To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator
     DCF Area Administrators
     Child Placing Agency Directors
     Child Welfare Agency Directors
     County Departments of Community Programs Directors
     County Departments of Human Services Directors
     County Departments of Social Services Directors
     Group Home Providers
     Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
     Private Child Placing Agencies
     Residential Care Center Providers
     Shelter Care Providers
     Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove
     Administrator

Re: Level 5 Exceptional Treatment Foster Home Guide to Certification and Placement

PURPOSE

This memo provides a new resource guide to assist agencies in the development and placement of children in Level 5 Exceptional Treatment Foster Homes (Level 5 Foster Homes). The guide, Level 5 Exceptional Treatment Foster Home Guide to Certification and Placement, provides an overview of Level 5 Foster Homes by outlining considerations and resources for agencies looking to develop, license or place a child into a Level 5 Foster Home.

BACKGROUND

The operation of and placement of children in Level 5 Exceptional Treatment Foster Homes require an exception from the Department of Children and Families Exceptions Panel. Prior to 2011, the department granted exceptions to operate shift-staffed treatment foster homes under DCFS Memo Series 2006-15. These exceptions were granted in order to serve the needs of children who needed overnight awake care and were expected to need care into adulthood in a community setting, often for medical reasons. In 2011, the Levels of Foster Care Licensing initiative incorporated Level 5 Foster Homes into permanent rule under Ch. DCF 56.13 (7) Admin. Code.

Level 5 Exceptional Treatment Foster Homes provide care to children whose conditions require a high degree of supervision and overnight awake care that is provided by staff persons in the home 24 hours per day. Licensed foster parents manage the program in the home. Level 5 Foster Homes are intended to serve children expected to need long-term care in a community setting. A Level 5 Foster Home should only be considered as the last community placement option when all other options have been determined to be unavailable or not in the best interest of the child. Each home and all services provided in that home are tailored to the identified child's specific needs and integrates the child into the surrounding community. These homes often continue to be the youth's home as they transition into adulthood if they continue to need and qualify for adult services.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

The Level 5 Exceptional Treatment Foster Home Guide to Certification and Placement was developed with input from current providers as an in-depth resource for agencies to use throughout the licensing and placement process. This guide follows a timeline from initial referral through licensure and placement. Each section provides agencies with information regarding the interpretation of specific citations in Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code, as well as other related standards and requirements. The guide streamlines the procedures related to the Level 5 Foster Home process to ensure every agency clearly understands the information that is required to apply for certification or placement in a Level 5 Foster Home.

The guide summarizes requirements outlined in Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and details other applicable requirements from Wisconsin Ongoing Services Standards, Wisconsin Department of Health Services Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Manual, and Guidelines and Requirements for the Use of Restrictive Measures Manual.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Program and Policy Analyst
Division of Safety and Permanence
Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care
(608) 422-6751

MEMO WEB SITE: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy

LINKS:

Level of Care Certification Information Web Page
https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/loc

Level 5 Exceptional Treatment Foster Home Guide to Certification and Placement, DCF-P-5251
https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/publications