

Resource

Day 1 - Facilitator Guide



Role of the Resource Specialist

Placement Types

Minimum Licensing Standards

Activity: Can We Approve It?

Day 1:

Resource Training Agenda

Monday	
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome Pre-Test
9:30 – 10:45	Role of the Resource Specialist
10:45 -11:00	Break
11:00 – 12:00	Placement Types
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:00	Minimum Licensing Standards: Building Safe Homes and Strong Relationships
2:00 - 2:15	Break
2:15 – 3:30	Activity: Can We Approve It?
3:30 – 4:00	Wrap Up and Review

Before You Train

Facilitator Resources – Day 1

Materials and Handouts

- Name Tents
- Markers, Pens, Highlighters
- Sticky Notes
- Giant Sticky Note Pad
- Printed Participant Manuals
- Blank paper

DCFS Entry Level Competencies

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| • 101-1 | • 102-2 | • 104-4 |
| • 101-2 | • 102-4 | • 104-5 |
| • 101-4 | • 102-7 | • 104-6 |
| • 101-5 | • 104-1 | • 104-7 |
| • 101-7 | • 104-2 | • 105-1 |
| • 102-1 | • 104-3 | • 105-2 |

DCFS Forms and Publications

- CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Visit Report
- CFS-451: Resource Parent Reevaluation
- CFS-475-C: Reevaluation Checklist
- PUB 17: AR Road to Fostering
- PUB-30 Resource Parent Handbook
- PUB-18 Roadmap to Adoption
- CFS-475: A Initial Checklist for Foster/Adoptive Home Assessment
- CFS-480: Alternate Compliance of Water Supply
- CFS-409 Resource Family Preference Checklist
- CFS-451: Resource Parent Reevaluation
- CFS-475-C: Reevaluation Checklist for Resource Home

DCFS Policy And Internal Procedures

- Internal Procedure 815.5 Respite; 9 CAR§ 40-814 Alternate Care Policy

Day 1 Sources

- Used in part from “Top 10 Tips for Introducing a Training Session Like a Pro” by Langevin.
<https://langevin.com/top-10-tips-for-introducing-a-training-session-like-a-pro/#:~:text=Share%20a%20bit%20about%20your,the%20human%20behind%20the%20trainer.&text=Establishing%20a%20connection%20with%20your%20learners%20is%20crucial.>

Resource Specialty Training

Building safe, stable and connected placements for children and families



MidSOUTH
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS,
HEALTH, AND HUMAN SERVICES

Day 1

RESOURCE SPECIALTY TRAINING DAY 1



Resource Specialty Training

RESOURCE SPECIALTY TRAINING

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To establish the expectations for the training, introduce the core responsibilities of a Resource Specialist, and prepare participants to apply knowledge and critical thinking through realistic skill-based scenarios that mirror fieldwork

Say:

Over the next three days, we will focus on the real work of a Resource Specialist. Our goal is not simply to learn policies and forms. Our goal is to learn how to assess families, make safe placement decisions, support caregivers, and help children find stability and permanency.

Throughout this training, you will work through realistic scenarios, evaluate prospective resource homes, make approval recommendations, and practice many of the same decisions you will make in the field.

Facilitation Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- When you hear the term Resource Specialist, what comes to mind?

Facilitator Note:

Write responses down on a flipchart. Do not correct the participants, set a baseline instead.



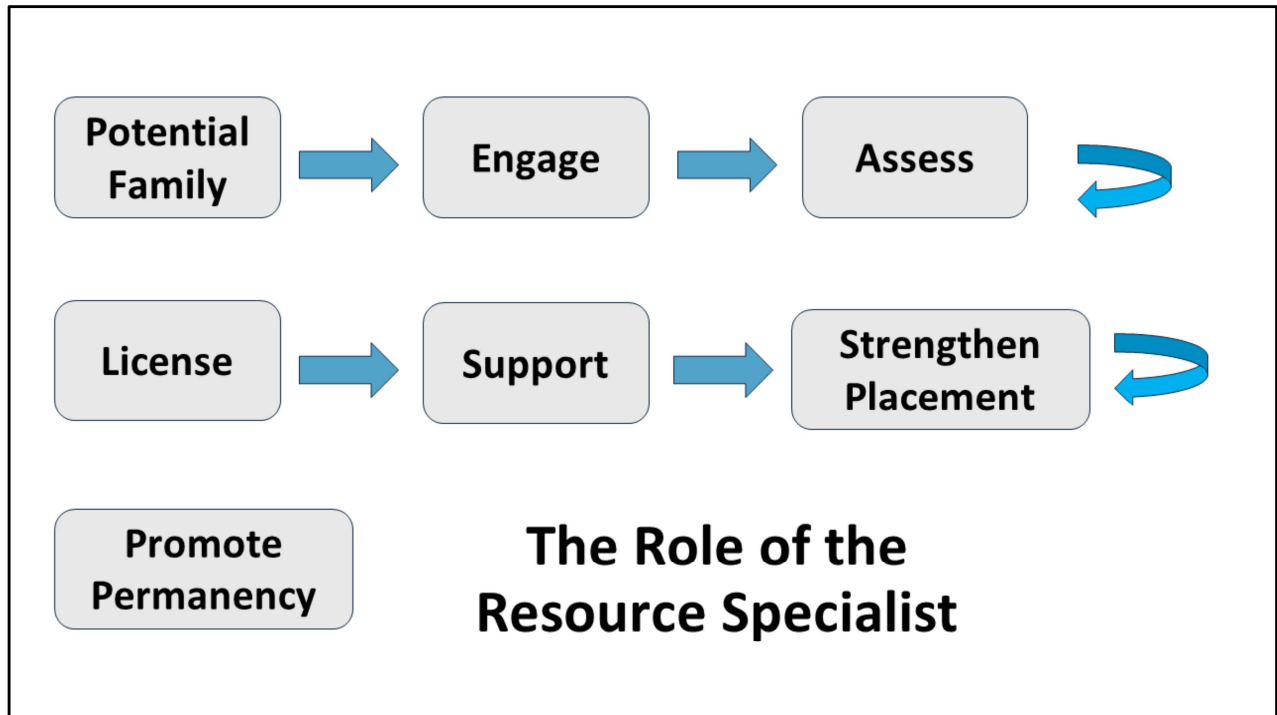
Pre-Test Assessment

INVESTIGATIONS PRE-TEST

Time: 20 minutes

Purpose: To assess the existing knowledge at the beginning of this specialty

Facilitator Note: Before moving to the Target Outcomes direct participants to the QR code on the slide. Participants will need to use their phones to scan the code to complete the pre-test in Qualtrics.



THE ROLE OF THE RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To introduce participants to the role of the Resource Specialist by establishing the purpose of the training, highlighting the impact of the position, and reinforcing how Resource Specialists contribute to child safety placement stability and permanency

Say:

I want to begin by talking about why your role matters. Many people think Resource Specialists simply license homes. This is only part of what you do.

- *You help children find safe, prepared families.*
- *You help relatives step forward during some of the hardest moments of their lives.*
- *You support resource families so they can continue caring for children.*
- *You partner with primary specialists, adoption specialists, and caregivers to promote stable placements and permanency.*

Everything we cover over the next three days should help you do one of those

things better.

