

Certification Process for Embrace Families

Prepared by Ellen Taylor, Training Manager

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Preface

If you are employed by the Department of Children and Families, a Community-Based Care Lead Agency, or a CBC subcontractor and are providing child welfare case management services and do not hold a current Child Welfare certification, you are required to complete the certification process through the Florida Certification Board.

Background History

According to Florida Statute, 402.40 FS (Child Welfare Training and Certification), the legislative intent behind privatizing credentialing was “the Department of Children and Families work in collaboration with the child welfare stakeholder community, including department-approved third-party credentialing entities, *to ensure that staff have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to competently provide child welfare services. It is the intent of the Legislature that each person providing child welfare services in this state earns and maintains a professional certification from a professional credentialing entity that is approved by the Department of Children and Families.* The Legislature further intends that certification and training programs will aid in the reduction of poor staff morale and of staff turnover, will positively impact on the quality of decisions made regarding children and families who require assistance from programs providing child welfare services, and will afford better quality care of children who must be removed from their families.”

The Florida Certification Board is the only Department-approved third-party credentialing entity.

According to statute, the Florida Certification Board (FCB) must:

- (a) Establish professional requirements and standards that applicants must achieve in order to obtain a child welfare certification and to maintain such certification.
- (b) Develop and apply core competencies and examination instruments according to nationally recognized certification and psychometric standards.
- (c) Maintain a professional code of ethics and a disciplinary process that apply to all persons holding child welfare certification.
- (d) Maintain a database, accessible to the public, of all persons holding child welfare certification, including any history of ethical violations.
- (e) Require annual continuing education for persons holding child welfare certification.
- (f) Administer a continuing education provider program to ensure that only qualified providers offer continuing education opportunities for certificate holders.

What Human Resources Needs to Know about Certification

How do I verify that someone seeking employment is credentialed by the Florida Certification Board?

There is a search option on the Florida Certification Board homepage that allows anyone to verify an individuals' Child Welfare certification. It should **ALWAYS** be checked for the most up to date status information. In order to access the search feature, you must complete a registration process. Directions for this can be found at the link below:

Does the potential employee meet the educational requirement for Florida Certification Board?

Child welfare certification requires that an individual holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree in Social Work or a related area of study (listed below) from an **accredited college or university**.

Behavioral Sciences	Human Services
Community Development	Law
Criminal Justice/Criminology	Political Science
Education	Public Administration
Health Science	Psychology
Human Development	Social Policy
Human Sciences	Sociology

A college or university's accreditation can be verified at the website below:

<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/search.aspx>

It is imperative that the employing agency verify that individuals meet the minimum education requirements for certification. This is especially true when an individual in transferring from one program area to another as the requirements for case managers and licensing staff are stricter than those for protective investigators.

How does the credentialing process begin?

For candidates who attend pre-service training provided by Embrace Families, **provisional applications will be completed online in the classroom**. The Pre-Service Trainer will assist the candidate in completing the provisional certification application process. The link to the provisional application can be accessed after an account is created using the link below:

<https://portalfcy.cyzap.net/dzapps/dbzap.bin/apps/assess/webmembers/login?webid=FCB>

Certification Requirements

There are **two forms that must be completed by the employee's HR department** attesting to the educational degree and level 2 background screening.

The forms can be located at the links below:

<https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/CWP-Level-2-Background-Eligibility-Verification-Form.pdf>

<https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/CWP-Formal-Education-Degree-Verification-Form.pdf>

Once completed, these **forms should be returned to the Pre-service Trainer** for submission to FCB.

There is a testing fee of \$100 per test attempt. Embrace Families is limiting the number of posttest attempts to three. The cost for testing is the responsibility of the employee/employer. There is three day minimum time between test attempts. If a third attempt is requested a formalized training plan will have to be developed to assist the candidate in learning the materials. Payment and all paperwork have to be submitted to FCB a minimum of three days prior to the re-test.

There is a **\$100 fee for provisional certification.** This fee is the responsibility of the employee/employer.

