

<i>Child Protection Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. C-5.1</i>	Program	Foster Care	
	Subject	Level Classification Assessment Process	Policy # 3.3
Effective Date: November 1, 2013		Authorized by: Carol Anne Duffy	
Revised Date: October 1, 2014		Deputy Minister	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Approved Foster Parent(s) must have a valid contract with the Director of Child Protection to provide service to children in care (Foster Care Contract policy 3.1). All contracted Foster Parent(s) will be assigned a Level Classification based on an assessment of skills, abilities, experience and availability. Financial compensation will be paid to the Foster Parent(s) based on the Level Classification.

Level Classification of a Foster Parent serves as a guide for matching children in care to appropriate foster placements to meet the protective, developmental and permanency needs of children in care.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 All Foster Parent(s) must have a valid contract signed by the Director of Child Protection.
- 2.2 The Director of Child Protection has discretion regarding contracting for Foster Care based on need for service.
- 2.3 All Foster Parent(s) with a valid contract will be assigned a Level Classification based on a Level Classification assessment process.
- 2.4 The Level Classification assessment process includes:
- completion of the Level Classification assessment;
 - confirmation of Foster Parent(s) willingness, availability and flexibility to meet Level requirements; and,
 - Director of Child Protection's need for the service

- 2.5 Contracted Foster Parent(s) will be assigned a Level Classification of 0, 1, 2, or 3.
- 2.6 Kinship Foster Parent(s) are automatically assigned a Level Classification of 0 for the duration of their contract(s) and the Level Classification process will not be completed.
- 2.7 A probationary period, of not less than ninety (90) days of a placement of a child in care, is required for all Regular Foster Parent(s).
- 2.8 Regular Foster Parent(s) available for full time placement are automatically assigned a Level Classification 1 for the probationary period beginning when the first child placement has been accepted.
- 2.9 Upon successful completion of the probationary period, the Director of Child Protection may enter into a one year contract and the Foster Parent(s) will automatically be assigned a Level Classification of 1. Within ten (10) business days, the Child Protection Resource Social Worker will meet with the Foster Parent(s) to sign the Foster Care contract.

An exception may apply to new Foster Parent(s) who have fostered in PEI within the previous five (5) years. If applying as a couple, this exception applies only if both persons meet the previous experience criteria. Upon successful completion of a probationary period, a Level Classification assessment process will be completed to determine the appropriate Level Classification for the first year of contracted service.

- 2.10 Following the first year of contract at Level Classification of 1 and each year prior to contract renewal, the Child Protection Resource Social Worker will engage the Foster Parent(s) to participate in the Level Classification assessment process. The Level Classification assessment process must be completed at least one (1) month prior to the expiry date of the existing contract.
- 2.11 Upon completion of the Level Classification process, the Child Protection Resource Social Worker will meet with the Child Protection Resource Supervisor to discuss recommendation for approval.
- 2.12 The Child Protection Resource Social Worker, in consultation with the Child Protection Resource Supervisor, will determine the Level Classification.
- 2.13 Upon approval, the Child Protection Resource Social Worker will meet with the Foster Parent(s) to confirm requirements of the Level Classification and, if in agreement, the Foster Parent will sign the Foster Care Contract at the assigned Level Classification. The signed Foster Care Contract will be forwarded to the Director of Child Protection prior to the expiry of the existing contract.

- 2.14 When matching children in care to appropriate Foster Care placements, for all Level Classifications, the Child Protection Resource Social Worker and the child's Social Worker will consult on the needs of the child coupled with the skills and strengths of the Foster Parent(s), to determine if additional supports are required to meet the needs of the child placed in the home. Additional supports will be documented in the Case Plan for the child and reviewed, minimally, every three (3) months.

