
PRESS RELEASE

For Release: Immediate

New family foster home licensing standards protect children, provide guidance to help more caregivers become foster parents

(Washington, D.C.) – The [American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law](#), [the Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), [Generations United](#), and the [National Association for Regulatory Administration](#) have developed a set of clear and practical family foster home licensing standards that help ensure children in foster care are safe and promote the opportunity for relatives and non-related caregivers to become foster parents.

These model family foster home licensing standards ensure that children:

- live in safe and appropriate homes with child welfare and court oversight,
- receive monthly financial assistance and supportive services, and
- can access the permanency option of assisted guardianship in the states and tribes that participate in the federal Guardianship Assistance Program.

See the standards at: www.grandfamilies.org

These standards, which are the only comprehensive national guidelines, fill a previous void by giving the federal government a set of clear and practical requirements to reference and guide states in their efforts to license homes. Under federal law, states have extraordinary flexibility to create family foster home licensing standards; it requires only that states develop guidelines “reasonably in accord” with national organizations’ recommendations.

“For the first time, we have a set of common-sense guidelines that provide child welfare systems the tools to confidently assess and license more family foster caregivers, and do so in a way that ensures children are being placed in safe, nurturing homes,” says Rob Geen, policy director at the Casey Foundation.

The model standards are accompanied by an interpretative guide and crosswalk tool. The guide summarizes the purpose of each standard and provides instructions necessary for compliance determinations. The crosswalk tool helps states assess and align their current standards with the model standards.

According to Donna M. Butts, Executive Director of Generations United, “Generations United looks forward to working alongside champions for children and families to encourage all states to adopt these standards to break down barriers to licensure for grandparents and other relatives. While not all states may be able to implement every model standard without any modifications, our goal is to light a path toward reasonable and achievable safety standards across the nation.”

The model standards, which encompass all the necessary components to license a family foster home, should not be considered “minimum” criteria. These standards are flexible enough to respond to

individual circumstances, but most importantly they help ensure that children in out-of-home care have safe and appropriate homes.

“The National Foster Parent Association applauds these model standards, which seek to recognize and respect related and non-related foster parents as caregivers who are performing an invaluable service to our nation’s children,” says Irene Clements, President of the National Foster Parent Association. “The model standards make clear that, as respected caregivers, states should work with them and help them become licensed by providing support throughout the process.”

Lynn Urvina, a grandmother who has raised grandchildren both inside and outside the child welfare system, notes that “these model standards are the first step towards ensuring that children in foster care are placed in the best homes for them.”

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About Generations United

For nearly three decades, Generations United has been the catalyst for policies and practices stimulating cooperation and collaboration among generations, evoking the vibrancy, energy and sheer productivity that result when people of all ages come together. We believe that we can only be successful in the face of our complex future if generational diversity is regarded as a national asset and fully leveraged. www.gu.org

About the National Association for Regulatory Administration

NARA is an international professional organization dedicated to promoting excellence in human care regulation and licensing through leadership, education, collaboration, and services. NARA represents all human care licensing, including adult residential and assisted living, adult day care, child care, child welfare and program licensing for services related to mental illness, developmental disabilities and abuse of drugs or alcohol. www.naralicensing.org

About the American Bar Association (ABA) Center on Children and the Law

The ABA is the largest voluntary professional association in the world with nearly 400,000 members. The ABA Center on Children and the Law improves children’s lives through advances in law, justice, knowledge, practice and public policy by focusing on child abuse and neglect, child welfare and protective services system enhancement, family preservation, adolescent health and other child protective legal issues. www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law.html

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation’s children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. www.aecf.org