Both the provisional application and testing fees (\$200) must be paid a minimum of ten days prior to testing.

When a passing score is earned on the exam, the FCB will issue the provisional credential. A provisional credential's effective date is the day the exam was passed. **The expiration date is 12-months after the exam was passed.**

During the provisional period, certified individuals must complete the additional on-the-job requirements and submit an application to upgrade to the full credential before the provisional credential expires.

Pre-Service Waiver Testing

There are some individuals for whom a waiver of the pre-service training requirement may be sought. This can be utilized for individuals who have previously completed pre-service training or have extensive child welfare experience. A proposed Individualized

Training Plan must be completed for these individuals. All the required forms for provisional certification must be completed and submitted to FCB via the Embrace Families Training Manager a minimum of three days prior to the scheduled test date. Candidates must pass the waiver test on their first attempt or attend all components of CORE and the specialty track curriculum. <https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/CWP-WAIVER-Applicant-Registration-Form-2-3-21.pdf>

Extension of Provisional Certification

A provisional credential cannot be renewed. However, the expiration date of a provisional credential may be eligible for a one-time extension for cause (additional extensions will only be approved pending extraordinary circumstances). Each request is evaluated on its own merits.

Provisional certification extensions may be granted to individuals who were not able to earn full certification within required timeframes for the following reasons:

- a. Extended absence from work for maternity/paternity leave, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), or other extended illness. The extension will be equal to the amount of time the employee was on approved leave.
- b. Part-time staff. The extension will be granted for six (6) months.
- c. Discipline transfer mid-certification. The extension will be granted for six (6) months.
- d. Other circumstance. The applicant must submit a written Extension Request Memo (see last page of this document) packet for review and action by the Child Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC). The length of the extension will vary based on circumstances, not to exceed six (6) months.

The application to request an extension can be found at the link below:

<https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/CW-Provisional-Extension-Request-April-2019.pdf>

Supervision

Following the successful completion of the posttest or waiver test, supervision must be thoroughly documented. In the first six months following the test, an individual must receive a minimum of twenty hours of individual and ten hours of group supervision.

This supervision must be documented in FSFN, in a personnel file, or on a supervision documentation sheet. All supervision must be recorded on a supervision log that is maintained for all individuals seeking certification. While this information is not routinely submitted to Embrace Families or Florida Certification Board, it may be reviewed as part of a monitoring or audit and therefore must be completed thoroughly.

Supervision hours towards credentialing begin upon successful completion of the post test. In the first six months, an individual should receive a minimum of 20 hours of individual and a minimum of 10 hours of agency group supervision. During the seventh to tenth month, there is requirement of an additional 10 hours of both individual and group supervision. All supervision is to be documented on a supervision log and have supporting documentation in case files, meeting minutes or personnel records. A competency attestation sheet also needs to be submitted as part of the full certification application indicating that the core competencies related to the employee's role have been demonstrated.

This supervision is in addition to any field observations required as part of the credentialing process.

Group Supervision can occur in a variety of ways. Two or more individuals can be brought together with a supervisor to review actual cases or to discuss a policy or a best practice concept.

Staff Meetings are often forums where information is passed along to the unit. If policy memos are discussed or new practices explained, this can count as group supervision. It is important to attach a copy of your meeting minutes to the supervision log as supporting documentation.

Our system of care requires the use of **Learning Circles** as part of monthly unit meetings. According to the system of care, no less than once a month, the supervisor will meet with the entire unit for a case review (QI). At those meetings, the supervisor will ask (in advance) for case managers to present a case for review and discussion. The cases might be ones in which the supervisor and case manager have identified particular challenges that were successfully resolved, resulting in "teaching moments" for the unit, or they might select a complex case that is not moving forward where additional eyes might lead to solutions or at least a fresh perspective. These sessions need to be documented by the supervisor facilitating them (identifying participants and a brief summary of what was presented) and shall be attached to the supervision log for the individuals seeking credentialing.