Mandatory Requirements for Level Classification:

2.15 *Kinship - Level 0:*

Kinship Foster Parent(s) are assessed and approved to provide foster care to a specific child and may include a relative or someone known to the child

- Successful completion of a Foster Care Assessment
- Valid contract with the Director of Child Protection and compliance with conditions of the contract
- Foster Parent Oath of Confidentiality
- Proof of valid and required vehicle insurance
- Proof of valid and required home insurance
- Discipline Agreement for Foster Parents
- Foster Home Safety Checklist
- Criminal Record Check to include Vulnerable Sector Check
- Medical confirmation of no known medical condition that impacts caring for a child
- Child Protection Record Check
- Compliance with Child Protection policies
- Maintain and provide documentation as required by the Director of Child Protection
- Successful completion of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) and CPR/First Aid
- Participation in Aboriginal cultural sensitivity training, if providing care to an Aboriginal child
- Successful completion of Universal Health Precautions
- Participation, as age appropriate, in Period of Purple Crying and Car /Booster Seat training
- May have regular commitments outside the home, to include employment, but must have an emergency plan in place as approved by the Director of Child Protection, should a child return to the Foster Home unexpectedly
- A childcare plan approved by the Director of Child Protection for school holidays
- Provide routine transportation with no financial compensation
- Provide extraordinary transportation with financial compensation

Regular - Level 0 and Level 1:

- Successful completion of a Foster Care Assessment
- Valid contract with Director of Child Protection and compliance with conditions of the contract
- Foster Parent Oath of Confidentiality
- Proof of valid and required vehicle insurance
- Proof of valid and required home insurance
- Discipline Agreement for Foster Parents
- Foster Home Safety Checklist
- Criminal Record Check to include Vulnerable Sector Check
- Medical confirmation of no known medical condition that impacts caring for a child
- Child Protection Record Check
- Compliance with Child Protection policies
- Maintain and provide documentation as required by the Director of Child Protection
- Successful completion of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) and CPR/First Aid
- Participation in Aboriginal cultural sensitivity training
- Successful completion of Universal Health Precautions
- Participation, as age appropriate, in Period of Purple Crying and Car /Booster Seat training
- Minimum attendance of one (1) Foster Parent at monthly Cluster group (support and information sharing meeting facilitated by a Child Protection Resource Social Worker), PEI Federation of Foster Families Spring Symposium and Fall Conference, attendance at workshops, training sessions, courses or completion of other educational needs as directed. Foster Parents are not compensated for travel or other related costs of mandatory training
- Access to at least one (1) babysitter approved by the Director of Child Protection and the Foster Parent(s) demonstrates ability to utilize the babysitter resource as required
- May have regular commitments outside the home, to include employment, but must have an emergency plan in place, approved by the Director of Child Protection, should a child return to the Foster Home unexpectedly
- Must have a childcare plan approved by the Director of Child Protection for school holidays
- Willing to accept placement of children for whom the Foster Parent(s) has been assessed and approved
- Provide routine transportation with no financial compensation
- Provide extraordinary transportation with financial compensation
- Provide supervision of child and parent contact as required

- Participate in the transition of children in care, as defined by the Case Plan, through direct involvement with the family assuming care of the child e.g. birth parents, adoptive parents, new foster family, respite provider, Residential Services, etc.

Regular - Level 2

In addition to the mandatory requirements of Regular - Level 0 and Level 1, the following apply:

- Access to at least one (1) additional babysitter (for a total of 2) approved by the Director of Child Protection and the Foster Parent(s) demonstrates ability to utilize the babysitter resources as required
- In addition to the required training in Level 0 and Level 1, Foster Parent(s) must complete five (5) hours per home per year of child related, self initiated training as approved by the Child Protection Resource Social Worker. This training does not include training provided through Cluster or the PEI Federation of Foster Families Spring Symposium and Fall Conference. Foster Parents are not compensated for travel or other related costs of mandatory training
- Required capacity for child placement flexibility to include, at a minimum, one (1) of the following:
 - more than one (1) child in care placement at the same time which may include sibling groups;
 - placements of children with varying ages;
 - placement of children with significant physical, medical and/or behavioral needs

Regular - Level 3

In addition to the mandatory requirements of Regular - Level 0, Level 1 and Level 2, the following apply:

- Access to at least one (1) additional babysitter (for a total of 3) approved by the Director of Child Protection and the Foster Parent(s) demonstrates ability to utilize the babysitter resources as required
- In addition to the required training in Level 0, Level 1 and Level 2, Foster Parent(s) must complete five (5) hours per home per year (for a total of 10 hours) of child related, self initiated training as approved by the Child Protection Resource Social Worker. This training does not include training provided through Cluster or the PEI Federation of Foster Families Spring Symposium and Fall Conference. Foster Parents are not compensated for travel or other related costs of mandatory training

- At least one (1) Foster Parent must not be employed or have regular commitments outside the home, and shall be available to foster children in care on a full time basis
- Placement of more than one (1) child at the same time or placement of one child and must be available for Respite of eight (8) days per month to include availability for After Hours Emergency Child Protection Service short term placement. Placement of more than one child is to include placement of children of varying ages or children with significant physical, medical and /or behavioural needs
- Required to accept additional requests from the Director of Child Protection in the provision of services to children in care not living in the home e.g. transportation, child care, supervising family contact, or related needs of the Director of Child Protection

_____ *Respite Only - Level 1*

In addition to the mandatory requirements of Regular - Level 0 and Level 1, the following apply:

- Must be available for a minimum of eight (8) days per month
- Must be available for After Hours Emergency Child Protection Service short term placements

Respite Only - Level 0

- Respite only homes unable to meet availability requirements of Respite Only Level 1 may be contracted at Level 0.

Exceptions to Mandatory Requirements

2.16 Exceptions to mandatory requirements of a Level Classification specifically related to the availability for additional child placements may be considered. The Foster Parent(s) must submit the request for an exception in writing to the Child Protection Resource Social Worker indicating the reason for the request, specified time period, potential impact on the child and alternate arrangements being proposed by the Foster Parent(s).

The Child Protection Resource Social Worker will request the Child Protection Social Worker for the child to provide an assessment of the level of care required for the child and potential impacts on the child in the event of additional child placements in the home. This assessment may include information provided by medical personnel, Early Childhood Educators or school personnel, and/or additional professionals with knowledge of the child. The Child Protection Social Worker, in consultation with the Child Protection Supervisor, will prepare an assessment to be provided to the Child

Protection Resource Social Worker. The Foster Parent(s) request for an exception and the Child Protection Social Worker's assessment of the child will be reviewed by the Child Protection Resource Social Worker in consultation with the Child Protection Resource Supervisor.

In the best interests of a child and as recommended by the Child Protection Resource Social Worker, Child Protection Resource Supervisor and Provincial Coordinator of Child Protection Services, the Director of Child Protection may approve, for a specified period of time not to exceed six (6) months, an exception to the mandatory requirements for a Level Classification. An exception may be considered and renewed for an additional period of time as approved by the Director of Child Protection.

The decision will be made within twenty (20) business days. This decision will be documented on the Foster Care file and a copy provided to the Foster Parent(s).

Foster Parent Compliance with Mandatory Requirements

2.17 Step One

Foster Parent(s) are expected to work in partnership with Child Protection Services in meeting the mandatory requirements of their Level Classification.

Foster Parent(s) are responsible to immediately notify the Child Protection Resource Social Worker of any anticipated and/or failure to comply with mandatory requirements. The Child Protection Resource Social Worker will meet with the Foster Parent(s), as soon as reasonably possible, to identify the reason, review the expectations of the Foster Parent Contract and together determine an action plan. The Child Protection Resource Social Worker will advise the Child Protection Resource Supervisor of the agreed upon action plan and the plan will be documented on the Foster Parent(s) file.

An action plan for compliance with all other mandatory requirements will require the Foster Parent(s) to develop, in conjunction with the Child Protection Resource Social Worker, a plan to complete the requirements or an agreed upon alternative within three (3) months.

