



Dual Licensure for Foster Homes And Family Day Care Homes

<u>Department Name</u> Quality Management		
<u>A. CHAPTER:</u> Foster Care	<u>B. SUBJECT:</u> Dual Licensure for Foster Homes and Family Day Care Homes	<u>POLICY NUMBER:</u> QM-003
<u>APPROVAL:</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE DATE:</u> 12/10/2004	<u>REPLACES:</u> Department of Children and Families policy memo June 25, 2003

I. **PURPOSE:** This policy has been developed to clarify the procedure for families who seek dual licenses for foster homes and family day care home so that the requirements of Florida Statutes 409.175, 402.313, 402.281 and applicable Florida Administrative Codes are met.

II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** Supercedes policy memos from the Department of Children and Families Child Care Services dated May 5, 2000, and June 25, 2003.

III. **CONTACT:** QM Specialist for foster care licensing.

IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** Foster parents who are licensed through the Children's Network of Southwest Florida, Children's Network of Southwest Florida staff and contracted providers.

V. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Children's Network of Southwest Florida to allow dual licensure for foster parents who provide family day care as long as all provisions of the relevant statutes and administrative rules are met at all times. The family may pursue a foster care license, and then request a family day care license. A licensed family day care home can apply to become a licensed foster parent. The Children's Network of Southwest Florida does not support a family pursuing both types of licensure simultaneously.

VI. **RATIONALE:** There is a need in the community for both foster parents and for licensed family day care homes. This procedure identifies the most stringent rules that will apply in order to ensure the safety and protection of all children in care.

VII. **CROSS REFERENCES:**

- A. Florida Statute 409.175
- B. Florida Statute 402.313
- C. Florida Administrative Code 65C-20
- D. Florida Administrative Code 65C-13

VIII. **DEFINITIONS:**

A. *Child* means any unmarried person under the age of 18 years.

B. *Family Foster Home* is defined in s. 409-175, F.S. as a private residence in which children who are unattended by a parent or legal guardian are provided 24-hour care and includes emergency shelter family homes.

C. *Child care* means the care, protection and supervision of a child, for a period of less than 24 hours a day on a regular basis.

IX. **PROCEDURES:**

A. Total Number of Children

1. The total number of children in the home for both foster care and family day care should not exceed five (5) children regardless of whether foster children are customarily in the home during child care hours or not unless a foster care waiver has been granted increasing the number of children in foster care allowed in the home, including the out of home caregiver's own biological or adoptive children or any other children residing in the home.

2. There must be no more than two (2) infants under twenty-four (24) months of age in the home, including the family's own birth children.

B. License renewal frequency

1. Licensed day care providers must be relicensed annually.

2. Foster parents are generally relicensed annually, possibly up to every three years in certain circumstances.

3. Training requirements as described in the Florida Administrative Codes must be completed annually.

C. Inspections

1. Families with dual licensure will receive joint inspections and complaint investigations by a representative from child care licensing and from the foster care licensing counselor. Inspections from each program will be in both the foster care and the day care licensing record for the family.

2. Dually licensed foster homes are subject at a minimum to bi-annual inspections. Additional follow-up inspections may be required.

D. Physical Environment

1. All areas and surfaces accessible to children shall be free of toxic substances and hazardous materials. These and knives, sharp tools and other potentially dangerous hazards shall be stored in locations inaccessible to children.

E. Play area and equipment

1. Play area must be clean, free of litter, glass and other hazards.
2. Outdoor space must be fenced, a minimum of 4 feet in height, if the home borders:
 - a. A laned road or street open to travel by the public;
 - b. A road or street open to travel by the public divided by a median;
 - c. Where the posted speed limit is more than 25 mph by municipal/county ordinance;
 - d. Or not posted but limited to 25 mph by municipal/county ordinance;
 - e. A lake, ditch, pond, brook, canal, or other water hazard.

