Department of Children's Services

POLICY

16.9 Required Foster Parent In-Service Training	
Application: DCS Foster Care and Supervisory Staff and Contract Agency Staff	
Authority: TCA § 37-5-105(3), 37-5-106, TCA 37-4-201-207; Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, T.C.A.§ 36-1-115(g)(1); Adoption and Safe Families, P.L. 105-89; Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006, P.L. 109-239, and Social Security Act; Fostering Connections To Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, P.L.100-351; Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (HR 4980)	**Standards: COA**: PA-AS 2-3, PA-AS 8, PA-FKC 1-3,PA-FKC 6-7,PA-FKC 10, PA-FKC 16-19,PA-RC 2, PA-KC 10.
Commissioner:	**Date:**
Original Effective Date: 11/26/18 Current Effective Date: 03/07/24	Supersedes: 11/19/21 Last Review Date: 03/07/24
Glossary: None	

Policy Statement:
Foster Parents receive in-service training in accordance with policies of the Department of Children's Services (DCS) and Council on Accreditation (COA), other accrediting entities, State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations.

Purpose:
To ensure DCS/Contract Agencies maintain highly qualified and competent foster parents who are equipped to provide for the safety, permanency and well-being of the children placed in their care.

Procedures:

A. Mandatory Training Courses for DCS/Contract Foster Parents

1. All foster parents are required to complete a minimum number of annual in-service training hours, as outlined in the ***16.9 Attachment: Required In-Service Training Chart-Foster Parents***.
   - **a)** The mandatory in-service training for foster family requirements, as described in this section, also applies to foster families serving children from out of state if their home is approved as a traditional foster home.
   - **b)** Under the ICPC, mandatory in-service training requirements for foster parents in another state serving DCS children is subject to training requirements or procedures of that state.
   - **c)** Kinship foster parents desiring to foster traditionally will be required to complete TN KEY and all in-service training requirements.
2. All foster parents complete annual training requirements by June 30th of each year, with the exception of foster parents approved between the period of January 1st and June 30th. All parents approved after December 31st will have until the following year to complete training requirements.
   - ***a)*** All other adults/caregivers in the foster home that complete TN KEY are required to complete In-Service training as required and outlined in ***16.9 Attachment: Required In-Service Training Chart-Foster Parents.***
   - **b)** Contract Agency/DCS Foster Parent Support staff members should assess completion of the annual mandatory training requirements for each of the approved family members.
   - **c)** Proof of foster parent elective training completion not sponsored by DCS/Contract Agency, or other approved training received through media such as books, videos or online hours should be documented on ***CS-1000, Foster Parent Elective Training Documentation***, or on the ***External Training Credit*** page and submitted to the Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD) for review and approval.
   - **d)** All foster parents will be required to complete a minimum of one (1) trauma course annually. Parents should choose from the list in the ***16.9 Attachment: Required In-Service Training Chart-Foster Parents*** to fulfill this requirement:
   - **e)** Foster parents providing services to diabetic children are required to complete the online course ***Working with Children Who Have Diabetes*** within 24-hours of placement.
   - **f)** Foster parents providing services to pregnant or parenting youth are required to complete the online course ***Fostering Pregnant or Parenting Youth*** within thirty (30) days of placement.
   - **g)** Foster parents providing services for therapeutic agencies should complete the required therapeutic hours and courses outlined in ***Policy 16.9 Attachment: Required In-Service Training Chart-Foster Parents***.

h) Foster parents who foster youth with special health care needs are required to complete Caring for Children with Special Healthcare Needs (2 Hours) or an approved curriculum within ninety (90) days of placement.

i) Foster parents who foster youth adjudicated delinquent are required to complete Parenting the Justice Involved Youth online course prior to placement and Trauma Informed Parenting Strategies within ninety (90) days of placement.

j) Foster parents who foster youth on the autism spectrum or who have an intellectual developmental disability will complete an autism, sensory, or Intellectual Developmental Disability course within ninety (90) days of placement.

k) All DCS families with DCS custodial children placed in their home for the purpose of adoption are required to attend Adoption Preparation classroom training through the contract agency providing adoption preparation and supports, when the criteria below has been met:

- Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition has been filed on or after July 1, 2017
- Child is physically placed in the home
- Family has made a verbal commitment to adopt
- Recruitment for a pre-adoptive placement is no longer needed, as determined by the team.

3. The following steps are followed for foster parents who do not meet annual training requirements:

a) DCS FPS or Agency Staff meet with families during their monthly home visit to discuss compliance issue and develop a ***CS-0909, Foster Home Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)*** within thirty (30) days.

b) If foster parents do not progress towards complying with the PIP, DCS/Contract Agency places the home on suspended admissions for no more than sixty (60) days.

c) If foster parent continues non-compliance, DCS/Contract Agency consults with Regional Director/Agency Director to discuss next steps for the family. The OTPD is then notified of the plan for the family.

B. Written Request for Training Waiver

1. Staff may submit a CPR/First Aid equivalent waiver requesting exemption, deferment, or an extension for the courses listed below to an OTPD representative for review and approval utilizing ***form CS-0921, Waiver of Criminal Convictions, Pre and In-Service Training Requirements, Non-Safety Issues, CPS Substantiations and Education Requirements.***

Course:	Credentials

CPR/First Aid	Medical and Emergency Medical Professionals (i.e., nurses, doctors, emergency medical personnel, etc.)

2. Staff may request for training requirements to be deferred or exempted due to employment, military, or medical reasons by submitting documentation from the foster parent's employer or physician.
3. Current foster parents who are certified to deliver In-Service training will receive credit for courses that they deliver.
    - Foster parent trainers for In-Service courses are required to have a bachelor's degree.
4. Foster parents who meet the DCS approved medical professionals criteria are exempt from the Medical Resources Information course. However, they are required to complete an online course titled "Medical Resources Information for Medical Professionals" every other year. In addition, foster parents are required to submit a copy of their medical license or certification for final completion of this course, here: ***https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/medadmin4prof***

C. Out of State or Transfer Foster Homes

Foster Parents transferring from out of state must submit an official training transcript, official document, or certificates summarizing foster parents pre-service and in-service training experience to OTPD for review.

D. Other Agency Transfers

DCS or Contract agency reviews training transcript, official document, or certificates summarizing foster parents in-service training compliance. If foster parent(s) are not in compliance, a plan is developed to ensure compliance within ninety (90) days of activation.

Forms:

CS-0909 Foster Home Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

CS-0921, Waiver of Criminal Convictions, Pre and In-Service Training Requirements, Non-Safety Issues, CPS Substantiations and Educational Requirements.

CS-1000 Foster Parent Elective Training Documentation

Collateral Documents:

16.9 Attachment: Required In-Service Training Chart-Foster Parents