *resource* parents (not required for respite *resource parents*).
- Maintaining a home and community environment that promotes safety and well-being.

4.2.3. Supplemental Training (2.5.3.2.)

The following content areas are to be included in the pre-service training of *prospective resource parents*:

- The Children's Services Practice Model and Implication for Practice.
- Virginia's Family Partnership Meetings: The Purpose and Process.
- Rate structuring and the *resource parent*'s role in the process.
- The Foster Home Agreement: Code of Ethics and Mutual Responsibilities.
- The Adoptive Home Placement Agreement.
- Standards of Care for Continued Approval (see Section 4.5.5.1.1.).
- Shaken Baby Information.

Any additional LDSS requirements.

4.2.3.1. Mandated Reporter training (2.5.3.2.1.)

The Code of Virginia identifies those persons who are mandated reporters. These persons must report suspected child abuse or neglect that they become aware of in their professional or official capacity.

Effective July 1, 2012, *resource parents*, and respite *resource parents* are considered mandated reporters due to their association with a public organization that is responsible for the care, custody and control of children as referenced in § 63.2-1509 A.

Mandated reporter training and other resources for mandated reporters are available from the Virginia Department of Social Services at (https://www.dss.virginia.gov/abuse/mr.cgi).

Resource parents may complete CWS 5692 - Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect as part of their pre-service training.

4.2.4. Prior training considerations

Resource parents who have previously completed *resource* parent training are not exempt from meeting training requirements; however, an LDSS has several options when considering the family for approval. For *resource parents* who can provide verification that they 1) completed a *resource parent* course within the last five years, or 2) completed the training more than 5 years ago AND have completed ongoing additional training which addressed competency areas, then the LDSS may consult their Regional Resource Family Consultant to determine how best to proceed based on the three options outlined below:

- Utilize the Pre-Service Competency Checklist to affirm that these competencies have been observed over the course of the *resource parent's* experience with the LDSS. This checklist should be maintained in the *resource parent*'s file to indicate compliance with the pre-service standard.

- Conduct one-on-one training to address areas lacking sufficient competence.

- Request that the *resource parent* complete pre-service training.

Resource parents whose previous training is accepted as meeting Virginia's requirements for pre-service training must still be provided with training on the additional training areas under Section 1.7.2.3. and Section 1.7.2.4. above. This training must be documented in the Mutual Family Assessment .

4.3. Role of a Resource Parent

Through training and careful assessment, LDSS should identify and approve those *prospective resource parents* who demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in supporting relationships between children and their parents. Kinship and *non-relative resource parents* should never be viewed as an alternative to children's families, but instead, they must clearly understand their role in supporting family reunification. All *resource parents*, including adoptive *parents*, should complete training and be carefully assessed to ensure that they *can* meet the physical, behavioral, and emotional needs of children who enter foster care in Virginia.

The following standards must be met for LDSS to approve a *resource parent*:

- Background Checks for all adult household members
- Pre-service training using a VDSS approved curriculum
- Completion of a Mutual Family Assessment
- Physical examination of approved *resource parents* and tuberculosis screening or tests for all household members

4.4. Required Background Checks (2.4.2.1.)

Background checks are required for all prospective *resource* parents and every adult household member 18 years of age or older who reside in the home. Required background checks consist of a national criminal *background* check, a Child Protective Services (CPS) Central Registry search, and a search of the Sex Offender Registry, which is included in the national criminal *background* check. *Prospective resource parents* cannot be approved as *resource parents* until the results of all background checks have been received. *Prospective resource parents* with barrier crimes as set forth in the Code of Virginia, § 63.2.1719 cannot be approved as a *resource parent* unless they meet one of the exceptions outlined in the above Code section. These requirements are not subject to a waiver. Other adults residing in the home with a barrier crime also preclude approval of the home. The *criminal and central registry* background checks expire 36 months from the date of verification for all approvals occurring after 1/1/2020.

Results of these checks must be maintained in the file of the *resource parent* and in no other place (including any form of archiving or electronic storage). Criminal *background checks* cannot be shared with any person other than the specific subject of the search. Eligibility letters from OBI may *not* be shared when transferring foster home approval between LDSSs.

Background checks must be completed within 120 days of issuing the Certificate of Approval. Background checks for non-relative resource parents are typically initiated near the end of the approval process. If background checks were completed much earlier in the process due to a concern and need to rule out any potential barrier crimes, background checks may need to be redone to issue the COA within 120 days of background check clearance.

4.4.1. Sworn Statement or Affirmation (2.4.2.1.1.)

A sworn statement or affirmation form is required disclosing whether or not the individual has a criminal conviction or is the subject of any pending criminal charges within or outside the Commonwealth and whether or not the individual has been the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect within or outside the Commonwealth. *The statement/form indicates if the adult has lived in other states within the previous five years, which would require additional central registry checks from those states.* A sworn *statement* must be completed during the initial approval process and does not expire.

4.4.2. National criminal background check (2.4.2.1.2.)

Prospective resource parents are required to be fingerprinted and complete all requirements outlined by the VDSS approved vendor, FieldPrint. All identifying information and prints will be electronically sent to the Virginia State Police (VSP), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and Office of Background Investigations (OBI). OBI staff will screen criminal history results received from the VSP and the FBI in order to provide the requesting LDSS a determination of eligibility on the individual being searched. For detailed information on how to complete the fingerprint-based criminal background check, *reference this FieldPrint instruction sheet.*

4.4.2.1. "Unable to Determine" letters (2.4.2.1.2.1.)

When LDSS receive an "Unable to Determine" response from OBI, the FSS responsible for approval should contact OBI at backgrounds@dss.virginia.gov *to identify which adult and conviction was in question then follow up with the adult for more information. The FSS may also use the Barrier Crime Determination Guide to determine if the conviction in question qualifies as a barrier crime. The FSS must document the details related to the conviction in question which indicate that the adult meets approval standards along with a signature and date from the adult before the LDSS may make a determination. The LDSS must also obtain verifying documentation to support the report of the prospective resource parent. The FSS must document the determination and proceed with approval or ineligibility based on the verified details.*

4.4.3. Central Registry of abuse and neglect (2.4.2.1.3.)

The LDSS shall submit a Search of the Central Registry and Release of Information Form to OBI to search the Virginia CPS Central Registry *or use the CRS Provider Portal* for each *prospective resource parent* and adult household member over the age of 18 years, no more than 120 days prior to the *prospective resource parent* being approved.

