



PRIVATE CHILD PLACING AGENCIES

By: Katherine Dwyer, Associate Analyst

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According to DCF regulations (1) a "child placing agency" is an agency in or outside of Connecticut licensed or approved by DCF for the placement of children for adoption purposes and (2) a "non-approved child placing agency" is an agency anywhere in the United States that is licensed or regulated by its local jurisdiction but not approved by DCF ([Conn. Agency Regs. § 45a-728-2](#)).

ISSUE

Do private child-placing agencies in Connecticut have to be licensed and, if so, by whom?

SUMMARY

By law, private child-placing agencies must be licensed by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to place a child in Connecticut ([CGS § 17a-149](#)). Additionally, DCF regulations distinguish between "child placing agencies" and "non-approved child placing agencies" (see sidebar). The regulations prohibit non-approved agencies from placing a child, for any purpose, in Connecticut ([Conn. Agency Regs. § 45a-728-2](#)).

The law requires private child-placing agencies seeking DCF licensure to consent to department inspection, review, and supervision of all child-placing acts. This provision does not apply to the homes in which children are placed ([CGS § 17a-149](#)).

The licensure process includes (1) state and criminal history record checks of anyone named on the application and (2) investigation of the agency's conditions to determine if they are suitable for placing children under standards prescribed by the commissioner for children's health, safety, morality, and well-being. If, after the investigation, the commissioner finds that the applicant, notwithstanding good faith efforts, is not able to fully comply with all the standards, but can achieve compliance with minimal efforts, she may issue a provisional license for up to 60 days. The provisional license may be renewed for 60 day periods for up to one year ([CGS § 17a-151](#)).



Before issuing any license, the commissioner must give the selectmen of the town in which the licensee intends to operate 10 days' written notice of the proposed licensure. The notice is not required for licensure of a corporation incorporated to place children.

DCF issues child-placing agency licenses for 24 months at a time. The department must periodically inspect and review licensees at least once every 90 days, or more often if the commissioner deems it necessary ([CGS § 17a-151](#)). According to DCF, this includes quarterly on-site visits to the agency premises.

Each licensed child-placing agency must annually file with DCF a report on its functions, services and operation.

The commissioner may revoke, suspend, or limit a license for cause, after first notifying the licensee and providing the opportunity for a hearing ([CGS § 17a-151](#)).

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