

## Resource Management

This section pertains to the recruitment and management of foster home resources by child and family services agencies and their mandating authorities. It includes persons who provide a place of safety and apply for a foster home licence as required in Section 1.4.2, [Place of Safety](#).

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### Legislation

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#### Child and Family Services Agencies

The definition of a foster home in [section 1](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act* excludes the home of parent or guardian of a child. [Section 7](#) of the Act lists the duties of child and family services agencies. Clause (g) requires an agency to provide care for children in its care. Clause (l) requires an agency to develop and maintain child care resources. [Section 8](#) provides for the licensing of foster homes.

Section 1 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#) defines a licensing agency as an agency that licenses foster homes. Section 2 states that the regulation applies to foster homes and respite foster homes. Section 3 pertains to the application process. Subsection 3(1.1) allows an agency not to accept applications if it already has enough licensed foster homes.

#### Child and Family Services Authorities

[Clause 19\(l\)](#) of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* requires authorities to ensure the development of appropriate placement resources for children.

Under section 20 of the [Child and Family Services Authorities Regulation](#), the authorities and the director (Director of Child and Family Services) share the duty under [clause 4\(1\)\(j\)](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act* to ensure the development of appropriate placement resources for children.

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## **Policy**

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## **Foster Care**

Foster parents play an essential role in the delivery of child and family services. As members of an agency team that works with foster children and their families, they provide the stability of a family setting for children in care under *The Child and Family Services Act*.

The purpose of foster care is to protect and nurture children and to strengthen families. It is intended to provide children with a temporary residence until they can be returned home, adopted or graduate to independent living. For some children, however, remaining in long-term foster care is the best plan for them.

Foster home resources should be used for children who can benefit most from a family environment. Other forms of placement may be preferable for a child who has extreme needs a foster family could not meet. In recent years, the development and use of specialized foster homes has reduced reliance on group home and treatment centre placements. The importance of developing culturally appropriate resources has also been recognized.

## **Foster Home Staff**

Child and family services agencies are responsible for the development, licensing and use of foster homes through staff assigned to manage these resources. Depending on the size and staffing patterns of the agency, this responsibility may be carried out through a program manager, foster home coordinator or district supervisor. Provincial policies and standards relating to [human resource practices](#) and [screening](#) of applicants for employment apply.

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An agency's foster care program must complement and support its responsibilities to provide services to families and child protection services. Agencies and their mandating authorities are expected to ensure coordination of these functions.

Agencies may rely on assistance from their mandating authority or collaboration with other agencies or service organizations in carrying out their foster home management responsibilities.

## Foster Home Recruitment

Child and family services authorities and their agencies collectively share the responsibility to ensure there is an adequate supply of suitable foster homes to meet the needs of the majority of children in care through appropriate means including:

- engaging the assistance of existing foster parents
- working with the Manitoba Foster Family Network or local organizations
- approaching an individual or couple regarding a specific children
- engaging in local or regional recruitment campaigns in collaboration with other authorities and agencies
- participating in province-wide foster home recruitment campaigns in collaboration with the Province of Manitoba

Agencies are encouraged to develop annual foster home recruitment plans that include information on:

- the number of homes available and projected number required
- characteristics of children needing placement
- skills and abilities required of foster families to meet current placement needs
- specific objectives of the plan
- methods to be used to reach objectives

## Foster Home Enquiries

Agencies are required to respond to all enquiries about foster parenting. As stated in 3(1.1) of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#), if an agency has enough foster homes, it may decline to accept an application. However, as part of its responsibility to other agencies, the agency is expected to identify potential foster parents and to encourage them to apply to [another agency](#). Agencies are also expected to record enquiries as an incidental contact in accordance with [Standard 2](#) in Section 1.7.1, Service Records.

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## Foster Parent Orientation and Training

Agencies receive funding for foster parent orientation and training. These funds are to be used for orienting foster home applicants as required under subsection 3(3) of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#) and for ongoing training.

For orientation, agencies are expected to follow the Orientation/Preservice for Foster Caregivers curriculum developed and distributed by the Child Protection Branch. Alternative resources may be used providing they include the similar content. Although not required, agencies are also encouraged to provide an orientation to foster home applicants when the foster child to be placed is personally known to them.

Agencies and their mandating authorities are also expected to provide ongoing training for foster parents (see [Foster Parent Training and Development](#) in Section 1.5.5, Support and Respite, for details).

## Complaints Relating to Foster Homes

There are six categories of complaints relating to foster homes. Child and family services agencies and their authorities are expected to respond to each category as follows:

**Child Protection (Including Abuse) Allegations** – This type of complaint involves an allegation that a child is or might be in need of protection as a result of an act or omission by a foster parent, alternate care provider or other individual in the home. These situations must be dealt with as a [child protection referral](#). These situations are covered in detail in Section 1.3.4, [Provincial Child Abuse Investigations](#).

