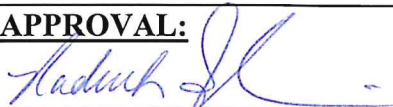




DEPARTMENT NAME: Staff Development		
SUBJECT: Employer Sponsored Child Welfare Certification		POLICY NUMBER: SD-001
APPROVAL: 	EFFECTIVE DATE: 9-23-2020	REPLACES : SD-001 dated April 20, 2017

- I. **PURPOSE:** This policy establishes the minimum requirements for certification as a child welfare professional for an employer-sponsored applicant through the Children's Network of Southwest Florida.
- II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** This policy was developed on 10/2/12, updated 2/11/16 and 4/20/17.
- III. **CONTACT:** Director of Staff Development
- IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** Children's Network of Southwest Florida staff, contracted Case Management Organizations, agencies providing case management in the Extended Foster Care program, and contracted providers of foster care licensing activities whose staff are required to earn certification to maintain employment.
- V. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Children's Network of Southwest Florida to establish minimum standards that must be achieved in order to obtain full certification as a Child Welfare Professional.
- VI. **RATIONALE:** The State of Florida requires all Child Welfare Professionals who perform the functions of protective investigations, case management and foster care licensing activities to be certified by a third-party credentialing agency. The Florida Certification Board, an approved third-party credentialing agency has established statewide requirements for certification of employer-sponsored applicants in the State of Florida. The Children's Network has established policy that exceeds minimum requirements of the Florida Certification Board.
- VII. **CROSS REFERENCES:**

Florida Statute 402.40.
- VIII. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. Child Welfare Certification – A professional credential awarded to individuals who meet the minimum education, training, testing, experience and supervision standards that reflect competency in the field of child welfare. Child Welfare certification is offered in two disciplines: Case Management and Licensing.

- B. Direct Supervision Requirement – The relationship between the qualified supervisor and applicant that promotes the development of responsibility, skills, knowledge, attitudes and adherence to ethical, legal and regulatory standards in the practice of child welfare services. Applicants must complete field, group and individual supervision requirements in the discipline in which they are seeking certification. These requirements must be completed during the provisional certification period. Supervision is face-to face contact between a qualified supervisor and a provisionally certified professional during which the applicant apprises the supervisor of the status of a case, the case is discussed, the supervisor provides the applicant with oversight and guidance in working the case, and evaluates the applicant's performance. Individual and/or group supervision must occur in a minimum of 15-minute increments. Field observations and follow-up case consultation should last approximately 1.5 - 2 hours.

Certification applicants in a supervisory position may satisfy on-the-job supervision and competency demonstration requirements by either directly performing casework activities or by being observed providing on-the-job supervision to direct staff.

Applicants must demonstrate competency on cases assigned to them.

- C. Employer Sponsored Applicant ("the applicant") – An individual who is currently employed in a position requiring certification. These applicants are in employer-driven training and professional development programs that lead to Child Welfare.
- D. Field Observation – Supervision of interactions with children and/or families that takes place in the field (home, court or in any public location). A Field Observation consists of an assessment of interpersonal skills, safety considerations of the home environment AND a review of relevant documentation that pertains to the observation.
- E. Florida Certification Board (FCB) – A private, non-profit professional credentialing agency. The FCB develops and administers certification programs in multiple health and human service fields, including child welfare, addiction, prevention, behavioral health and mental health. The FCB is the only DCF-recognized credentialing entity for child welfare professionals in Florida.
- F. Provisional Certification – A 12-month credential awarded to applicant's who have satisfied formal education, training and testing requirements. During this time applicants must complete experience and supervision requirements.
- G. Qualified Supervisor – The applicant's Agency Directors, immediate supervisor, other agency supervisors, trainers, quality assurance staff, senior or lead CWCM, and other agency management staff directed to provide supervision to employees seeking certification.
- H. Staff Development Liaison – An individual, identified by the Children's Network of Southwest Florida Director of Staff Development who serves as a point of contact between the employer/employees and the Florida Certification Board.
- I. Written Competency Exam – A multiple-choice written exam that measures the applicant's attainment of the knowledge base of the profession. Applicants must pass the written competency exam to earn provisional certification.

IX. **PROCEDURES:**

A. Upon the applicants successfully achieving a minimum passing score of 78% on the Pre-Service written competency exam administered by the Children's Network of Southwest Florida, the following steps are necessary and found with the required forms on the website:

<https://flcertificationboard.org/credentials/>

1. The applicant will complete the Provisional Certification Form electronically.
2. The employer will complete the Degree and Level 2 Background Verification Form.
3. Children's Network will complete the Training Verification Form.
4. Children's Network will submit documents and applicable fees to the FCB to process the employee's provisional certification.
5. Children's Network will provide employee with an Employer- Sponsored Child Welfare Certification Packet.