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Every decision made by a Resource Specialist directly impacts the safety and well-being of children and families.
- The role extends beyond licensing to support caregivers, collaborate with child welfare professionals, and promote placement stability and permanency.

Insert Facilitator 1 Headshot Photo Here Facilitator Name	Meet the Facilitator All about me ... - Your role - Brief credentials/background - Something relatable/passionate about - Share a moment or experience in your professional career that shaped how you show up in this work
--	--

ALL ABOUT ME FACILITATOR 1 SLIDE

Time: 3 minutes

Purpose: To build rapport with participants and set the tone for a positive learning environment

Activity Set Up:

Each facilitator will need to complete this slide with their desired information and a professional headshot photo, following the guidelines listed below.

Activity Instructions:

Please limit the introduction to 1-2 slides per trainer (i.e., an information slide with your picture, and an optional second slide if you want to share a family/pet pic for relatability). First, introduce yourself, and then allow a few minutes for your co-trainer to introduce themselves to the classroom as well. A second set of slides can be created as needed for your co-facilitator.

What to include in your “All about me” ...

- Your photo:** Please ensure that the photograph is a headshot and be mindful of any writing on clothing or backgrounds that would not meet professional standards for the classroom.
- Your name and role** (Facilitator)
- Brief credentials/background:** Briefly mention relevant education, professional

experience, or areas of specialty related to the training.

- **Something relatable/passionate about:** Share your enthusiasm for the subject and why you enjoy teaching/training. Let them see the human behind the facilitator .
- **Moment or experience:** Share a moment or experience in your professional career that shaped how you show up in this work

Keep it simple, impactful, and engaging! Balance professionalism with approachability to make learners comfortable and excited to learn. It's important to understand that the way you kick off your training sets the tone for the entire course so start with a bang!

Tips for Facilitation Success:

- **Start Strong:** Energetic greeting, smile, and a positive vibe.
- **Balance Professionalism:** Be credible but not intimidating.
- **Be Authentic:** Share genuinely to build trust.
- **Keep it Concise:** Don't overshare; focus on relevance. Share your enthusiasm for the subject and why you enjoy teaching/training.
- **Be Clear:** Speak clearly and calmly.
- **Make it Interactive:** Get participants talking early. Establishing a connection with your learners is crucial. Acknowledge the diverse group in front of you and make it clear that their experiences and perspectives are valued. Encourage open communication and assure them that questions and discussions are more than welcome.
- **Conclude Positively:** Express excitement for the session and invite participants to share.

Source:

Used in part from "Top 10 Tips for Introducing a Training Session Like a Pro" by Langevin.

<https://langevin.com/top-10-tips-for-introducing-a-training-session-like-a-pro/#:~:text=Share%20a%20bit%20about%20your,the%20human%20behind%20the%20trainer.&text=Establishing%20a%20connection%20with%20your%20learners%20is%20crucial.>

All About Me

Insert Facilitator 1 Family/Pet
Photo Here (optional)

ALL ABOUT ME FACILITATOR 1 SLIDE

HELLO my name is

- What's your name/What do you want to be called?
- If you could be anywhere, where would you be?
- What's the last thing you did at work you are proud of?
- What two words would your best friend use to describe you?
- What's challenging for you right now?
- If you could ask the group one question, what would it be?

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS SEVEN POINT REFLECTION AND PAIR SHARE

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: To build rapport with participants and set a positive tone for the training environment

Say:

Now that you've met your facilitators, we'd love to get to know each of you. I've placed blank resources on your tables for writing

Ask everyone to number a sheet of paper or 3x5 card 1-7

One at a time, show Seven (7) questions/sentence completions

- What's your name/What do you want to be called?
- If you could be anywhere, where would you be?
- What's the last thing you did at work you are proud of?
- What two words would your best friend use to describe you?
- What's challenging for you right now?
- If you could ask the group one question, what would it be?

Activity Prep:

Place blank paper or 3x5 note cards on the tables for participants to use during the training.

Activity Set Up:

Each participant will pair up with someone at their table and answer the following questions with their partner. After all pairs have discussed participants will share their partners answers while introducing them to the class.

Source:

Icebreakers & Openers to start a soft-skills session

<https://trainerswarehouse.com/blogs/worksmart/icebreakers-to-start-a-soft-skills-session?srsId=AfmBOopZBDOFRiGnHKYVnAVVNlpHsloX8h035AaPHMZwub7yqwiKipLZ>



HOUSEKEEPING

Time: 10 minutes

Purpose: To establish a framework for the flow of the specialty trainings

Say:

Let's take a few moments to review the rules of engagement and important housekeeping points to ensure a smooth flow in our classroom sessions. This helps us set the tone for a respectful and organized learning environment. We want to set the stage for each of you to engage in your own learning!

Take a moment to share your goals and expectations for participation, breaks, training flow, and any housekeeping matters below:

Paraphrase:

- **Attendance Tracking**
 - Attendance is taken at the beginning of training and after lunch.
- **Restrooms and Designated Smoking Areas**
 - Discuss the location of restroom(s), break areas, and designated smoking areas for your specific training location.
- **Wi-Fi Connection for all sites**

- **Guest Wi-Fi:** MidSOUTH Public
- **Password:** midsouth
- **Reminder for appropriate Use of Laptops and Cell Phones in the Classroom:** Agency cell phones and laptops may be in use only during designated Qualtrics and Virtual Home Simulation activities. Participants will be instructed when to take out their cell phones or laptops. When not in use, all laptops and cell phones should be muted/silenced and placed underneath the training room tables. Phone calls may be answered during scheduled breaks to protect classroom learning time.
- **Daily schedule:** Training is from 9:00 AM - 4:00 pm. We will have a formal morning break (15 minutes), lunch break (1 hr.), and an afternoon break (15 minutes)
- **Parking Lot:** This is the tool we will use to capture questions, ideas, or topics that come up during the training but can't be addressed right away. It helps keep the group focused while making sure important thoughts aren't lost. We will return to the parking lot later in the training or at the end to review and respond to those items.
- **Evaluations:** At the end of the day, there will be an evaluation to complete in Qualtrics using the QR code on the slide.

Target Outcomes



- Understand the role of the Resource Specialist within the child welfare team
- Navigate the process of opening traditional and kinship resource homes
- Apply licensing standards while maintaining a family centered approach
- Support prospective resource families through the approval process
- Use policy and structured decision making to promote safe, timely placement

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 10 Minutes

Purpose: To equip Specialists with the knowledge and structured decision-making skills necessary to navigate the licensing process, ensuring compliance with policy and procedural regulatory standards

Paraphrase:

By the end of this section, Social Services Specialists will be able to:

- Understand the role of the Resource Specialist within the child welfare team
- Navigate the process of opening traditional and kinship resource homes
- Apply licensing standards while maintaining a family centered approach
- Use policy and structured decision making to promote safe, timely placement

Say:

Today is about building the foundation for your role as a Resource Specialist.

- ***By the end of today, I don't just want you to know the licensing process, I want you to understand why each step matters. You will learn how to guide families through the approval process, how to balance policy with good professional judgement, and how to support both traditional and kinship families from the moment they're identified through licensure.***

As we move through the day, keep asking yourself one question: How does this help me

support families and create safe, stable placements for children?