If a *prospective resource parent* or household member has resided in another state within the preceding five years a check of that state's child abuse and neglect registry is required. LDSS must not approve individuals with a founded complaint of child abuse as a *resource* parent or adult household member. *The Adam Walsh State Contacts and Procedures for Child Abuse Registry Checks may be helpful.* Out of state searches of the child abuse and neglect registry should be completed only at the time of initial approval and do not expire. *Out of country searches are not necessary as part of approval.*

4.4.4. Department of Motor Vehicles Check (2.4.2.1.4)

A Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) driver *background* check must be obtained for the *prospective resource parent* as well as all others in the home who may be transporting the child. A Virginia driving *background check* must be obtained if the individual holds a Virginia driver's license. If the individual holds an out-of-state driver's license, the out-of-state driving *background check* must be obtained. While there is no specific standard for a "satisfactory" DMV driver *background* check, results of this check should be considered in concert with other information gained in the Mutual Family Assessment process.

Local governments have access to DMV *background checks* free of charge in accordance with § 46.2-208 of the Code of Virginia. *The LDSS should utilize this to obtain DMV background checks for resource parents and should not expect resource parents to obtain their own DMV background checks.* The information available includes convictions, accidents, driver's license suspensions or revocations, and other information that may be needed by the local government to carry out its official function. Most LDSS have established agreements with DMV to allow *background checks* access; however, for more information on this process contact the DMV or access www.dmvnow.com.

4.5. Initial approval

All LDSS approved *resource parents* must meet minimal standards, as outlined below. *Resource parents* may be dually approved to eliminate the need for a second approval, if adoption by a foster parent is determined to be in the best interest of the child(ren) in foster care. However, foster parents may be required to meet additional legal requirements. Please see: § 63.2-1225. Determination of appropriate home.

If at any point in the process, the decision is made either by the LDSS or family to discontinue the process, the LDSS must notify the *prospective resource parent* in writing as to the reason why the approval process was stopped. The letter should be issued to document the reason the approval process stopped so that everything is documented in the case should the family resume interest in the future. This includes kinship families regardless of the stage or whose decision it was to stop the approval process. A copy of this notice must be filed in the *prospective resource parent's* file.

4.5.1. Physical Home Environment (2.4.1.)

The physical environment of the home must be assessed both in terms of the physical space (e.g., adequate furnishings, heat, ventilation, etc.) as well as the *prospective resource parent's* attitude toward, and ability to provide for the child's need for space and privacy and separate sleeping arrangements. Documentation of an assessment of the home environment should include the Physical Home Environment Checklist. The following areas must be assessed, as appropriate, in the course of interviews at the *prospective resource parent's* home.

4.5.1.1. Physical comfort (2.4.1.1.)

- The *prospective resource parent* must be able to provide safe, comfortable sleeping furnishings.
- All rooms used by the child must be heated in winter, *cooled in hot weather*, dry, and well ventilated.
- Rooms and study space used by the child must have adequate lighting.

4.5.1.2. Space and furnishings (2.4.1.2.)

The home must have sufficient appropriate space and furnishings for each child receiving care in the home, including:

- Space to keep clothing and other personal belongings.
- Accessible basin and toilet facilities.
- Space for recreational activities.

4.5.1.3. Sleeping space (2.4.1.3.)

- Sleeping space must be provided on the first floor of the home for a child unable to use stairs unassisted, other than a child who can easily be carried.

- Multiple children sharing a bedroom must each have adequate space including closet and storage space. Bedrooms must have adequate square footage for each child to have personal space.
- Children over the age of two (2) years must not share a bed.
- Children over the age of two (2) must not share a bedroom with an adult unless the LDSS approves a plan to allow the child to sleep in the adult's bedroom due to documented needs, disabilities, or other specified conditions.
- Children of any age must not share a bed with an adult.
- Children of the opposite sex over the age of three (3) must not sleep in the same room.
- Children under age seven (7) or children with significant and documented cognitive or physical disabilities must not use the top bunk of bunk beds.

4.5.1.4. Phone access (2.4.1.4.)

The *resource parent* and children must have access to a working phone in the home. This may be a cell phone; *however, if the resource parent does not wish for others to have access to their cell phone, an additional working phone must be available. The optional Phone Requirement form may be utilized to assist the resource parent in deciding which option will work best.*

4.5.1.5. Home safety requirements (2.4.1.5.)

4.5.1.5.1. Emergency Preparedness plan (2.4.1.5.1.)

Resource parents need to develop Emergency Plans, that help protect their families and also provide communication information for use in emergency situations. State regulation 22 VAC 40 21170 requires a plan that includes, but is not limited to fire and natural disasters. It also requires the plan to include:

- How the *resource parent* plans to maintain the safety and meet the needs of the child in their home during a disaster.
- How the *resource parent* will evacuate the home, if necessary, during a disaster.
- How the *resource parent* will relocate in the event of a large-scale evacuation.

- The requirement to notify the LDSS of where they are relocating and contact information in the event of evacuation.

The LDSS FSS should encourage the *resource parent* to review the appropriate sections of the Emergency Plans form with the children who are old enough to understand. The Emergency Plans form should be posted in a location that is accessible to the children.

Suggestions for information the *resource parents* should include in the plan are:

- The phone number of the LDSS.
- The phone number of a close neighbor or relative who could come to the home quickly.
- Plans for having emergency food, water, and batteries for flashlights and radios.
- The location and contact information for friends or relatives they may go to in an emergency or evacuation.

The LDSS will keep a copy of all sections of this plan in the *resource parent*'s file.

4.5.1.5.2. Fire Safety (2.4.1.5.2.)

The *resource parent* must permit a fire inspection of the home by appropriate authorities if conditions indicate a need and/or the LDSS requests such an inspection.

- Every home must have an operable smoke detector, the specific requirements of which must be coordinated through the local fire marshal. If a locality does not have a local fire marshal, the state fire marshal must be contacted.

