

INTERIM APPROVAL OF REGULAR FOSTER HOMES

Policy no.: 4.5

Effective Date: March 2007

Date Revised: October 1, 2013; March 26, 2018

Policy Cross References: Regular Foster Home Approval Process; Positive Discipline; Medical Consent; A Child or Youth Absent Without Permission; and A Child or Youth Missing or Abducted

Legislative References: s.62(3) Placement considerations; s.63(1) and s.63(3) Agreement for service

PURPOSE: To outline the process for completing an *interim approval* for a regular foster parent applicant(s).

POLICY:

1. In situations where a suitable foster home is not available for a child or youth in the care or custody of a manager, a manager may assess the suitability of a foster parent applicant(s) to be processed for an interim approval, and may grant an interim approval of the applicant(s) to facilitate a placement that is in the best interests of a child or youth.
2. The full regular foster home approval process must be completed **within 90 days** of the interim approval if the applicant(s) completed the *PRIDE* Preservice sessions prior to the interim approval.
3. The full regular foster home approval process must be completed **within 120 days** after the interim approval if the applicant(s) did not complete the *PRIDE* Preservice sessions prior to the interim approval.

PROCEDURES:

Interim Assessment

1. The social worker, in consultation with a supervisor, may assess the suitability of the applicant(s) to be processed for an interim approval if it will facilitate a placement in the best interests of a child or youth requiring a foster home placement. In determining suitability, the social worker must ensure the applicant(s) meet the screening requirements outlined in the *Approval of Regular Foster Homes policy* and shall also consider the following factors:
 - a) past or current parenting or caregiving experience;
 - b) cultural and community connections;
 - c) experience working with children or youth; and
 - d) experience with either the foster care program or other Departmental programs.

2. The social worker shall ensure that the foster parent applicant(s) understand the requirements of both the interim approval and full *PRIDE* approval process before starting an interim approval.
3. If the applicant(s) has not completed the *PRIDE* Preservice sessions the social worker shall first discuss the five *PRIDE* competencies with them.
4. A social worker shall ensure the following documentation is obtained in accordance with the policy on the *Approval of Regular Foster Homes*:
 - a) *Foster Home Application Form*;
 - b) completed criminal record checks on all persons over 12 years of age in the home;
 - c) three verbal or written references, using the *Letter of Reference Form*, from individuals who are not related to either applicant, and have known, the applicant(s) for at least **three (3) years** and one from a collateral community contact (e.g. minister, community leader, teacher, etc.). If the applicant(s) has a school age child(ren), the teacher is the preferred collateral reference.
 - d) completed *Child Protection Clearance Checks* for all persons residing in the home;
 - e) completed Physicians Report on Foster Parent Applicant for the applicant(s). All children or other adults living in the home should be examined by a physician who shall provide a letter outlining their general health and any significant findings or concerns;
 - f) financial assessment;
 - g) completed *Home Safety Checklist*;
 - h) written proof of valid automobile insurance for any vehicle the applicant(s) may use for transporting a child or youth in care; and
 - i) signed *Declaration of Confidentiality*.
5. The social worker shall interview the applicant(s) and any children or other persons residing in the home in accordance with the following:
 - a) minimum of three interviews must be held with applicants who apply as a couple: a private individual interview with each applicant and a joint interview;
 - b) minimum of two interviews must be held with single applicants;
 - c) minimum of one private interview with all other persons residing in the home; and
 - d) minimum of two interviews must occur in the home of the applicant(s).
6. The social worker shall document the interim approval process using the *Regular Foster Home (Interim Approval)* form. This form provides a guide for social workers regarding the areas that shall be assessed to inform the interim approval process including:
 - a) a summary of how the applicant(s) was protected and nurtured;
 - b) the applicant(s) history of having their developmental needs met including how they were disciplined as a child;
 - c) the loss history of the applicant(s) and their understanding of the impact of their loss history on their ability to support a child or youth in care with their feeling of

loss. This should include a discussion of the role of a foster parent as a loss manager and the impact that children or youth's losses can have on a foster family, especially if they have significant unresolved losses.

- d) A clinical assessment of the ability of the applicant(s) to meet the five *PRIDE* competencies with their own child(ren) (if applicable), as well as a child or youth in care who may be placed in the home.

Approval Process

7. The social worker shall document the interim assessment on the *Regular Foster Home (Interim Approval)* form and forward it with their recommendation and the supporting documentation to the supervisor.
8. The supervisor shall review the interim assessment and forward it with their recommendation to the manager.
9. The final decision regarding approval shall be made by the manager. Approval shall not be granted if any person residing in the home has been charged or convicted of a crime against a child or youth, or if the applicant(s) is currently involved in an active *Protective Intervention Program*.
10. When an interim approval is granted the applicants(s) shall be notified in writing by the manager in a timely manner. The approval letter should outline the duration of the interim approval as well as the remaining steps that have to be completed for a full regular foster home approval.
11. Where interim approval is granted a copy of the *Foster Parent Agreement (Level 1)* or *Foster Parent Agreement (Level 2)* shall be signed by the social worker and the foster parent(s) following approval. A copy shall be given to the foster parent(s) and a copy shall be placed on the foster home file.
12. The social worker shall ensure that an interim approved foster parent(s) receives a copy the In Care policies on ***Positive Discipline; Medical Consent; A Child or Youth Absent Without Permission; and A Child or Youth Missing or Abducted***.
13. The social worker shall ensure that an interim approved foster parent(s) is given the contact information for the Newfoundland & Labrador Foster Families Association (NLFFA), the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and their local CSSD office, including the phone number for after hour services.
14. The social worker shall forward the name(s) of the interim approved foster parent(s) to the NLFFA on the *NLFFA Registration* form. If there is more than one approved foster parent, both names are required on the *NLFFA Registration* form.
15. The social worker shall also advise the interim approved foster parent(s) of the requirement to notify the social worker at the time of any change in who is residing in the home, or if any person(s) will be visiting and staying in the home for a period of 2 months or longer at which time a foster home review shall be required.
16. If applicant(s) are not approved the social worker shall meet with them as soon as possible to discuss the reason(s) for the decision. The applicants shall also be advised in writing by the manager of the decision in a timely manner after the meeting with the

social worker.

EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY: None

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

- *Foster Home Application* form
- *Letter of Reference* form
- *Application for a Child Protection Clearance Check*
- *Physicians Report on Foster Parent Applicant* form
- *Foster Parent Agreement (Level 1)*
- *Foster Parent Agreement (Level 2)*
- *Declaration of Confidentiality* form
- *Foster Home Safety Checklist*
- *NLFFA Registration* form