

**441—108.8 (238) Foster home studies.** The agency shall provide information to prospective foster parents about foster care, agency policies, licensing requirements for foster care, the children needing foster care, the licensing process and the reimbursement rates.

**108.8(1) Licensing procedures.**

*a.* Availability of applications. The agency may provide Form 470-0689, Foster Family Home License Application, to anyone requesting to be licensed.

*b.* Licensing study. The agency may complete a licensing study of the family.

*c.* New applications. If the child-placing agency decides to complete the initial licensing study, the agency shall submit to the department all documents and information required by 441—Chapter 113 pertaining to the licensing and regulation of foster family homes. This shall include a narrative evaluation of the foster family home which reflects a thorough study of each foster family. The narrative shall document at least two face-to-face interviews with the prospective foster family and at least one face-to-face interview with each member of the household before the placement of a child. At least one interview shall take place in the applicant's home. The narrative summary of the family study shall assess all of the following:

- (1) Motivation for foster care.
- (2) Family's and extended family's attitude toward accepting foster children.
- (3) Family's attitude toward foster children's parents.
- (4) Emotional stability, physical health, and compatibility of foster parents, and ways they cope with change and stress.
- (5) Adjustment of own children, if any.
- (6) Assessment of the child-caring skills, including disciplinary techniques used.
- (7) Strengths and weaknesses of each member of the household.
- (8) Types of children desired.
- (9) Type of children, if any, for whom placement with the family would be appropriate.
- (10) Recommendation as to the number, age, sex, characteristics, and special needs of children best served by this family.
- (11) Assessment of the need for training and a plan for providing the needed training.
- (12) Any other pertinent information that might assist the agency in making the licensing recommendation.
- (13) Record checks. The licensed child-placing agency shall submit record checks for each applicant and for anyone who is 14 years of age or older living in the home of the applicant to determine whether they have any founded child abuse reports or criminal convictions or have been placed on the sex offender registry. The licensed child-placing agency shall use Form 470-0643, Request for Child Abuse Information, and Form 595-1396, DHS Criminal History Record Check, Form B, for this purpose. Each person subject to record checks shall also be fingerprinted for a national criminal history check. The department's contractor for the recruitment and retention of resource families shall assist applicants in completing required record checks, including fingerprinting. Any criminal or abuse records discovered shall be evaluated according to the procedures in rule 441—113.13(237).
- (14) Health of foster parents and impact of medical conditions on their ability to foster a child.
- (15) Income information.
- (16) Documentation that at least three references have been received and the responses reviewed.

**108.8(2) Licensing decision.** The department shall make the licensing decision and notify the applicant and the child-placing agency within 30 days of the licensing decision. In no case shall a child be placed in a foster home before licensing approval.

*a.* A full license shall be issued to foster families meeting all necessary criteria for a full licensure.

*b.* A provisional license may be issued for up to one year if the foster family fails to meet all requirements for licensure. When an agency recommends, because of rule violation, that a foster home receive a provisional license at the time the license is issued or renewed, the agency shall document the violation in the foster home file, and shall send the following to the department:

- (1) A copy of the assessment of the rule violation and recommendation.
- (2) A copy of the foster home's plan to achieve rule compliance within stipulated time frames.

c. When an agency recommends that a foster home license be denied or revoked, the agency shall send the following documents to the department:

- (1) A copy of the assessment of rule compliance and the foster family's reaction to the assessment.
- (2) The agency's recommendation and supporting rationale.
- (3) Other appropriate documents supporting the findings.

**108.8(3) *Reapplications.*** At least 30 days before the expiration of the license, the agency shall submit all documents and information required by 441—Chapter 113 pertaining to the licensing and regulation of foster family homes. This shall include an update of the narrative noting any changes that may have occurred in the foster family's living arrangement or life style and any other pertinent information that might assist in making the licensing decision, including an assessment of the foster family's ability to provide foster care.

**108.8(4) *Unannounced visits.*** The agency shall conduct at least one annual unannounced visit to each licensed foster family home the agency inspects to meet the requirements of Iowa Code section 237.7.

**108.8(5) *Complaints.*** When an agency receives a complaint which may indicate possible violation of the foster care licensing rules, the agency shall, within five working days of receiving the complaint, either conduct an investigation to assess compliance with applicable rules or refer the complaint to the department for investigation. If the agency conducts the investigation, the agency shall submit a written report of the investigation to the department within ten working days of receiving the complaint with a statement of rule violation and a recommendation regarding the license of the foster family home. The written report shall be filed in the foster parents' file.

**108.8(6) *Foster family training.*** The agency shall ensure that each foster home recommended for foster family license has complied with the training requirements in 441—113.8(237).

Within six months of licensure and every five years thereafter, each foster parent shall obtain mandatory reporter training relating to identification and reporting of child abuse.

**108.8(7) *Placement agreement.*** When a child is placed with a foster family, the agency shall have a signed agreement with each foster family home including the expectations and responsibilities of both the agency and the foster family, the services to be provided, and the financial arrangements for children placed in the home.

**108.8(8) *Foster family home records.*** The agency shall keep separate records for each foster family home. The agency shall begin the record at the time of application. Foster family home records shall contain:

- a. The application.
- b. Family assessment.
- c. Most recent medical reports on foster family members.
- d. Summary of dates and content of worker's contacts relating to licensing or relicensing.
- e. Reference letters.
- f. Annual assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the foster family relative to the care of individual children placed with them.