In the first six months following the posttest or waiver test, an individual should receive a minimum of 20 hours of **Individual Supervision**. During the seventh to tenth months following the posttest or waiver test, there is requirement of an additional 10 hours of individual supervision. This supervision is to be documented on a supervision log and have supporting documentation in case files, meeting minutes or personnel records.

Field Observations

In months seven to eleven following the test, an additional ten hours of both individual and group supervision are required along with field observations. There is a minimum of six field observations required for certification that must occur during this time. The field observations are designed to assess the individual in court (or for licensing specific staff, teaching a PRIDE class); participating in a staffing; and during interactions with families (at least one must be with Birth Parent (except licensing & adoption specific staff) and at least one must include a child). The remaining field observation is the supervisor's choice based upon the individual's needs. One of the family interactions must be observed by a System of Care Trainer or Quality Assurance Manager. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to coordinate field observations.

Additional Training

Academy Days are a four part training series that support the transfer of learning from classroom to field. Attendance to these four sessions is an Embrace Families requirement for full certification. The sessions are offered on a continuous basis.

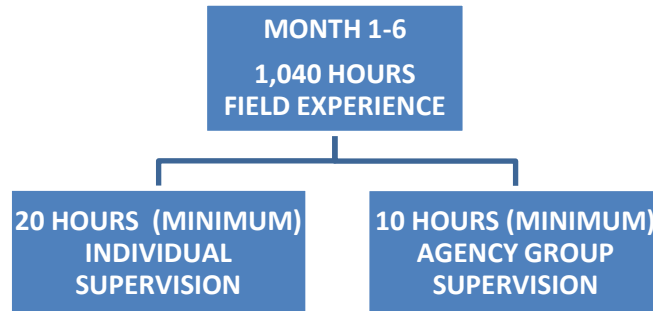
The Initial Certification Process Summary

Florida Certification Board set minimal standards for certification. Embrace Families has added several required enhancements to these minimal standards.

Post Test

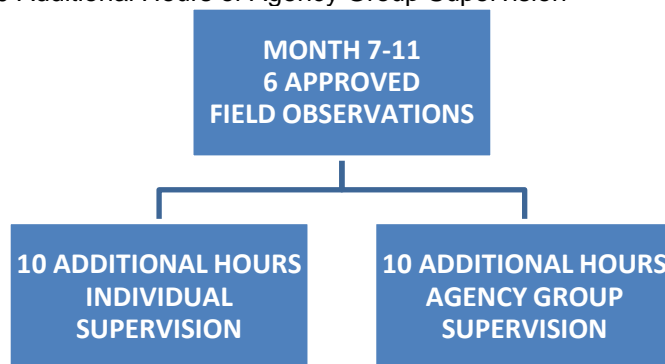
➤ **Activity during Month 1-6**

- 1) 1,040 Hours of Field Experience (6 months)
- 2) 20 Hours (minimum) of Individual Supervision
- 3) 10 Hours (minimum) Agency Group Supervision
- 4) Attending the Academy Days training series (4 sessions)



➤ **Activity during Month 7-10**

- 1) Field Observations (6 total and 1 of the family interactions must be with a System of Care Trainer or Quality Assurance Manager)
 - A. 1-Court Hearing (for licensing staff, teach a PRIDE class)
 - B. 1-Staffing
 - C. 3-Family Interactions
 - At least 1 must be with Birth Parent (except for licensing & adoption specific staff)
 - At least 1 must include a child
 - D. 1-Supervisor's Choice (based on individual needs)
- 2) 10 Additional Hours of Individual Supervision
- 3) 10 Additional Hours of Agency Group Supervision



➤ **Activity during Month 10**

- 1) Certification review and attestations
- 2) Packet submission to Embrace Families Training Manager for review no later than 60 days prior to provisional expiration.
- 3) Submission by Embrace Families Training Manager for approval to FCB at least 30 days prior to provisional expiration.

Upgrade to Full Certification Application

The online application is completed by the candidate. The application can be accessed via the individual's FCB account.

