

Quality Standards Framework Regulations Implementation Bulletin #2: Foster Parent Training

JANUARY 11, 2023

In follow up to the January 4, 2023, email, this is the second of the weekly communications that will be sent by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (ministry) to out of home care¹ service providers and placing agencies on the new and updated [Quality Standards Framework](#) related regulations, which come into effect on July 1, 2023.

The weekly bulletins will cover the 10 regulatory topics with the intent to help familiarize licensees and placing agencies with the new and updated requirements, and answer questions about how they can start preparing for implementation.

The subject of this week's bulletin is the new [foster parent training requirements](#). The bulletin provides an overview of the new foster parent training and foster parent learning plan requirements, provides responses to frequently asked questions and points to helpful resources to support implementation, including a training portal.

Foster Parent Training Requirement Q&As

1. Who do the new foster parent training requirements and Foster Parent Learning Plan regulations apply to?

The new foster parent training requirements and Foster Parent Learning Plan regulations apply to:

- Foster care licensees,
- Foster parent applicants, and
- Approved foster parents.

¹ Although the term *residential* is a legal term under the CYFSA and its regulations, the ministry is using the term “out-of-home care” instead of “residential” to acknowledge the traumatic history of the Residential School system in Canada. We recognize the importance of choosing different languages, especially, since the term may be triggering to some.

2. Overview of New Foster Parent Training Requirements

Note that the information that follows does not constitute legal advice. It provides general information about the regulatory amendments made to licensing requirements under the CYFSA. If you require assistance with respect to the interpretation of the regulatory requirements and their potential application in specific circumstances, you should seek legal advice.

The new foster parent training requirements include new mandatory training that ALL foster parents must complete, and a new individualized Foster Parent Learning Plan to capture and track all planned and completed foster parent training and skills development.

The new training requirements coming into effect July 1, 2023, will:

- Bring consistency in skillsets among all foster parents across the province,
 - Create a foundation for which future training can build on,
 - Advance the goal of the 8th quality standard in the [Quality Standards Framework](#): Staff and Caregivers,
 - This goal provides that children and young persons are cared for by staff and caregivers who have appropriate educational qualifications, skills, training and experience to fully support them, meet their needs, help them thrive, and achieve positive outcomes; and
 - Mandate on-going skill development for foster parents to improve the foster parent's ability to provide foster care and to meet the individual needs of foster children placed with them.
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3. What are the new requirements for foster parents as of July 1, 2023?

Beginning July 1, 2023, all foster parent applicants must complete the following training BEFORE a licensee may approve them to provide foster care:

- The Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) pre-service training or Strong Parent Indigenous Relationships Information Training (SPIRIT). Refer to [Ministry Policy Directive CW 003-20: "Approved Tools for Caregiver Assessment and Pre-service Training, and for Plan of Care Development"](#) for details of these training programs.
- Training in standard first aid, including infant and child CPR and hold a valid certificate of such training issued by a training agency approved by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

All foster parent applicants will also be required to complete the following, no later than 6 months after the date that the person was approved to provide care:

- Training on First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis cultural competency that meets the requirements of [Policy Directive 001-23](#).

- o Exemption for foster parents who identify as a First Nations, Inuk or Metis person.
- Training on providing trauma-informed care that meets the requirements of [Policy Directive 001-23](#).

The licensee or a person designated by the licensee must also have developed a foster parent learning plan for the foster parent that meets the requirements set out in s. 120.1 of O. Reg. 156/18 prior to approving any foster parent to provide foster care.

Note A licensee is prohibited from permitting a person to receive a child for foster care unless the above requirements are met (as well as any other applicable requirements set out in O. Reg. 156/18).

All foster parents already approved to provide foster care as of July 1, 2023, are subject to the following requirements:

Foster parents must have completed the following training BEFORE July 1, 2023, and no earlier than July 1, 2018:

- Training in standard first aid, including infant and child CPR and hold a valid certificate of such training issued by a training agency approved by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.
- Training on First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis (FNIM) cultural competency that meets the requirements of [Policy Directive 001-23](#).
 - o Exemption for foster parents who identify as a First Nations, Inuk or Metis person.
- Training on providing trauma-informed care (TIC) that meets the requirements of [Policy Directive 001-23](#).
- The licensee must also have developed a foster parent learning plan for the foster parent that meets the requirements set out in s. 120.1 of O. Reg. 156/18.

