



Memorandum of Agreement Adoption of the Attestation Model for Family Foster Home Licensing

PREAMBLE

The goal of child welfare is to promote, safeguard, and protect the overall well-being of children and families, to intervene on behalf of children who have been abused or neglected, and to work with children and families to assure that every child has a permanent, safe and nurturing environment in which to achieve their maximum potential.

The Attestation Model of licensing has been established in law as a potentially beneficial process for licensing family foster homes in that it is efficient and provides the entities serving the children and training potential foster parents a continued role

This memorandum of agreement between the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency and the Department establishes an agreement to promote efficient processing of all foster home license applications under 65C-45, F.A.C. The goal of this memorandum is to promote quality and safety in licensed foster care homes in the Lead Agency's contracted counties or the Noncontracted Supervising Agency.

PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT

The parties to this Agreement, the Department of Children and Families, _____ Region Foster Care Licensing Program Management and Contract Management offices, hereinafter referred to as the "Department," and the _____, Community-based Care Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency, hereinafter referred to as the "Lead Agency," or the "Noncontracted Supervising Agency," respectively, agree to the terms and conditions set forth herein.

1. Purpose

This agreement sets out procedures to be used by the Department Regional Foster Care Licensing Program Management and the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency staff when processing applications and renewals for foster care licenses. The Regional Foster Care Licensing office and Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will work together to improve and simplify the application and renewal process moving the primary responsibility of compliance, quality information and documentation and decision-making from the Department to the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency.

2. Agreement

- 2.1. The Department and the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency hereby enter into this Memorandum of Agreement based on the mutual promises set forth herein.
- 2.2. The statements of the Preamble are true and are incorporated herein and made a part hereof.

Key Tenets

- 2.3. Communication. Both parties agree to view their individual responsibilities as part of a team effort to ensure the highest quality of licensed foster care in the Lead Agency's contracted counties or homes managed by the Noncontracted Supervising Agency. In order to support continued collaboration and ensure the highest quality and safety for children served, the agencies agree to meet quarterly or as needed, based upon a joint decision by the Lead

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Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency and regional staff, to discuss any technical assistance on specific cases, review and modify processes and communication protocols that impact safety and quality in licensed foster care in the Lead Agency's contracted counties or homes managed by the Noncontracted Supervising Agency.

- 2.4. Side- By- Side Reviews. The Side-by-Side Reviews are designed to support the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency and strengthen communication among the staff representing the Department's Region Foster Care Licensing Program Management, the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency, the child placing agency (CPA) providers, aka supervising agencies, licensed under 65C-15, F.A.C., and Department Contract Management in order for all licensing packets to be of high quality, contain complete information and follow rule and law. Each region in collaboration with the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will develop a transition process that requires _____ side by sides to be completed prior to full transition to the attestation model for licensing. At a minimum, on-going reviews will be completed during the relicensing process of the child placing agency; additional reviews may be completed prior to relicensing based on the needs of the individual agencies.
- 2.5. Prior to full transition to the Attestation Model, the region and lead agency will establish an accuracy rate for packets reviewed that will be no less than 90%.

3. Lead Agency's or Noncontracted Supervising Agency's Responsibilities

- 3.1. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency agrees to oversee and/or enter into agreements with all licensed child placing agencies operating as supervising agencies in their contracted area.
- 3.2. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will ensure that supervising agencies, that are providing therapeutic and/or traditional out of home licensed care to dependent children, understand and abide by the processes outlined in this Agreement.
- 3.3. The supervising agency will submit the licensing packets to the Lead Agency's personnel designated as the Licensing Review Specialist. This person is responsible for the licensing file review, recommendation and ultimately for submission of the licensing packets to the Department's Regional Foster Care Licensing Office.
- 3.4. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will submit the entire licensing packet or information that supports the addendum or change request (i.e., capacity, location, etc.) along with the Attestation to the Department's Regional Foster Care Licensing Office during the transition period.
- 3.5. After a successful transition period, the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will submit the Attestation and retain the Licensing packet. The Attestation will be submitted along with the Licensing Standards Checklist.
- 3.6. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency agrees to submit the Attestation for Foster Home Licensing declaring:

all documentation, background screening, and other elements required under s. 409.175, F.S., and Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C., for issuance of initial or renewal foster care license have been received and reviewed and found to be in compliance with all statutory and Administrative Code requirements by me and the application should be approved. Attach Licensing Standards Checklist.

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Or

a review of the documentation, background screening, and other elements required under s. 409.175, F.S., and Chapter 65C-45 F.A.C., for issuance of initial or renewal foster care license demonstrates that the license should not be issued or renewed for the following reason(s): _____ . Attach supporting documentation.

- 3.7. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will forward the original license and cover letter to the supervising agency once the Department issues the foster home license.
- 3.8. In the case where Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency recognizes that the licensing packet meets minimum licensing standards, but the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency has no intention of utilizing this home in their system of care, the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will continue to submit the Re-Licensing packet. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency may at their discretion add the utilization intention in the letter that is submitted.
- 3.9. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency will lead an integrated review team made up of subject matter experts and stakeholders, for the purpose of reviewing and determining a plan of action for reports of abuse and neglect in family foster homes and foster care referrals.

4. Department Regional Foster Care Licensing’s Responsibilities

- 4.1. The Department Regional Foster Care Licensing will provide training and technical assistance as requested by the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency.
- 4.2. The Department Regional Foster Care Licensing office will communicate changes in policy and Administrative Code to the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency.
- 4.3. The Department Regional Licensing office will issue a State License that reflects the name of the foster parent(s), supervising agency, date, location and any specific restrictions.
- 4.4. The Department will participate as a member of the integrated review team for the purpose of reviewing and determining a plan of action for reports of abuse and neglect in family foster homes and foster care referrals.

5. Licensing Actions (corrective, revocations, denials, etc)

- 5.1. The Department Regional Licensing Office will staff with the legal office information received from the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency and draft actions accordingly.
- 5.2. The supervising agency will submit the request and supporting documentation to the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency designated Licensing Review Specialist. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency designated Licensing Review Specialist will review and staff the request with the Department Regional Licensing office and follow up with submission of request and all supporting documentation for review, approval and action.

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6. Transition Readiness

6.1. To ensure the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency is prepared to receive the review responsibilities as described, the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency is scheduled and will be evaluated to ensure readiness.

6.1.1. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency selected _____ to begin transition. The Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency has identified _____ as the designated Licensing Review Specialist responsible for final review, recommendation and submission of all Initial and/or Re-Licensing application packets under 65C-45.

6.1.2. Once the side-by-side family foster home licensing packet reviews demonstrate a 90% or above compliance rate for accuracy, quality and proper handling, the final transition of application packet review, management of licensing actions and recommendation responsibilities for both will occur. This will include a transfer of the Master Licensing files from the Department to the Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency as the records custodian.

7. Modification. This Agreement may be amended only by a written amendment signed by both parties.

8. Cancellation. This agreement will remain in effect until terminated by either party. A thirty-day notice will be required prior to termination of this agreement.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties hereto cause their signatures to be affected:

Regional Director
Department of Children and Families
_____ **Region**

Date

Chief Executive Officer
Community Based Care Lead Agency or Noncontracted Supervising Agency

Date

Name of Agency