B. While in provisional status the applicant is required to complete experience and supervision requirements. The applicant may complete the full certification process in as little as 6 months, but the maximum time period for the applicant to achieve full certification is 12 months from the date of successfully passing the written competency exam.

1. Experience Requirement:

To fulfill this requirement, the applicant will complete a minimum of 1,040 hours of consecutive full-time discipline-specific work (approx. 6 months of full-time employment). The applicant must have primary case responsibility or have been a direct supervisor of individuals with primary case responsibility. The Related Work Verification form is to be completed by the agency's Director, Assistant Program Director or Human Resources Department.

2. Individual Supervision Requirement:

To fulfill this requirement, the applicant will receive a minimum 20 hours of documented face-to-face individual supervision from a qualified supervisor that promotes development or responsibility, skills and knowledge. The applicant will apprise and discuss the case with the qualified supervisor. Demonstrates competency in the field and alignment of field work, documentation and decision making. One-on one supervision in minimum increments of 15-minutes.

3. Group Supervision Requirement:

To fulfill this requirement, the applicant will receive a minimum 10 hours of documented group supervision from their agency or qualified entity. Supervision consists of two (2) or more staff being present at one time and must occur in a minimum of 15-minute increments. Staff refers to certified or uncertified persons. General training, in-service, or other education

events are not eligible to meet group supervision requirements, however group events that focus on building skills using work products in eligible. *note: 10 hours of group supervision can be substituted for 10 hours of individual supervision.

4. Field Observation Requirement:

To fulfill this requirement, the applicant will complete six (6) passing field observations, including the interpersonal skills assessment, safety considerations of the home environment and a review of the documentation with a qualified supervisor. Field observations and follow-up case consultation should last approximately 1.5 - 2 hours. Documentation in FSFN for all observations MUST be entered by applicant within 48 hours AND reviewed by the Qualified Supervisor. Only two (2) of the six (6) observations can be completed in an office setting. The specific setting for observations is to be completed as follows:

- 1 - Court (Licensing/Pride class)
- 1 – Staffing
- 3 – Family Interactions (Home Visit/Field Settings)
 - 1 must be with a birth parent (licensing/adoption excluded)
 - 1 must be with a verbal child(ren)
 - 1 must be a family interaction
- 1 – Supervisor's Choice (based on individual needs)

5. Documentation requirement

To fulfill this requirement, the applicant will acquire all documentation necessary to demonstrate achievement of supervision and field observations: Documentation of field experience hours, individual and group supervision, field observations and certification checklist are to be completed and submitted on forms approved by the Children's Network Staff Development Department. These forms can be found in the CNSWFL Employer-Sponsored Child Welfare Certification Packet.

Included in the Packet are the following forms:

- Certification Checklist (completed by the Direct Supervisor)
- Individual Supervision Tracking Log
- Group Supervision Tracking Log
- Field Observation Tracking Log

The applicant is responsible to obtain a completed On-the-Job Supervision and Competency Verification Form from each the qualified supervisors who provided supervision.

6. The Child Welfare Certification Application

- a. Complete the Child Welfare Certification Application electronically.
- b. Submit completed forms to the Children's Network Staff Development Liaison

C. Submitting for Credential

1. All required documentation is to be submitted to the Children's Network Staff Development Liaison no later than 60 days prior to the expiration of the applicant's provisional period.
2. Within 10 business days of receiving the certification forms and documentation the Children's Network Staff Development Liaison will review the submitted paperwork, if it is found to be accurate and complete the Liaison will submit to the FCB for certification to be awarded. If the paperwork is found to be incomplete the Liaison will return all paperwork back to the applicant with feedback for revisions.
3. In the event that the applicant does not accurately complete and submit the required documentation to the Children's Network Staff Development Liaison within the required timeframe, the applicant may be subject to taking a waiver test and/or extending their provisional status at the expense of the applicant or their respective agency.
4. The FCB is responsible for issuance of the appropriate Child Welfare Certification. The credentials will be sent to the Children's Network Staff Development Liaison for tracking and then released to the applicant. The credentials belong to the applicant who assumes responsibility for maintaining the credential through attendance in continuing education events.

IX. **TIMELINE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Months 0-6
 - Completion of Post Test
 - 1,040 hours of Field Experience
 - Begin documenting individual supervision
 - Begin documenting group supervision
 - Begin documenting 6 Field observations (Passing)
- Months 6-11
 - Complete remaining individual supervision for total of 20 hours
 - Complete remaining group supervision for a total of 20 hours
 - Complete 6 Field observations (Passing)
 - Complete On-the-Job Supervision and Competency Verification Form-(One per individual providing supervision)
 - Complete Full Certification Upgrade application (online)
 - Submit completed required FCB forms no later than 11 months after test date
- Months 12 and thereafter
 - FCB issues Child Welfare Certification Credential
 - Applicant is fully Certified and assumes ownership of credentials

Certified Staff are responsible for maintaining the credential through attendance in 20 hours of continuing education per credentialed year.