



Quarterly Update

FALL 2016

CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL UPDATE

Children's Residential Licensing Program Mission:

The Children's Residential Licensing Program licenses and monitors Adoption Agencies, Foster Family Agencies and Certified Family Homes, Group Homes, Foster Family Homes, Crisis Nurseries, Runaway Youth Shelters, Small Family Homes, and Transitional Housing Placement Programs in an effort to ensure that they provide a safe and healthy environment for children who are in residential care.

A Note from Pamela Dickfoss, Deputy Director

Welcome to our Fall 2016 Children's Residential Care Quarterly Update!

The Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) is making steady progress with the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) effort. We are pleased to announce that the Foster Family Agency (FFA) Interim Licensing Standards have gone out for public review and comment. In anticipation of the statewide implementation of the RFA program on January 1, 2017, CCLD will be conducting regional trainings that will provide an overview and structure of the Interim Licensing standards, review the program statement template for FFAs, identify activities that FFAs need to complete on or before 1/1/17 and will include a rates discussion. Additionally, CCR efforts are gearing up and focusing on Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs) this Fall. Newly developed STRTP Interim Licensing Standards will be completed early Fall and will be distributed for public review and comment.

I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Ellie Jones as the Assistant Deputy Director of CCLD for the Department, effective May 1, 2016. Ellie has over 25 years

of extensive Child Welfare Services experience. Ellie has been the Chief of the Children's Services Operations and Evaluations Branch in the Children and Family Services Division for the last five years. In her new capacity, Ellie will oversee the development and implementation of policy and process standards across CCLD's seven branches and the Central Operations Branch functions. Please join me in welcoming Ellie to the CCLD's leadership team.

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Changes to the Children’s Residential Program Management Personnel

With the retirement of Regional Manager Thomas Stahl of the Sacramento Children’s Residential Program (CRP) Regional Office on June 30 and that of Licensing Program Manager Donna Watters of the Chico Children’s Residential Unit Office on July 30, the process of finding qualified candidates to fill in the respective positions is in progress.

Ms. Lenora Scott, the Regional Manager at the Culver City CRP Regional Office, has assumed the role of acting Regional Manager at the Sacramento CRP Regional Office and has also been overseeing the selection process for the aforementioned positions. There are no other managerial changes reported by the other CRP Regional Offices for this quarter.

New System News – It’s Really Happening!

Child Welfare Digital Services (CWDS) is overseeing development of Child Welfare Services-New System (CWS-NS). As part of CWS-NS, CWDS will provide the “Certification, Approval, and Licensing Services” (CALs) functionality needed by Children’s Residential Program and Counties. In what is likely to be a multi-year process, once everything that CCLD currently relies on from the current databases-Field Automation System (FAS) and Licensing Information System (LIS) has been developed for Children’s Residential, planning for rollout to the Adult and Senior Care and Child Care Programs will also begin.

state and county workers related to ensuring that licensed facilities, approved homes, and associated adults meet and maintain required standards. More information about the vision for CALs and the scope of the CALs digital service can be found at the CWDS “[Digital Services Dashboard](#).”

The team that is awarded a contract on the basis of their response to the CALs RFO may begin work as early as December! To read the CALs Request for Offer or to follow the key action dates for this procurement, please see the [CWS-NS Procurements page](#).

The first step on this journey is procuring the software developers who will work in partnership with users to create CWS-NS. On September 1, 2016, CWDS [announced the award](#) of a development contract for the Intake digital service to Case Commons. The Intake Digital Service will provide county Child Welfare Agencies an easy to navigate and efficient way to record and access information regarding child abuse, neglect, and exploitation allegations, investigative findings, and outcomes. Case Commons has now started this work.

More information about the progress, scope, and vision for CALs development, as well as for all the CWS-NS digital services, including your opportunities to provide feedback throughout CWS-NS development, can be found at the following websites:

- <https://cwds.ca.gov/dashboard/digitalservices.html>
- <https://cwscms.osi.ca.gov/New-System>
- <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/PG2400.htm> (see monthly “Child Welfare Service – Digital Services Update” reports under Children and Family Services Division)

On September 16, 2016, the Request for Offer (RFO) for the design and development services of the CALs digital service was also released. The CALs digital service will provide tools that facilitate and support the activities of

You can also follow CWDS on its [Twitter feed](#) for more information about CWS-NS and CALs progress!

