



The SC Foster Care 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, home studies are completed in 3-4 months and 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.

Initial Info 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.

- Following the info meeting, families will complete an online application if they are being led to move forward. A pastoral recommendation will be required.

Welcome Call & Orientation Interview- Two Zoom meetings to meet your licensing worker, go over the foster care licensing process including all of the necessary paperwork and begin the assessment process. Initial paperwork from the Starter Kit is due prior to the Orientation Interview.

1st 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 2nd set of paperwork is due prior to this first visit. 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 1st family consultation should be completed during the licensing class. They are typically scheduled at Meeting 2, and conducted between Meetings 2 and 5. Please allow between 2-2.5 hours for 1st Consultations. Please also note that families must have completed applications, and Prepare/Enrich results on file before this interview can be conducted. If families have not submitted all necessary paperwork from the Foster Care Manual some delay in consultation scheduling could result.

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 (format will be given in class) and have completed 1st Family Consultation.
- Individual consultations typically occur prior to the completion of the licensing class, unless special circumstances arise or families have been unable to complete assignments in accordance with the roadwork schedule.

2nd Family Consultation - A conversation to debrief the licensing class 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. All remaining paperwork from the Foster Care Manual is due prior to the second family visit. 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 2nd family consultation is conducted after the family's course completion and once 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 and start 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!

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF MINIMUM SC STANDARDS FOR APPROVED FOSTER HOMES:

Licensing Requirements – This list is not exhaustive of all requirements. There may be case-specific documents requested based on personal history. Your case worker will work with you on a timeline for when these items are due and how to collect them.

- If married, must be married at least 1 year before beginning licensure process.
- If married, must complete Prepare and Enrich marriage survey.
- No home can have more than 8 total children under age 18 (includes biological, foster, and adopted).
- No home can have more than 2 infants (under age 1).
- There must be an adequate number of bedrooms and beds, and a separate bed or crib for each child in your care. Children age 4 and older of opposite genders may not share a bedroom.
- Must have sufficient income to care for a child for up to 3 months without daily board rate.
 - Completed financial statement and supporting documents
- FBI clearances (fingerprinting) for all household members age 18 and older.
- South Carolina Law Enforcement (SLED) clearances for all household members age 18 and older.
- South Carolina Child Abuse and Neglect clearances (CANS) for all household members age 18 and older.
 - CANS required for all states lived in during the last 5 years.
- National and South Carolina sex offender clearances for all household members age 12 and older.
- Complete medical examinations for all household members.
- Written references from seven (7) individuals who have known your family for at least 3 years.
- Pass a state Fire Marshal inspection.
- Pass a DHEC inspection for cleanliness and safety:
 - Firearms are unloaded and locked in a storage area inaccessible to children;
 - Ammunition stored and locked separately;
 - If seeking licensure for children ages 6 and under, protective covers over the outlets, childproof locks on cabinets, and safety gates on stairs should be in place
 - Chemicals and medications should be stored in a locked area;
 - Current rabies vaccinations on all pets (dogs, cats, ferrets);
- Completed disaster preparedness plan and fire escape plan.
- Copies of verifications – driver's license, social security card, marriage license, divorce decree and complaint, military discharge paperwork.
- CPR/First Aid training completed.
- Completed driving record from DMV
- Alternate caregiver/babysitter screening
- 14 hours of pre-certification training

Annual Inspections

- Four (4) Quarterly in home visits annually
- Fire inspection by a state Fire Marshall
- SLED, CPS, and sexual offender checks
- Complete 14 hours of continuing education (CEU) training (each foster parent)

Re-Licensing Procedures (completed every two years)

- SLED, CPS, and sexual offender checks
- New financial forms if job or financial situation has changed
- Updated driver records

- Complete a total of 28 hours of CEU training for each foster parent