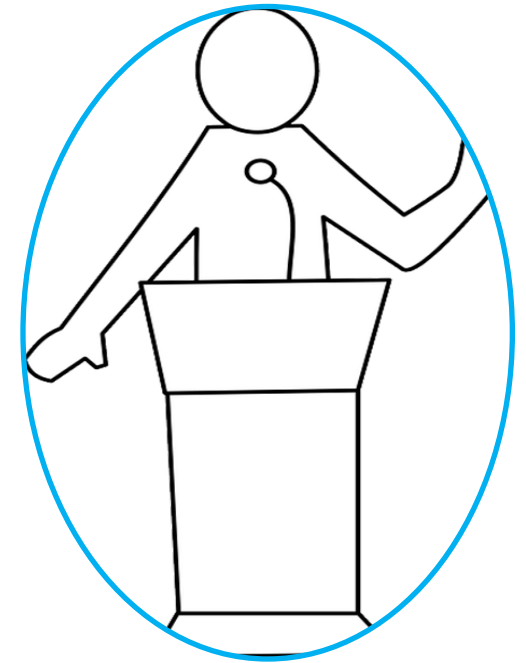


Implementation of Resource Family Approval



Today's Speakers

- Kim Wrigley, California Department of Social Services
- Danna Fabella, Child and Family Policy Institute of California
- Carol Ramirez, Lilliput Families
- Karen Alvord, Lilliput Families
- Angie Schwartz, Alliance for Children's Rights



Logistics


- Webinar will be recorded and archived at www.stepupforkin.org/trainings
- All attendees will be on mute – type any questions you have into the chat box or if you experience technical difficulties email Adina Kuncz at a.kuncz@kids-alliance.org
- A certificate of participation will be posted online after the webinar at www.stepupforkin.org/trainings
- We will be answering your questions – please submit questions using the “questions” function on your GotoWebinar dashboard

Agenda

- Goals and Vision of CCR
- Overview of Current Law and Policy
Resource Family Approval
- Home Based Family Care Rate
- Best Practices in Implementation of
Resource Family Approval
- Tools to Help Families Navigate Resource
Family Approval



GOALS AND VISION



Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.” ~Arnold Bennett

“The thing that lies at the foundation of positive change, the way I see it, is service to a fellow human being.” ~Lech Walesa

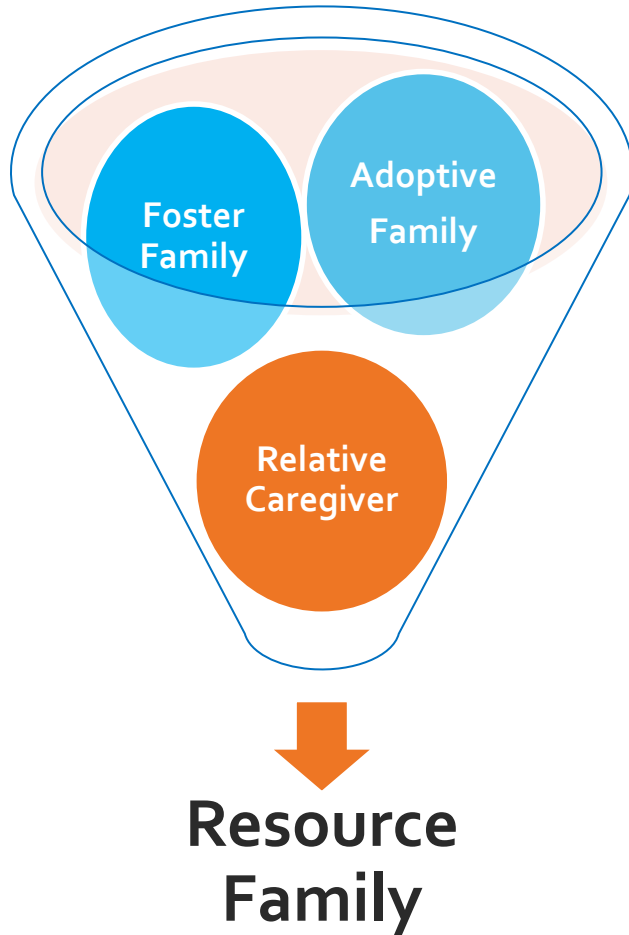
Vision

- All children live with a committed, permanent and nurturing family with strong community connections
- Services and supports should be individualized and coordinated across systems and children shouldn't need to change placements to get services
- When needed, congregate care is a short-term, high quality, intensive intervention that is just one part of a continuum of care available for children, youth and young adults
- Effective accountability and transparency drives continuous quality improvement for state, county and providers