**Complaints about Foster Homes other than Child Protection Allegations** – These are complaints other than allegations that a child is or might be in need of protection. They may pertain to concerns about the care and supervision of a foster child, alleged violations of approved standards or failure by a foster parent to report an [incident](#) involving a foster child. In addition to requirements in Section 1.7.3, [Complaint Review Process](#), agencies and their authorities are expected to resolve these complaints in a way that both respects the role of foster families and is in the best interests of the child.

**Complaints by Foster Parents and Care Providers** – These are complaints made by foster parents or other care providers in a foster home. They may pertain to such matters as lack of contact or support by an agency, lack of services or resources for a child, insufficient funding, the amount of respite provided, interference by parents of a foster child and compensation for damages. Agencies and their authorities are expected to respond to these complaints as required under Section 1.7.3, [Complaint Review Process](#).

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**Appeals against Licensing Decisions** – These complaints pertain to the right of foster home applicants and parents under [subsection 8\(2\)](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act* to appeal decisions made by licensing agencies with respect to the issuing, suspension cancellation or renewal of a foster home licence. This category is covered in Section 1.5.2, [Licensing and Licensing Appeals](#).

**Grievances by Foster Children** – This category pertains to the right of foster children under section 21 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#) to grieve the actions of a foster parent and other care providers in a foster home. Policies and standards relating to this category are contained in Section 1.5.4, [Care Roles and Responsibilities](#).

**Removal of Children** – This category pertains to the right of foster parents under [section 51](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act* to appeal an agency’s decision to remove a child. It is covered in Section 1.5.6, [Removing Children](#).

## Managing Agencies

Mandated child and family services agencies have the legislative authority to licence foster homes. This authority cannot be delegated. However, activities related to the development and management of foster home resources may be carried out by a [managing agency](#), for example, another mandated agency or a service organization such as a group home, treatment centre or family service agency. The licensing agency, however, continues to have legal responsibility for the operation and use of the home.

Consistent with section 6.1 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#), there must be only one agency responsible for managing each foster home applicant or foster family, whether it is the licensing agency or a managing agency. Conversely, each applicant and family must have an agency that is responsible for that home.

Resource management activities carried out by a managing agency may include:

- recruitment
- assessment of applicants
- orientation and training
- making recommendations with respect to the licensing
- assisting placing agencies in [selecting](#) a foster home for the placement of a child
- consulting with placing agencies and foster parents regarding [special rates](#) for a child

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- assessing the need for [support and respite](#) services in consultation with placing agencies and foster parents
  - advising placing agencies of planned and unplanned [absences](#)
  - investigating complaints other than child protection (including abuse) [allegations](#)

## Foster Home Records

A foster home record is a [service record](#) of a foster home applicant or parent created by a child and family services agency or a [service provider](#). It includes a [foster care management](#) case created in the Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) and any other electronic or paper record created by an agency or service provider.

Foster home records are voluntary service records under [subsection 76\(12\)](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act*. Foster parents have a right to access information on the file subject only to limitations to access in subsections 76(4) to (8) of the Act.

Information and documentation in a foster home record can only be disclosed in accordance with [subsection 76\(3\)](#) of the Act and, when a foster parent had requested a licence transfer, section 13.1 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#). Information and documentation in foster home records cannot be shared with agency staff not directly involved in the licensing and management of the home without the consent of the foster parents unless the information is relevant to a child protection investigation.

When a foster parent applies for a licence transfer to another agency, all third-party information and documentation on file relating to the licensing of the home such as medical or personal references form part the record and are included in the information and documentation transferred to the other agency (see [Standard 15](#) in Section 1.5.2, Licensing and Licensing Appeals).

## Child Placement Resource Lists

As part of their responsibility to develop, manage and support placement resources for children in care (see [Standard 1](#) in this section), foster home coordinators or program managers are required to maintain a current list of all foster home applicants and licensed foster homes, including families and agency staff providing a [place of safety](#). The list is compiled from information recorded on the foster care management records (see [Standard 8](#)) and contains the information required under [Standard 9](#).

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All agencies are required to use CFSIS for generating resource lists for children in care who are a provincial financial responsibility. First Nations agencies are also encouraged to use CFSIS to generate reports for children who are a federal financial responsibility.

