



May 30, 2023

**Child Welfare Services County Letter No. 2023-01**

**To:** County Departments of Family and Children Services  
DFCS District Directors  
DFCS Regional Directors  
State Office Staff

**From:** Candice L. Broce, Director <sup>CB</sup><sub>CB</sub>  
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

**Re:** Child Welfare Policy Manual: Foster Home Approval Term and Re-evaluation

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Child Welfare Services County Letter (CWSCL) is to announce a change to the approval term for foster homes and the frequency of home re-evaluations.

**Discussion**

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) is responsible for the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of children served. The assessment of an approved home is an ongoing process between DFCS/CPA and caregivers. The key purpose of the foster home re-evaluation is to utilize information gathered during the approval term to determine if a home continues to be a safe and suitable environment for the placement of children in foster care and meets Safety and Quality Standards. Information gathered from various sources (e.g., in-home consultation, feedback from caregivers, case managers, children placed in the home, documentation, safety screening, training logs) is used to conduct a holistic review of the caregiver and household.

This CWSCL modifies the length of time foster homes are approved and the frequency of which foster home re-evaluations are completed. Effective immediately, foster homes (including kinship foster homes) will be approved for a period of 24 months and DFCS will complete a comprehensive written evaluation of the overall quality and functioning of each approved caregiver every two years. The re-evaluation must be completed prior to the expiration of the current foster home approval period and no home shall have more than 24 months of approval. The re-evaluation shall include a recommendation for re-approval or disapproval and the signature of the final approving authority. Previously, foster homes were approved for a 12-month period and re-evaluated on an annual basis. The annual requirement for Continued Parent Development remains unchanged and will be

monitored by the Resource Development Case Manager during quarterly visits to the foster home.

The following policies will be updated to reflect the changes implemented by this county letter in the near future:

1. 14.13 Resource Development: Family Re-evaluation
2. 14.15 Resource Development: Household Approval Status
3. 14.16 Resource Development: Working with Caregivers
4. 22.05 Kinship: Kinship Foster Home Re-evaluation
5. 22.06 Kinship: Waiver of Non-Safety Standards for Kinship Foster Homes

The following forms and tools will be updated to reflect the changes implemented by this county letter in the near future:

1. Foster or Adoptive Caregiver Annual Re-evaluation Instructions - Adult Household Member
2. Foster or Adoptive Caregiver Annual Re-evaluation Instructions - Primary Caregiver
3. Foster or Adoptive Caregiver Annual Re-evaluation Instructions - Secondary Caregiver
4. Foster Parent Manual
5. Primary Caregiver Feedback Survey
6. Process Guide for the SAFE Home Study Conversion of Approved Foster and Adoptive Caregivers During Annual Re-evaluation

### **Implementation**

This policy change is effective upon release of this CWSCL and will be incorporated into the Child Welfare Policy Manual in the near future. Regional and County Leadership shall provide opportunities for staff to review and discuss the updated policy to ensure implementation. Please refer to policy [1.3 Administration Access, Distribution and Review of Child Welfare Policies](#) for the applicable requirements and procedures for policy review.

Please direct questions regarding this policy release to the Field Program Specialist in your region. Regional staff shall submit questions to the Policy and Regulations Unit at [PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov).