



PROSPECTIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS:

Moving a family from their initial inquiry
to placing a child in their home

You have just had an inquiry from a prospective Resource Family...

Your prompt response and inviting tone will encourage them to learn more about becoming a Licensed DCF home and set the stage for a positive working relationship. It is important to explain the system to the interested family so that they can make an informed decision about whether becoming a resource home is the right fit for them.

1. **Answer their phone call/email within 24-72 hours.** A fast response to a prospective family is vital. New families are a *very valuable resource* and this is about providing good customer service.
2. **Meet the person at their level.** Listen and learn about what they know about the FC system. Get a sense of their motivation for this work.
3. **Use the scripts for talking points** about the system.
4. **Make note of their name,** contact information and where they heard about the need for foster families. Fill out the [Foster Parent Pre-Screen Form](#) with them.
5. **Schedule the next time you will talk or meet** prior to hanging up. Offer the prospective family some choices of next steps.
 - Set up an appointment for an informational meeting.
 - Send them information via email or mail and schedule a follow up phone call for a length of time away that provides them the opportunity to think about it.
 - Ask if they'd like to speak to a current resource family.
 - If someone decides that fostering is not for them, don't forget to ask if they would like to consider being a respite family or helping in some other way.
6. **Visit the family in their home.** Use the document [Steps to Become a Resource Family checklist](#) embedded in the application packet to help guide them through the process.
 - **If possible, schedule it so that you meet the children,** but it is better if they are not there for the entire visit. This provides a great opportunity for you to see how they interact with the children they are currently caring for if applicable.
 - It is important to spend at least 1.5 hours reviewing all of the materials and preferably without the children present.



Recruit and Retain Toolkit, Step 2 Engaging the Prospective Family

7. **Schedule the next step.** This usually would be providing them with the *First Steps* schedule and helping them pick out a time that works.
 - They need to contact Peggy Manahan (Peggy.manahan@uvm.edu) at UVM CWTP to enroll in their choice of class.
 - Discuss the classroom training schedule and let them know how that will work. CWTP will mail out the invitation for the classroom sessions and they will need to RSVP to the person named in the letter.

8. **In the classroom,** have the participants complete their homework which includes a Casey Self-Assessment.
 - Review this material and have another meeting with them to review the material and guide them through any issues that you or they may identify.

9. **Licensing** the licensing and training procedures to become a resource parent can be time consuming and complicated.
 - Keep in contact with prospective families to let them know how the process is going and avoid their being discouraged. A strong working relationship the family begins with good communication now.
 - It helps to remind the family that once all the paperwork has been gathered and finger print information is received, a Licensing Social Worker will get in touch to schedule an appointment with the caretaking adults in the home. This appointment usually lasts approximately two hours. More of their history will be reviewed and there will be further discussions about integrating a new person into their family.
 - The Licensor will make recommendations based on all of the information obtained. The Licensor will write a licensing report that will be placed on the family's file in RLSI and the district office. The family will receive a copy of their License in the mail.

10. **Ready for placement**
 - If you do not have a child to place with them immediately, make sure to keep in touch and continue to nurture your working relationship with the family.