Agencies require authorization from the Child Protection Branch to generate the following CFSIS reports relating to foster care and places of safety:

- RFac001 Foster Home Statistics
- RFac002 Current Facility Information
- RFac003 Facility Occupancy
- RFac005 Facility Utilization History
- RFac006 Placement Monitoring Report
- RFac010 Place of Safety Facility Occupancy
- RFac011 Foster Home Space Utilization by Agency
- RFac012 Facility Vacancy
- RFac014 Foster Home Management Report
- RFac015 Foster Home Licensing Statistics
- RFac016 Bed Space by CAA (Culturally Appropriate Authority)
- RFac017 Place of Safety Management Report
- RFac100 Children in Hotels/Shelters Report

## Standards

1. **Development and Management of Foster Homes** – An agency’s organizational structure and staffing patterns include a capacity to develop, license and manage foster home resources (see [Child Placement Resource Lists](#) in this section). The overall responsibility for this function is given to one or more supervisors, depending on the size and structure of the agency. This capacity is documented in agency organizational charts and job descriptions.
2. **Staff Orientation to Foster Care** – Within three months of commencing employment, all workers and supervisors, as part of their orientation to the agency, receive information about the agency’s foster care program. This orientation includes:
  - introduction to legislation and regulations pertaining to foster homes
  - overview of the agency foster care program
  - number and availability of foster homes
  - roles and responsibilities of staff and foster parents
  - effective use of foster homes
  - selection and matching process
  - working with foster parents

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- use of foster homes for emergency placement of children
  - foster home rates and rate approval process
  - administrative forms and procedures
3. **Foster Home Worker Assignment** – An agency ensures that each foster home has a worker assigned to provide supervision and support. In rural and northern agencies, the assignment may be to a worker with a general caseload.
4. **Orientation for Foster Home Applicants** – A licensing agency ensures that a foster home applicant receives an orientation to foster care based on the provincially approved [curriculum](#) within three months of accepting a written application for a licence to operate a foster home. The orientation may be provided individually or in groups. An agency may licence a foster home prior to completing the orientation process if it is satisfied that an applicant has met all other licensing requirements in Part 2 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#).
5. **Opening a Foster Care Management Case** – A licensing agency worker or coordinator opens a [foster care management](#) case
- when a decision is made to accept an application for a licence
  - on accepting the transfer of a licence pursuant to section 13.1 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#)
  - at the request of a [service organization](#)

When using CFSIS, the worker or coordinator opens a person record and a pending case record, noting the date the pending case was opened. On receiving a signed [application](#) for a licence to operate a foster home, the worker or coordinator opens the foster care management case with an *application* status, noting the date the case was opened.

6. **Foster Care Management Record Content** – In addition to relevant record content requirements in [Standard 5](#) of Section 1.7.1, Service Records, a foster care management record maintained by a licensing agency also contains:
- completed [forms](#) and other documentation pertaining to the screening, assessment, approval, licensing and use of foster homes
  - information on the bed capacity of the foster home and the characteristics of children to be placed



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- current information on the placement and removal of children, the number of children in the home and the number of children with special needs
  - information on each foster child in the home required under [Standard 7](#) in Section 1.5.3, Placing Children
  - current [support and respite](#) services provided to each home including the total cost over basic maintenance
  - the name, address, phone number and email address of all placing workers and, when applicable, the name of the placing agency

Assessments and contact recording may be stored electronically and printed when necessary for sharing with foster parent applicants and parents and for court.

7. **Record Confidentiality and Access** – Foster home applicants and foster parents, as the case may be, are advised of confidentiality and access provisions in [section 76](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act* and provincial [policy](#). The foster home worker or coordinator records on each foster care management record that the foster parents have been informed of these requirements and are prepared to comply with them.
8. **Closing a Foster Care Management Record** – a licensing agency closes a foster care management case when:
  - a foster home ceases operations or foster parents moves out of province
  - the agency refuses to issue a licence and the foster home applicant has not [appealed](#) or has unsuccessfully appealed the decision
  - the agency [transfers](#) a licence to another agency
  - the licence is [cancelled](#), the agency does not intend to reinstate the licence, and the licensee has not [appealed](#) or has unsuccessfully appealed the decision
9. **Maintaining Current Placement Resource List** – A licensing agency maintains a current list of all foster home applicants and licensed foster homes, including families and agency staff providing a [place of safety](#). The list contains the following information from the foster care management record (see [Standard 6](#) above):
  - names and addresses of place-of-safety parents and foster home applicants and parents and other relevant contact information
  - characteristics of children to be placed

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- bed capacity and current vacancies
- children placed in the home including name, age, sex, dated placed or discharged
- the name, address, phone number, agency and email address of all placing workers for each home in use

Child and family services agencies are required to use the [Child and Family Service Information System](#) to develop and maintain their foster home resource lists.