4.5.1.5.3. Weapons (2.4.1.5.3.)

Possession of any weapons, including firearms, in the home must comply with federal and state laws and local ordinances. The *resource parent* must store any firearms and other weapons (e.g., BB guns, air guns, etc.) in a locked closet or cabinet, with the activated safety mechanisms. Ammunition must be stored in a separate and locked area. The key or combination to the locked closet or cabinet must be maintained out of the reach of all children in the home.

4.5.1.5.4. Pets (2.4.1.5.4.)

Resource parents must ensure that household pets are not a health or safety hazard in accordance with state laws and local ordinances, and the LDSS must request verification of *resource parent* compliance.

Pets must be vaccinated in accordance with state and federal law against diseases that can transmit to humans, including rabies.

4.5.1.5.5. Other (2.4.1.5.5.)

- The home and grounds must be free from litter and debris and present no hazard to the safety of the child receiving care.
- *Resource parents* must keep cleaning supplies and other toxic substances stored away from food and locked, as appropriate. Medications must be out of reach of children and locked as appropriate. Medications must be stored separately from food, except those medicines that require refrigeration.
- Every home must contain basic first aid supplies.
- Drinking water is always available to children.
- *Homes with swimming pools, hot tubs, or spas should follow the safety guidelines outlined in the optional Water Safety Agreement form.*
- The LDSS may require other safety-related checks or verifications as deemed necessary (e.g., well water tests, electrical safety, home structure stability).

4.5.2. Mutual Family Assessment (2.5.4.1.)

A Mutual Family Assessment is a process that includes both a study of the physical home as well as the prospective *resource parent*. It is mutual in that while the LDSS maintains final authority on the decision to approve or not approve, the assessment is done with families rather than to families. Prospective *resource parents* are empowered to assess themselves as *prospective resource parents* and to determine if the role of *resource parent* is right for them. A thorough assessment integrates pre-service training topics into the home visits to maximize opportunities for developing and documenting a family's competence in meeting the *unique* needs of children in care.

Training, *interviews,* and home visits are primary sources for assessment, while also drawing information from sources such as references, background checks, etc.

Each prospective *resource parent* must be encouraged to participate in an open and honest assessment of their strengths in fostering or adopting, as well as their needs for support. Their strengths and needs must be utilized in making a match with the needs of a specific child to be placed.

As a result of this process, the final decision to approve the *resource parents* must reflect the family's perceived ability and willingness to foster *and/*or adopt as well as the LDSS's assessment of the family.

4.5.2.1. Purpose of the Mutual Family Assessment (2.5.4.1.1.)

As part of the approval process, the LDSS must conduct a family assessment. This family assessment must address all elements required by guidance and signed and dated by the individual completing the assessment and the director of the LDSS or their designee. The information contained in the Mutual Family Assessment must consist of demographic information including:

- Age of *prospective resource parent*
- Marital status and history
- Family composition and history
- List of LDSS individuals involved in completing the assessment process and their roles.
- Information indicating that the *resource parent* has been given and understands the standards for sleeping space and maintaining a safe environment as listed in Resource Family Guidance Section 4.5.1.

4.5.2.2. Assessing the *prospective resource parent*'s knowledge, abilities, attitudes, relationships, and capacity to foster (2.5.4.1.2.)

Narrative documentation must include information from the interviews, references, observations, and other available information, and must be used to assess and document the *prospective resource parent*'s skills to foster and/or adopt. Decisions to approve may also be based on information gained through discussions, recommendations, etc. and should assess that the *prospective resource parent*:

- Is knowledgeable about the necessary care for children and is physically and mentally capable of providing the necessary care for children.

- Can articulate a reasonable process for managing emergencies and ensuring the adequate care, safety, and protection of children.
- Expresses attitudes that demonstrate the capacity to love and nurture a child born to someone else.
- *Understands their role as a resource parent and is aware of how to parent children with loss and trauma.*
- Values children's families and other significant relationships.
- Expresses appropriate motivation to foster or adopt.
- Shows stability in all household relationships.
- Has the financial resource to provide for current and ongoing household needs.

4.5.2.3. Making the most of interviews (2.5.4.1.3.)

- Connect visits to the *resource parent's* pre-service training, to allow for give and take of information that helps inform mutual decision-making.
- Approach visits from the perspective that assessment is truly mutual—just as the LDSS must assess the family's ability to support children and families, so should the family assess the LDSS's ability to support them in this endeavor.
- Observe interactions among household members, looking for the strengths and/or challenges individuals have in sustaining their current family relationships.
- Have conversations with all family members in the home, focusing on how fostering/adopting will impact the current family system.
- Carefully and thoroughly examine the family's expectations of children in foster care, and how realistic these are.
- Use opportunities to stress the importance of maintaining children's connections, and explore *prospective resource parent's* attitudes, skills, and willingness to support these connections.

4.5.2.3.1. On-going Resource Parent Training expectation (2.5.4.1.3.1.)

The LDSS FSS also explains training requirements and the concept of competencies necessary for foster and adoptive parenting. *Resource parents benefit from on-going development through support and in-service training to address gaps in their understanding and their abilities to meet the needs of children placed with them. During the approval process, the LDSS should encourage prospective resource parents to be active participants in their own development. See Resource Family Guidance Section 5 for more information on supporting resource families.*

4.5.2.3.2. Changes in the household (2.5.4.1.3.2.)

A Change in Circumstances addendum should be completed when there are changes in the household, which include: a change in address, household members leaving the home, additional household members in the home, minor household members turning 18 and requiring background checks, changes in marital status for the resource parent, or any other significant changes in health or finances. The LDSS should inform the resource parents which changes in circumstances require addendums to maintain compliance in approval. See Resource Family Guidance Section 4.5.6.

4.5.2.4. Supporting documentation (2.5.4.1.4.)

4.5.2.4.1. Resource Parent application (2.5.4.1.4.1.)

Upon receipt of a completed *resource parent* application, the LDSS is responsible for ensuring the initiation of the approval process. The Application For Department-Approved Provider form must be used by all individuals who are requesting to become LDSS-approved *resource parents*. The form provides basic information needed to begin the process of approval and eliminates obtaining such information during the interviews.