Key Strategies

- Child and Family Teams (CFTs) drive case planning, placement decisions and care coordination
- New licensing requirements for FFAs and STRTPs:
 - Limit use of residential care to when an Interagency Placement Committee finds child requires short-term intensive services
 - Ensures STRTPs and FFAs have an identified ability to meet the varied needs of children (i.e. “core services”) including mental health services
 - Ensures STRTPs and FFAs are nationally accredited and have engaged placing agencies in program development
- New approval requirements and restructured rate system for caregivers provides for a single residential rate and a varied “level of care” home-based rate
- Local collaboration between Child Welfare, Mental Health, Probation, and Education to provide integrated services

RFA LEGISLATIVE INTENT



Unified, family friendly, and child-centered approval process that applies to all types of foster families:

- Eliminates duplication
- Increases approval standards
- Incorporates a comprehensive psychosocial assessment of all families
- Includes approval for: foster care, adoption, guardianship

Authorized under AB 340 (2007), reauthorized under SB 1013 (2013) and modified under AB 403 (2015) & AB 1997 (2016); WIC § 16519.5

What Happens on January 1, 2017?

- Group Homes must transition to become Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs or have an extension
- All new families must be approved as Resource Families.
(Existing homes have until 12/31/19 to convert)
- Phase 1 of new rate structure will implement:
 - All licensed and certified foster homes, NREFM and relative caregivers will be receive \$889 Basic Level unless already receiving a higher rate.
 - FFA agency rate will be raised to Basic Level Agency rate
 - STRTP rate will be in effect for licensed facilities
- Foster Family Agencies must submit updated Plan of Operation and revised Program Statement
- Counties must implement Child and Family Teams

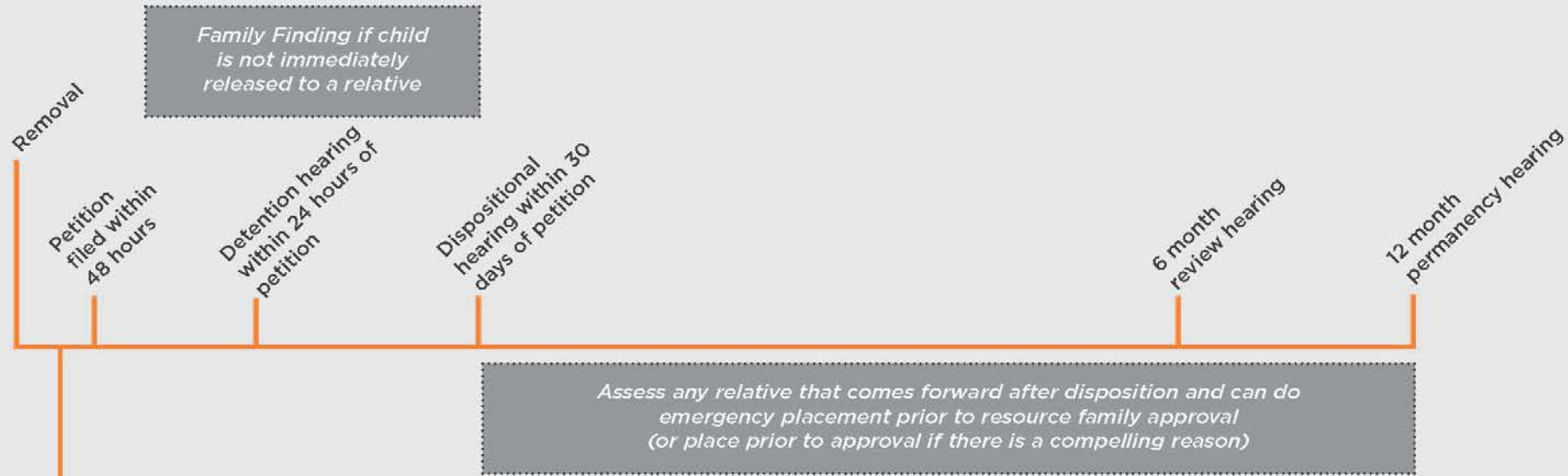
What happens afterwards?

- STRTPs must have a Mental Health Program Approval/ Medi-Cal Certification to provide on-site Specialty Mental Health Services no later than 12 months after licensure.
- STRTPs and FFAs must become nationally accredited no later than 24 months after licensure and must provide statute updates to CDSS at 12 and 18 month intervals post-licensure.
- All existing foster homes must be approved as Resource Families by 12/31/19.
- A statewide Child Welfare Assessment tool will be selected following completion of a 9 month pilot.
- Implementation of a new Performance and Oversight framework for providers and counties by 1/1/19.