Resource Family Approval

The Resource Family Approval (RFA) program was developed to help meet California's goal of ensuring that all children live in committed, nurturing, and permanent families. Specifically, RFA establishes a new family-friendly and child-centered approval process for all related and non-related families seeking to care for children and youth in foster care. Because this new process consolidates and replaces existing requirements (foster parent licensing and certification, relative approval, adoption, and guardianship approvals) no additional home approvals are necessary should a family wish to pursue adoption or guardianship of a child in foster care (updates to the approval will occur at least annually and may be necessary if there are changes in the household or personal life events). Under the program, which will be statewide beginning January 2017, all caregivers of children and youth in foster care may be approved to be "resource families." Once approved, a Resource Family is able to be an emergency, temporary, and/or permanent family for a child.

WHAT WILL CHANGE?

RFA requires enhanced assessments of caregiver and training for all resource families, including those related to the child. This training is to better prepare families to care for children who have experienced the kinds of trauma that leads to children entering foster care.

The enhanced assessment determines the family's ability to meet developmental, safety, permanence, and well-being needs of children, the capacity to act as a prudent parent in

providing normal childhood experiences, the ability to cooperate with agency and service providers, the ability to provide and maintain financial stability, the ability to maintain the least restrictive and most family-like environment, and an assessment of the caregivers support system.

The goal is that better prepared families will lead to fewer placement changes for children enabling children to have stable, nurturing relationships with caregivers and to focus on school and other childhood activities.

BENEFITS

- RFA is a streamlined process that includes one application, one background check and a combined home environment, and psychosocial assessment. This will eliminate redundant paperwork for families and maximize the efficient use of staff and system resources.
- The improved approval standards will be consistent regardless of a child's case plan. This allows for a seamless transition to permanency through adoption or guardianship when a child is unable to return to his or her parents.
- Increased stability in foster care will assist families with developing supportive lifelong relationships and improved outcomes for children, youth and young adults.

MORE INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

- Please contact: CCR@dss.ca.gov.



Health and Safety Tips for this Fall

With the approach of autumn, the milder weather, and the gradual shortening of daylight hours, caregivers are encouraged to plan ahead in the interest of making this season both a safe and healthy one for all in the home. To this end, the following are some areas where due attention may be in order:

- **Vaccinations** – With the flu season, it is highly recommended by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) that flu shots be considered. As a course of best practices, the child's physician should first be consulted prior to the administering of any vaccines.
- **Hand-washing** – In order to prevent the spread of germs, it is recommended that hands be washed with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds. Where that is not possible, the use of hand-sanitizers is recommended.



- **Clothing** – Caregivers are advised to provide for sufficient clothing that is appropriate to changes in the weather.
- **Batteries** – Especially with the likely increased use of heating around the home in response to colder weather conditions, the start of the season marks an optimal time to check all batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. The chances of household fires and carbon monoxide poisoning are increased with the more frequent use of fireplaces and space heaters.
 - **Fire Extinguishers** – This is also a good time to check that all fire extinguishers in the home are fully charged and functional and placed in strategic locations for ease of access in the case of an emergency.
- **Emergency Drills** – Reviewing household emergency procedures (see [Section 80023](#) for Group Homes and [Section 89323\(a\)\(1\)](#) for Foster Family Homes.)

Back-to-School Safety Tips

The start of a new school year can be marked by both excitement and a good measure of stress as parents and foster youth alike make efforts to accommodate changes to their daily routine. With the busyness typically associated with purchasing school supplies and new apparel, an important area also meriting focus is working out an emergency plan for unforeseen events that may take place during the school day.

To begin with, be sure to update the emergency contact and pick-up information with the school, making certain that the information provided is consistent with the one kept at home and reviewed with the child periodically—especially as it regards

individuals who are authorized to pick up your child in the event of an unplanned contingency. A clear understanding established with the school and the child's instructors on the emergency procedures set in place will help avert confusion in the event of an emergency.

In addition, it is advisable that children carry emergency contact information in their backpacks or on their person. Such information may include important telephone numbers, directions on how to get home, transportation routes, or code words shared only amongst family members and cleared individuals to ensure the children's safety and security.

(Source: [Back to School—Be Prepared!](#))

Encouraging Personal Responsibility in Foster Youth

Foster parents and caregivers have a unique role in assisting the children and youth placed in their care to learn personal responsibility and age-appropriate independent behaviors that in turn help build their life skills as well as their sense of self-confidence and accomplishment.