4.5.2.4.2. References (2.5.4.1.4.2.)

The LDSS must obtain at least three (3) references from persons who have knowledge of each *prospective resource parent's* character and applicable experience with children and caregiving of others. At least one (1) reference per person must be from a non-relative. If a single reference addresses the skills and abilities of both *prospective resource parents*, it may count as one of the three references for each. The state

approved Reference Request form is acceptable as reference documentation as well as references conducted via telephone and documented in the file. *Consider using a similar reference process for adult children who do not live in the home regarding their experience with their parents as caregivers.*

4.5.2.4.3. Physical exams (2.5.4.1.4.3.)

The *prospective resource parent* and other adult caregivers residing in the home must submit the results of a physical examination, conducted by a licensed health care professional, administered within *13* months prior to the *prospective resource parent's* approval. These results must include comments regarding the person's mental and/or physical condition or abilities, such as they relate to caring for a child in the foster care system. A Physical Examination Form is available for use.

All household members who come in contact with the child must submit to a tuberculosis screening and/or test, in compliance with current VDH requirements. For most individuals, a TB risk assessment should be sufficient. Information regarding the TB risk assessment form is found on the Virginia Department of Health website. If risk factors or TB symptoms are present, a TB test may be required. The Center on Disease Control offers more information on Testing for Tuberculosis Infection and Disease.

4.5.2.4.5. Prior experience

The LDSS FSS must confirm if a *prospective resource parent* previously applied to, or was approved, denied, and or closed by any other LDSS or licensed child-placing agency through the Application for Department Approved Provider and Child Welfare Information System. The LDSS must have the *prospective resource parent* sign a request to release information for the other agency to obtain information about previous applications and performance and must use that information in considering approval of the *prospective resource parent*.

4.5.2.4.7. Verification of marriage and divorce (2.5.4.1.4.5.)

During a meeting with the *prospective resource parent*, the FSS must visually verify all documents that give proof of the *prospective resource parent* marriage(s) or divorce(s). This requirement is documented on the Checklist for Initial Provider Approval.

4.5.2.4.8. Federal W-9 (2.5.4.1.4.6.)

The LDSS should obtain a W-9 from the resource parent prior to or immediately upon placement to ensure that the monthly maintenance and/or enhanced maintenance payment can start as soon as possible.

4.5.2.4.9. Financial/employment history (2.5.4.1.4.7.)

4.5.2.4.9.1. Income verification (2.5.4.1.4.7.1.)

The LDSS FSS must verify the *prospective resource parent* has income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household. Requesting credit checks may have an adverse effect on the *prospective resource parent's* credit history and are discouraged. *Prospective resource parents* are not required to be employed so long as there is sufficient income to meet the needs of the family. Where there is no employment, LDSS should carefully examine the source and reliability of any other income or resources in establishing whether there is sufficient income to meet the needs of the family. Financial or employment history information that may be used to assess income sufficiency may include:

- Recent pay stubs.
- Tax documents (e.g., W-2s).
- Verification of any assistance received (SSI, food stamps, public assistance, etc.).
- Utility bills (with payment history).
- Deployment information (military).
- Rental lease, public housing agreement, or mortgage statement.
- Bank statements.

4.5.2.4.9.2. Assets and resources (2.5.4.1.4.7.2.)

Assets and resources include any other sources of income (e.g., real estate), estate holdings, monetary gifts or bonuses, or any public assistance. There is no general restriction on the receipt of public assistance for resource families.

Income requirements should be documented on the Provider Approval Budget. Income requirements are not applicable to *prospective resource parents* who are approved solely as respite *resource parents*.

4.5.2.4.9.3. Debts and obligations (2.5.4.1.4.7.3.)

Debts may include aggregate amounts owed to credit cards, student loans, car leases/loans, etc., as well as individual amounts owed for home/rental, home maintenance.

4.5.2.4.10. Agreements (2.5.1.1.)

The LDSS FSS must discuss the following mandatory agreements with the *prospective resource parent*:

- Discipline Agreement
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Foster Parent Bill of Rights
- Foster Care Agreement: Code of Ethics and Mutual Responsibility (for discussion purposes only *at time of approval*)
- Adoptive Placement Agreement (for discussion purposes only *at time of approval*)

The content of these documents is reviewed, and prior to the *prospective resource parent's* approval, they must agree to abide by the values and requirements as specified in these agreements. All *prospective resource parents* sign the Discipline and Confidentiality Agreements and the Foster Parent Bill of Rights. The Foster Home Agreement: Code of Ethics and Mutual Responsibilities must be signed upon the placement of a child in the home. The Adoptive Placement Agreement is signed only upon the placement of a child in the home for the purpose of adoption.

The following agreements must be discussed with and, when noted, signed by the *prospective resource parent* during the interview process.

4.5.2.4.10.1. Confidentiality Agreement (2.5.1.1.1.)

The LDSS must have the *prospective resource parent and any other adult caregivers in the home* sign a Confidentiality Agreement. The

LDSS FSS must discuss confidentiality requirements with the *prospective resource parent* and ensure *they* understand the need to keep confidential all information regarding the child, their family, and the circumstances that resulted in the child coming into care. A copy of the signed agreement must be provided to the *prospective resource parent*.

4.5.2.4.10.2. Discipline Agreement (2.5.1.1.2.)

The LDSS must have the *prospective resource parent and any other adult caregivers in the home* sign a Discipline Agreement. This provides an opportunity to discuss the *prospective resource parent's* approach to discipline and attitude towards, and beliefs about, the use of corporal punishment with children. The LDSS must clearly communicate that no form of corporal punishment as defined in Resource Family Guidance Section 1.3 may be used for any reason. The range of possible actions the LDSS may take as a result of the use of corporal punishment (e.g., additional training on discipline; anger management for the *prospective resource parent*; suspension of the approval of the home; removal of the child from the home) must also be discussed.

4.5.2.4.10.3. Foster Parent Bill of Rights and Dispute Process (2.5.1.1.3.)

The purpose of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights, as authorized by Virginia Code § 63.2-902 and established pursuant to Virginia Administrative Code 22VAC40-211, is to ensure collaboration, communication, access and transparency between LDSS, licensed child placing agencies (LCPA) and *resource* parents. LDSS must share the Foster Parent Bill of Rights with all approved *resource* parents and maintain a signed copy in the *resource parent* file.