- ***If you can answer that question, you'll begin seeing the work through the lens of partnership rather than paperwork.***

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate the responses)

- When you think about a Resource Specialist, what's the first responsibility that comes to mind?

Say:

Those are all important responsibilities. Over the next three days, we are going to expand that picture. Resource Specialists don't just open homes, they build relationships, support families, and help create the conditions for placement stability and permanency.

Role of the Resource Specialist

- Supporting Families
- Opening Safe Homes
- Supporting Placements
- Partnering with Others



ROLE OF THE RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Time: 30 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand that the Resource Specialist role goes far beyond licensing homes and is about partnering with families and professionals to ensure children experience safe, stable, and lasting placements

Participant Manual: Resource Specialist Role

Say:

In addition to supporting families and opening safe homes, there is also supporting placements (partnering with resource families after placement monitoring safety, stability, and helping prevent placement disruptions), and partnering with others (working closely with primary specialists, adoption specialists, and community partners, while keeping the child's safety and well-being at the center of every decision.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about what your job really is. Sometimes people think Resource Specialists spend their days completing paperwork and licensing homes. Paperwork and licensing are part of the job, but those things are not your purpose. Your purpose is to help children have safe, stable families.

Every background check you request, every home visit you conduct, every difficult conversation you have, every phone call you return, and every licensing requirement you

explain ultimately serves one goal: creating and supporting safe homes for children.

Throughout this specialty, you will learn the technical requirements, but just as importantly, you will learn how to partner with families in a way that builds trust and supports placement stability.

Facilitation Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- Think about the best supervisor, mentor, coach, or leader you have ever had. What made that person effective?

Say:

How can we bring those same qualities into our relationships with resource families?

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- The Resource Specialist's primary purpose is to help children achieve safety, stability, and permanency.
- Supporting placements means partnering with resource families after placement to monitor safety, strengthen stability, and reduce placement disruptions.
- Success requires collaboration with Primary Specialists, Adoption Specialists, and community partners while keeping the child's best interests at the center of every decision.

Resource Specialist Across the Life of a Case

```
graph TD; A[Relative/ Kin Identified] --> B[Initial Contact]; B --> C[Home Assessment]; D[Safe Placement] --> E[Complete Licensing Process]; E --> F[Ongoing Support]; G[Promote Placement] --> H[Stability and Permanency]; H --> I[Road Icon];
```

The flowchart illustrates the progression of a case through various stages. It is organized into three columns. The first column contains 'Relative/ Kin Identified', 'Initial Contact', and 'Home Assessment'. The second column contains 'Safe Placement', 'Complete Licensing Process', and 'Ongoing Support'. The third column contains 'Promote Placement', 'Stability and Permanency', and a road icon. Arrows indicate the flow from top to bottom in each column, and from the first column to the second, and from the second column to the third.

Relative/ Kin Identified

Initial Contact

Home Assessment

Safe Placement

Complete Licensing Process

Ongoing Support

Promote Placement

Stability and Permanency

A stylized blue icon of a road with a dashed white line down the center, leading towards a horizon with a small flag on a pole.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST ACROSS THE LIFE OF A CASE

Time: 10 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand that the Resource Specialist's role spans the entire placement continuum from initial family engagement through licensure and ongoing support with the goal of promoting safe, stable, and lasting placements

Say:

I want you to think about your role throughout a placement. Unlike some positions within DCFS, your work doesn't begin after a child is placed, and it doesn't end once a home is licensed. It begins the moment a potential resource family is identified.

Your first responsibility is to make timely contact with the family, complete their initial assessment, and determine whether the home can safely care for the child.

Often, especially with relatives and kinship caregivers, a child may be placed in a home before all licensing requirements have been completed. That means that your early assessment and professional judgment are incredibly important. You're helping balance two priorities: getting a child to a safe, familiar home as quickly

as possible while continuing to work with the family toward full licensure.

Once the child is placed, your relationship with that family is just beginning. You will continue guiding them through the licensing process, answering questions, helping them meet requirements, providing ongoing support, completing required contacts, and partnering with them to help maintain a safe and stable placement.

When Resource Specialists are successful, children experience fewer placement disruptions, families feel supported instead of overwhelmed, and we retain more resource and kinship families for the future.

Facilitation Questions: (ask the following question and validate the responses)

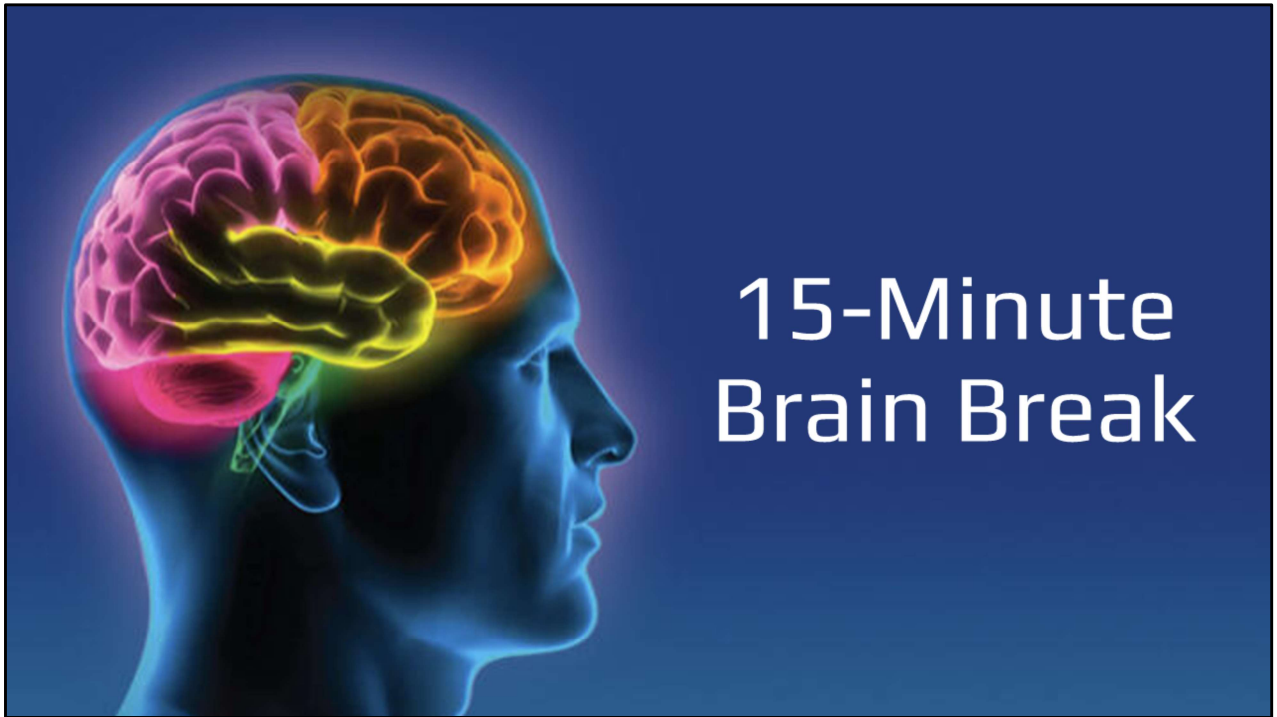
- At what point do you think your relationship with a resource family ends?

