

9-100 HOME DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is responsible for developing foster and adoptive homes that meet the placement needs of children in its custody, comply with minimum standards, and participate in permanency planning.

The authority for DCFS to set these standards is found in the Child Care Facility and Child Placing Agency Act 286 of 1985 (R.S. 46:1401-1424), and regulations are outlined in the Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 67, Part 5, Subpart 8, Chapter 73.

While DCFS must maintain an open intake for home development services, it is not obligated to approve every applicant. Applications may be declined or referred elsewhere if the applicant is not genuinely interested in fostering or adopting through DCFS, or if their home is unlikely to be used for placements. DCFS does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, political beliefs, veteran status, or any other non-merit factor. Applicants are either supported to meet approval criteria or guided to withdraw within specified timeframes.

DCFS also assists other states' agencies in placing special needs children with Louisiana families at the request of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Administrators. In certain cases, DCFS may provide home studies for international adoptions when a Louisiana resident has identified a specific child abroad and cannot access affordable private agency services in-state. Certified families waiting over a year to adopt may be helped to transfer certification or use adoption exchanges to find children through other agencies.

1. Roles and Application Process

Dually certified families committed to permanency best meet the needs of children in care are dually certified as foster and adoptive homes. These families serve as key team members in partnership with DCFS, the child's birth family, and the child.

Applicants for foster and adoptive services must meet criteria designed to ensure child safety and build effective partnerships with DCFS. Home Development (HD) Specialists are responsible for developing placement resources and ensuring the safety of homes for children in the custody of the State of Louisiana.

DCFS prioritizes applications in this order:

1. Friends or relatives seeking child-specific certification
2. Families interested in a specific child, verified by the child's caseworker
3. Families open to fostering or adopting children in or entering care

The application process includes a home study, agency and criminal background clearances, pre-service training, and mutual assessment. DCFS makes the final decision regarding certification of all applicants and their home.

HD staff are responsible for intake systems that support applicants, recruitment plans, and resource development. They screen and certify applicants, facilitate timely training and approval, and collaborate with placement staff to find suitable matches for children.

Additional responsibilities include retaining certified homes, supervising their performance, supporting in-service training, serving external agencies as required by law, and maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation in all cases.

2. Types of Family Foster Homes

DCFS recognizes six main types of foster and adoptive homes, each requiring different levels of caregiver skills:

- a. **Family Foster Homes** provide ongoing care for one to six children or young adults (18–21) apart from their families. These homes may also offer respite care and are identified as Subtype FH in TIPS/LARE.
- b. **Relative/ Kin Foster Homes** are certified for a particular child and are not used for general placements. They follow a specialized training curriculum and are marked as Subtype FR.
- c. **Specialized Family Foster Homes** receive an additional stipend to care for children with specific needs, including large sibling groups, emotional or behavioral challenges, medical or developmental conditions, intellectual disabilities, or adolescents. These are Subtype FS.
- d. **Diagnostic and Assessment (D&A) Homes** offer short-term, intensive assessments to guide placement planning or reunification. They may also support transitions out of residential care or disruptions. These homes, available 24/7, receive a stipend and are Subtype ED.
- e. **Alternate Family Care (AFC) Homes** serve children with severe disabilities or behavioral issues who cannot be placed in regular or specialized homes. They are therapeutic settings that receive additional stipends and are marked as Subtype FA.
- f. **Adoptive Homes** are certified households of individuals eligible to adopt children through DCFS.

References:

Child Care Facility And Child Placing Agency Act 286 of 1985 as amended (R.S. 46:1401-1424)
Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC), Title 67, Part 5, Subpart 8, Chapter 73

Organizational:

Child Welfare – 9. Home Development – 1. Introduction – 9-100 Home Development Program

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