In an exceptional circumstance e.g. death or serious illness of a family member, significant life events, etc., resulting in the Foster Parent(s) being unable to attend Cluster, Spring Symposium, Fall Conference, training events, the Foster Parent(s) will be expected to attend a similar event e.g. another Cluster meeting, within thirty (30) days of a missed event. In the event this is not possible, there may be an option, as approved in consultation with the Child Protection Resource Supervisor, for the Foster Parent(s) to meet individually with the Child Protection Resource Social Worker for updated information. This will be dependent on the reason the meeting was missed, the

appropriateness of receiving the information through an individual meeting with the Child Protection Resource Social Worker, and the availability of the Child Protection Resource Social Worker.

Step Two

In situations where Foster Parent(s) fail to comply with the agreed upon action plan, the Child Protection Resource Social Worker will consult with and provide recommendation to the Child Protection Resource Supervisor, the Provincial Coordinator of Child Protection Services and the Director of Child Protection. Decisions may include:

- suspend monthly Level Classification payment and reassess for continued eligibility; and /or,
- end Level Classification payment and terminate Foster Care Contract.

The Director of Child Protection will prepare a registered letter to be sent to the Foster Parent(s) outlining the continued non-compliance and the decision. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Provincial Coordinator of Child Protection Services, the Child Protection Resource Supervisor, and the Child Protection Social Worker. A copy will be placed on the Foster Parent(s) file.

There is no appeal process for decisions of the Director of Child Protection regarding Foster Parent(s) non-compliance with the Foster Care Contract. Foster Parent(s) may request a meeting with the Child Protection Resource Social Worker and the Child Protection Resource Supervisor for additional clarification of the decision.

Foster Care Service on Hold

- 2.18 Foster Parent(s) may request to have their Foster Care service placed on hold. The Director of Child Protection appreciates Foster Parent(s) have personal lives, however, the Director of Child Protection has responsibility to ensure stability and predictability in the provision of service to children in care. As such, the Director of Child Protection must review all Foster Parent(s) requests to be placed on hold to balance the requests of Foster Parent(s) with the best interests of children.

All Foster Parent(s) initiated requests to be placed on hold must be received by the Child Protection Resource Social Worker with a minimum thirty (30) day notice prior to the requested leave.

For all Foster Parent(s) initiated requests to be put on hold, the monthly Level Classification payment will be suspended for the period of unavailability and the period of availability will be calculated on a per diem basis. If the requested period of being placed on hold exceeds twelve (12) consecutive months, the Foster Care Contract will be

terminated. In the event the Foster Parent(s) request to resume fostering, the Foster Parent(s) will be required to reapply as a new applicant.

In the event a Foster Parent(s) chooses to provide Extended Service resulting in the termination of the Foster Care Contract beyond a twelve (12) month period and wish to reapply to be a Foster Parent(s) immediately following the provision of Extended Service, the former Foster Parent(s) will not be considered as a new applicant based on the continued Departmental relationship through the provision of an Extended Service.

- 2.19 The Department may initiate placing a Foster Parent resource on hold. In situations where the Child Protection Resource Social Worker, in consultation with the Child Protection Resource Supervisor, recommends the Foster Parent(s) be placed on hold, the monthly Level Classification payment may continue for a maximum of three (3) months to include the month the placement hold began. The Foster Parent(s) will be advised in writing of the decision which will be documented on the Foster Parent(s) file and a copy provided to the Provincial Coordinator of Child Protection Services and the Director of Child Protection.

If the period of being placed on hold exceeds six (6) consecutive months, the Foster Care Contract will be terminated. The Child Protection Resource Social Worker, in consultation with the Child Protection Resource Supervisor, Provincial Coordinator of Child Protection Services and the Director of Child Protection, has the discretion to deny future applications by the Foster Parent(s).

3.0 REFERENCES

After Hours Emergency Child Protection Service 1.11
Foster Care Contracts 3.1

HISTORY:

October 1, 2014 - Editorial and format changes; change to probationary Level classification section. 2.8; clarification detail added to sections 2.16 - 2.18