



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

June 03, 2024

Service Request Process:

When submitting a service request in Guardian for FAS Courtesy Supervision or FAS Guardianship Annual Review, please submit all service requests related to the child together to ensure they are all assigned to the same agency. Please include information in the narrative in regards to whether the caregiver previously worked with an agency and if the child is in an unlicensed non-kin placement or a licensed foster home. This will ensure assignment of the referral to the same agency previously working with the caregiver, for continuity of care for the family

FAS reports that will be uploaded into Guardian will include:

- Foster Care License.
- Child and Caregiver Visitation Field Guide (when referred for Courtesy Supervision).
- Guardianship Annual Review Reports (when referred and applicable).
- Adoption Certification Studies and Order of Certification (when referred and applicable).
- Case Notes (when applicable).

Foster and Adoption Services (FAS)

Description of Service

DCS believes family-based care is the most appropriate and healthy setting for children who cannot remain safely in their home of origin. In these circumstances, family-based care is achieved through focused recruitment, retention and enhancing the knowledge and skills of foster and adoptive families, prior to, during and post placements. Arizona's foster care population and the capacity of licensed foster families continue to evolve as the trends of children entering and exiting care change. This requires continued maintenance and enhancement to ensure the needs of the children in care are met.

The Department's goal of these services is to expand the caregiver array to match the demographics of children in care. Recruitment and retention strategies should attract new and existing families who reflect or show an interest in caring for the cultural, age, gender and racial population of the children in need of homes. Services should focus on improving the support required to assist families in meeting the needs of the children in their homes while also assisting foster families in navigating the child welfare system. Included in FAS, High Needs Foster Care (HNFC) should be utilized as an intervention service. The purpose is to provide care to youth in a more structured environment for the youth until a time when the youth can safely step to a lower level of care.

The purpose of this service is to support families through the foster care and/or adoption process as these families support children who are experiencing foster care. The support shall include but not be limited to: ongoing family support before, during and after placement, monitoring of the home environment, recruitment, initial and ongoing training, retention efforts, initial and renewal licensing, and initial certification and extensions.

FAS service requests include Adoption Certification, Courtesy Supervision, and Guardianship Annual Review Report.

Should an unlicensed non-kinship caregiver need to become certified to adopt as outlined in A.R.S. § 8-105 or as necessary for families who previously had guardianship, a referral can be made to a FAS agency and the agency will complete the adoption home study and submit it to DCS and the designated court in each county within the designated timeframes required by the courts.

Should a foster parent be granted legal guardianship, a referral can be made to a FAS agency and the agency will complete the Permanent Guardianship Annual Review Report, upload the report to Guardian and submit to the Courts, and attend and participate in the court hearing. The new referral will be matched to the existing FAS agency who may have already been working with the foster family.

Eligibility

Caregivers who do not meet the criteria to be considered relative or fictive kin, foster parents, and adoptive caregivers are eligible for FAS services. Please refer to DCS Program Policy Chapter 4: Section 3 Kinship Care for clarification on who is considered to have a kinship relationship with a child and the difference between a relative and fictive kin. Kinship caregivers should be referred to Kinship Support Services. Persons who are not familial relatives but have pre-existing relationship with a child only would be considered for unlicensed placement; however, they would to meet the standards for licensure (A.C.C. Title 21, Chapter 6 and 8) and be licensed under FAS.

Unlicensed non-kinship caregivers who need to become certified to adopt should be referred.

Foster parents who are granted legal guardianship or have a pending annual guardianship review hearing should be referred.

Children placed in foster homes needing courtesy supervision services should be referred. (note: courtesy supervision of children placed in kinship homes, group homes or who are non-minor dependents is not part of the FAS service array).

Time frames for Outreach, Engagement, Assessment, & Services

Within two (2) business days from receiving an initial inquiry the FAS provider shall respond by providing general information about the provider, the children in DCS care, the licensing and/or certification process, and information on how to attend an online DCS orientation. Follow up with families within five (5) business days, thirty (30) days and again at sixty (60) days if the family has not already started the process or has asked not to be contacted again.

Return non-emergency phone calls and emails from families within one (1) business day.