Facilitation Answer:

- Hopefully, your answer was “it doesn’t end after licensure.” In some ways, that’s when some of your most important work begins.

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Early assessment and professional judgment are critical, especially when children are placed with relatives before full licensure is complete.
- Resource Specialists balance child safety with timely placement in familiar, supportive homes.
- The role continues after placement by guiding families through licensure, providing support, completing required contacts, and addressing concerns.



BRAIN BREAK



PLACEMENT TYPES

Understanding Resource Home Types

Traditional Resource Home

- No existing relationship with the child
- Licensed prior to placement
- Provides care for children needing placement
- Usually recruiting and referred through established processes

Kinship Resource Home

- Existing Relationship with the child
- Often opened quickly to support placement
- Helps preserve family connections and reduce trauma
- Often identified during a child's removal or early case activity

UNDERSTANDING RESOURCE HOME TYPES

Time: 10 Minutes

Purpose: To introduce participants to the two primary types of resource homes they will work with and reinforce that, regardless of the home type the Resource Specialist's role is to ensure child safety, support caregivers, and guide families toward success licensure.

Say:

One of the first decisions you will encounter is what type of resource home you are working with. While there are several placement options available for children, the majority of your work will involve either traditional resource homes or kinship resource homes.

Although the licensing process may look a little different depending on the type of home, your responsibility remains the same: help children safely live with families who can meet their needs.

Kinship placements deserve special attention because they often happen very quickly. A grandparent, aunt, uncle, or another adult with an established relationship may step forward during a family crisis. They didn't wake up planning to become resource parents. They're responding because a child they love needs them. While both homes contain differences, they both must actively progressing towards full licensure, provide ongoing support a safe home, and have accurate background clear background checks and home

assessments.

Your job is to help them successfully navigate that process while ensuring the child's safety.

Facilitation Question: (ask the following and validate the responses)

- What do you think are some unique strengths that relatives bring to children entering foster care?
- What challenges might relatives face that traditional resources families may not?

Say:

Throughout this training, you will notice that many of our discussions come back to one idea-supporting families. The support a grandmother needs may look differently than the support an experienced resource parent needs, but they both deserve a Resource Specialist who partners with them throughout the process.

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Kinship caregivers often step in unexpectedly during family crisis and may require additional guidance and support.
- Resource Specialists partner with all caregivers to promote safe stable placements and positive outcomes for children.

Private Licensed Placement Agency (PLPA)

- Recruits, trains licenses, and supports its own resource home
 - Provides ongoing supervision and support to those resource families
 - Partners with DCFS to meet placement needs for children experiencing foster care
-



PLPA (PRIVATE LICENSED PLACEMENT AGENCY)

Time: 7 Minutes

Purpose: To provide an overview of PLPA resource homes, including their role, level of support, and when this placement type may be appropriate for youth

Say:

Throughout Arkansas, DCFS partners with several Private Licensed Placement Agencies to help meet the needs of children experiencing foster care.

A Private Licensed Placement Agency (PLPA) is a private child placement agency licensed by the Child Welfare Agency Review Board. PLPAs are responsible for recruiting, training, approving, and supporting their own resource homes. PLPA resource homes provide 24-hour, full-time care for the youth, typically ages 6-18, in a family-like setting. These homes receive greater supervision and support from the approving PLPA. Each youth placed in a PLPA home is assigned a case manager who maintains regular contact, including at least monthly visits with the youth to monitor the youth's well-being and progress.

Your focus as a Resource Specialist will be on DCFS resource homes, guiding families through the licensing process and providing ongoing support after children are placed.

Understanding where PLPAs fit in helps you understand the broader foster care system,

but today we are going to continue focusing on the work you will perform every day.

Facilitation Question: (ask the question and validate responses)

- Why do you think it is important to understand what another partner does, even if you do not perform that work yourself?

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- PLPA provides 24-hour, family-like care for youths
- Children may be placed in PLPA homes under certain circumstances
- Resource Specialists should know who the PLPAs are in their area, but they are not expected to know all of the PLPA procedures

Resource Specialist's Role in Family Based Placements

Resource Specialists primarily support:

- Traditional Resource Homes
- Relative/ Fictive Kin Resource Homes



Your responsibility includes:

- Assessing safety
- Completing required home assessments and background checks
- Supporting caregivers throughout the licensing process
- Providing ongoing support after placement
- Partnering with the child's Primary Specialist

RESOURCE SPECIALISTS ROLE IN FAMILY BASED PLACEMENTS

Time: 10 Minutes

Purpose: Clarify the Resource Specialist's primary responsibilities within family-based placements by focusing on the resource homes they support most often and the key tasks required to ensure safe, stable placements for children

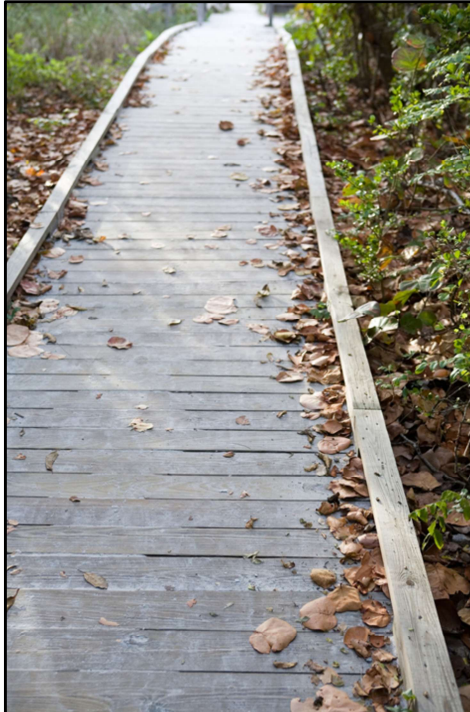
Say:

In foundational training, you learned about the full continuum of placement options available to children experiencing foster care. We aren't going to reteach those today. Instead, we are going to focus on the placement types that you will work with every day.

The majority of your work will involve helping traditional resource families and relatives become safe, approved resource homes and then supporting them after children are placed in their homes. You will certainly collaborate with staff involved in other placement settings, but this specialty is designed to prepare you for your role, not everyone else's.

Key points: (ensure these are covered)

- Core responsibilities include: assessing child and home safety, completing background checks, Guiding families through the licensing process, Providing ongoing support after placement, and Collaborating with the child's primary Specialist to promote placement stability and permanency.



How Families Enter the Resource Home Process

Pathways:

- Traditional
- Kinship

RESOURCE HOME PROCESS

Time: 10 Minutes

Purpose: To help specialists understand the pathways by which families become resource homes, identify where the Resource Specialist becomes involved in each process, and distinguish the roles of Every Child Arkansas, the Centralized Inquiry Unit, Placement providers, and Resource Specialists

Participant Manual: PUB 17: AR Road to Fostering, CFS-475: A Initial Checklist for Foster/Adoptive Home Assessment, and Resource Home Process

Say:

Before we discuss the licensing process, it is important to understand how families reach your desk, as not every family follows the same path or even works directly with you. If you turn to the page titled "Resource Home Process" in your participant manuals, you will see an outline of the pathways available to families and kinship caregivers within the Every Child Arkansas framework.