This can start at a relatively young age with the introduction of basic doable household chores and, with time, progress to more complex activities, as appropriate to the child's age, ability, and level of maturity. Examples include learning how to manage allowance, opening and maintaining a basic savings account, and even finding part-time employment during the high school years.

Whatever the particular skill-building activities, however, at the very heart is the stable and edifying home environment where initiative, personal responsibility, and the desire to learn are steadily reinforced over time. The benefits of the many life skills learning opportunities available to foster youth (i.e., the [Independent Living Program \(ILP\)](#)) are optimized when they arrive already motivated and ready to run with the skills, ideas, and the knowledge provided. The nurturing home environment, maintained under the caring watch of care providers, plays

a pivotal and transformative role in setting the right tone for the journey toward a successful transition into young adulthood one day.

Foster parents and group home care providers are reminded that children placed in their care are entitled to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities, pursuant to [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 362.05](#). They shall furthermore receive training related to the reasonable and prudent parent standard (RPPS).

The RPPS is the standard characterized by the employment of careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child whilst at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of that child. Caregivers shall use this standard when determining whether to allow a child in foster care to participate in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities (see [Health and Safety Code \(HSC\) Section 1522.44](#)).

Smoke Free Environment and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

In the interest of ensuring that foster children are protected from toxic exposure and health risks associated with second-hand smoke and the presence of carbon monoxide, the Department has developed new regulations that came into effect on July 7, 2016. Said regulations are based on the following Health and Safety Code (HSC) sections which mandate appropriate protective measures.

[Health and Safety Code \(HSC\) Section 1530.7](#), which was added pursuant to



[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 352](#), mandates that group homes, foster family agencies, small family homes, transitional housing placement providers, and crisis nurseries shall maintain a smoke-free environment in the facility. It further mandates that caregivers operating licensed or certified family homes shall not smoke or permit any other person to smoke inside the facility, and, when the child is present, on the outdoor grounds of the facility. It further prohibits smoking in any motor vehicle that is regularly used to transport the child.

[HSC Section 1503.2](#), which was added pursuant to [AB 2386](#), mandates that every licensed or certified community care facility shall have one or more carbon monoxide detectors that meet the standards established in Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 13260) of Part 2 of Division 12. It also mandates that the Department shall account for the presence of these detectors during inspections. The following are the newly effective Title 22 regulations sections pursuant to the aforementioned statutes:



Prohibition on Smoking

On Premises:

- [Small Family Homes – Section 83087\(d\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)
- [Group Homes – Section 84087\(c\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)
- [THPP – Section 86087\(f\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)
- [Crisis Nurseries – Section 86587\(k\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)

- [Foster Family Homes – Sections 89387\(q\) & 89387\(r\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)

During Transportation:

- [Small Family Homes – Section 83074\(c\) – Transportation](#)
- [Group Home – Section 84074\(b\) – Transportation](#)
 - [THPP – Section 86074\(a\)\(2\) – Transportation](#)
 - [Crisis Nurseries – Section 86574\(d\) – Transportation](#)
 - [Foster Family Homes – Section 89374\(a\)\(1\) – Transportation](#)

Installation of Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- [Small Family Homes – Section 83087\(e\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)
- [Group Homes – Section 84087\(d\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)
- [THPP – Section 86087\(g\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)
- [Crisis Nurseries – Section 86587\(l\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)
- [Foster Family Homes – Section 89387\(s\) – Buildings and Grounds](#)

Reporting of Incidents Involving Law Enforcement Contact

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 388 \(Chesbro\), Chapter 760](#), which went into effect on January 1, 2015, was enacted in an effort to protect foster youth from being needlessly arrested and detained in juvenile hall for minor incidents or infractions in group homes and other facilities resulting from staff routinely calling on law enforcement to allege criminal behavior as part of their overall intervention strategy.

Facility staff are expected to appropriately intervene when foster youth exhibit misconduct typical of adolescence and not call upon law enforcement every time there is, for example, a fight amongst roommates or damage to property.

It is, however, not the intent of this law or the California Department of Social Services to discourage licensees from contacting law enforcement whenever appropriate or required.

Calls to law enforcement for minor infractions, on the other hand, have needlessly resulted in a greater numbers of arrests of foster youth, including their subsequent crossover to the delinquency system. This, in turn, has further undermined the chances of youth from successfully transitioning into young adulthood—not having benefited from the proportional clinical and behavioral interventions otherwise expected to be provided them during placement.

