



## Memorandum

To: Child Welfare Staff  
From: Mary Havick, Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare  
Date: October 27, 2022  
Re: Streamlining of Resource Development Policy and Practice

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of our work and improve efficiency, I am pleased to announce the revisions to Resource Development policy and practice noted below. These are effective immediately while formal policy changes are initiated.

### **Policy 14.1 Safety and Quality Standards**

The following requirements have changes:

- Instead of requiring a caregiver to obtain a new physical examination once they start the foster parent approval process, we will now allow the caregiver to submit proof of an unexpired physical examination if the examination occurred within twelve months.
- Instead of requiring formal documentation, we will now allow household members to sign an attestation that they do not have any current untreated mental health or substance abuse issues. If they are receiving treatment for either, a reference from the treating professional is required.
- Instead of requiring married caregivers to each provide three different references, allow the married caregivers to submit a total of three references.
- Allow a caregiver to sign an attestation that no smoking, or use of e-cigarette products, will occur in the presence of children in foster care, within the foster home, or in any vehicle used to transport children in foster care.
- Recommend, instead of requiring, caregivers for infants and children with special needs to have current influenza and pertussis vaccines. Caregivers with these vaccines may be given preference when the agency makes placement decisions.

- Prescription medication must be administered by caregivers and always kept in original containers.
- Ammunition must be removed from firearms for storage purposes. Firearms and ammunition must be stored under lock and key. Keys to locked storage devices containing firearms or ammunition must remain in the possession of an adult or be reasonably secured from children.
- Under limited circumstances, including but not limited to firearm safety lessons or safe and lawful hunting activities, children may be allowed to handle firearms with the prior written approval of the County Director. However, if the child's parental rights have not been terminated, prior written approval must be obtained from each birth parent whose rights remain intact.
- The following practice guidance items are now requirements:
  - Fences used as a safety barrier must be at least four feet in height, surround all sides of the pool, and have a gate that locks. Fences must be constructed in such a manner that a young child cannot climb through or under the fence.
  - In order for the side structure of an above-ground pool to be considered an adequate safety barrier to a pool or body of water, the steps or ladders must be removed to make the pool inaccessible when not in use.
  - Safely secure animals with any history of violence or aggressiveness toward people in a cage, fence, or similar enclosure.
  - Report immediately (within 24 hours) to the agency any acts of violence toward a child in foster care or others by an animal in the foster home.

## **Policy 14.6**

### **Recruitment and Retention**

- Removal of ongoing recruitment and retention efforts from policy

## **14.7**

### **Inquiries and Information Sessions**

- The following remaining in effect:
  - Process all inquiries from prospective foster and adoptive parents received in person, via the Foster Georgia Inquiry Line (1-877-210-KIDS or 1-877-423-4746) or the Foster Georgia website ([www.fostergeorgia.com](http://www.fostergeorgia.com)).

- Contact prospective foster and adoptive parents within one (1) business day of an inquiry to explain the process for becoming a caregiver.
- Removal of Webinar Information Sessions from policy

## 14.9

### Continued Parent Development

- The following remaining in effect:
  - Verify that all approved foster caregivers obtain a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of Continued Parent Development (CPD) each calendar year.
  - Afford more flexibility in obtaining those hours, now allowing required hours of the annual training requirement to also stem from personal growth and development activities (e.g., counseling, support groups, stress management, nutrition, etc.). Hours from these activities need to be verified with a written statement by the professional providing the service.
    - EXCEPTION: The number of required hours is prorated for caregivers approved after March 31st of the current calendar year.
  - Verify that caregivers maintain current certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid throughout the approval period for their foster home.
- Reduction in the responsibility of RD staff, including removing the need for reminding caretakers of timeframes and identifying possible training opportunities
- Expanding the timeframe for newly approved families to begin CPD to ninety (90) days of their approval date and to complete CPD by December 31st of the year following their approval

We look forward to announcing additional streamlining related to Resource Development Policy and Practice in the near future. Thank you for your support and assistance.