4. How do the new foster parent training requirements enhance quality of care?

Historically, Ontario foster parent training requirements have been inconsistent across the province. Prior to the incoming changes, effective July 1, 2023, prospective foster parents recruited by societies had to complete PRIDE or SPIRIT pre-service training prior to being approved, but this requirement did not apply to prospective foster parents recruited by an Outside Paid Resource (OPR). Any additional training that a foster parent completed was entirely dependent on the individual practices of the foster care licensee/agency.

MCCSS has received ongoing feedback and recommendations from stakeholders, including foster parents, that consistent and accessible training is needed to enhance a

foster parent's skills and build their capacity, so they are well-equipped and feel supported to provide high-quality residential care to children placed in their home.

Enhanced foster parent training requirements are part of the work to embed the [Quality Standards Framework](#) into regulation. Quality Standard 8 of the [Quality Standards Framework](#) speaks to the need for educational qualifications, skills, training and experience of staff and caregivers to allow them to fully support and care for children and young persons in their care. Specifically, out of home care service providers should ensure that staff and caregivers receive appropriate training and supports to deal with the specialized needs of a child prior to caring for children, and on an ongoing basis.

5. Where can I find the new foster parents training requirements?

The new foster parent training requirements are found in two different locations:

- The foster parent training directive (Minister's Directive) can be found here: [Residential Licensing 001-23: Training on the Provision of Foster Care. This document contains information related to the new mandatory training that must be completed, including associated timelines.](#)
 - The regulations related to the Foster Parent Learning Plan can be found in [sections 120.1](#) and [120.2](#) of O. Reg. 156/18.
 - Other relevant regulations in O. Reg. 156/18 include:
 - s. 119(2)(c.1), which sets out requirements for the maintenance of written policies and procedures respecting the development and review of foster parent learning plans.
 - s. 120(2), which sets out requirements for foster parents to receive training on all policies and procedures before a child is placed in the foster home and at least once every 12 months thereafter.
 - s. 120(3), which sets out requirements for persons assigned to supervise and support the foster parent (staff) to receive training on all policies and procedures before beginning supervision and at least once every 12 months thereafter.
 - s. 121(1)(c)-(e), which sets out requirements respecting training for the foster parent as part of the foster parent approval process.
 - s. 122(4)(b), which sets out the requirement for the person assigned to supervise and support the foster parent to review the foster parent learning plan at least once every three months.
 - s. 124, para. 0.1, which sets out record keeping rules respecting foster parent learning plans.
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6. What is the Foster Parent Training Directive?

The foster parent training directive is officially called: [Residential Licensing 001-23: Training on the Provision of Foster Care](#). The policy directive comes into effect on July 1, 2023 and sets out training requirements for foster parent applicants and current foster parents. Training includes:

- The Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) pre-service training or Strong Parent Indigenous Relationships Information Training (SPIRIT). Refer to [Ministry Policy Directive CW 003-20: “Approved Tools for Caregiver Assessment and Pre-service Training, and for Plan of Care Development”](#) for details of these training programs.
- Training in standard first aid, including infant and child CPR and hold a valid certificate of such training issued by a training agency approved by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.
- Training on First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis (FNIM) cultural competency that meets the requirements of [Policy Directive 001-23](#).
 - Exemption for foster parents who identify as a First Nations, Inuk or Métis person.
- Training on providing trauma-informed care (TIC) that meets the requirements of [Policy Directive 001-23](#).

In addition to the above, a new Anti-Black Racism training program is under development for foster parents, which will be included as part of the directive with distinct timelines. Training for foster parents on the topic of Anti-Black Racism was highlighted by multiple child welfare sector stakeholders as a critical foundational training that all foster parents should be required to complete. Further information about the distinct timelines for this requirement will be communicated later this year.

7. What is the Foster Parent Learning Plan?

As of July 1, 2023, every foster care licensee or person designated by the licensee will be required to develop and keep updated a foster parent learning plan for each foster parent. Refer to s. 120.1 and 120.2 of O. Reg. 156/18 for details of the requirements respecting the development and review of this plan.