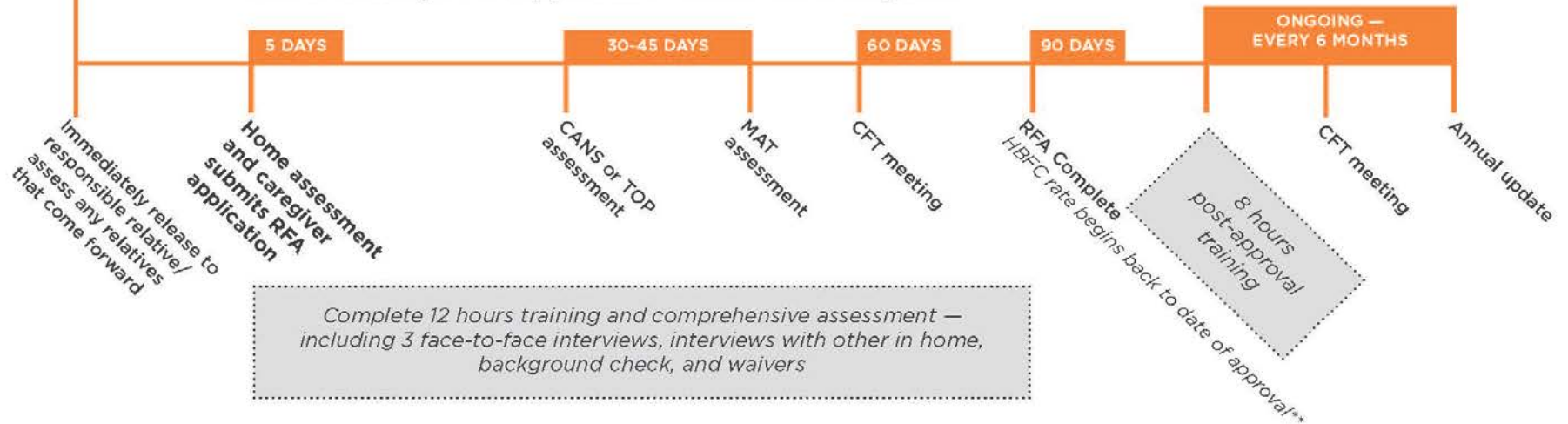
RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL

Overview of Current Law and Policy

Overview of Timeline from Removal to Permanency



CalWORKs/Pre-Approval Placement Stipend



****Rates to be at child's assessed level of care, but the LOC system will not be rolled out until Spring/Summer 2017**

PLACEMENT PRIOR TO APPROVAL

1. Compelling Reason:

- Based on needs of the child
- After home environment approval completed
- Permanency assessment to be completed within 90 days

2. Emergency Basis:

- Must be with relative or nonrelative extended family member
- Requires WIC 309/361.45 assessment (WIC 309 requirements have **not** changed)
- Home environment assessment must be initiated within 5 business days and caregiver must turn in RFA application

*AFDC-FC funding is not available to families until full approval has been achieved **BUT** counties can use expedited CalWORKs, Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention Funds, and/or Emergency Assistance to bridge the gap!! At a minimum, counties must provide relatives with the Expedited CalWORKs application.*

CORE ELEMENTS OF RFA

- **One standard** – relatives and recruited families treated the same
- **One process** – approved for any child in foster care, approved in any county, and approved for guardianships & adoptions
- **Comprehensive assessment** required, includes:
 - Home Environment Assessment
 - Permanency Assessment
- Pre- and post-approval **training** required for all families
- Procedures for **expedited placements**



Overview of RFA Process

- All resource family applicants will:
 1. Receive a RFA orientation
 2. Undergo criminal clearances and background checks
 3. Undergo home environment assessment
 4. Participate in 12 hours pre-approval training + 8 additional hours within the first year (some counties/FFAs may require additional training hours)
 5. Provide health screening for applicants and TB screening for all adults in home
 6. Participate in a psychosocial assessment
 7. Receive a written report of the resource family

HOME ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

Home environment assessment requires:

- 1) Criminal record clearance (and any necessary exemptions) of each applicant and all adults residing in, or regularly present in, the home
- 2) Consideration of substantiated allegations of child abuse or neglect
- 3) Building, grounds & storage requirements that ensure health and safety
- 4) Total # of children shall not exceed 6 children.
 - **Exception**: Exceptional circumstances exist that are documented in the foster child's case file, including but not limited to the need to place siblings together
- 5) Applicant must understand:
 - Rights of children and his/her responsibility to safeguard those rights
 - Responsibility to act as a reasonable and prudent parent and maintaining the least restrictive environment serving the child's needs.

