

CareCertify LLC

Foster Care Training Series

FC-01

Introduction to Foster Care & Licensing

Participant Guide

Foster Care Training Series · Audience: Foster Parents · Agency Staff · Treatment Foster Care Providers · CE Hours: 1.0

A Temporary, Healing Home

Foster care provides safe, nurturing, temporary homes for children and youth who can't safely live with their families. The goals are clear: keep children safe, move them toward permanency (reunification when possible, or another permanent home), and support their wellbeing along the way. Child foster care is licensed under Minn. Rules 2960 (parts 2960.3000 to 2960.3340).

This guide introduces foster care, treatment foster care, the licensing standards, the team, and the training every foster parent and staff person needs. Knowing the framework helps you provide a healing home and work well with the team.

Learning Objectives — by the end of this module you will be able to:

- Describe foster care and treatment foster care and who they serve
- Explain the goals of safety, permanency, and wellbeing
- Identify the licensing framework and training requirements
- Describe the roles of foster parents, agency staff, and the team
- Explain working with birth families and the court system

Section 1: What Foster Care Is

Foster care provides safe, nurturing, temporary homes for children and youth who can't safely live with their families — usually due to abuse, neglect, or family crisis. It is temporary by design: the goal is a safe, permanent home, ideally reunification with the family when that becomes safe.

Foster parents don't do this alone — they partner with a licensing agency, a caseworker, the child's birth family, and the court system. Foster care serves children of all ages, backgrounds, and needs.

Section 2: Treatment Foster Care

Treatment foster care (sometimes called therapeutic foster care) serves children and youth with significant emotional, behavioral, or medical needs that require more intensive support. It provides a higher level of training, services, and support, with providers working closely with a treatment team. The goals are the same — safety, permanency, and wellbeing — with more specialized care to get there.

Section 3: Safety, Permanency, and Wellbeing

Three goals guide every foster care decision. Safety means the child is protected from harm. Permanency means working toward a lasting home — reunification with the birth family when safe, or placement with relatives, adoption, or guardianship. Wellbeing means supporting the child's health, development, education, identity, and connections. Foster parents and agency staff support all three.

Section 4: The Licensing Framework

Child foster care is licensed in Minnesota under Minnesota Rules, parts 2960.3000 to 2960.3340 (Rule 2960), within the Human Services Licensing Act framework (Chapter 245A, with child licensing now under Chapter 142B and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families). Licensing covers family foster homes and treatment foster care. The rules exist to protect children's safety, rights, and wellbeing — and licensing includes background studies, home standards, and training.

Section 5: Orientation and Annual Training

Foster parents complete orientation and an agency-developed training curriculum following Minn. Rules 2960.3070. Full-time staff with direct contact with children must complete at least 18 hours of in-service training per year, half of it skill development. Caregivers who assist in the care of infants or children through age five must complete sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) and abusive head trauma (AHT) training (Minn. Stat. 142B.47) at least once every five years.

This course supports your training; your agency documents your completed training in the license file.

Training is ongoing

Foster care training isn't one-and-done. Orientation, annual in-service, and specialized trainings (like SUID/AHT) keep you prepared as children's needs change.

Section 6: Roles and the Team

Foster care is a team effort. Foster parents provide daily care and a safe, nurturing home. Agency staff license and support foster homes and supervise care; the child's caseworker coordinates the case plan and services. The court oversees the case and permanency decisions. And birth families remain part of the picture, with their own rights and role. Everyone works toward the child's safety, permanency, and wellbeing.

Section 7: Working With Birth Families and the Courts

Because reunification is often the goal, birth families remain central. They have rights and a role, and the case plan often includes visits and connections. Approach birth families with respect rather than judgment — foster parents can be a supportive bridge for a child's relationship with their family. The court system oversees the case, makes permanency decisions, and protects everyone's rights.

Section 8: Where You Fit on the Team

You are a trained partner in a child's safety and healing. You provide a safe, nurturing, temporary home and daily care, work as part of a team, follow the case plan, and communicate and document. The standards in Rule 2960 exist to protect children — and your everyday care is where safety, permanency, and wellbeing actually take shape in a child's life.

Key Terms

Term	What it means
Foster care	Safe, temporary homes for children who can't safely live with family.
Treatment foster care	Specialized foster care for children with significant needs.
Rule 2960	Minnesota's licensing rules for child foster care (2960.3000–2960.3340).
Permanency	A lasting home — reunification, relatives, adoption, or guardianship.
Reunification	Safely returning a child to their birth family.
In-service training	Ongoing training required to maintain a foster license/role.

Check Your Understanding

1. What is foster care, and what are its goals?
2. How does treatment foster care differ from family foster care?
3. Under what rules is child foster care licensed?
4. What training do foster parents and staff need?
5. Why are birth families important, and how should you approach them?

What's Next

Looking ahead

Next, FC-02: Trauma-Informed Care for Children & Youth covers how trauma affects children and how to provide healing care.