The Foster Parent Learning Plan is intended to:

- Capture all training completed by each foster parent and training they plan to complete,
- Promote on-going training, skills development, and capacity building connected to the needs of the children being cared for, and
- Be a collaborative tool developed with input from both the foster care licensee or designate and the foster parent.

The Foster Parent Learning Plan must be reviewed at specified intervals set out in the regulation, including prior to any placement of a foster child with a foster parent to ensure the foster parent has the necessary skills to provide high quality care and meet the needs of the proposed placement.

Training included on the Foster Parent Learning Plan will include mandatory training set out in Ministry Directive [Residential Licensing 001-23: Training on the Provision of Foster Care](#) as well as any additional training determined by the licensee or requested directly by the foster parent to improve the foster parent's ability to provide foster care and to meet the individual needs of foster children placed with them. Possible training topics may include:

- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or other diagnoses,
 - Administration of medication,
 - Human Trafficking, or
 - De-escalation techniques.
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8. Why can First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis cultural competency and trauma-informed care training be completed after a foster parent is approved to provide care?

In response to stakeholder feedback through consultations, the ministry heard about the importance of accounting for adult learning principles to help ensure maximum impact of training requirements. To respect adult learning principles, foster parents may benefit from some practical experience before completing all of the required training. For this reason, foster parents have an additional 6 months after their date of approval to complete the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis cultural competency and trauma-informed care training.

Regardless of the additional 6 months, these training requirements should be understood as foundational, and, as a best practice, should be completed as soon as possible after a foster parent is approved to provide care.

As part of the pre-placement assessment process (effective July 1, 2023), licensees are required to review a Foster Parent Learning Plan to confirm that the proposed foster parent has completed the training necessary to meet the child's immediate needs. A foster child should not be placed with a foster parent who does not have the training necessary to meet the child's needs.

9. What options are available for training on First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis cultural competency that satisfy the requirements of Policy Directive 001-23?

Foster care licensees are responsible for ensuring that the training selected for their foster parents or foster parent applicants meets the requirements set out in Policy Directive 001-23. The training must be developed or co-developed and delivered or co-delivered by a band or First Nations, Inuit or Métis community as defined under the CYFSA **OR** by an entity listed in [Appendix A](#) of the Directive.

Information about some training programs that comply with the new foster parent training requirements respecting FNIM cultural competency can be found on the [Training Portal](#).

Note: A foster parent is exempt from the requirement for training on First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis cultural competency if the person identifies themselves as a First Nations, Inuk or Métis person.

10. What options are available for training on trauma-informed care that satisfy the requirements of Policy Directive 001-23?

Foster care licensees are responsible for ensuring that the training they select for their foster parents or foster parent applicants meets the requirements set out in the Policy Directive 001-23. This training must be developed or co-developed by an organization that provides mental health services and supports to children and youth.

The Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) has developed trauma-informed care training that complies with this requirement and is available at no cost.

Information about this training and other training programs that comply with the new foster parent training requirements respecting trauma informed care can be found on the [Training Portal](#).

11. What resources are available to me right now to begin preparing for implementation of the new requirements?

A training portal has been created to support foster care licensees and foster parents in identifying some training options that comply with the new foster parent training requirements. The training available on the portal is not exhaustive and is meant only as a starting point for licensees.

The training portal can be found [here](#).

12. What resources will be available to me in the near future to support implementation of the new requirements?

In the coming months, the following will be available to service providers to support understanding and compliance with the new foster parent training requirements:

- A guidance document covering the new requirements, purpose for the new requirements, indicators used by the ministry to assess compliance, guidance for placing agencies and best practices for implementation (March 2023).
- A Foster Parent Learning Plan Template (March 2023).
- Training for service providers on the new requirements (Spring 2023).

13. Who should I be sharing this information with?

Information regarding the new foster parent training requirements should be shared with foster care licensees, placing agencies and foster parents.

14. Who can I contact if I have questions about the new foster parent training requirements?

If you require assistance with respect to the interpretation of the legislation and its potential application in specific circumstances, you should seek legal advice. You may also contact your regional licensing team for more information as you implement the new requirements. Any additional questions pertaining to future activities to support operationalization of the new regulations can be directed to qualitystandardsframework@ontario.ca.

15. What's next?

Stay tuned! The next Quality Standards Framework Regulations Implementation Bulletin topic will be on **pre-service qualifications**.