



A15 Introduction to Resource Family Approval

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INTRODUCTION TO RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL (RFA)

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CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM (CCR)

A comprehensive framework that supports children, youth and families across placement settings (from relatives to congregate care) in achieving permanency. Includes:

- The child, youth and family's experience and voice is important in assessment, placement, and service planning
- Increased engagement with children, youth and families through the child and family team process
- Increased capacity for home-based family care
- Limited use of congregate care
- Systemic and infrastructure changes: rates, training, accreditation, accountability and performance, mental health services
- Strengthening of cross-agency networks of services and supports

VISION

- All children live with a committed, permanent and nurturing family with strong community connections
- Services and supports should be individualized and coordinated across systems and children shouldn't need to change placements to get services
- When needed, congregate care is a short-term, high quality, intensive intervention that is just one part of a continuum of care available for children, youth and young adults
- Effective accountability and transparency drives continuous quality improvement for state, county and providers

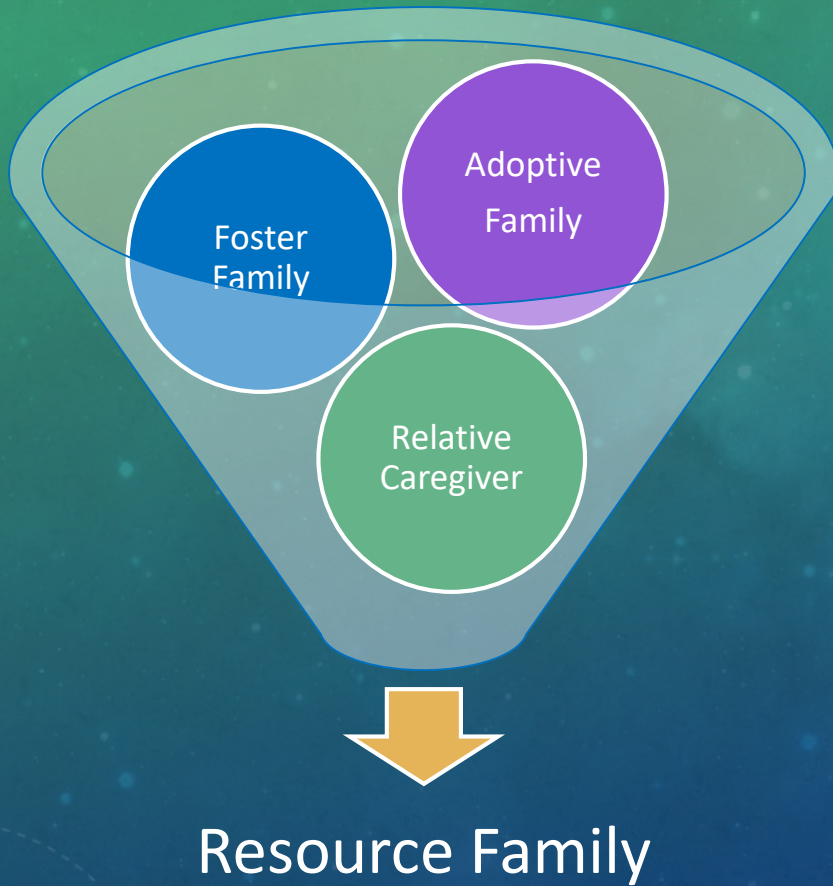
RFA LEGISLATIVE INTENT *

To develop a unified, family friendly, and child centered resource family approval process that:

- Eliminated duplication
- Increased approval standards
- Incorporated a comprehensive assessment of all families
- Included approval for: foster care, adoption, guardianship

*Authorized by Assembly Bill 340 Chapter 464, Statutes of 2007) and reauthorized by Senate Bill 1013, (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012)

FOSTER FAMILIES → RESOURCE FAMILIES



RFA:

- Related and non-related families, including those providing a foster placement for a probation child
- Training for all families
- Resource Families still choose the role they play in the system: temporary or permanent
- Prepared for permanency-no additional approvals necessary

RFA Process:

- Single, consistent, unified RFA process will be used for all caregiver families: kin, NREFM, county foster families, FFA foster families

RFA Key Messages

Focuses on Lifelong Relationships & Quality Parenting

- No additional assessment of the family for adoption or guardianship.
- Considers family's ability to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

Achieves Results for Children and Families

- Families are better prepared and supported
- Less intrusive to family
- Training and support for all families → more stability, fewer moves.