PERMANENCY ASSESSMENT

Permanency assessment requires:

1. Caregiver training – minimum of **12** hours pre-approval & **8** post-approval hours annually
2. Psychosocial assessment of caregiver/applicant, which shall include a risk assessment of:
 - Physical and mental health,
 - Alcohol and other substance use and abuse,
 - Family and domestic violence, and
 - Caregiver’s understanding of the needs of children in care and ability to meet those needs

NOTE: When the applicant is a relative/NREFM, psychosocial assessment shall consider nature of relationship between the applicant and the child AND county can do child-specific approvals (*WIC § 16519.5(d)(3) and Written Directives section 6-07(d)*)

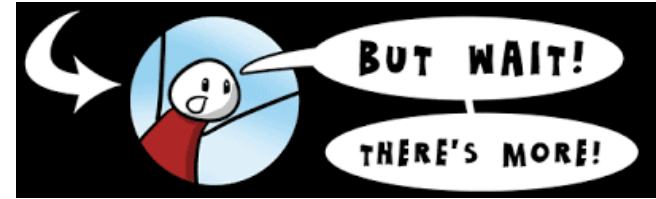
NOTE #2: The applicant’s preference to provide a specific level of permanency shall not be a basis to deny an application. (*WIC § 16519.5 (g)(5)(A)(i)(II)*)

NOTE #3: If a relative does not wish to adopt or enter into guardianship, the court can order a permanent plan of placement with a “fit and willing relative” (*WIC § 366.26(c)(4)(B)*)

Understanding the Psychosocial Assessment

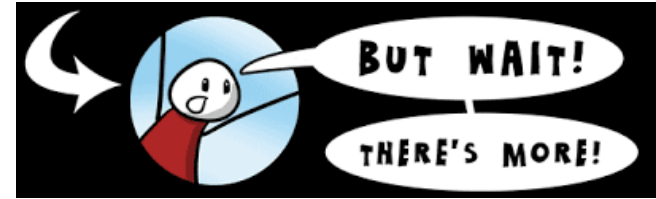
- NOT an adoption home study
- In depth look of family structures, values, discipline practices, coping strategies, etc.
- Allows the social worker to see into the family system and evaluate their strengths and areas where more support may be needed for safer and more effective parenting
- Concerns addressed with the family and mitigated when possible
- Allows for more thoughtful matches and more individualized training to better support families

RFA WRITTEN DIRECTIVES



- Some additional assessment requirements specified in the directives:
 - Health screening within last 360 days & TB Screening
 - First Aid and CPR certification
 - 3 face-to-face interviews with applicant(s)
 - 1 face-to-face interview with all other residents in the home, including children
 - 3 personal references
 - DMV check on applicants and all adults in the home or regularly present who may frequently transport a child

RFA WRITTEN DIRECTIVES – NEW IN VERSION 4



- Child specific approval – not in the interim licensing standards
- Families receive copy of the notes from the visit
- Reporting requirements regarding Notice of Actions and the Notice of Action database.
- Confidentiality regarding the elements of the comprehensive assessment and the case files.
- Out of County Assessments: Procedure includes three options
- Requirement to consult with the Legal Division prior to denial of an approval

Written Directives: New in Version 4 (con't)

- Fire clearance is required if more than six children or NMD's placed in the home
- Requirements for checking prior administrative actions in the LAARS and Notice of Action databases
- Provisions for transfers of criminal background checks
- Written Report shall include physical features of the home
- Provisions for the addition or removal of a Resource Family Parent.
- Anyone can apply as a resource family regardless of immigration status



New in Version 4 (con't)

- Provisions for Corrective Action Plans
- Provisions for maintenance of Resource Family file and confidentiality
- Expansion of Article 12: Due Process
- Records requirements including documentation of prescription medication delivery.
- Arrangements for childcare to be provided by a relative.
- Provisions for health related services.



Maintaining Resource Family Approval

- RFA must be updated annually or more often if “significant changes”
 - Must begin 60 days prior to approval anniversary and be completed no later than 30 days after
- If a resource family moves from one county to another
 - RFA must be updated within 30 days
 - Completed update begins new annual period
- A resource family remains approved until the family surrenders their approval or their approval is rescinded



Conversion to RFA

- Current license/approval is good until December 31, 2019 as long as they have a child in placement at some point during 2017 (WIC § 16519.5(p)(5)
 - *Approval can continue after December 31, 2019 as long as RFA initiated by that date*
 - All licensed foster family homes that did not have a child in placement between January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017 shall forfeit license by operation of law on January 1, 2018
 - Applications for a foster family home license or request for relative/NREFM approval received on or before December 31, 2016 are approved/denied under the prior licensing/approval process (not RFA) (WIC § 16519.5(p)(2)(C))
- Truncated RFA Process for Currently Licensed/Approved Families
 - Licensed and approved homes with an approved adoptive home study completed by January 1, 2018 are deemed approved as a resource family
 - Licensed and approved homes with child in placement during 2017 are approved as resource families upon completion of psychosocial assessment