Resource parents have a right to file a complaint regarding alleged violations of collaboration, communication, access, and transparency between the local boards and LCPAs and the *resource* parents.

Prior to filing a formal complaint, the *resource* parent must contact the FSS assigned to the resource family and provide a description of the alleged violation. For LDSS-approved homes, this would be the Resource FSS assigned to the home. For LCPA approved homes, this would be the Foster Care FSS for the child in foster care. The FSS shall respond within five business days and explain any

corrective action to be taken in response to the *resource* parent's complaint. If the *resource* parent and FSS are unable to informally resolve the complaint, the *resource* parent may file a written complaint through the dispute resolution process with the foster care supervisor or designee. The supervisor shall respond to the complaint within five business days with the findings regarding the alleged violation and any correction action that will be taken.

If the *resource* parent disagrees with the supervisor's response, the *resource* parent may appeal the resolution to the local director by filing a written notice of appeal. The appeal shall include a description of the alleged violation, and a copy of the foster care supervisor's report. The director shall hold a meeting with all the parties within seven business days to determine the validity of the alleged violation and the appropriateness of the response from the FSS and supervisor. A summary of the meeting shall be documented by the FSS after approval by the foster care supervisor. The director shall issue written documentation of findings to all parties, and when applicable, recommendations for corrective actions.

This dispute resolution process does not apply to a complaint related to the denial or failure of an LDSS to act upon an individual's claim for benefits. Complaints related to a claim for benefits shall be appealable pursuant to federal law (42 USC § 671(a)(12))and state law (22VAC40-201-115).

Resource Parents may call 833-TELL 2FC (833-835-5232) to reach the Virginia Division of Family Services for disputes at any point in the dispute process. As per § 2.2-445, *resource* parents must also be notified and directed to the website for the Office of the Children's Ombudsman.

4.5.2.4.10.4. Foster Care Agreement/Adoptive Placement Agreement (2.5.1.1.4.)

The Foster Care Agreement: Code of Ethics and Mutual Responsibilities Form is required to be signed whenever a child is placed in a *resource parent*'s home except when the placement is solely for the purpose of adoption. *The Adoptive Placement Agreement is not signed during the resource parent approval process but should be reviewed with the resource parent if the purpose of the placement is adoption.*

4.5.3. Approval

4.5.3.1. The decision to approve or deny (2.3.2.)

When discussing approval with a resource parent as part of the mutual decision process, the LDSS should consider the resource parent's motivation, capacity, parenting skills and ability to meet the core competencies and whether those could be better developed to meet the needs of children in their care. The LDSS should address concerns directly with the resource parent and offer resources to support them in developing their ability to meet the needs of the children. The decision is mutual in that while the LDSS maintains final authority on the decision to approve or not approve, the prospective resource family will decide if they are able and willing to be a resource for children in care. If at any point in the process, the decision is made either by the LDSS or family to discontinue the process *or deny approval*, see Resource Family guidance Section 4.5.

Except when children are placed with kinship *resource* parents, *prospective resource parents* must meet all standards as established by the regulation and be approved by the LDSS prior to placement of a child in the home. Approval may be achieved by the *prospective resource parent* meeting all standards or by meeting most standards and having a waiver granted for one or more standards.

4.5.3.2. Documenting approval (2.5.2.)

4.5.3.2.1. Format of approval narrative

The LDSS must document the Mutual Family Assessment process through a narrative report that addresses specific information obtained during the approval process. The minimum required areas to be contained in the narrative are outlined in the preferred template discussed below.

The Mutual Family Assessment Report is the preferred format for use in approving *prospective resource parents*. LDSS that choose to use another format for their narrative report must clearly address each of the categories in the preferred template.

4.5.3.2.2. Checklist for Initial Provider Approval (2.5.2.2.)

Not all information obtained during an assessment needs to be written into the narrative report. LDSS are required to complete the Checklist for Initial Provider Approval.

Once completed, this form, attached to the completed narrative report, constitutes the completed Mutual Family Assessment Report.

Upon initial approval of resource parents, the LDSS should upload the Checklist for Initial Provider Approval into COMPASS. The Certificate of Approval and the remainder of all other elements of the approval process should be uploaded to COMPASS upon completion.

4.5.3.3.3. Certificate of Approval (2.5.2.1.)

Certificates of Approval are issued for periods of 36 months and are valid for 36 months or until the background check expires (36 months from the day of clearance), whichever occurs first. *Keep track of approval date to ensure that for those resource parents being re-approved, their checks are reissued in a timely manner and their COA does not lapse.*

To approve a *resource* parent, all elements of approval must be met. See *Section 2: Kinship, which outlines all elements of kinship resource parent approval.* The effective date of the certificate of approval for *non-relative resource* parents is the date the Mutual Family Assessment is signed by the supervisor. The results of background checks indicating eligibility for all adult household members must be obtained prior to signing a Certificate of Approval. The date of approval must be documented on the Certificate of Approval. A copy of the Certificate must be maintained in the *resource parent*'s file.

Only individuals or married couples may be *identified on the COA as resource parents*. See Resource Family guidance 4.1.3.

4.5.3.3.4. Notification to the Resource Parent (2.5.2.3.)

Once approved, *resource parents* are to be given a Certificate of Approval specifying the following:

- Type of approval (dually-approved as a resource *parent* or respite *resource parent*).
- Date when the approval became effective and the date when the approval will end.
  - The effective date cannot be any earlier than the date on which any of the items required to approve the *resource family* was received
  - The approval period cannot exceed 36 months. (Example, March 30, 2023- March 30, 2026)
- Specifications or limitations of the approval (e.g., number/*gender/ages* of children).

- The signature, *date* and title of the individual approving the home and the supervisor's signature, *date,* and title.

NOTE: A Certificate of Approval cannot be issued unless all required documents are received. A copy of the Certificate must be filed with the *prospective resource parent's file*.

If at any point in the process, the decision is made either by the LDSS or family to discontinue the process *or deny approval*, , the LDSS must notify the *prospective resource parent* in writing as to the reason why the approval process was stopped. See Resource Family guidance Section 4.5.