F. Water Safety

1. One person in the home who has completed a water safety course such as one offered by the American Red Cross, YMCA or other organization, must be present when children have access to the swimming pool. All foster parents with water hazards must complete a water safety course.
2. Swimming pools and other water hazards must have a fence on all four sides of at least four feet which is locked to keep the water hazard inaccessible to children, except during the time water-related activities are being conducted as a program activity.
3. Hot tubs and spas shall be required to have a safety cover that is locked when not in use.
4. Swimming pools must be equipped with one of the following life saving devices:
 - a. Ring buoy
 - b. Rescue tube, or
 - c. Other appropriate flotation device with a rope attached which is sufficient length to cover the area.
5. Children who are not proficient in swimming shall not be allowed in the pool or pool area without wearing a Coast Guard approved life jacket or floating device, unless engaged in swimming lessons.
6. Direct adult supervision shall be required when children are using the swimming pool, spa or hot tub, or are in the pool area.
7. All high risk recreation, boating, water sports, or contact sports shall have direct adult supervision.

G. Sleeping arrangements

1. Children in foster care must have their own beds; infants their own cribs. When napping or sleeping, infants that are not capable of rolling over must be placed on their backs unless there is a doctor's statement in the child's file authorizing an alternative position.
2. Children in family day care must have safe, sanitary bedding in a designated area. Mats must be one inch thick and covered with an impermeable surface. There must be a minimum of 18 inches between

napping spaces. Mats, air mattresses or foam mattresses may not be used for overnight stays. No napping is allowed in kitchens, bathrooms, utility rooms or garages.

3. Children one year of age or older may sleep on the family's beds provided the children have bed linens of their own.
4. Two pre-school siblings in family day care may share a bed; children in foster care must have their own beds.
5. Children in family day care up to one year of age must be in their own crib, portacrib or playpen with sides. Playpens may not be used for overnight stays.
6. Family day care operators must provide written documentation of sleeping arrangements to parents, the Children's Network of Southwest Florida and the Department of Children and Families if they provide evening care.

H. Drinking water

1. The home must have a continuous supply of clean drinking water approved by the local health department. If disposable cups are used, they must be discarded after each use.

I. Medications and chemicals storage

1. All medications, poisonous chemicals, and cleaning materials must be in a locked place and inaccessible to children. They must be labeled.

J. Firearms

1. If the family owns a gun, the ammunition and unloaded firearm must be kept separately in locked cabinets.
2. The family must follow Florida Statute 790.174.

K. Pets, other animals and/or fowl must be immunized. The family must have a method to restrict children's access to large pets or potentially dangerous animals. Parents of children in family day care must be notified in writing if any animals are on the premises.

L. Emergencies

1. The family shall have a working corded telephone at all times.
2. For children in foster care, the family must follow the bilateral agreement. For children in family day care, the family must post emergency telephone numbers, including ambulance, fire, police, poison control center, Florida Abuse Hotline, county public health department, and the address of and directions to the home, must be posted on or near all telephones and shall be used to protect the health, safety and well-being of any child in care. Caretakers must call 911 or other emergency numbers in case of an emergency.
3. For children in family day care, the operators will notify the custodial parents or legal guardians immediately in the event of any serious illness,

accident, injury or emergency to their child and their specific instructions regarding action to be taken under such circumstances shall be obtained. If they cannot be reached, the day care operator will contact those persons designated by the custodial parent or legal guardian to be contacted under these circumstances, and shall follow the written instructions provided by the custodial parent or legal guardian.

4. All accidents, incidents, and observed health related signs and symptoms which occur at a family day care home must be documented and shared with the custodial parent or legal guardian on the day they occur. Documentation shall include the name of the affected party, date and time of occurrence, description of occurrences, actions taken, and signature of operator and custodial parent or legal guardian. Records of accidents, incidents, and observed health related signs and symptoms must be maintained for one year.

M. Fire safety

1. The home must be safe from fire hazards. The home must not be heated by unvented gas heaters.

2. The home must have an evacuation plan with exits clearly identified posted that has been discussed with everyone in the home.

3. Fire drills shall be conducted monthly and shall be conducted at various times when children are in care. A written record shall be maintained showing the date, time, number of children in attendance and time taken to evacuate the home. Records should be maintained at least six months and until the foster home relicensing is completed.

4. After a fire or natural disaster, the operator must notify the licensing agency, within 24 hours, in order for the Department of Children and Families to ensure health standards are met for continued operation as a family day care home.

