Department of Family and Children’s Services

**Family and Permenency Bureau**

*373 Julian Street Building #2*

*San Jose, Ca 95110*

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***We Believe***

*Resource Families are fully committed to nurturing and supporting a child.*

*Resource Families are respected and valued team members.*

*Resource Families support family connections.*

*Resource Families are our neighbors who are specially trained and skilled in meeting the diverse needs of children in their care.*

We are always recruiting for more foster families. Refer friends to 299-KIDS or visit our webpage at:

<http://www.sccgov.org/fpr>

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**Date**: August 9, 2014

**Dear Caregiver,**

We are pleased to announce that Santa Clara County has begun to implement the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process. We are joining Kings, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties, who have already launched, to be among the first counties in California to implement and shape the RFA process. Statewide implementation of the remaining counties will begin in 2017.

***What is the RFA?***

The Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program was authorized through Senate Bill 1013 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012). The statute requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in consultation with county child welfare agencies, foster parent associations, and other interested community parties, to implement a unified, family friendly, and child-centered resource family approval process.

This new process replaces the existing multiple processes, eliminates duplication, and increases approval standards by incorporating a comprehensive permanency assessment of all families that want to provide care to a child, including relative care, foster, adopt, or provide legal guardianship to a child.

***What is a Resource Family?***

The term Resource Family, replaces the terms such as foster parent, adoptive family, guardianship family, and relative/NREFM. A Resource Family is considered to be approved individuals or couples, regardless of whether they are related to a child in foster care, who provide supervision of a juvenile, court dependent or ward.

***RFA Process Changes and Enhances our Services***

 **R**educes Processes and Paperwork

 The RFA process is a streamlined process that includes one application, one background check and a combined home environment and permanency assessment (formally known as the adoption home study) designed to expedite permanency.

 Resource families will no longer have to go through redundant processes. The separate orientations for people interested in fostering or adopting a child have merged into one orientation.

 **F**ocuses on Stable, Caring Lifelong Relationships

 Eligibility of families, relatives and non-relatives to become caregivers will be determined upfront in order to connect children to safe, caring relationships that can last a lifetime.

 **A**chieves Results for Children and Families

 The RFA process provides pre-approval and post approval training for caregivers and relatives resulting in families who are equipped to address the needs of children and prepared to make lifelong commitments. The new process is anticipated to be expedited in less than 90 days and accelerate the process to permanency.

***What you need to know!***

As a licensed provider this does not impact you. Your license and home study will remain valid as long as you meet the California Community Care Licensing Regulations and the Adoptions Program Regulations. **Note** that you are required to have annual visits, maintain up to date in-service training hours and a current adoption home study. In the future our current licensed foster family homes will have the opportunity to convert over to become Resource Family Approved homes. This process is being developed.

Due to transiting to a new process, the Department will no longer accept Foster Family Home applications from individuals who completed Pre-Service Training. All new applicants are required to take Pre-Approval Training. Therefore, applications submitted after September 2014 will be required to complete the new application process including Pre-Approval Training.

If you desire more information about the program call your licensing worker or 408-299-KIDS (5437).

**Contact:** Family and Permanency Bureau 408-299-KIDS (5437)