Traditional resource families typically begin through Every Child Arkansas. From there, the family decides whether to work with DCFS or a Private Licensed

Placement Agency (PLPA).

- *If they choose DCFS, the Centralized Inquiry Unit serves as the initial point of contact. CIU provides information, completes the intake process, and assigns the family to the local Resource Unit. That is where your role begins.*
- *If the family chooses a PLPA, the provider completes its own approval and licensing process. While you may collaborate with PLPA's, you are not responsible for licensing those homes.*
- *Relative and kinship homes follow a very different path. These families aren't responding to a recruitment campaign. They are responding to a child they know, who needs a safe place to stay. They are identified during the child's case, referred directly to the resource unit, and require an expedited assessment and approval process.*
- *For the rest of today, we will walk through each of these pathways separately, because the Resource Specialist's work varies depending on how the family entered the process.*

Paraphrase:

Every Child Arkansas

- Arkansas's public recruitment portal for prospective traditional resource families
- Provides information about fostering and adopting
- Routed interested families based on the family's selection

Centralized Inquiry Unit (CIU)

- Responds to DCFS traditional resource home inquiries
- Completed intake
- Assigns family to the local resource unit

Private Licensed Placement Agencies (PLPA)

- Recruit, assess, approve, and support their own resource homes
- Resource Specialists should understand the process, but do not complete PLPA licensing

Resource Specialists

- Assume responsibility once the referral is assigned (traditional) or when a kinship caregiver referral is received

Facilitation Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why do you think it is important to understand how a family entered the process before you contact them?

Paraphrase:

Someone from the Centralized Inquiry Unit will provide a brief explanation of the county in which they are applying for foster care and of the resource parent assessment process. If the family decides to proceed in moving forward with the process, they will be provided with Resource Packet 1, which will consist of:

- A letter that thanks them for their interest.
- Identifies a contact person.
- Indicates the date, time, and location of the next informational meeting in their county or neighboring county that is hosting a meeting for prospective resource parents from surrounding counties.

Facilitator Note:

For more detailed information on the role of the Centralized Inquiry Unit Response Team in recruiting resource families, refer to Internal Procedure 400.2, Centralized Inquiry Unit and Internal Procedure 801.1 Response to Traditional Resource Applicant Inquiries

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Community inquiries about fostering are an opportunity to expand placement options and increase permanency for children.
- Use PUB-17: Road to Fostering as a guide to explain the fostering process and serve as a talking point with prospective families.
- Direct families to Project Zero and Every Child Arkansas.

Say:

Now that we have looked at how families enter the system and where your role begins, let's walk through what happens once you are assigned a traditional resource family.

The In-Home Consultation (IHC): First Assessment of a Traditional Applicant

The IHC is where the Resource Specialist begins assessing:

- Family motivation and readiness
- Home safety and environment
- Sleeping arrangements
- Transportations
- Medication safety
- Emergency planning
- Resource parent responsibilities
- Concerns that must be corrected before training or approval

THE IN-HOME CONSULTATION: FIRST ASSESSMENT OF A TRADITIONAL APPLICANT

Time: 10 Minutes

Purpose: To help Resource Specialists understand the purpose of the In-Home Consultation, what they are assessing during the visit, and how the CFS-466 guides the recommendation to move a traditional applicant forward in the approval process

Participant Manual: CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Visit Report

Say:

Before a traditional applicant is referred to pre-service training, the resource specialist must complete the In-Home Consultation. This visit is not just a checklist. It is the first real opportunity to assess whether the family understands what they are stepping into, whether the home is safe, and whether there are concerns that need to be addressed before the family moves forward.

The CFS-446 guides that assessment. It includes resource parent responsibilities, home requirements, sleeping arrangements, exterior safety, emergency planning, transportation, medication safety, and a final determination of whether the home meets requirements.

As you complete this visit, you are doing two things at the same time: building a relationship with the family and assessing whether it is appropriate for them to continue in the approval process.

Facilitator Notes:

Point out these sections:

- **Resource Parent Responsibilities:** Explains expectations, including supervision, cooperation during family time, confidentiality, transportation, participation in planning, reasonable expectations, and prudent parenting.
- **Interior Home Requirements:** safety, hazards, smoke-free home, water, kitchen, bathrooms, emergency numbers, firearms, pets, and surveillance
- **Sleeping Arrangements:** bedrooms, beds, windows, co-sleeping, bunk beds, and infant safe sleep
- **Final Determination:** whether the home meets requirements and what corrective action or safeguard measures are needed before training or approval

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- During an In-Home Consultation, what is the difference between a concern that needs coaching and a concern that should stop the family from moving forward?

Key points: (ensure these are covered)

- The In-Home Consultations happen before referral to pre-service training.
- The CFS-446 guides the assessment for traditional applicants.
- The Resource Specialist is assessing both safety and readiness.
- This is also the first opportunity to build trust with the family.

Referring Families to Pre-Service Training

After the In-Home Consultation

If the family is appropriate to move forward:

- ✓ Complete the CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Visit Report
- ✓ Document any corrective actions or safeguards needed before training or home approval
- ✓ Submit the required documentation to MidSOUTH through REDCap
- ✓ Continue supporting the family throughout the licensing process

REFERRING FAMILIES TO PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Time: 25 Minutes

Purpose: To explain the Resource Specialists' responsibilities for recommending traditional applicants for pre-service training, completing the required documentation, and preparing families for the next step in the licensing process

Say:

Once you have completed the In-Home Consultation and determined that the family is appropriate to continue, your next responsibility is to submit them for pre-service training.

That submission is documented on the CFS-446 and submitted to MidSOUTH through the REDCap system so the family can be enrolled in pre-service training.

Pre-Service training helps families understand the realities of out-of-home care, prepares them to care for children who have experienced trauma, and gives them the opportunity to decide whether this commitment is right for their family.

Your role does not stop once that paperwork is submitted, though. Continue communicating with the family, answer questions, and help them stay engaged throughout the process. Families who feel supported are much more likely to complete

training and continue through licensure.

Paraphrase:

THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR PRE-SERVICE TRAINING: Within five (5) business days of completing the In-Home Consultation Visit for traditional applicants, the Resource Specialist should proceed with the approval process for pre-service training. At that time, the specialist submits the completed and signed CFS-446 to the Resource Supervisor or designee, along with a recommendation to either invite the applicant to pre-service training or not, including an explanation if the applicant is not recommended.

If the recommendation is approved, the Resource Specialist documents the in-home consultation (initial home visit) contact under “In-Home Consultation/Approval for Training” in the Provider Contact Information Screen and logs receipt of the appropriate form in CHRIS. The specialist then submits a copy of the CFS-446 to MidSOUTH via REDCap to obtain approval for the applicant's pre-service training. Finally, the prospective resource parents will receive an email link to schedule their pre-service training.

WHEN AN APPLICANT IS NOT APPROVED: When an applicant is not approved to attend pre-service training, the Resource Specialist sends a notification letter to the applicant and forwards a copy to the Resource Supervisor. The specialist then documents the non-selection on the Provider Household Member Required Checks Information Screen by selecting “IHC/Not Approved for Training” and clearly explaining the decision.