N. Medications

1. For children in foster care, the parents must follow all requirements for medications which include proper storage, dispensing of medications, record keeping and notifications to the Children's Network Southwest Florida's case management organization of any drugs prescribed for the child and of any non-prescribed prescription drugs taken by the child. The foster parent must obtain emergency medical care if needed. Medications must be kept out of the reach of children.

2. For children in family day care, if the parent/operator chooses to administer medications, the following shall apply:

a. Prescription and non-prescription medication brought to the family day care home by the custodial parent or legal guardian must be in the original container.

b. Prescription medication must have the label stating the name of the physician, child's name, medication and medication directions. All prescription and non-prescription medication shall be dispensed according to written directions on the prescription label or printed manufacturer's label.

All bottles must have child-resistant caps.

c. Medications which have expired or are no longer being administered shall be returned to the custodial parent or legal guardian.

3. For children in family day care, the operator will keep a written record documenting the child's name, the name of the medication, date, time and amount of dosage to be given, and the signature of the custodial parent or legal guardian shall be maintained by the family child care provider. This record shall be initialed or signed by the adult who gave the medication. This record shall be maintained for six months.

O. CPR/First Aid Training

1. Prior to initial licensure, family day care home operators must have a valid certificate of course completion for infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation procedures and first aid training. The person providing care to the children in the family day care home must have a valid certificate of course completion for infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation procedures and first aid training. Certificates of course completion are valid based on the time frames established by each first aid and CPR program, not to exceed three years.

P. Smoking

1. If family members smoke tobacco products, they must inform the parents of children in the family day care.

2. There is no smoking within the home, in all outdoor play areas and in vehicles when transporting children.

Q. Food

1. Meals must be nutritionally balanced, meeting the USDA Food Pyramid guide. Snacks should be age-appropriate and breakfast must include at least three different food groups, lunch and dinner must have food from four food groups, while snacks should include two food groups. Notices of special diets and food allergies should be in writing in the child's file.

R. Pest control requires that all rodents and vermin shall be exterminated. Extermination shall not take place while children are in the room.

S. Lighting requirements are lighting at a minimum of 20 foot candles for supervision and entering and exiting.

T. The home must have proper ventilation and the temperature maintained between 65F and 82F.

U. Hygiene and sanitation

1. Operators, substitutes, and children shall wash their hands with soap and running water, drying thoroughly, following personal hygiene procedures for themselves, or when assisting others.

2. Soiled items shall be placed in plastic lined, securely covered containers which are not accessible to children. The container shall be

emptied, cleaned and disinfected daily. Children's wet or soiled clothing and crib sheets shall be changed promptly.

3. Potty chairs, if used, shall be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

4. Each child shall have his own individually labeled towel and washcloth. IF disposable towels are used, they shall be discarded after each use.

5. When children in diapers are in care, there shall be a diaper changing area with an impermeable surface which is cleaned with a sanitizing solution after each use. Children must be attended at all times when being diapered or when changing clothes.

V. A First Aid Kit shall be accessible to the operator and kept out of the reach of children. The kit must be clearly labeled "First Aid" and must, at a minimum, include:

1. Soap
2. Band-Aids or equivalent
3. Disposable non-porous gloves
4. Cotton balls or applicators
5. Sterile gauze pads and rolls
6. Adhesive tape
7. Thermometer
8. Tweezers
9. Pre-moistened wipes
10. Scissors, and
11. A current resource guide on first aid and CPR procedures.

W. Communicable Disease Control

1. The family day care home shall have an isolation area for a child who becomes ill. The child's condition shall be closely observed. Any child who is suspected of having a communicable disease or who has a fever, of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, in conjunction with any other signs or develops other signs and symptoms which include any of the following: diarrhea, rash, pink eye, vomiting, or skin infection, shall be placed in the isolation area.

2. Linens and disposables shall be changed after each use.

3. The condition shall be reported to the parent or legal guardian and the child shall be removed from the family day care home. Such children shall not return to the home without medical authorization, or until the signs and symptoms of the disease are no longer present.

4. A child who has head lice will not be permitted to return until treatment has been accomplished. The treatment shall include the removal of all lice, lice eggs and egg cases. The parent will need to provide evidence of treatment – a product box, empty bottle, or signed statement by parent or guardian that treatment has occurred.