

WAC 110-148-1520 Interim Practice Guide

This resource is time-limited and only meant to provide additional information with the September 2026 rule memo. Final guidance will be implemented with the updated Foster Care Home Study and Reassessment Practice Guide.

Licensors will continue to ask applicants/foster parents questions about:

- The various identities of prospective children and youth in care.
- Affirming and supporting children and youth in care.
- Their views regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE).

Licensors should continue gathering as much information as possible during the interview and finish the assessment. Like other barriers that may arise, do not stop your assessment process but continue to gather information.

Interviewing

Wait for applicants/foster parents to raise religious or spiritual beliefs

Include information about religious beliefs only if applicants bring it up on their own. Only ask about their religion or beliefs when needed to clarify limitations.

Identify support limitations

If applicants state they are unwilling or unable to support LGBTQIA+ children or youth, explore the reasons they provide. Document a summary in the home study whether their explanation includes religious beliefs, personal values, or other factors. LD staff also document ongoing conversations with the applicants or CPA in provider notes in FamLink.

Ask clarifying questions when necessary

If applicants indicate that their stance is directly informed by religious beliefs related to marriage, gender, or sexual relationships, ask only the clarifying questions needed to understand how those beliefs shape their ability to support LGBTQIA+ youth.

Assess alternative support pathways

When applicants say their religious beliefs prevent them from supporting a child or youth who identifies as LGBTQIA+, assess and document how they will ensure the child or youth still receives support, including:

- Connecting the child or youth with resources and support in the home or community.

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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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- Not interfering with DCYF or other support people from facilitating access to resources and supports.

Write down exactly what the applicants say about how they will meet these expectations.

Share best practice information

Provide applicants with information about why these supports matter and how DCYF ensures access for LGBTQIA+ children and youth. Clarify that they are not being asked or required to personally provide support, but they must allow access to it. Share additional resources when appropriate.

Consult your supervisor or Regional Licensor

Seek guidance whenever applicants' statements are unclear, complex, or raise questions about licensing implications or next steps. Discuss whether additional training or support opportunities are needed.

Documentation

Document applicant/foster parent statements accurately and often. Record their explanations and use direct quotes, when possible, especially regarding their:

- Beliefs
- Limitations, and
- Willingness to:
 - connect youth to support
 - not interfere with DCYF or other support persons in connecting and engaging the children/youth with resources and support.

Continue to provide education and resources to the applicant/foster parent who has requested additional information.