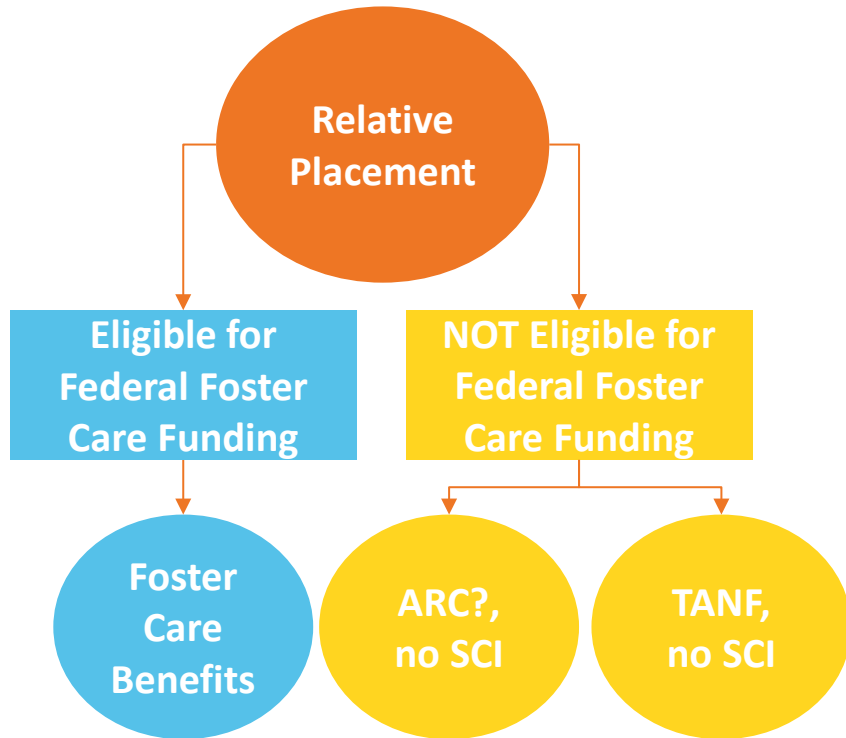
Moving to Permanency: Adoption

- What else happens prior to finalizing adoption once the case plan is adoption?
 - Ensure all marriages/dissolutions/death certificates of resource family have been verified
 - Resource family provided with adoption specific information (WD Section 13-01(c))
 - Child's adoption worker determines if resource family is appropriate adoptive placement for the child
 - Adoptive placement, AAP and post placement visits completed by appropriate adoption agency (county, licensed adoption agency)
 - Once family files petition for adoption, appropriate adoption agency completes report for the court with recommendation for granting/denying petition for adoption

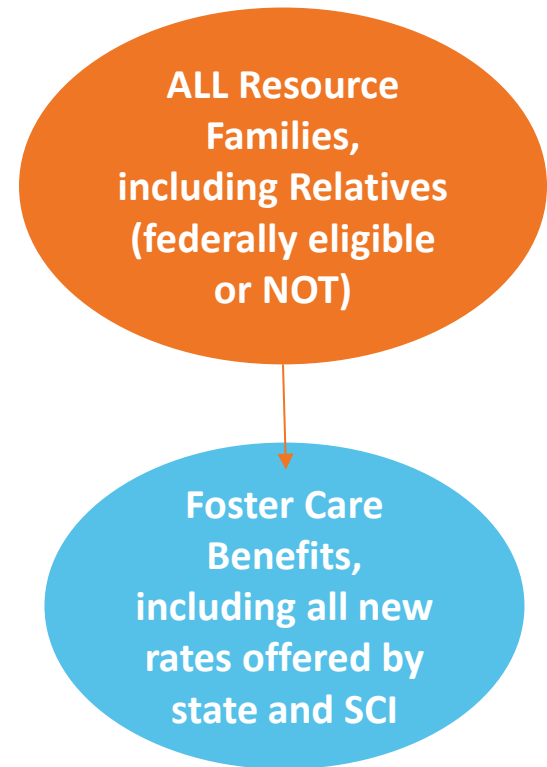
HOME BASED FAMILY CARE RATE

EQUAL(ISH) FUNDING!

Old Rate System



Home Based Family Care Rate System



“a child placed with a resource family is eligible for the resource family basic rate... at the child’s assessed level of care” (WIC § 16519.5(l))

** Non-federally eligible placed with relatives are still not eligible for infant supplement or dual agency rate

Home Based Family Care Rate Structure

The HBFC Rate paid to the Resource Family is based on the amount of care and supervision the child needs from the family. A Level of Care (LOC) Protocol tool is being developed to guide the county LOC determination.