TRAINING COMPLETED IN ANOTHER STATE: If prospective caregivers have resided in another state and move to Arkansas after completing training, Arkansas may accept their pre-service training certification; however, the training curriculum must be reviewed to ensure it is comparable to Arkansas's curriculum.

REIMBURSEMENT OF CPR & FIRST AID FEES: Also, traditional resource parents can request reimbursement of CPR and First Aid fees once the home is approved and open. They must provide a copy of their receipt and certifications to be reimbursed and will need to sign and submit an original Agency-Generated Invoice (AGI).

- Online CPR and First Aid training is also acceptable if the course is provided by an approved organization, such as the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, the National Safety Council, the Health and Safety Institute, or EMS Safety Services.
- The training must also include a hands-on, skills-based component, as well as both written and practical evaluations. On the other hand, if an applicant desires to become an

adoptive placement, they must attend classes arranged by the Division of Children and Family Services.

Say:

Many people may have the heart to serve children in the child welfare system by becoming a resource family. The reality is they may not have the willingness, resources, or abilities to carry out the specialized parenting tasks required to meet these children's needs. If you have a resource family who will not be invited to pre-service training, consult your supervisor to determine whether the family is approved to attend. If they are not, the first step is to send a denial letter to the family notifying them that they were not approved to attend, and to send an additional copy to the Area Director.

Paraphrase:

At this point, you may not be able to have a face-to-face conversation with the family. Either way, telling an applicant that they have not been approved to move forward in the process can be a difficult conversation to have with a family. Difficult conversations are a necessary part of the job, and if you are clear about the background check requirements from the beginning, there should be little to no surprises with potential resource families.

Facilitation Question: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

Would you recommend this family for pre-service training? Why or why not?

1. Family is highly motivated but needs to install smoke detectors
2. Family has appropriate housing but unrealistic expectations about reunification
3. Family has strong support, but one caregiver is hesitant about fostering teenagers

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Difficult conversations regarding denial are part of the role and should be handled professionally and clearly.
- Applicants seeking to become adoptive placements must only attend the training offered by DCFS.
- Online CPR and First Aid training certificates are accepted, but a hands-on, skills-based component is required.
- Pre-service training from other states may be accepted at DCFS's discretion.



LUNCH BREAK



Minimum Licensing Standards: Building Safe Homes and Strong Relationships

**MINIMUM LICENSING STANDARDS: BUILDING SAFE HOMES AND STRONG
RELATIONSHIPS**

Minimum Licensing Standards:

Building Safe Homes and Strong Relationships

Licensing Standards help ensure children are placed in homes that are:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Stable
- Prepared to meet the needs of the children



MINIMUM LICENSING STANDARDS

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To introduce the minimum licensing standards for traditional homes and help Resource Specialists distinguish between immediate safety concerns and coachable licensing deficiencies while maintaining a supportive, family-centered approach

Say:

Minimum licensing standards exist to protect children, but how we apply those standards matters just as much as knowing them.

Families don't expect to have perfect homes. They do expect us to explain the requirements, answer their questions, and help them understand what needs to be corrected before approval.

As Resource Specialists, you'll often find opportunities to coach families through simple corrections. Maybe they need to install a smoke detector, lock up medications, or make changes to sleeping arrangements. Those conversations should leave families feeling supported, not judged.

There are also situations that pose immediate safety concerns and require action before a child can be placed safely. Learning to distinguish between those situations is an important part of your professional judgment.

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Differentiate between coachable deficiencies and immediate safety concerns that must be resolved before placement.
- Professional judgment is essential in determining when a concern can be corrected versus when it prevents safe placement.
- The goal is to prepare families for success while ensuring children are placed in safe, compliant homes.

Minimum Licensing Standards are your guide for:

- ✓ Conducting Home assessments
 - ✓ Ensuring child safety
 - ✓ Determining licensing compliance
 - ✓ Coaching families towards licensure
 - ✓ Answering questions from prospective families
-



MINIMUM LICENSING STANDARDS ARE YOUR GUIDE FOR:

Time: 30 Minutes

Purpose: To provide an overview of the minimum licensing standards and detail to specialists which documents contain the information

Participant Manual: PUB-30 Resource Parent Handbook

Say:

Throughout your career as a Resource Specialist, this manual will become one of the resources you use most often.

The licensing standards establish the minimum requirements every resource home must meet before children can be placed in the home. They provide consistency across the state and help ensure every child is placed in a safe environment.

Even experienced Resource Specialists don't memorize every standard. They know how to find the answer and apply it consistently.

Now, we will be doing a scavenger hunt activity to become familiar with PUB-30, learn how it is organized, and apply it consistently.

Facilitator Notes:

Ensure that participants have access to the table copies of the PUB-30. Briefly orient them by reviewing:

- Table of contents
- Major sections

Also give them colored sticky tabs and recommend that they tab sections they think they might use frequently

Activity Set-Up:

Working in pairs, have participants locate the standard for:

- Smoke detectors
- Firearms and ammunition
- Medication storage
- Swimming pools
- Sleeping arrangements
- Pets
- Transportation
- Emergency plans

After 15 minutes, call on pairs to briefly share:

- Where they found the standard
- Why do they think the standard exists
- How would they explain it to a prospective resource parent

Say:

Now that you are familiar with PUB-30, let's practice applying those standards during an actual home assessment.

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- PUB-30 is the Resource Specialist's primary field resource.
- This publication should be referenced regularly throughout the process.
- Child safety is the foundation of every licensing standard.
- Resource Specialists should know how to locate and apply standards rather than rely on memory.



The Carson Family

Use PUB-30 to help you identify why this home would or would not be a good placement for a child.

- Identify any changes that could make this home safe for the child, if any.

Activity

THE CARSON FAMILY- ACTIVITY

Time: 30 Minutes

Purpose: To equip specialists with the skills to evaluate the suitability of a prospective resource family

Participant Manual Pages: CFS-475-A Initial Checklist for Resource Home Assessment, PUB-30 Resource Parent Handbook, CFS-446 In-Home Consultation Visit Report, The Carson Family Scenario, PUB-18 Roadmap to Adoption, CFS-480: Alternate Compliance of Water Supply ,and CFS-409 Resource Family Preference Checklist

Say:

As the resource specialist, your responsibility is not only to assess the family's appropriateness for approval but also to assess the safety of the family's environment for a child entering the home. I will give you 10 Minutes to scan the QR code and read the scenario, after you have done so, I need you to take about 20 minutes to answer the questions at the end of the activity. Feel free to utilize your PUB-30, CFS-446, PUB-18, and CFS-475-A to answer the questions.

Facilitation Questions: (these are the questions in Qualtrics)

- What were some potential minimum licensing concerns you identified with the Carson family?
- Would you place a child in their home? Why or why not?

- Is there anything that needs to be addressed before you can move forward with the family in the approval process?

Facilitation Answers:

- Unanchored trampoline, holes in the yard, play area unsecured (no railing), high grass, old open metal barrels, old lawn mower, and several broken wooden planks
- I would not place a child in the home in its current outdoor condition, as it presents a hazardous living environment that could result in injury during normal outdoor play or other daily activities.
- I would explain to the family that, given the current condition of the outdoor environment, it is not safe for any children in the home. I would also explain that the previously identified concerns must be addressed immediately to ensure the physical safety and well-being of all children.

