

Internal Procedure 415: Opening Kinship Homes

08/2024

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS or Division) in accordance with Executive Order EO 23-18 must establish a streamlined process to open and license a kinship home within a 45-day deadline. The goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of the child while minimizing delays in placement, as mandated by the executive order, to expedite the approval of kinship homes.

In these situations, the Family Service Worker will:

- A. Upon removal of the child from their home, identify and assess potential relatives or fictive kin caregivers as per DCFS Policy VI-B2: Provisional Home Placement for Children in Foster Care.
- B. Assist with completion of the CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire as appropriate to the specific case and/or local county procedures.
- C. Keep the Resource Worker informed of any changes to the child's need for a provisional placement and any other relevant information.
- D. Collaborate with the Resource Worker to evaluate the prospective provisional home.

The Resource Worker will:

- A. Prior to placement of the child:
 - 1) Process all necessary background checks by (see Procedure VII-CI: Background Check Processing for more information):
 - a) Conduct an expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check)
 - b) Conduct an expedited State Police Criminal Record Check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check)
 - c) Conduct a Vehicle Safety Program (DMV) Check (see Procedure VII-C1 for forms to be completed)
 - d) Submit the FBI Criminal Record Check (FBI results do not have to be received to open the provisional home, but results must be received and clear to approve as a regular DCFS Resource Home)
- B. Within the first forty-eight (48) hours of placement:
 - 1) Conduct an Initial Home Consultation:
 - a) Complete a visual inspection of the home (via CFS-446: In Home Consultation Visit Report)

- b) Follow up on any compliance issues identified during the night of placement if completed by On-Call staff
- 2) Based on the results of the background checks listed above and the visual inspection of the home, begin the process for requesting any necessary Alternative Compliances or DCFS Policy Waivers, if applicable.
- 3) Determine if the caregiver can complete the required training through group sessions with MidSOUTH or if they would benefit from personalized 1:1 training:
 - a) If the caregiver is deemed suitable for group training with MidSOUTH, send the CFS-450 or CFS-466 to Redcap to initiate the training process
 - b) If the caregiver is not a candidate for completing training with MidSOUTH, schedule 1:1 training to be completed within fourteen (14) days
- 4) Provide family with the Kinship Support Resource Guide:
 - a) Explain to the relative/fictive kin process related to being opened as a fully approved DCFS Resource Home
 - b) Clearly communicate that all documents must be submitted within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the checklist to allow time for processing and meeting the forty-five (45)-day deadline
- 5) Enter relative/fictive kin into the Division information management system as a provider (refer to Policy VII: Development of Resource Homes).
- C. Within first ten (10) days of placement:
 - 1) If any documents have not been received, contact the caregiver to remind them of the missing items. Offer assistance in gathering or completing the documents if any challenges are identified.
 - 2) Determine if the caregiver has started required training:
 - a) If the family was referred to MidSOUTH for training and has not yet begun, pivot to scheduling 1:1 training within next fourteen (14) days:
 - i. Document the reasons for the change in training format and ensure the caregivers are informed of the new schedule
 - 3) Verify the status of the home study:
 - a) If 1:1 training is required, assess whether the home study should be completed by a contract provider or by resource staff
 - 4) Conference with supervisor about status of opening home.
- D. Within first thirty (30) days of placement:
 - 1) If documents remain outstanding, conduct a follow up emphasizing the approaching deadline and the potential impact of the placement process if documents are not received.

- 2) Provide additional support or resources as needed, such as transportation assistance or referral to community services.
 - 3) If a home is not on track to open within the forty-five (45)-day deadline, a staffing with the Area Director should be scheduled at this time to assess the situation:
 - a) Set action steps for remaining tasks and document in the Division information management system
- E. Within first forty-five (45) days of placement, the Resource Worker will:
- 1) Complete final walkthrough of home:
 - a) Provide any necessary support to family and explain next steps
 - 2) Complete necessary steps in the Division information management system to open home as an approved Relative or Fictive Resource Home.

The Resource Supervisor will:

- A. Upon receipt of a notification email from a worker who has removed children and identified a prospective provisional placement (see Procedure VI-B1: Provisional Resource Home Placement for Children in Foster Care for more information), be responsible for ensuring completion or opening home within first forty-five (45) days of placement.
- B. Conference with and support the resource worker as necessary regarding opening the provisional home.
- C. Review and approve the home study.