4.5.4. Resource Parent File (2.5.5.)

4.5.4.1. Establishing a Resource Parent file (2.5.5.1.)

A *resource parent* file should be established at the time a formal application is received. The application should be on VDSS-approved forms Application for Department Approved Provider; alternatively, other forms/letterhead may be used if all required components are addressed.

Although the Child Welfare Information System is the official case *file*, all forms, letters, and other original hard copy documents (as referenced in this guidance) must be retained in the paper *resource parent* file. The Checklist for Initial Provider Approval can help organize the file.

4.5.4.2. Child Welfare Information System record (2.5.5.2.)

The Resource Section of Child Welfare Information System is the electronic file that captures information on *resource parents* and other resources. Information on the household applying to be a *resource parent* should be updated in the Child Welfare Information System as the *resource* family assessment and approval process moves forward.

It is important to search the Child Welfare Information System Resource Directory prior to opening a new record in Child Welfare Information System to prevent duplication. The Child Welfare Information System Help section has several topics such as "Search for a Resource" and "Open a New Resource" which aid when completing the screens. *LDSS are responsible for entering homes (LDSS Home, LCPA Homes, ICPC Homes, etc.) and VDSS is responsible for entering all other Resources Categories/Types. If a VDSS-entered resource is needed, but it is not in the Child Welfare Information System, a VCCC ticket must be submitted by contacting VCCC at (866) 637-*

8482 or email vccc@vita.virginia.gov for additional assistance in entering resource homes into Child Welfare Information System.

4.5.4.3. Maintenance of the file (2.5.5.3.)

Any changes in the *resource* family that require new documents (e.g., criminal background search for a new adult in the home) or re-approval documents must be retained in the paper file and information updated in the Child Welfare Information System as needed.

Resource family files may be disposed of in a way that protects confidential information so long as five years have elapsed since the file was closed.

4.5.5. Maintaining Approval (2.5.6.)

4.5.5.1. Standards of care for continued approval (2.5.6.1.)

LDSS are required to engage in ongoing discussion with and supervision of *resource parents*. The "Standards of Care for Continued Approval" as described below are first discussed during the assessment to ensure *resource parents* are knowledgeable of what is expected of them once a child is placed in their home. The "Standards" should be part of the ongoing dialogue with *resource parents*. FSS should discuss and monitor how the *resource parent* meets these standards. Several of the "Standards" noted below also require the LDSS FSS to document compliance on the Checklist for Family Re-Approval.

- The *resource parent* must provide care that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or family status.

- The *resource parent* must ensure the child receives meals and snacks appropriate to their daily nutritional needs. The child must receive a special diet if prescribed by a licensed health care provider, or designee, or in accordance with religious or ethnic requirements or other special needs.

- The *resource parent* must ensure that they can be responsive to the mental health or medical needs of the child.

- The *resource parent* must establish rules that encourage desired behavior and discourage undesired behavior. The *resource parent* must not use corporal punishment or give permission to others to do so and must sign an agreement to this effect.

- The *resource parent* must provide clean and seasonal clothing appropriate for the age and size of the child.

- If a *resource parent* transports the child, the *resource parent* must have a valid driver's license and automobile liability insurance. These will be checked at approval and re-approval, but verification may be required at any time deemed necessary.

- The vehicle used to transport the child must have a valid registration and inspection sticker.

- *Resource parents* and any other adults who transport children must use functioning child-restraint devices in accordance with requirements of Virginia law. See Section 10.6.1.2 of the Foster Care Manual and the following link for additional information. Virginia's Child Passenger Safety Laws

4.5.5.2. Monitoring Efforts (2.5.6.2.)

LDSS are required to monitor *resource parents* as follows:

If monitoring efforts indicate that significant changes in the household composition or circumstances of the *resource parent* have occurred and would impact the conditions of approval, a *Change in Circumstance Addendum* must be completed and included with the Mutual Family Assessment and appropriate action taken. Such action may include a plan to correct any deficits noted, suspension of the *resource parent's* approval, or revocation of the *resource parent's* approval. *See Resource Family Guidance Section 5. for support and resource family development.*

4.5.5.2.1. Required Visits

The FSS must visit the home of the approved *resource parent* as often as necessary, but at least quarterly, to provide support to and monitor the performance of the *resource parent* and must document these visits in the *resource parent file*.

- When a child is placed in the home, these visits may coincide with the monthly visits to the child and be completed by the same LDSS FSS.

- If there is no child placed in the home, the quarterly visit may be replaced by phone contact.

4.5.6. Addendums (2.5.7.)

Addendums are used to update the original Mutual Family Assessment and to ensure that the resource family approval maintains compliance with approval requirements. Changes in circumstances that necessitate an addendum are documented on the Changes of Circumstances Addendum form and are listed below. All necessary addendums to the Mutual Family Assessment should be documented in the resource parent file and updated in the Child Welfare Information System.

4.5.6.1. When an Addendum is needed (2.5.7.1.)

Resource parents should inform the LDSS as soon as possible but no later than 45 days **before** a significant change occurs in the household composition or circumstances, including but not limited to:

- A child turning 18 years of age
- A new child or adult entering the household
- A household member leaving the household
- A change in marital status of a *resource parent*
- A change of address (a move)
- A substantial change to the residence (such as *a tree falling on the house or a remodel that impacts stability or functioning of the household*)
- Any changes that may impact the health or safety of a child placed in the home such as recent arrests or pending charges of a *resource parent* or adult household member.
- Any significant change or decline in a *resource parent's* physical or mental health which directly impacts the *resource parent's* ability to care for a child in foster care should be reported immediately but no later than seven (7) days from the time of occurrence.
- A child is being adopted and an Adoption Supplement is necessary. See Adoption Guidance, section 3.4.4 for details when completing an Adoption Supplement.

4.5.6.1.1. Background Checks for New Adult Household Members (2.5.7.1.1.)

For any new adult entering the home, background checks must be conducted, consisting of a national criminal background check *which*

includes a search of the Sex Offender Registry, and a CPS Central Registry search. The Registry may be accessed on the Virginia State Police website. If the new adult in the home has resided in another state within the previous five (5) years, they must also have a CPS Central Registry search run in those states in which they resided. If the adult will be transporting the child, a DMV check is required.