Improves Efficiency

- Eliminates redundant processes

| Approval Standards | Adoption (Existing) | Relative/NREF M (Existing) | Foster Home (Existing) | RFA |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Criminal Records/Child Abuse Review | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Standardized Criteria for Criminal Record Exemptions | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Homes and Ground Safety Evaluation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Training Required | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Psychosocial Assessment | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Applicant References | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Annual Review of all families | | ✓ | | ✓ |

PLACEMENT PRIOR TO APPROVAL

1. Emergency Basis:

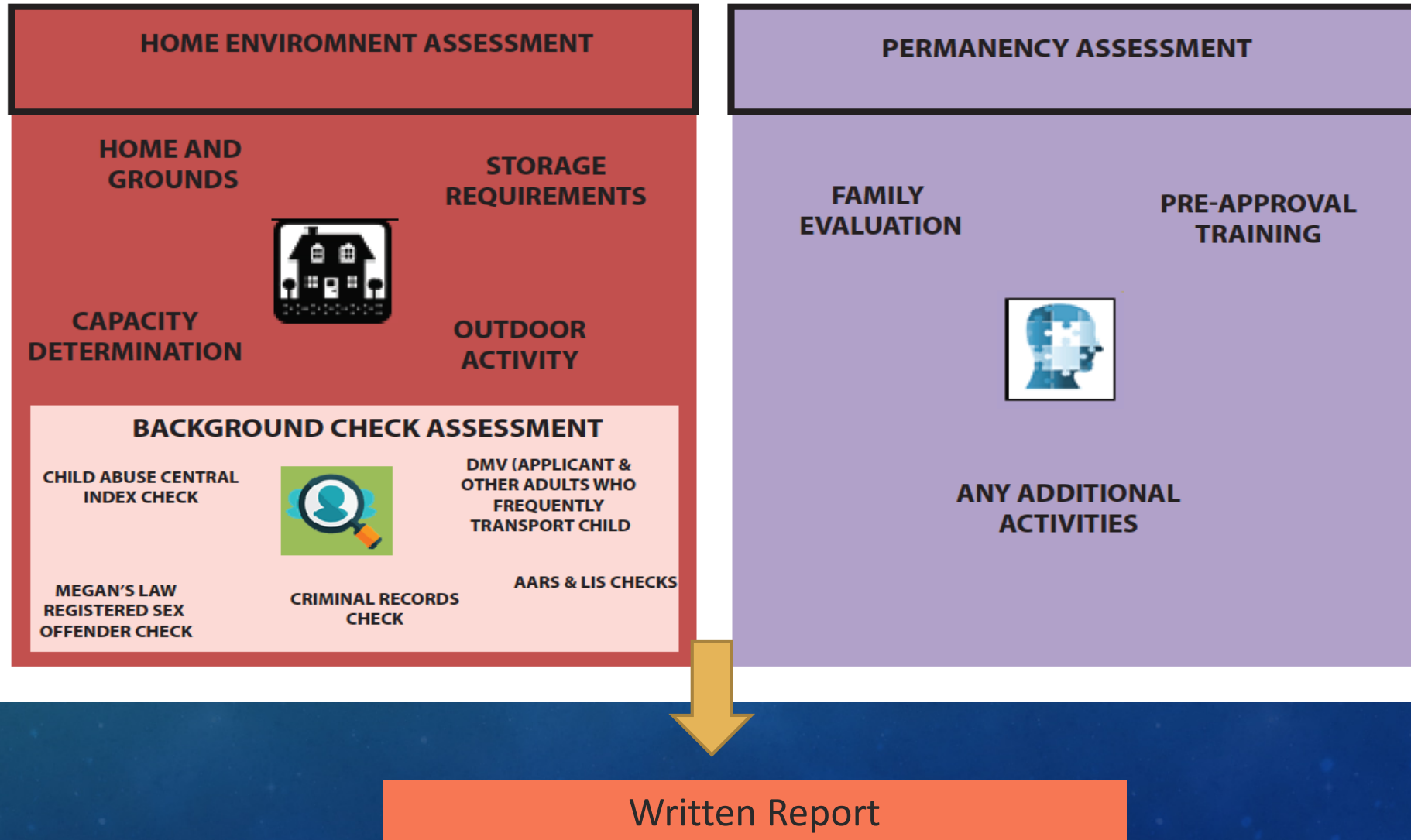
- Must be with relative or nonrelative extended family member
- Requires WIC 361.4 assessment
- RFA application must be submitted and Home Environment assessment initiated within 5 business days (Includes background checks and home health and safety assessment)
- Comprehensive assessment to be completed within 90 days

