



## The Licensure Process: What to Expect...

**Below is the general progression you can expect your licensure process to follow. Some variation to this process may occur on a case by case basis according to your family dynamic. Generally, you can anticipate the following based upon *South Carolina Minimum Standards for Foster Family Homes*:**

### A Note about the Licensure Process:

*Lifeline desires to serve families well, both during the licensure process and once placements begin to occur. In order to aid us in this, please be candid and forthcoming with your licensure worker about all prior history and present needs. This enables us to not only walk with you through the mutual selection aspect of the class, but also enables us to best provide support post-licensure and to best match your family with placements in keeping with your best interest and the best interest of children.*

**Pre-Application**- A short form on the LifelineChild.org website that can be completed when families become interested in becoming a foster parent. Following the pre-application completion, the family will be sent materials, resources and an invitation to attend an optional information meeting. The family can complete the online application at any time when they feel led to move forward.

**Information Meeting**- A meeting to learn an overview of foster care, Lifeline's philosophy and approach to foster care, and requirements for families to be licensed. Families can complete an individual information meeting with a Lifeline Social Worker in lieu of attending if they are ready to begin the foster care process and an information meeting is not scheduled at the time. Following the information meeting, families can complete an online application if they are being led to move forward.

**Welcome Call**- A lifeline social worker will contact the family after acceptance of the application into the program. A brief overview of the licensure process and class requirements will be discussed. The family will select class dates to attend Foster Parent Training Courses. Following the Welcome Call, the family will be sent their Starter Kit. The Starter Kit will contain important initial documents the family will complete before scheduling an Orientation Interview.

**Orientation Interview**- A Zoom Interview with the Lifeline Social Worker to ask initial assessment questions of the family. Preliminary Questions will be asked to begin the assessment process before the Consultations with the family begins. Following the Orientation Interview, the family will receive their Foster Care Manual that contains all remaining paperwork that must be completed. Part 1 of the Foster Care Manual will need to be completed before scheduling the First Family Consultation.

**Foster Parent Training Course**- A 2 day, 16-hour training over 2 Saturday's with interactive training to prepare families for the role of parenting children from hard places. Training courses are offered on a rotating basis throughout the year. Families are required to attend this training to complete the foster care licensing program and become foster parents. Lifeline Children Service's foster care program is a mutual selection process. Training will require homework material, etc. If married, both spouses are required to attend. Both class sessions are required.

**1<sup>st</sup> Family Consultation** - An opportunity for family and worker to jointly assess strengths and needs in a family setting, and namely, a time for you to simply share your thoughts and feelings about fostering at this point with your worker. The following will be completed during this time:

- Initial Home Tour
  - Licensure Specialist will tour your home and troubleshoot with you on getting your home in compliance with Minimum Standards.
- Initial Joint Interview
  - Licensure Specialist will meet with applicant(s) in the home and discuss motivation to foster, marriage, children, support network, etc.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> family consultation should be completed once Part 1 of the documents in the Foster Care Manual are completed. Please allow between 2-2.5 hours for 1<sup>st</sup> Consultations. Please also note that families must have completed the Prepare/Enrich assessments and results must be on file before this interview can be conducted.

**Individual Consultations:** An opportunity to meet one-on-one with your licensing specialist and to address personal history and present needs.

- In order to conduct individual interviews with each applicant, the Licensure Specialist must receive an Autobiography from each applicant (located in the Foster Care Manual) and have completed 1<sup>st</sup> Family Consultation.
- Part 2 of Foster Care Manual must be completed before individual consultations can be scheduled.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Family Consultation** – A final conversation to debrief the licensing process and discuss your family's future role in fostering. Both family and worker will provide feedback about your family's appropriate role in fostering following completion of the licensing class and about your own specific support needs as you prepare to begin fostering. The following will be completed during this time:

- Final Home Tour
  - Licensure Specialist will provide a final tour of your home and check to make sure that it is in compliance with Minimum Standards.
- Final Joint Interview
  - Licensure Specialist will meet with applicant(s) in the home in order to review elements learned in class and talk through the family's self-assessed competency to demonstrate the skills for successful fostering.
  - Licensure Specialist will briefly meet with child(ren) of applicant(s) in order to get to know them better as well as to engage them in conversation regarding their thoughts and feelings about sharing their home/family with children in care.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> family consultation is conducted after the family has completed all paperwork and requirements listed in the Foster Care Manual, a fire inspection has been completed and they have confirmed that they have everything in place for Minimum Standards.

\*DHEC and Fire Inspection – Scheduling will vary

\*Please keep in mind since many documents are time-sensitive and expire after a specific amount of time, you are required to have all documents in by their deadlines or you may have to repeat class, paperwork or reapply to start the process again.

\*Additional consultations, documents, references, assessments, etc. may be required as a part of your licensure process and can impact timing. This includes, but is not limited to current and past mental health history and treatment, medical history, marital health, substance/alcohol usage history, and any other personal or familial needs. Please speak with your licensing specialist about your particular history, so that we can best serve and support you as you begin this journey.

**We are looking forward to partnering with you throughout this process, and welcome any questions you may have. Thank you for your willingness to begin this journey with us!**