Level of Care Protocol

- The LOC Protocol will be based on 5 Domains: Physical, Health, Education, Behavioral/Emotional, and Permanency/Family Support.
 - Additionally, Static Factors are established that identify an automatic LOC 4 designation.
- Designed to interact with existing child welfare assessment tools and interpret the various assessment tool scores
- There will be a testing period before a final release and then training will be offered. This will be finalized prior to 12/1/17.



Home Based Family Care Agency Rate – How it Impacts Foster Family Agencies

Paid to the FFA is a rate that correlates to each LOC. The services and supports are not limited to IV-E allowable activities.

Agency	Basic Level	Basic LOC -2	Basic LOC-3	Basic LOC-4
Social Worker	\$340	\$340	\$340	\$340
Services and Supports	\$156	\$200	\$244	\$323
Admin	\$672	\$672	\$672	\$672
RFA Activities	\$48	\$48	\$48	\$48
Resource Family	\$889	\$989	\$1089	\$1189

Intensive Services Foster Care

Intensive Services Foster Care replaces ITFC and is intended to accommodate probation placements, MTFC, special health care or certain medical placements, an alternative to or step down from residential care, Therapeutic Foster Care or other special populations. The Resource Family must meet a level of specified training and competencies based on the child's needs.

Paid to the Resource Family	\$2,321
Administration	\$3,482
Services & Supports	\$200
Total	\$6,003

Implementation Plan of Rate Structure

Phase 1 (implements 1/1/17)

- FFHs (includes ARC) NRLGs, NREFM , NMDs in SILP paid less than \$889 will get rate increase to that amount.
- FFA Agency rate will be increased to Basic Level plus the foster care age based payment
- Existing Kin Gap and AAP will remain the same (new cases will receive the basic/Level 1 HBFC rate)
- STRTP – Interim Rate of \$12, 030 if licensed as a STRTP
- Wraparound – Single Rate of \$8,573
- Intensive Treatment Foster Care – stays the same

Phase 2 (implementation following automation)

- Level of Care 2-4 and Intensive Services Foster Care will be implemented following further state guidance and are available on a prospective basis following full implementation.
- Will implement December 1, 2017

BEST PRACTICES IN IMPLEMENTING RFA

Surveys from Early Implementer Counties

- Emergency Placements:
 - Begin family finding as soon as possible
 - Having appropriate staff on call 24/7 that can provide verbal approval for emergency placements
 - Very important! Nothing changes under RFA with respect to relatives as the first placement choice
- Training:
 - Adapted trauma informed training to be closer to the 12 hour pre-approval requirement
 - Using Foster ParentCollege.com – on line for part of training
 - Providing child-care and transportation for relatives
 - Offering one-on-one training in the home for relatives who face unique barriers
 - Providing a “one-stop shop” with training, fingerprinting and health screening
 - Flexibility in scheduling classes

Surveys from Early Implementers (cont'd)

- First Aid/CPR Training:
 - Incorporate into training sessions
 - Providing access to on-line training when necessary
- Health and TB Screening:
 - Contracting with Health Department for the Screenings
 - Arranging to have available at the Orientation/Training
 - Referring families to low cost health care providers and provides transportation
 - Providing vouchers or reimbursing Screening costs
 - Developing MOU's with County Hospital

Surveys from Early Implementers (cont'd)

- Criminal Background check:
 - Offering Livescans at the Department
 - Having mobile Livescans available
 - Designating experienced staff to ensure this task is completed timely
- Character References:
 - Using a form with check boxes to simplify the process
 - Communicating with references via call or email
- Written Report:
 - Using a modified Assessment Tool which supports standardization of the information across county lines
 - The goal is to make this an interactive process – very important with relatives – asking questions but also providing opportunities for them to ask us question

Best Practices for Implementing RFA at the County Level

- Providing financial assistance to help applicants caring for a child placed on an emergency basis pending approval
 - *LA County provides \$400 stipend per child for 3 months and caregivers can initiate CalWORKs using expedited app immediately*
- Providing support at placement with purchasing of bedding, and other items
- Assigning specific staff to assist applicants one-on-one with the completion of paperwork
- Using Foster Parents as mentors to support applicants through the process
- Using Foster Youth at Orientations to tell their story and need for families for older youth

Best Practices for Implementing RFA at the County Level

- Data bases created to track timelines
- Nineteen (19) counties using BINTI – allows relatives to put their information in once – expediting relative approvals
- If more than one relative available, work with the family system to determine if there is one that will go through the entire process (but encouraging counties to work with other relatives to be part of youth’s support system)
- Using a Resource Family “Mentor” who can work with relatives
- Providing one-time emergency payment to assist the relative with expenses
- Linking relatives to community resources