Supporting documentation has to be completed by the candidate's HR Department verifying work experience. That form can be located at the link below:

<https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/CWP-Work-Experience-Verification-Form-2-3-2021.pdf>

Supporting documentation has to be completed by the candidate's supervisor attesting to the candidate's competency. That form can be located at the link below:

<https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/CWP-OTJ-Supervision-and-Competency-Verification-Form.pdf>

The supervisor will also complete a competency checklist attestation. That form can be located in the attachments section of this manual.

Once all of this has been completed, a submission checklist is completed by the supervisor and submitted to the Embrace Families Training Manager along with the documents required to support the candidate's upgrade application to full certification.

The packet will be reviewed and once approved, submitted to Florida Certification Board by the Embrace Families Training Manager.

There is an upgrade to full certification fee of \$100. Payment needs to be made directly to FCB no later than thirty days prior to the provisional expiration date.

Dual Certification

If a fully certified individual transfers from another role in child welfare to case management or licensing, that individual must complete the dual certification requirements. They will join a pre-service class for the case management or licensing portion of the curriculum. They will receive at least half of the supervision hours required for a provisionally certified individual and will complete a "test case" in the new specialty area. There is no testing requirement, but the process for achieving dual certification is the same as full certification with the reduction in supervision hours.

There is additional information available on the process at the link below:

<https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-Dual-Certification-Application-and-Policy-Guide.pdf>

The application can be located at the link below: <https://flcertificationboard.org/wp-content/uploads/Dual-Cert-Application-1-16-19-current-1.pdf>

Provisionally certified individuals who transfer into case management or licensing will have to complete all pre-service training specific to their new role and complete all of the requirements for a provisionally certified individual. An extension of the provisional certification may be an option.

Recertification/Renewal of Certification

The Florida Certification Board requires all certified professionals to complete a specific number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs)/in-service training hours each year. The renewal fee is \$200.

Eligible Continuing Education/In-service Training: Eligible training meets three requirements:

- a. The training is directly related to at least one of the child welfare core competencies.
- b. The training is documented and documentation can be verified by a third-party (the Florida Certification Board).
- c. The training is offered by a Florida Certification Board approved provider.

Florida Certification Board -Approved Providers: Florida Certification Board-approved providers must deliver or sponsor the event *and* meet at least one of the following requirements:

- a. The provider is an accredited college or university.
- b. The provider is approved to issue CEUs by another licensing or certification board.
- c. The provider holds a Florida Certification Board-awarded continuing education provider number.*

Embrace Families and DCF are both Florida Certification Board-approved training providers.

Renewal Requirements for Individuals Holding Multiple Credentials: Certified professionals must earn the minimum number of required continuing education/in-service training hours required for the credential held. When multiple credentials are held in the same credential category, CEU hours perform “double duty.”

Note: While the credential is on inactive or suspended status, the certified individual is NOT meeting the requirements of the law and employers will have to remove inactive persons from positions requiring certification as a condition of employment until the credential is back in active status.

SUPERVISION TRACKING LOG

Candidate Name:				
Date (MM/DD/YY)	Case ID or Topic	Supervisor	Individual: (15 minute increments)	Group: (15 minute increments)
Total Hours:				

SUPERVISION DOCUMENTATION

Candidate Name: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Begin Time ____:____ (AM/PM) End Time ____:____ (AM/PM) Total Time: ____:____

Type of Supervision: ☐ Individual ☐ Group

Case ID or Topic of

Discussion: _____

Purpose:

Discussion:

Feedback:

Supervisor Print: _____ Title: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

FIELD OBSERVATION FORM

Name: _____ Observation Date: ____/____/____

Case ID: _____

Observation Type: ☐ Court ☐ Family ☐ Staffing ☐ Other _____

FIELD ASSESSMENT – Identify Strengths/Needs/Recommendations

DOCUMENTATION ASSESSMENT- <i>Identify Strengths/Needs/Recommendations</i>

The candidate met competency for Field Assessment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

The candidate met competency for Documentation Assessment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Observer's Name Print: _____ Title: _____

Observer's Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

The core competencies in the Foundations domain include job tasks related to professional and ethical behavior, legal responsibilities, and documentation tasks. Case managers must perform these job tasks in conjunction with appropriate Community and Family Engagement competencies; Assessment competencies; and Safety Management, Service Planning, and Delivery competencies.