Provide a phone number to families to have access to live agency support twenty-four hours a day.

Guarantee availability to arrange placements twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week including holidays.

For all families with a new placement, conduct an in-person visit within seven (7) calendar days of placement.

Send families a notice of license expiration and license renewal requirements at least ninety (90) calendar days before the expiration date.

Submit certified families within thirty (30) calendar days of certification to DCS to be placed on the Adoption Registry.

Assist families who require recertification or an extension of their certification within sixty (60) calendar days before the certification expiring.

15 business days prior to the annual guardianship hearing the FAS Provider will upload the Guardianship Annual Review Report to Guardian and submitted to Court. The FAS Provider will attend and participate in the court hearing.

Within 10 calendar days of the Courtesy Supervision monthly visit the FAS Provider will upload the Child and Caregiver visitation Field Guide to Guardian.

FAS benefits foster and adoptive families in many ways.

- Assists the potential caregivers with completing licensing paperwork and eliminating barriers to licensure.
- Discusses the adoption certification process and assist in obtaining certification when necessary.
- Creates a Family Support Plan (FSP) with the caregivers to address barriers, supports and training needs; significant changes to the household; shared parenting and reunification efforts; placement preservation efforts; case plan changes, etc.
- Assists the caregiver in accessing community services and navigating systems (behavioral health, court, educational).
- Assists the caregiver with ensuring children are enrolled in school and their educational needs are met.
- Notifies the DCS Specialist of additional needs of the children identified by the caregiver, such as appointments, necessary services and resources (e.g., counseling, medical, dental, employment, etc.).
- Ensures each family understands the importance of placement preservation and works to support the family in preserving the living arrangement, including consultation with the CFT for consideration of additional in-home supports and services as appropriate.
- Assists the caregiver with accessing the Provider Portal. Explain and demonstrate the DCS Foster Care Invoice and Provider Portal. Assist the caregiver with any ongoing billing issues. Assist the caregiver with requesting bed rate increases, if applicable.
- Educates caregivers on reunification goals and permanency options for children in care.
- Facilitates and promotes shared parenting and partnerships unless otherwise directed by the DCS Specialist.
- FAS Providers participate in the Child Family Team (CFT) meetings, attend court with the kinship caregiver, participate in Team Decision Meeting's (TDM) and other structured engagements with the Department, system partners, birth parents and other activities that support the permanency goal for each child placed with licensed or certified family.
- Assists the caregiver with applying for adoption subsidy or guardianship subsidy when applicable.
- Provides timely education, specific skill building and coaching to caregivers to ensure they are able to adequately meet the needs of children in their care and kept up to date on current best practices.
- Provides ongoing supports on an as needed basis for DCS-referred families that previously had guardianship and are being referred for certification only.
- Intercedes for the caregivers to reduce conflict or stress between the caregivers and any parties involved.
- Ensure families are informed of DCS sponsored events and other events in the community that may support their needs and notify DCS of agency sponsored events.
- Support families through the licensing inquiry process as outlined in R21 6 221 in the event there is a concerning allegation.

FAS benefits foster and adoptive families in many ways ~continued

- FAS providers complete Incident Reports on behalf of the caregiver, when needed.
- Ensure families signs and abides by the expectations outlined in the Family Foster Home Agreement.
- Supports placement transitions as outlined in the Guide to Placement Transitions.

Frequency of contact

Weekly home visits for the first month and monthly for the next five (5) months if the family is receiving their first placement or is newly licensed, in the past six (6) months.

Quarterly home visits if the family has been licensed for more than six (6) months and has had children previously in their home.

If referred for Courtesy Supervision, visits will continue monthly and not transition to quarterly.

More frequent home visits as necessary based on the needs of the caregiver and child.

For High Needs Foster Care (HNFC), conduct weekly in-person or virtual visits during the first six (6) weeks of the child's placement. Conduct monthly home visits for the remainder of the time the child is in HNFC.

For adoptive homes not licensed for foster care, conduct home visits weekly for the first month a child is placed and monthly thereafter until the adoption is finalized.

Communication between DCS and FAS providers informs every one of the caregiver's progress and provides a timely response to identified concerns while continuing to coordinate services.