Putting Policy to Practice: Lilliput Families

Lilliput Implementation Strategies for Approaching RFA

Early Implementer, FFA and Adoption, Unified Assessment, Kinship expertise

- Agency Self Evaluation- staffing, training, CQI, website, RFA materials /messaging, finance (LOC), database (electronic client record), logic model to track desired outcomes
- Identify lead for Internal and external communication and messaging: ACL's, RFA written directives, FFA interim licensing standards; update policies, procedures and protocols
- Weekly RFA implementation meetings- what's working, what needs improvement, areas to address with CDSS and CCL
- Development of staffing resource model to support timely approval for kin and non kin- RFA flow chart
- Enhance data base and software to create dashboards and tracking systems
- Evaluation of staff training requirements and competencies to align with RFA

Implementation Strategies for Approaching RFA (con't)

- Strength based and child/youth/family centered language
- SAFE – inter rater reliability (psychosocial inventory) collaborative process
- CANS- assist in service planning and focus on wellbeing
- Resource parent training redesign (pre/post)- kinship lens
 - Accessible and supportive (play care provided, Saturday/evening trainings/one on one), foster parent college;trauma informed and permanency woven throughout, Nurtured Heart training
- Researching: Uber app for kin with transportation challenges, live scan mobile unit
- Collaborations: CCL-culture shift; CDSS; Probation -FF; MH; County- Step down; FF to FFA RFA with kin; FFA's- MOU
- Messaging: Pilot mode, testing, interim procedures, flexibility, creativity
- Excellence not Perfection- On going Learning through CQI

Best Practices in Working with Kin

- Get in touch with own biases
- Utilize different lens when assessing and working with kin vs non-kin families
- Recognize our intrusion into the family
 - - help family navigate vs judging because of their past or present circumstances
- Value importance of familial bonds
- Understanding safety concerns vs “good enough parenting” (values regarding living conditions, community, parenting)
- Motivation for adoption is unique and different

Kinship vs Traditional Foster Care

Kinship Care	Traditional Foster Care
Unplanned, immediate/crisis-oriented	Planned decision to become foster caregiver
Changes existing relationships/family roles	Builds new relationships
Hopes and expectations for reunification	May hope to adopt
Knowledge of family dynamics	Limited knowledge of a family
Mixed feeling about role change	Excitement of a new role of parent
Mixed feelings about loss of parent to child	Celebration of new family
Limited preparation	Prepared and supports in place
Unanticipated requirements to become approved for placement	Anticipated requirements to become approved foster parent
Guilt over the issues of birth parents	No guilt over issues of birth parents
Feelings of betraying birth parents	Displaying loyalty to the child
Feel entitled to be in “driver’s seat” – distrusting of system	Emotional entitlement is more gradual; legal entitlement only after adoption
Hesitation to legalize – doesn’t indicate a lack of commitment to child	Low motivation to legalize triggers concerns about commitment to child

RFA – Opportunities for Kin

- Equitable access to funding, services, supports
- Placement supports and services can be provided by FFAs
- Training required, not optional both an opportunity and potential barrier)

RFA – Potential Barriers for Kin

- Emergency placements – meeting approval timelines for RFA
- Cost containment – delays in getting funding to parents; inequitable funding during initial weeks/months of placement
- Same requirements:
 - Potential to “screen out” versus “screen in”
 - Reasonable expectations for training
- Systems biases
- For FFAs – covering the cost of recruitment,

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

... and answers!

Frequently Asked Questions... and Answers!

- **Will existing families have to fingerprint under the RFA Livescan code?**
 - Current licensed or approved families will not have to fingerprint when they convert to RFA. However, if that converted family would like to pursue adoption they will have to fingerprint using the Resource Family Livescan code.
- **Can a certified family home of a licensed foster family agency convert to a county-approved Resource Family?**
 - No. If a certified family home wants to be approved by a county, then it must apply for RFA with the county and complete the entire approval process. Otherwise, the certified family home may be converted by the foster family agency if that agency approves Resource Families.

Frequently Asked Questions... and Answers!

- **Does a caregiver with guardianship of a child have to convert to be a Resource Family?**
 - No. If the guardianship has already finalized, dependency has been terminated, and there are no other foster children in the home, the guardian does not have to convert to a Resource Family. However, if the individual wishes to care for other children or nonminor dependents or adopt the child over whom guardianship was approved, then he or she must go through the entire RFA process. Additionally, if dependency remains open after the guardianship is established, the guardian's home must be converted to a Resource Family home, or dependency must be terminated, by 12/31/19.

