**Section 402.12 Qualifications of Foster Family**

a) The licensees shall be either a single person or two persons in a marriage or civil union with each other. Each foster parent shall be willing and able to assume appropriate responsibilities for the child or children received for care.

b) An individual may be allowed to share the living arrangements only at the discretion of the supervising agency. The licensee is responsible for reporting to the supervising agency that an individual may be sharing the living arrangements prior to the individual moving into the home or prior to licensure. The individual will be subject to the same requirements as other members of the household, such as health certification and background checks as required in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 385 (Background Checks). The license capacity will be redetermined based on the new family composition. This is non-waivable.

c) Foster parents shall be stable, law abiding, responsible, mature individuals, at least 21 years of age. This is non-waivable.

d) The capability of the foster parents to provide care shall be considered prior to licensure of the foster family home. A decision to establish the age and number of children permitted in the home shall be based on an assessment of the foster family and shall consider at least the following criteria, which are non-waivable:

1) the foster parents' capability to provide care including an evaluation of the caregivers' health, strength, and mobility;

2) whether at least one applicant for foster home licensure can read and write at the level necessary to meet the needs of youth in care and whether the applicants participate effectively in the community in which they reside;

3) the number, chronological and functional age, and characteristics and needs of the children currently under the care of the foster parents. This shall include an assessment of the foster parent's own children under age 18, all other children under age 18 receiving full-time care, and children receiving day care services in the foster family home;

4) the characteristics, limitations, and responsibilities of the caregivers. All members of the foster family shall be free from active alcohol or substance dependency;

5) the caregivers' ability to appropriately care for and adequately supervise the children currently in the home, as well as their ability to care for and supervise the ages, needs, and behaviors of the children who may be placed in the foster family home; and

6) the number of foster parents in the home and the availability and experience of child care assistants.

e) All members of the household age 13 and older (except for foster children) shall have passed the background check required by 89 Ill. Adm. Code 385 (Background Checks). This is non-waivable.

f) Foster parents shall accept agency supervision. This is non-waivable.

g) Foster home applicants shall provide the names and addresses of at least three persons who are not related to them who can attest that the applicants are of reputable and responsible moral character, as well as the name and address of at least one relative who can attest to the applicant's capability to care for the child or children. This is non-waivable.

h) Foster parents shall respect a child's ties to his or her family and support the child in maintaining connections with his or her family. Foster parents shall cooperate with the supervising agency and the service plan for the child and his/her family. In an effort to become better acquainted with the child's siblings and other family members, a foster parent shall transport children to and supervise family visitation whenever possible.

i) The licensee shall have sufficient and stable financial resources to provide for all needs of current household members and for any youth placed in the foster home.

j) As a condition of initial licensure, each foster parent shall complete Pre-licensure Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE Training or an equivalent pre-licensure foster parent training that has been approved by the Department.

k) As a condition of fostering unrelated children in a licensed foster home, each foster parent shall complete Pre-placement Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE Training or an equivalent pre-placement foster parent training that has been approved by the Department.

l) Promoting Joint Placement of Sibling Groups and Sibling Contact

1) As part of pre-licensure training, each foster parent shall receive training regarding the importance of maintaining sibling relationships and the child's sense of attachment to his/her siblings, the importance of maintaining sibling relationships over the child's lifespan, and the impact on the child if those relationships are severed. Foster home applicants shall be asked to explore their willingness to help children maintain contact with their siblings and other significant relationships in the children's past, as well as significant relationships they develop in the future. Foster home applicants shall be told that they may be contacted in the future regarding placement of siblings of a child subsequently requiring placement, or visitation and contact with siblings in other living arrangements or living independently.

2) The Department shall assess the prospective foster family's understanding of a foster child's family connections, their willingness to help and support children in maintaining or developing a relationship with their siblings, including siblings with whom the children do not yet have a relationship, and recognize the value of preserving family ties between siblings, including their need for stability and continuity of relationships, and the importance of sibling contact in the development of the each child's identity.

3) When it is not possible to place all of the children together, the Department shall encourage the prospective foster families to encourage and facilitate visitation and contact among the siblings.

m) In addition, each foster parent shall complete, as a condition of license renewal, 16 clock hours of approved in-service training. The foster home license shall not be renewed until each single foster parent and at least one foster parent in a married couple, or couple in a civil union, has completed educational advocacy training by the Department or approved agency that, if completed in the most recent licensing cycle, may count toward the 16 clock hours of in-service training. Child welfare agencies may require foster families under their supervision to complete additional training as a condition of continued supervision by the agency.

n) An expanded capacity license to allow foster homes to serve more than six children (including the foster parent's own children under age 18 and all other children under age 18 receiving full-time care) may be granted if the foster family home meets the requirements of Section 402.15(c). As a provision of retaining the expanded capacity license, foster parents shall complete a total of 9.0 clock hours of approved training each calendar year, beginning the calendar year the expanded capacity license is issued.

o) A statement that describes how the foster family and the foster family's home comply with the requirements of this Part shall be placed in the permanent foster home record. If the foster family home is not in compliance with any of the licensing standards, these standards shall be specifically recorded and the plan for achieving compliance shall be outlined. The plan for achieving compliance shall indicate whether foster children can remain in the foster home and whether new placements may be made in the foster home while the foster home is achieving compliance with the licensing standards. The statement shall be updated to reflect any changes in the status of the foster family or the foster home. All such updates shall be entered within five working days after the change in status. This is non-waivable.

(Source: Amended at 44 Ill. Reg. 6019, effective April 1, 2020)