As a means of establishing greater accountability, AB 388, enforced under [Health and Safety Code \(HSC\) Section 1538.7](#), requires all group homes, community treatment facilities, transitional housing placement providers, and runaway and homeless youth shelters to report all incidents to CCLD involving law enforcement contact, regardless of their type or degree of seriousness, and whether law enforcement actually responded. For reporting purposes, it is sufficient that the facility contacted law enforcement.

CCLD shall conduct a special case management inspection at least once a year to congregate care facilities subject to AB 388 that are determined by CCLD (per its internal metrics) to have generated a greater than average number of law enforcement contacts alleging a crime committed by a foster youth as described under [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 602](#).

The metrics employed to determine what is a greater than average number of law enforcement contacts does factor in the element of proportionality, thereby taking into account the facility's capacity relative to the number of incident-related law enforcement calls generated. For this reason, larger facilities will not be at a disadvantage relative to their smaller capacity counterparts by the mere fact of netting a higher number of calls made to law enforcement for incidents.

Furthermore, only law enforcement contacts generated for alleged crimes committed by foster youth as described under WIC Section 602 will be used to determine whether a case management inspection is warranted. This, however, does not alter the requirement that all law enforcement contacts concerning an incident shall be reported, as previously mentioned—including those that are made to

report unauthorized absences. When no crime falling under WIC 602 is alleged by the facility at the time law enforcement is contacted, the facility must indicate that in the incident report.

CDSS has recently released Form [LIC 624-LE Law Enforcement Contact Report](#), used specifically to report incidents involving contact with law enforcement. The instructions maintain the standard protocol typical of reporting unusual incidents and injuries—that is, notifying CCLD of the incident by the next business day during normal business hours, then to be followed up by a written report within seven days of the incident.

However, there is one additional step that needs to be taken. A follow-up report on the incident needs to be submitted within six months of the incident. If the nature of the incident is such that matters are resolved immediately with no pending outcomes, the follow-up report may be submitted concurrently with the initial report.

The use of the LIC 624-LE, like that of the standard [LIC 624 Unusual Incidents/Injuries Report](#), is not required. If the facility elects to use its own document for reporting an incident, it may, provided the requisite information fields are properly completed. The benefit to using the LIC 624-LE, however, is its convenience as a tool specially designed to take the guesswork out of properly reporting law enforcement contact incident.

In closing, facilities determined by CCLD to require case management inspections pursuant to HSC Section 1538.7(b)(1) will be required to implement programs and services to help minimize law enforcement contacts and delinquency petition filings following incidents alleging unlawful conduct on the part of the foster youth. CDSS will likewise implement performance standards and outcome measures to gauge progress.



Reminder to Periodically Update Facility LIC Forms

With the beginning of a new academic year and the start of a new season, this may be a good opportunity for licensees to review and update their facility files as needed, with particular attention paid to the following licensing forms:

- [LIC 610B](#) – Emergency Plan for Foster Family Homes
- [LIC 610C](#) – Emergency Disaster Plan for Children’s Residential Facilities (Except Foster Family Homes)
- [LIC 308](#) – Designation of Facility Responsibility
- [LIC 309](#) – Administrative Organization
- [LIC 500](#) – Personnel Report.



stock of important changes—especially as they relate to helping ensure the safety of all in the event of disasters or life-threatening emergencies.

Having a clear and accurate account of the staff designated to act on behalf of the licensee and the days and hours staff are scheduled to work at the facility collectively work toward ensuring the health and safety of the children placed and the due care and supervision expected of them.

A current administrative organization record for licensees that are corporations or limited liability companies works to establish clarity as far as the “who’s who” in an organization for the purposes of determining how decisions are made and who is authorized to make them. Licensing inquiries are thus better channeled.

Keeping these licensing forms updated as changes occur is not only a regulatory requirement but also assists licensees to take

IMPORTANT INFO AND PHONE NUMBERS	
Centralized Complaint Information Bureau (CCIB)	1-844-538-8766
Foster Care Rates	916-651-9152
Caregiver Background Check Bureau (CBCB)	1-888-422-5669
Foster Care Ombudsman	1-877-846-1602
CCL Public Inquiry and Response	916-651-8848
Technical Support Program	916-654-1541

Notes and Credits

The Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) publishes the Children’s Residential Program Quarterly Update for the benefit of Licensees, Parents, Clients, Residents, and Stakeholders.

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