Frequently Asked Questions... and Answers!

- **Does a caregiver with guardianship of a child have to convert to be a Resource Family?**
 - No. If the guardianship has already finalized, dependency has been terminated, and there are no other foster children in the home, the guardian does not have to convert to a Resource Family. However, if the individual wishes to care for other children or nonminor dependents or adopt the child over whom guardianship was approved, then he or she must go through the entire RFA process. Additionally, if dependency remains open after the guardianship is established, the guardian's home must be converted to a Resource Family home, or dependency must be terminated, by 12/31/19.

Frequently Asked Questions... and Answers!

- **Will relatives/NREFMs receive the same base foster care payment rate as other approved Resource Families?**
 - Yes, all families will receive the same base rate based on the child's Level of Care (LOC) determination.
- **What if the county has not opted into the Approved Relative Caregiver program?**
 - **All** families will receive the same base rate based on the child's Level of Care (LOC) determination – this is true regardless of the child's federal eligibility and regardless of whether the county has opted into the ARC program.

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

RFA Toolkit

- Step by step instructions for families navigating RFA
- Vetted with relative caregivers
- Will be available online at www.stepupforkin.org
- Binders available for distribution early Feb. 2017

Resource Family Approval Guide



A project of The Step Up Coalition
stepupforkin.org



Additional Resources

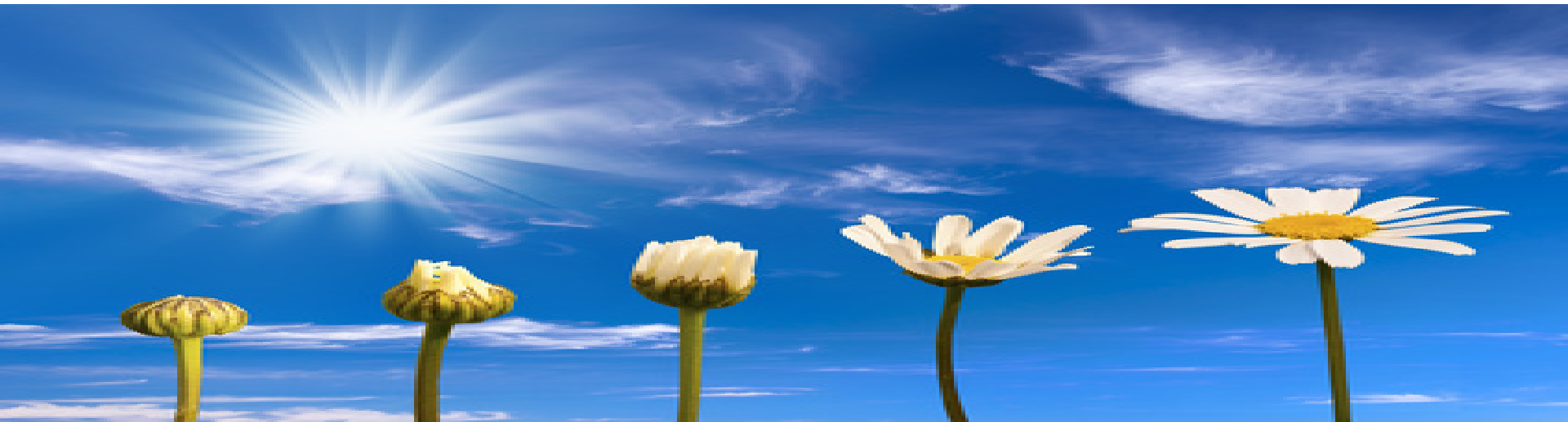
- Step Up Webinars – likely topics:
 - Understanding confidentiality rules
 - Legislation introduced that will impact kin caregivers
 - Best practices in recruitment and retention strategies
 - Child and Family Teaming
 - The federal landscape and what it means for California’s vulnerable children
- California Youth Connection Continuum of Care Reform Toolkit available at:
http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/pdf/CCR/CYCCCR_Toolkit.pdf
- FAQs will soon be available on the CCR page at the CDSS website

Ongoing Changes Anticipated in Statute and Policy

- Forthcoming ACLs
 - Certification process for out-of-state group homes
 - Changes to requirements for placement and 2nd level review for group homes and STRTPs
 - RFA – Conversion of Existing Approved and Licensed Caregivers
 - CCR Trainings
- Additional legislation pending this year
 - Streamlining review of applicant's criminal history
 - CCR clean up bill

RFA (and CCR!) Is A Work in Progress...

- Don't Panic
- This is designed to be an incremental process... changes, revisions and improvements will be ongoing
- Technical assistance and support is available – ask for help!
- We all need to learn what works together



QUESTIONS?