In instances where it is not reasonable to complete all the background checks prior to the new adult entering the household, **at minimum**, a written *Sworn* statement or affirmation disclosing any criminal and child abuse and neglect history in Virginia and any other state of residence within the past five (5) years, satisfactory findings on a Central Registry search, and a Virginia criminal name check must be completed.

The new household member must schedule themselves for fingerprinting and the LDSS must submit to a Search of the Central Registry and Release of Information Form, to the State Office of Background Investigations for processing **within 3 days**.

Within **60** days of a person in the home becoming 18 years old, the results of background checks must be obtained by the local department, consisting of a national criminal background check *which includes* a search of the Sex Offender Registry, and a CPS Central Registry search. A written Sworn Statement or affirmation disclosing any criminal and child abuse and neglect history in Virginia and any other state of residence within the past **five (5)** years must be completed when the individual becomes 18. If the 18-year-old will be transporting the child, a DMV check is required.

Any individual participating in the Fostering Futures program, which allows LDSS to continue to provide foster care services to individuals who are 18 years of age or older but have not reached 21 years of age, who is placed *with* a *resource family* must be subject to the background check requirements. The results of such background check must be used for the sole purpose of determining whether other children should be placed or remain *with* the same *resource family* as the individual subject to the background check. The results of the background check must not be used to terminate or suspend the approval of the *resource family*.

4.6. Re-approval (2.5.7.2.)

The approval period for a *resource parent* is 36 months. Re-approvals are due **no later than three (3) years** from the begin date of the previous certificate of approval. *To ensure the COA does not expire while a child is placed with a resource family, the LDSS should start*

the re-approval process, including the initiation of new background checks, at least 90 days but no more than 120 days prior to the background checks expiring. Revisit Resource Family Guidance, Section 4.5.5.1. for Standards of care for continued approval. Suggested steps in this process are available on FUSION.

4.6.1. Checklist for Re-approval (2.5.7.2.1.)

LDSS are required to complete the Checklist for Family Re-approval. The LDSS should upload the completed checklist in addition to the updated Certificate of Approval and Physical Home Environment Checklist to COMPASS and place copies in the resource parent file. Once completed, these forms and the completed re-approval addendum constitute the complete re-approval package.

4.6.2 Interview Requirements (2.5.7.3.)

During the re-approval process, the LDSS FSS must conduct a minimum of one (1) interview with the *resource parent* in their home. FSS are to use the visit to conduct a review and update the Mutual Family Assessment. *The FSS should assess the resource parent's willingness and ability to continue to meet the needs of children in care, develop their skill set, and expand their fostering profile to better meet the local need for resource families.*

The LDSS FSS must conduct a review of the previous home approval information with the *resource parents*. By reviewing the information with the *resource parent*, the FSS and *resource parent* can identify and discuss any changes in the *resource parent's* situation that may affect the approval of the home, such as the number and *needs* of children for which the *resource parent* will be approved.

4.6.2.1 Written Addendum (2.5.7.3.1.)

The LDSS FSS must update the Mutual Family Assessment through a written Re-approval Addendum, documenting the decision to re-approve the *resource parent*. The addendum includes any new information the FSS has obtained and considered in deciding to re-approve the *resource parent*: (i.e., new additions to the household, changes to the home, changes in marital status, or updates to capacity). The Re-approval Addendum to the Mutual Family Assessment must indicate that the *below* requirements were met. When applicable, any *supporting documents* received during the re-approval process (e.g., TB screening, training verification) are to be included in the *resource parent's* file.

This narrative must address all requirements for re-approval as outlined in this guidance and contain documentation from interviews and submitted forms and must be signed and dated by the FSS completing the addendum and the director of the LDSS or their designee.

4.6.2.2. Addendum Supporting Documentation (2.5.7.4.)

4.6.2.2.1. Background checks (2.5.7.4.1.)

All adults in the home should already have had a national criminal background check completed and reflected on the Checklist for Initial Provider Approval. For re-approval**,** a Virginia criminal name check and CPS Central Registry search are required. Completed background checks must be dated within the 36 months since the date of the most recent central registry finding and the most recent criminal *background* check report. *A national criminal background check with fingerprinting must be completed if prior criminal checks expired. Background checks dates need to be dated within 120 days of the Certificate of Approval start date. A national criminal background check with fingerprinting must be completed if prior criminal checks expired or the Certificate of Approval (COA) lapses.* A sworn statement or affirmation does not expire and does not need to be completed at re-approval.

4.6.2.2.2. Transportation (2.5.7.4.2.)

The *resource parent* and other adults expected to transport children must show evidence of a valid driver's license, a valid motor vehicle inspection, and proof of automobile insurance. *DMV background checks must also be completed with every approval and re-approval.*

4.6.2.2.3. Agreements (2.5.7.4.3.)

LDSS must review and complete new the Confidentiality and the Discipline Agreements. A copy of the forms must be given to the *resource parent*.

4.6.2.2.4. Physical Home Environment Checklist (2.5.7.4.4.)

As part of the re-approval process, the LDSS should conduct a walkthrough of the home and complete the corresponding Physical Home Environment Checklist.

4.6.2.2.5. TB Risk Assessments (2.5.7.4.5.)

All household members must obtain and provide to the LDSS the results of a new TB Risk Assessment or TB Screening form as documentation of the absence of tuberculosis in a communicable form.

4.6.2.2.6. In-service training (2.5.7.4.6.)

All in-service training must be documented in the *resource parent's* file, as well as any additional training that is needed.

4.6.2.3. Subsequent Certificate of Approvals (2.5.7.5.)

In addition to the new Certificate of Approval (COA) that is needed at re-approval, an updated COA should be issued when there are changes to any of the information that is listed on the COA such as:

- *A change in residence*
- *A change in legal name of the resource parent*
- *A change in marital status of the resource parent*

The COA should be updated to reflect the change in information, but the dates of approval should remain the same.

2.5.7.5.1. Lapses in Certificate of Approvals and/or Background Checks (4.6.2.3.1)

Anytime background checks expire or a Certificate of Approval (COA) lapses, fingerprints must be completed and a new COA issued. In these situations, a Virginia State Police name search is insufficient.