2. Compelling Reason:

- Placement can be with anyone related or unrelated
- Based on needs of the child
- After home environment assessment completed
- Permanency assessment to be completed within 90 days (Includes pre-approval training and family evaluation assessment)

*AFDC-FC funding is not available to families until full approval has been achieved **BUT** pursuant to AB 110, after 3/30/18 till 6/30/18 families shall receive short term interim funding equal to the home base rate of \$923*

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS



PRE-APPROVAL TRAINING

- Minimum of 12 hours, but counties can have the ability to require additional hours
- 21 required topics which range from an overview of the child welfare and probation systems to birth parent relationships and safety issues regarding contact to child development
- Training can be completed several ways-what's best for the family
 - In person in a classroom style method
 - One-on-one with the caregiver(s)
 - Online through Foster Parent College or other training sites

WHAT IS THE FAMILY EVALUATION?

- In depth look at family structures, values, discipline practices, coping strategies, etc.
- Allows the social worker to see into the family system and evaluate their strengths and areas where more support may be needed for safer and more effective parenting
- Concerns addressed with the family and mitigated when possible
- Allows for more thoughtful matches and more individualized training to better support families

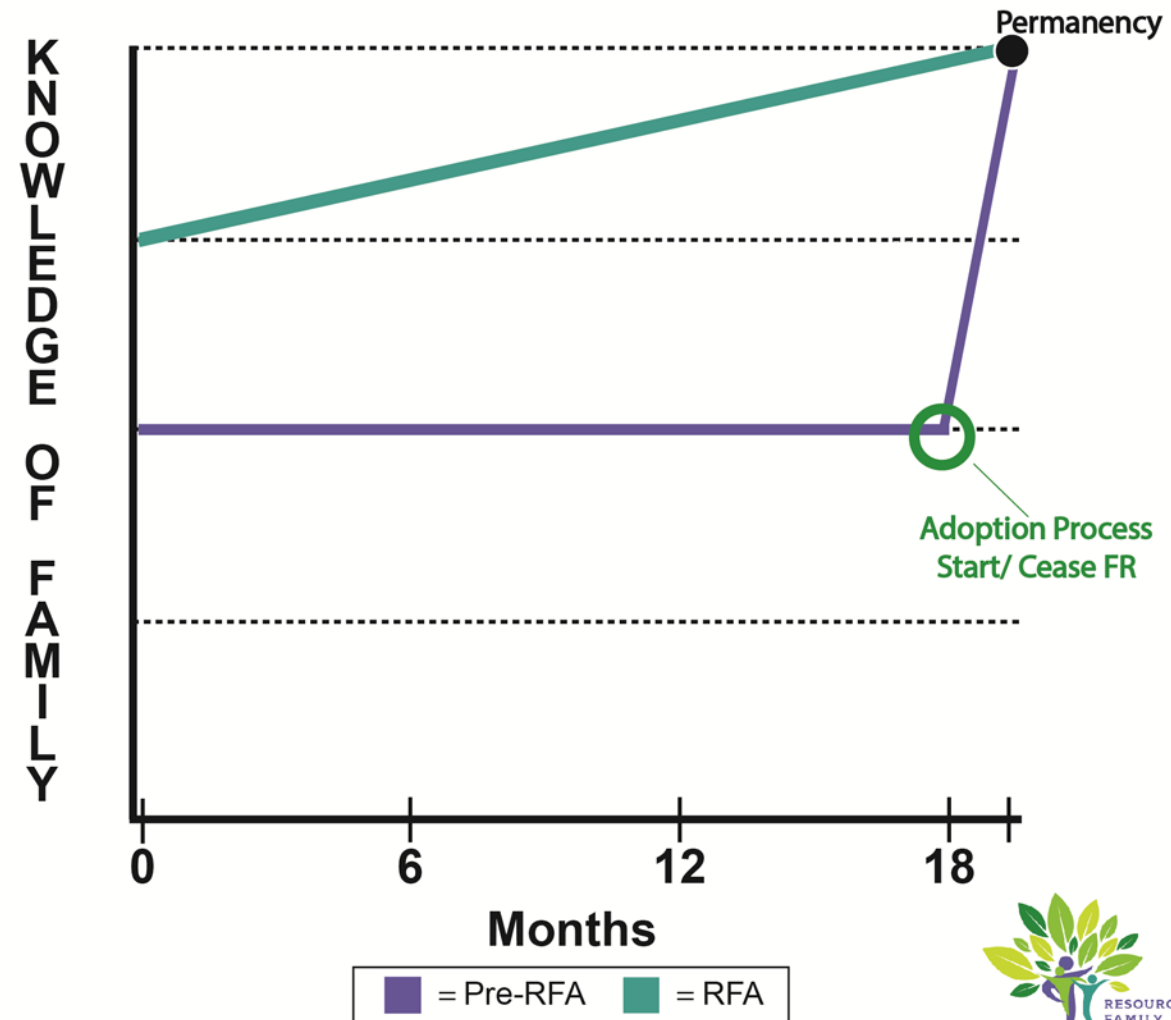
FAMILY EVALUATION

- Family Evaluation shall include a risk assessment of:
 - Physical and mental health,
 - Alcohol and other substance use and abuse,
 - Family and domestic violence, and
 - Caregiver's understanding of the needs of children in care and ability to meet those needs

ANNUAL UPDATES

- Annual updates on the family's approval are completed at least once a year or an update can be done sooner if needed. Other reasons for an update are:
 - A significant change in the family
 - Relocation of a family to a new home
 - Removal or addition of a Resource Parent to the approval
- A family's approval does not expire
- The update is a chance to meet with the caregivers and discuss any changes to their family and relook at any areas they may need support or additional training

Pre-RFA and Post-RFA



Research suggests... *when families are engaged* and supported to have a *significant role* in case planning, they are *more motivated* to actively commit to achieving the case plan. Additionally, families are more likely to recognize and agree with the identified problems to be resolved, perceive goals as relevant and attainable, and be satisfied with the planning and decision-making process.

- Antle, Christensen, van Zyl, & Barbee, 2012; Healy, Darlington, & Yellowlees, 2011; Dawson & Berry, 2001; Jones, McGura, & Shyne, 1981).

MANY POSITIVES WHEN PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

