Date – July 1, 2022

Manual - Child and Family Services Manual, Chapter D, Local Department Resource, Foster and Adoptive Home Approval Guidance

Transmittal - # 303

The purpose of this transmittal is to provide new, revised, and clarified guidance for *Chapter D: Local Department Resource, Foster and Adoptive Home Approval Guidance* of the Child and Family Services Manual. Unless otherwise stated, the provisions included in this transmittal are effective in July 2022.

Changes to the manual incorporate new state laws as well as state regulations; clarify existing guidance; and enhance guidance on meeting the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of children in foster care. In addition to the changes outlined in the chart below, minor edits were made throughout to address grammatical issues, remove outdated terminology such as "Emergency Approvals", add gender neutral terminology and person-first terminology, update all hyperlinks, and remove old form numbers. This transmittal and manual are available on FUSION at:

https://fusion.dss.virginia.gov/dfs/DFS-Home/Resource-Family/Resource-Family-Guidance

https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dfs/fc/intro_page/guidance_manuals/other/Family_Recruitment_Manual_2021.pdf

Changes to the manual are as follows:

Section(s) Changed	Significant Changes	Reason for Change
Section 1.3 Definitions	This subsection was revised to clarify that "Sworn Statements" do not expire and to clarify that the two types of "Waivers" are Kinship Waivers and Non-safety Waivers.	These revisions were made to ensure that these definitions align with existing guidance.
Section 1.4 Requirements to approve a foster parent	This subsection was revised to clarify that relatives can be approved if they meet the Citizenship requirements outlined in 1.7.1.8.	This revision was necessary to clarify existing requirements and correct confusing language regarding whether individuals with undocumented status can be approved as foster parents.
Section 1.5 Placing children with kinship foster parents	This subsection was revised to include the new requirement that notice of the approval process must be provided to any relative or fictive kin within 15 calendar days of when they express an interest in becoming a kinship foster parent. The use of the	This change was prompted by House Bill (HB) 716 and Senate Bill (SB) 307 from the 2022 Session of the Virginia General Assembly. The Permanency Assessment Tool was added to assist with and document the relative assessment process.

	Permanency Assessment Tool with relatives was added.	
Section 1.5.1 Appeal of denial of kinship foster parent	This subsection was added to outline what the LDSS must do when a prospective kinship foster parent is denied approval. The subsequent subsections were renumbered due to the addition of the new subsection.	This change was prompted by HB 716 and SB 307 from the 2022 Session of the Virginia General Assembly.
Section 1.5.4 Waivers to allow for placement with kinship foster parents	This subsection was revised to remove the outdated Emergency Placement Information form, rename the Kinship Waiver form and add the Foster Parent Bill of Rights form.	This revision was necessary to align this chapter with current terminology and to clarify existing requirements.
Section 1.6.1 Sworn statement or affirmation	This subsection was revised to clarify that criminal background checks and Central Registry checks expire 36 months from the date of verification for all approvals occurring after 1/1/2020.	This revision was necessary clarification to enhance ease of understanding.
Section 1.6.4 Other adult household members	This subsection was revised to add the term "adult" to clarify that the required background checks are for adults only.	This revision was necessary to enhance ease of understanding.
Section 1.7.1.4 Conflict of interest	This subsection was revised to clarify how and when an individual employed by an LDSS or child-placing agency and their relatives may serve as a kinship, foster or adoptive parent.	This revision was necessary to better align this chapter of guidance with *Chapter E: Foster Care* of the Child and Family Services Manual (FC 6.17.2).
Section 1.7.1.5 Provider approval period	This subsection was revised to clarify the length of time that a Certificate of Approval is valid.	This subsection was revised to clarify existing requirements.
Section 1.7.1.7 Marital status	This subsection was revised to clarify that either one individual or a married couple may be approved as a provider.	This subsection was revised to clarify existing requirements.

Section 1.7.1.8 Citizenship	This subsection was revised to clarify citizenship criteria and incorporate the federal definition.	This revision was necessary to clarify existing requirements and correct confusing language regarding whether undocumented individuals can be approved as foster parents.
Section 1.7.5.2 Provider agreements	This subsection was revised to rename the "Corporal Punishment Agreement" the "Discipline Agreement" and add the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to the list of agreements that must be discussed with the provider.	The renaming of the document was a choice to align this chapter with current terminology and to add the Foster Parent Bill of Rights as an agreement that was prompted by Chapter 336 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly (HB 2108).
Section 1.7.7.5.1 Discipline agreement	This subsection was revised to rename the "Corporal Punishment Agreement" the "Discipline Agreement".	This revision was necessary to align this chapter with current terminology.
Section 1.7.7.5.4 Foster Parent Bill of Rights and Dispute Process	This subsection was added to include information about the Foster Parent Bill of Rights and the related dispute process, which ensures collaboration, communication, access and transparency between LDSS, licensed child-placing agencies, and foster parents. It also states LDSSs to direct foster parents to the website for the Office of the Children's Ombudsman.	This change was prompted by Chapter 336 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly (HB 2108). The dispute process had previously been published in Foster Care Guidance 17.11.1. This update is to align with that manual. The Office of the Children's Ombudsman notification addition was prompted by § 2.2-445
Section 1.14.2 Grievance procedure	This subsection was removed because the grievance procedure was replaced with the dispute process associated with the Foster Parent Bill of Rights.	This revision was necessary to align this chapter with current practice.
Section 1.15 Best Practice	This subsection was revised to outline the benefits of LDSS creating collaborative relationships with neighboring localities.	This change was is currently a recommended practice.

Questions about this transmittal should be directed to the Regional Family Engagement and Resource Family Consultants:

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