Say:

Additional home visits may be necessary before the final walkthrough and orientation to ensure full compliance with all standards and policies, and to provide ongoing support to applicants throughout the process. I am going to give you all 5 minutes to review your CFS-475 Checklist, as you will use it later.

Paraphrase:

After pre-service training and pre-screenings are approved, the Resource Supervisor conducts a history check in the Division Information Management System and assigns the family to a resource specialist within one business day.

- The assigned specialist then contacts the prospective family within five business days to schedule the IHC visit and FBI fingerprinting. For traditional applicants, the IHC is scheduled within 2 weeks of the initial contact.
- During the IHC, the Resource Specialists complete the appropriate documentation if applicable and provide the CFS-480: Alternate Compliance Water Supply Agreement. The specialist also explains the required pre-approval training, including CPR and First Aid certification.
- Traditional applicants complete the CFS-409: Resource Family Preference Checklist and SAFE Questionnaire I, with preferences entered into the system.
- Finally, the family is informed of the requirement for three positive confidential references, at least one relative and one non-relative, and the appropriate reference forms are distributed with instructions for completion and return.

Supporting Normalcy Through Alternate Care

As a Resource Specialist, your role is to:

- Support families in providing age-appropriate experiences
- Help families understand when approval or additional documentation is needed
- Balance child safety with normalcy
- Guide families through policy requirements before issues arise



ALTERNATE CARE INFORMATION GATHERING

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To inform specialists of the procedures that they, as well as the resource parents, must take as it relates to out-of-state travel, and other alternative forms of care

Say:

Alternate care allows children experiencing foster care to participate in normal childhood experiences, while maintaining their safety and well-being. If a family wants to take a foster child out of the state on vacation, the resource parent should notify the assigned specialist as soon as possible so that the appropriate paperwork can be completed.

Additionally, a resource parent allows a youth to attend an overnight summer camp that the resource parent deems appropriate. The alternate care policy (see 9 CAR§ 40-814) should be followed, and the resource parent will apply the prudent parent standard when circumstances require supervision by an appropriate adult other than the resource parents.

Paraphrase:

- The Division promotes the use of certain types of alternate care (e.g., age-appropriate activities and interaction with a Resource Family Support System) for children and youth in out-of-home placements to foster normalcy in their lives.

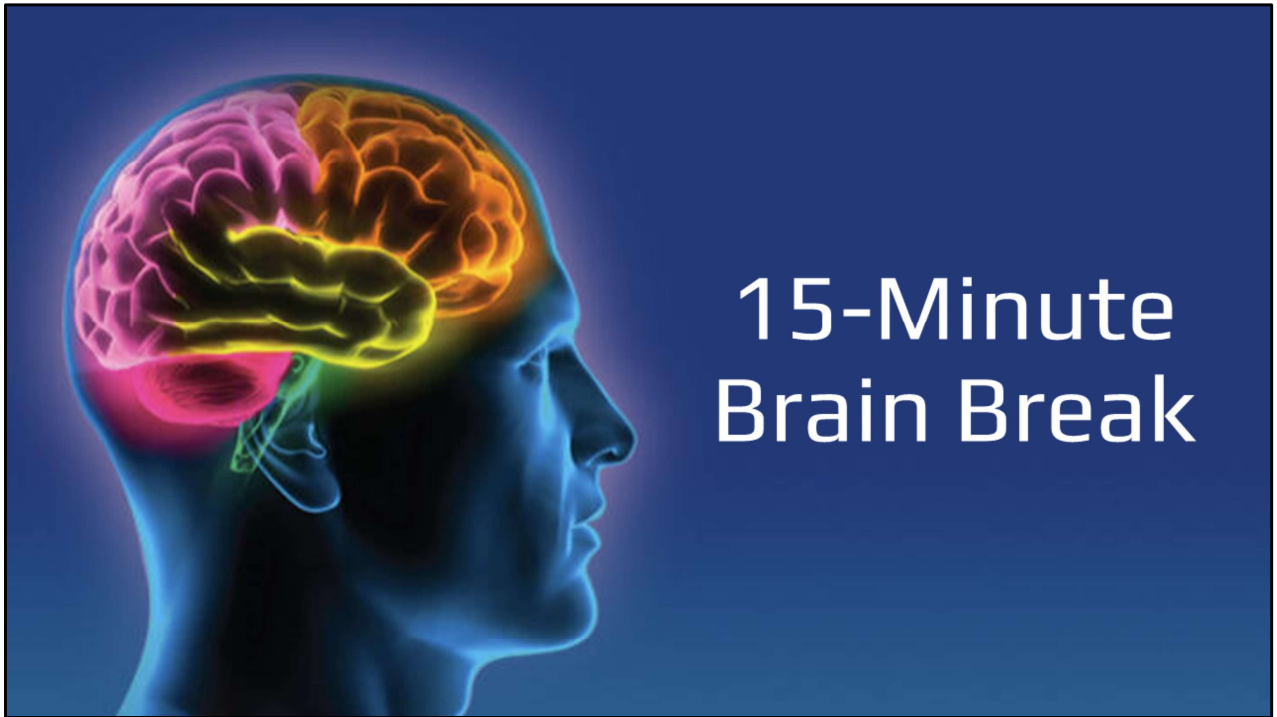
- Normal age-appropriate activities- children in all out-of-home placement types will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, or social activities that are age and developmentally appropriate for a child.
- Age- and developmentally appropriate activities are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age and are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child based on his or her cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities.
 - Examples of normal age- and developmentally appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, overnight visits with friends, school field trips, school sports or other sport leagues, faith-based activities, short-term summer camps, and family vacations.
- It is highly encouraged for resource parents to include children in care in their summer and holiday plans, but it is also important to note that these trips are the financial responsibility of the resource family, and the division is unable to pay for or reimburse resource parents for them.
- It is your job as the specialist to assess the appropriateness of the proposed activity or the authorized placement provider so that the child(ren) in care will be outside of the approved placement for more than 24 continuous hours.
- You should be provided with the following:
 - activity location address, a direct person of contact, anticipated dates for when the child(ren) are going to be staying at the location, and the date the child(ren) returns to the home when the activity has ended.

Facilitator Note:

For additional information regarding formal and informal respite alternate care, refer to **Internal Procedure 815.5: Respite.**

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Advance notice is required for out-of-state travel.
- Apply the prudent parent standard to determine appropriateness and to establish normalcy.
- Resource parents can act in an alternate care capacity.



15-Minute Brain Break

BRAIN BREAK

1. Would you have any concerns?
2. What questions would you ask?
3. What does policy say?
4. What guidance would you provide to the resource parent?
5. What additional approval or documentation is needed?



Activity: Can We Approve It?

CAN WE APPROVE IT? ACTIVITY

Time: 45 Minutes

Purpose: To help specialists understand their role in supporting resource families when children participate in overnight activities, travel, respite, or other alternate care arrangements while ensuring policy requirements are met

Facilitator Resources: Can We Approve It? Scenarios

Paraphrase:

One big adjustment for new resource families is figuring out what they can and cannot allow a child to do. Children experiencing foster care should still have opportunities to attend birthday parties, spend the night with friends when appropriate, go on vacations, attend church camp, and participate in extracurricular activities.

