

FAQ – State Licensed Foster Home Specific – Non-CPS or Licensing Complaint Investigations

Q What is a Licensing Division (LD) Non-CPS or licensing complaint investigation?

A When the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) receives a complaint in a licensed foster home that does not have an allegation of Child Abuse and/or Neglect but may be a violation of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), that information is screened as a Non-CPS intake.

Q Do all Non-CPS intakes result in an investigation?

A No, it depends on what is reported. If the complaint alleges a violation of the WAC, it will be investigated to determine whether there was a violation.

Q Who completes the investigation?

A A complaint investigator will be assigned to complete the investigation; they could be from the safety and monitoring unit (SAM), LD/CPS unit, or your licensor.

Q What are examples of incidents investigated by a complaint investigator?

A Examples of incidents investigated by a complaint investigator include, but are not limited to disciplinary practices, lapses in supervision, lack of nurturing and affection, medication management, failure to report, and environmental concerns.

Q How will I know if there is an investigation?

A A complaint investigator will contact you at the earliest point in the investigation, which does not jeopardize child safety or the integrity of the investigation. They may contact you by phone or in person, and they may come to your home unannounced.

Q What will I be told about the investigation?

A During your interview, you will be informed of the allegations or concerns reported. The complaint investigator will share with you as much information as possible without jeopardizing the integrity of the investigation. Information about the referent, or the person making the complaint, will not be shared.



Q Can I share with the complaint investigator my point of view?

A Yes, that is the purpose of the interview. This is your time to explain the situation and your opportunity to provide any other relevant information or documentation. You may also contact the complaint investigator at any time to share any additional information or to ask questions about the investigation.

Q Can I provide a written statement?

A Yes, you may provide a written statement. If it is received prior to the completion of the investigation, it will be considered as part of the investigation. All statements and documents provided will be placed in the file.

Q Can I have someone present for my interview?

A Yes, you may have a neutral, third-party adult present during the interview as long as you have signed a consent form to share information and it does not jeopardize the integrity of the investigation.

Q Who will be interviewed during an investigation?

A During the course of the investigation, all foster children in the home will be interviewed and the complaint investigator may ask permission to interview your child(ren). All adults in the home, caseworkers, witnesses, or collateral contacts with relevant information may be interviewed as well.



Q Will law enforcement be involved?

A *If a crime is alleged, the complaint investigator will notify law enforcement. Law enforcement makes their own determination whether to investigate. If law enforcement chooses to investigate, the complaint investigator defers to law enforcement and they take the lead on the investigation.*

Q How long will the investigation take?

A *Every effort is made to complete investigations within 45 days; however, some investigations may take longer.*

Q Will foster children be placed in my home during an investigation?

A *This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis. Children will not be placed in your home if Licensing Division decides to issue a No Referral on your license or if you request not to take placement of children during the course of an investigation. If a No Referral is issued, you will receive a notification.*

Q Will the foster children be removed from my home during an investigation?

A *Foster children are sometimes removed during an investigation. This decision is made with the goal of ensuring the safety of the children. DCYF Child Welfare is the legal guardian of foster children and has the responsibility to move foster children when it is necessary to ensure their safety and well-being. Licensing Division does not make placement decisions but may share information with Child Welfare to help with their placement decisions.*

Q What about tribal children in my care?

A *The tribe(s) will be notified about the investigation and they will make placement decisions about children in care and custody.*

Q Will the foster children be returned to my home when the investigation is complete?

A *This will depend on the outcome of the investigation and what is in the best interest of the children.*

Q What are the possible outcomes or findings of an investigation and how will I be notified?

A *Licensing investigation outcomes or findings are either “Valid” or “Not Valid.” You will receive written notification when the investigation is complete. “Valid” licensing finding means that there is reasonable cause to believe a violation of the WAC occurred. “Not Valid” means that there is reasonable cause to believe a violation of the WAC did not occur or that it cannot be determined if a violation occurred. All valid licensing findings are subject to compliance agreements, training, and/or coaching to gain adherence to the WAC.*

Q What if I disagree with the finding?

A *If you disagree with the finding, you can provide a written statement to be included in the licensing file.*

Q Can I request a copy of my investigation?

A *Yes, you may make a request through public disclosure at: dcyfpublicdisclosure@dcyf.wa.gov.*

Q Where can I find a copy of the WAC requirements?

A <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=110-148>

Q As a licensed foster parent, where can I get more information?

A www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-parenting

Foster Intervention and Retention Support Team (FIRST)

FIRST is a resource that is available to foster parents to provide you with assistance during an investigation. They also provide referrals to community resources. You may contact FIRST at 866-393-6186.