

# Initial License Q & A

## Who is the Initial License for?

Kinship caregivers are relatives and suitable other persons (i.e., friends, teachers, coaches) who have taken a child into their home.

## Why an Initial License?

Many kinship caregivers unexpectedly open their homes to children who cannot safely remain in their own homes. The Initial License is a way to alleviate the financial strain of having a new child join the home. Once the Initial License is issued, the caregivers can claim foster care payment.

## What are the requirements of an Initial License?

- Offered at time of placement with an unlicensed caregiver. This could occur at any time during the case.
- Household members pass the initial background check – this type of background check is called a Code X.
- Home passes a basic walkthrough inspection.
- Caregiver agrees to meet the needs of the child.

## What is an Initial License?

Think of the Initial License as a driver's permit. The caregiver will have additional requirements before they are fully licensed. The Initial License is temporary and issued for up to 90 days to provide the caregiver funding while they complete the full licensing process.

## What is the process to get an Initial License?

The general process to issue an Initial License to a kinship caregiver is a team effort with the case worker (CW), Background Check Unit (BCU), the courts, Licensing Division (LD), and most importantly, the kinship caregiver. Please consult policy for more details as this does not supersede policy. See the chart on the next page.

## Before Placement

- Child welfare CW identifies a relative or suitable person placement.
- CW calls the BCU National Crime Information Center (NCIC) - Code X for all adult household members and NCIC for household members ages 16-17, per DCYF Policy 6800. Background Checks ([www.dcyf.wa.gov/6000-operations/6800-background-checks](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/6000-operations/6800-background-checks)).
- BCU processes the background checks for all identified household members and communicates the results back to CW and the supervisor. This process typically takes less than one hour.
- CW discusses, identifies, and addresses any immediate needs with the caregiver that could be a barrier to placement.
- Once BCU conditionally approves the home, CW completes a walkthrough of the home.



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

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## At the Time of Placement

- During the walkthrough, CW talks to the caregiver about the Initial Licenses, noting their initial response on the Placement Agreement DCYF 15-281.
- CW completes a walkthrough of the home using the Home Inspection Checklist (Kinship) DCYF 10-453 and Unlicensed Caregiver Placement Checklist DCYF 15-280.
- CW informs the kinship caregiver that there is lag between placement, issuing the Initial License, and the first payment. CW should offer resources for immediate needs, including the option to apply for and collect Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
  - Caregivers will need to decide whether to report the change of income, which will count the foster care reimbursement as income against family benefits or remove the child placed in their care from the Department of Social and Health Services Community Services Office assistance unit, which would not count the foster care reimbursement payment as income against family benefits.

## After Placement

- CW notifies BCU placement has occurred.
- CW ensures “Placement Care and Authority” is entered into the legal status of FamLink.
- CW uploads placement forms into FamLink.
- BCU enters the placement into FamLink, automatically notifying the LD to begin the home study process.
- At shelter care, the courts order the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to commence the Initial Licensing process.
- CW continues to work with the caregiver (i.e., conduct health and safety visits and provide resources).
- LD verifies the child is still with the caregiver, sets the caregiver up in the Washington Caregiver Application Portal (WA CAP), and verifies requirements.
- LD issues the Initial License.
- LD continues to work with the caregiver until they are fully licensed.