- Families are their own experts and achieve success if given the supports to do so
- Practice is evolving to involve more family input and teaming with other agencies
- Improved outcomes for children, youth, and families
- Promotes collaboration, communication and shared decisions
- Unrelated relatives and NREFMs caring for children and youth in care

WE BELIEVE

A Child Welfare Core Practice Model is being developed that will guide child welfare practice throughout California.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

- How can you engage and support a Resource Family in your professional role?

CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE CORE PRACTICE MODEL PRACTICE BEHAVIORS



I. FOUNDATIONAL BEHAVIORS

- *Be open, honest, clear, and respectful in your communication.*
- *Be accountable.*

II. ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIORS

- *Listen to the child, youth, young adult, and family, and demonstrate that you care about their thoughts and experiences.*
- *Demonstrate an interest in connecting with the child, youth, young adult, and family, and help them identify and meet their goals.*
- *Identify and engage family members and others who are important to the child, youth, young adult, and family.*
- *Support and facilitate the family's capacity to advocate for themselves.*

III. ASSESSMENT BEHAVIORS

- *From the beginning and throughout all work with the child, youth, young adult, family, and their team, engage in initial and on-going safety and risk assessment and permanency planning.*

IV. TEAMING BEHAVIORS

- *Work with the family to build a supportive team.*
- *Facilitate the team process and engage the team in planning and decision-making with and in support of the child, youth, young adult, and family.*
- *Work with the team to address the evolving needs of the child, youth, young adult, and family.*
- *Work collaboratively with community partners to create better ways for children, youth, young adults, and families to access services.*

V. SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY BEHAVIORS

- *Work with the family and their team to build a plan that will focus on changing behaviors that led to the circumstances that brought the family to the attention of the child welfare agency and assist the child, youth, young adult, and family with safety, trauma, healing, and permanency.*

VI. TRANSITION BEHAVIORS

- *Work with the family to prepare for change in advance and provide tools for managing placement changes, social worker changes, and other significant transitions.*

RESOURCES

- CDSS RFA Website:
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program>
 - For more RFA information or questions email rfa@dss.ca.gov
- CDSS CCR Website:
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/continuum-of-Care-Reform>
 - For more CCR information, questions or to subscribe to CCR newsletter, email ccr@dss.ca.gov



Questions?