When a new COA is needed due to expired background checks or a lapse in background checks, a new re-approval checklist must be completed and all elements on the checklist must be current before the COA can be issued. This includes ensuring that the TB test was completed within 12 months of the new COA.

Example 1: Initial fingerprints were received on May 6th, 2021. These fingerprints are valid for 36 months, which means they will expire on May 6th, 2024. If the agency responsible for the home does not conduct a name search for reapproval until May 25th, 2024, then the home is out of compliance. As a result, it is necessary to conduct fingerprint searches before issuing the re-approval COA and using IV-E funds.

Example 2: The COA was initially issued on May 20, 2021, with an expiration date of May 20, 2024. If the agency completes the reapproval process on June 5, 2024, fingerprint searches must be completed due to the COA expiring prior to the reapproval being completed. A fingerprint search for all adult household members must be completed within 120 days of the reapproval COA. In this situation, a name search

is no longer sufficient, even if it was conducted before the fingerprints expired, as the COA has now lapsed.

4.6.2.4. Notification of Resource Parent (2.5.7.6.)

If the *resource parent* is re-approved, they are to be provided with a new Certificate of Approval specifying the following:

- Type of approval (dual or respite).
- Date when the approval became effective and the date when the approval expires.

  The effective date of the re-approval certificate should be no later than the expiration date of the previous certificate. The home is not eligible for re-approval if all required documents are not received by the end date of the previous certificate of approval.

- The signature, *date,* and title of the FSS approving the home and the supervisor.

If the re-approval process results in the LDSS's denial of the approval, the LDSS must notify the *resource parent* in writing of its decision. A copy of the letter must be filed in the *resource parent's* file.

4.7. Suspending or revoking Resource Parent approval (2.6.)

Actions by the *resource parent* or changes in the *resource parent's* situation may require the LDSS to take action that results in the suspension or revocation of a *resource parent's* approval. *Resource parents* who do not maintain compliance with the standards of approval as outlined in this guidance must have their approval either temporarily suspended or completely revoked. If the re-approval process results in the LDSS's decision to suspend or revoke the *resource parent's* approval, the LDSS must notify the *resource parent* in writing of its decision. A copy of the notification letter must be placed in the *resource parent's* file.

Frequent contact with the *resource parent* and visits to the home by an LDSS FSS are the major mechanisms for determining maintenance of standards. If there are concerns regarding the *resource parent's* ability to maintain the safety and well-being of a child, the LDSS has the authority to change the placement.

4.7.1. Suspensions of Approvals (2.6.1.)

Suspensions may occur when a change in the circumstances of the *resource parent* results in the *resource parent's* temporary inability to meet standards (e.g., individuals living in the home with barrier crimes that would jeopardize the safety of

the child(ren); safety concerns regarding the physical structure of the home). The LDSS may suspend a *resource parent's* approval when the *resource parent* cannot temporarily maintain full approval through corrective measures, and all agree that a violation of the standards for approval can be resolved.

If a *resource parent* has received a founded disposition of child abuse or neglect after being granted approval, the LDSS must suspend the *resource parent's* approval. In situations where the founded disposition is under appeal, the *resource parent's* approval must be suspended until the appeal process is completed.

Suspensions mean the *resource parent* is no longer approved for the placement of children, and therefore, no child may reside in the home until the suspension is lifted. Reinstating approval requires resolution of the circumstances that caused the suspension and must be documented in the addendum to the *resource parent's* file. Any child placed with a *resource parent* at the time approval is suspended must be immediately removed. No other children may be placed with the *resource parent* during the period of suspension. A suspension does not change the approval period.

4.7.2. Revocation of Approvals (2.6.2.)

The LDSS may revoke a *resource parent's* approval when conditions in the home or actions of the *resource parent* are a threat to the safety, permanency, or well-being of a child placed in the home. The LDSS must revoke a *resource parent's* approval when:

- A *resource parent* has been convicted of a barrier crime as defined by Virginia Code.
- A *resource parent* does not comply with approval standards (unless a waiver has been obtained).
- A *resource parent* whose approval has been suspended does not correct the conditions that led to the suspension.

The LDSS may also revoke a *resource parent's* approval when other conditions result in the determination that the *resource parent* is not or cannot provide a safe, stable, and nurturing home for children. Decisions to revoke and the factors that lead to such a decision must be documented in the *resource parent's* file and discussed with the *resource parent*. A *resource parent* whose approval has been revoked and who subsequently wants to seek approval must submit a new application.

4.8. Respite Approval

4.8.1. Respite Approval Process

- **Dual Approval:** *Resource parents* with full, dual approval may also provide respite care except in cases of kinship *resource* parents who are dually-approved for specific children.

- **Respite Approval Only:** *Resource parents* approved for respite only must satisfy all requirements for dual approval except for:

  - Of the 21 pre-service training core competencies required for approved *resource parents*, only 13 specific core competencies are required for respite-only *resource parents* (see Section 4.2.2.).

  - Provision of financial information.

- **Re-approval of Respite *Resource Parents*:** LDSS should follow requirements for re-approval for respite *resource parents* as spelled out in Sections 4.5.4, 4.5.5. and 4.5.6.

- **In-service Training:** The LDSS must provide opportunities annually for in-service training *such as utilizing CRAFFT and Foster Parent College*. See In-service Training in Resource Family Guidance Section 5.

4.9. Right to Grieve

4.9.1. Allowable Grievances

See dispute process in Resource Family Guidance Section 4.5.2.4.10.3.

4.9.1.1. Approval grievances

For initial approval or re-approval, the *resource parent* must have the right to dispute the actions of the LDSS to the LDSS on issues related to become a *resource parent*. See dispute process in Resource Family Guidance Section 4.5.2.4.10.3.

4.9.1.2. Child placement grievances

Decisions on the placement of a specific child with a *resource parent* are not subject to grievance. The LDSS shall have the final authority to determine appropriate placement for children pursuant to § 16.1-278.2 of the Code of Virginia. Decisions regarding final adoptive placements are made by the circuit court pursuant to Chapter 12 (§ 63.2-1200 et seq.) of Title 63.2 of the Code of Virginia.