- As Resource Specialists, one of your jobs is to help families understand how to safely say yes whenever possible. That means helping them understand the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, when alternate care is appropriate, and when additional approvals or documentation are required.
- Many resource families become frustrated because they fear making a

mistake. If we educate them early and remain available to answer questions, we reduce that anxiety and help them feel more confident in their role.

Facilitator Note:

You can assign each table 1 or 2 scenarios and ask them to answer the following questions on the board. This activity can also be done as a large group since there are only 5 short statements.

Say:

At this time, I am going to read through and assign a few short statements, and you will need to think about and answer the following questions on the slide and how they factor into the statements. You will be conducting this activity at your tables. I will assign each of you one or two statements, and I need you to write down the answers to your questions. You will have 15 minutes to do so.

- *Scenario 1: A family wants to take a child on a weekend camping trip.*
- *Scenario 2: A 14- year-old has been invited to spend the night at a friend's house.*
- *Scenario 3: A child wants to attend a week-long church camp.*
- *Scenario 4: A family is planning a vacation to Tennessee.*
- *Scenario 5: A resource parent asks a grandparent to care for the child for the weekend while they attend a wedding.*

Facilitator Note:

Take 15-20 minutes to review and wrap up the activity after everyone has shared their responses.

Say:

If a resource family wants to take a child out of state for vacation, the resource parent should notify the assigned specialist as soon as possible so the appropriate paperwork can be completed.

- *Additionally, a resource parent may allow a youth to attend an overnight summer camp that the resource parent deems appropriate.*
- *The alternate care policy (see 9 CAR§ 40-814) should be followed, and the resource parent will apply the prudent parent standard when circumstances require supervision by an appropriate adult other than the resource parents.*

When resource families understand what they can do, not just what they can't do, they feel more confident and supported. Clear guidance from Resource Specialists reduces frustration and helps families continue working with us.

Paraphrase:

- The Division promotes the use of certain types of alternate care (e.g., age-appropriate activities and interaction with a Resource Family Support System) for children and youth in out-of-home placements to foster normalcy in their lives.
- Normal age-appropriate activities- children in all out-of-home placement types will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, or social activities that are age and developmentally appropriate for a child.
- Age- and developmentally appropriate activities are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age and are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child based on his or her cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities.
- Examples of normal age- and developmentally appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, overnight visits with friends, school field trips, school sports or other sport leagues, faith-based activities, short-term summer camps, and family vacations.
- It is highly encouraged for resource parents to include children in care in their summer and holiday plans, but it is also important to note that these trips are the financial responsibility of the resource family, and the division cannot pay for or reimburse resource parents for them.
- It is your job as the specialist to assess the appropriateness of the proposed activity or the authorized placement provider so that the child(ren) in care will be outside of the approved placement for more than 24 continuous hours.
- You should be provided with the following:
 - Activity location address, a direct person of contact, anticipated dates for when the child(ren) are going to be staying at the location, and the date the child(ren) returns to the home when the activity has ended.

Facilitator Note:

For additional information regarding formal and informal respite alternate care, refer to **Internal Procedure 815.5 Respite**

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Advance notice is required for out-of-state travel.
- Apply the prudent parent standard to determine appropriateness and to establish normalcy.
- Resource parents can act in an alternate care capacity.

Source:

- *Internal Procedure 815.5 Respite; 9 CAR§ 40-814 Alternate Care Policy*

Home Studies

- Interviews with household members
- Background checks
- Financial and Employment verification
- Medical Information
- Three Personal References
- Home Assessment
- Evaluation of Parenting Style, Sleeping Arrangements, Household Functioning



HOME STUDIES

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To provide specialists with basic foundational requirements for conducting home studies

Say:

Home studies are assessments used to determine whether a family is appropriate to foster or adopt children; they are a necessary requirement for any placement and, at times, can be court-ordered. A resource home can be approved by only one agency. Each member of the resource family must have a physical exam 12 months prior to the initial approval, and resource parents must be trained in crisis prevention and intervention before children can be placed in their home.

Key Points: (ensure these are covered)

- Home studies are assessments used to determine whether a family is appropriate to foster or adopt children.
- A resource home study is required for all placements.
- All resource parents must complete crisis prevention and intervention training before a child can be placed in their home.

Resource Specialist Role in Home Studies

- Conduct annual re-evaluation and re-evaluations after major life changes.
- Complete required re-evaluation tools, including CFS-451 and CFS-475-C.
- Verify required certifications, background checks, and training are current.
- Document reevaluation activities in CHRIS.
- Submit the reevaluation and recommendation for approval.

Home Study Updates:

- Complete as needed for any major life changes.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST ROLE IN HOME STUDIES

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To explain Resource Specialists' responsibilities for conducting and documenting resource home evaluations and updates

Say:

As a Resource Specialist, you are responsible for conducting a reevaluation of each resource home annually and whenever a major life change occurs.

- ***You will complete the Division-approved update and reevaluation tools, including the CFS-451: Resource Parent Reevaluation and CFS-475-C: Reevaluation Checklist for Resource Home. You will also ensure required information remains current, including CPR and Standard First Aid certifications, background and Central Registry checks, and resource parents' continuing education hours.***
- ***You will document the reevaluation in CHRIS and submit the completed documentation and your recommendation to approve or disapprove the home to the Resource Supervisor or designee.***

Resource specialists are also responsible for completing Home Study updates as major life changes take place for the family. Examples of major life changes may include, but are not limited to:

- ***Job change***
- ***Birth or adoption of a child***
- ***Addition of other household member***
- ***Address change***
- ***Divorce***
- ***Marriage***

WRAP UP: OPENING UP YOUR FIRST TRADITIONAL RESOURCE HOME

- ✓ Explored the role of the resource specialist
- ✓ Learned how perspective traditional resource families enter the licensing process
- ✓ Conducted an Initial In-Home Consultation
- ✓ Applied the Arkansas Minimum Licensing standards
- ✓ Practiced assessing a perspective resource home through simulation
- ✓ Recommended a family to move forward in the licensing process
- ✓ Explored key considerations related to home studies and medication safety.

WRAP UP: OPENING UP YOUR FIRST TRADITIONAL RESOURCE HOME

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To reinforce the key concepts learned throughout day one and transition participants in today's two by recognizing that licensing a home is only the beginning of a resource specialists work

Say:

Take a moment to reflect on today's learning.

Facilitation Question: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- What is one of the concepts that became clearer today?
- What is one skill you want to continue building?
- What questions do you still have about opening traditional resource homes?

Say:

Today, you have followed a family from their initial interest in fostering through the licensing process. While there is still work to do before a family is fully prepared for placement, you've built the foundation for one of the Resource Specialist's most important responsibilities.

- *Tomorrow we will explore a different pathway. Kinship homes often begin under very different circumstances. Rather than responding to a family's interest in fostering, you'll respond to the immediate needs of a child entering care.*

- *You will learn how those situations differ, what policies apply, and how your role adapts while keeping children connected to family whenever it is safe and appropriate.*



Target Outcomes Evaluation

TARGET OUTCOMES EVALUATION

Time: 2 Minutes

Purpose: To assess the learning outcomes for this training day

Facilitator Note: Before ending the day, instruct participants on the QR code on the slide. Participants will need to use their phones to scan the code to complete the section target outcomes evaluation in Qualtrics.