By signing off on this section, you are attesting to the fact that you have directly observed and/or reviewed case file products that demonstrate achievement of core competency. For each competency identified through case file review, please cite the document supporting competency demonstration.

Child Protection Foundations Competencies	Competency Demonstrated	Document/Tool Description	Supervisor Initials
1. Implement ethical standards of the profession while conducting child welfare services.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
2. Report child abuse and neglect cases using the Abuse Hotline procedures and reporting requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
3. Recognize and operate within the legal obligations and limitations that state and federal laws place on case managers.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
4. Apply confidentiality requirements to casework tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
5. Perform case management responsibilities in accordance with state and federal laws on child abuse, abandonment, and neglect within required timeframes.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
6. Use the juvenile court to protect children from maltreatment and assure permanency within legally established timeframes.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
7. Collaborate with other service providers and legal and court personnel in preparing children and family members for court activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
8. Provide factual information through reports and testimony to the court.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
9. Work with Children's Legal Services to prepare legally sufficient documents for legal action.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
10. Prepare for and participate in all court hearings.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
11. Assure quality of care through a working knowledge of mandated performance standards and best practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
12. Work in partnership with various individuals and groups within the child welfare system and community to promote the safety and well-being of children and families.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
13. Prepare for and participate effectively in case staffings and meetings as a leader and contributor.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
14. Effectively communicate a complete, comprehensive, and coherent case plan history and compliance to the court.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		

Child Protection Foundations Competencies	Competency Demonstrated	Document/Tool Description	Supervisor Initials
15. Effectively communicate information about agency programs and services to clients, agency staff, or other service providers.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
16. Plan, organize, and manage multiple priorities, and perform work activities in a manner that efficiently uses existing resources and time.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
17. Use safety skills and techniques when faced with dangerous situations in the workplace and field.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
18. Assist individuals and families in responding to a crisis in a manner that promotes positive change, growth, and development, and ensures safety for all family members.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
19. Provide culturally-competent casework services and link families with culturally-competent service providers.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
20. Write clear, legible, and concise documents, reports, and case information.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
21. Build and maintain an up-to-date, organized, and accessible case file.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
22. Clearly and accurately document events, information/contacts, reasonable efforts, and actions related to the child and family within req. timeframes.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
23. Enter all case documentation in the official SACWIS (Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System) within required timeframes.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
24. Monitor and update each child's Child Resource Record and, when applicable, the Life Book, to ensure that each child has a life history traced over their time in care.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
25. Monitor and update each child's Health and Education Passport to ensure that each child has a complete and current medical and educational record.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		

"I hereby certify that I have been in a position to observe and have firsthand knowledge of the capabilities of

Name of Candidate

By my signature, I acknowledge that I have directly observed the applicant performing the core competencies identified in this domain and believe that the certification candidate is capable of consistently performing the core competencies under normal, standard supervision.

I further acknowledge that case file documentation exists to support my assessment of the candidate's demonstration of each core competency.

Your Full Name (printed)

Date

Your Signature

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

I, _____ have completed the minimum requirements necessary for certification as listed below. I am submitting the following documentation for review:

- ☐ Core Competency Attestation Form (Supervisor)
- ☐ 30 Hours Individual Supervision (Log provided)
- ☐ 20 Hours Group Supervision (Log provided)
- ☐ 6 Field Observations (one with trainer)
- ☐ Direct Supervision Form (Supervisor)
- ☐ Work Verification Form (HR Dept.)
- ☐ Academy Day certificates (4 sessions)
- ☐ Candidate's Upgrade Application (on-line)

Candidate Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Training Entity: _____ Date: ____/____/____