

## **T3C Training Series**

# **T3C Basic Foster Family Home Support Services**

*Self-Study Manual*

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## Curriculum

**Module 1: Service Package Overview & Core Responsibilities — 20 minutes**

**Module 2: Safety, Supervision, and Reasonable Discipline — 25 minutes**

**Module 3: Babysitters, Overnight Care, Respite, and Backup Caregivers — 25 minutes**

**Module 4: Documentation, Reporting, and Compliance Basics — 20 minutes**



## How to Use This Manual

This manual is designed as a self-paced training that you can complete independently. It is structured to take approximately 85 minutes total, including activities and the knowledge check.

Work through the modules in order. In each module, read the content, complete the short exercises, and write your responses in the spaces provided. If you are completing this training as part of a training plan, retain the completed manual for your records.

## Structure of Each Module

**What You'll Learn** – A short overview of the key skills and concepts covered in the module.

**Read & Learn** – The main teaching section written in plain language.

**Try It** – Brief exercises to practice the skill right away.

**Apply It** – Action steps you can use in the home or in your role.

**Self-Check** – A short quiz to confirm understanding.

## DFPS Minimum Standards Callouts

**Babysitters, overnight care, and respite policies: §749.127.**

Minimum Standards require the agency to maintain written policies that set expectations for babysitters, overnight care providers, and respite care providers.

**Unregulated homes for babysitting/overnight/respite: §749.2635.**

Minimum Standards allow placement for babysitting/overnight/respite in a home that Licensing does not regulate if the provider meets agency policy requirements.

**Backup caregivers and fingerprint-based criminal history checks: §749.2447.**

During foster home screening, any person who will act as a caregiver during an unexpected event or crisis must complete a fingerprint-based criminal history check before acting as a caregiver.

**Foster home screening updates: §749.2453.**

Minimum Standards describe when the agency must update foster home screening information to ensure continued appropriateness of the placement.

## Module 1: Service Package Overview & Core Responsibilities — 15 minutes

### What You'll Learn

- Define the scope of Basic Foster Family Home Support Services.
- Identify core responsibilities of foster parents and support staff.
- Explain why documentation and communication are essential for safety and stability.



## Read & Learn (approx. 8 minutes)

### What this service package supports

Basic Foster Family Home Support Services focus on helping foster homes provide safe, consistent, family-like care. This includes support with routines, supervision plans, caregiver coaching, and coordination with the case team.

### Your role in a family-like setting

Children should experience a safe and healthy home environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. Daily routines, clear expectations, and supportive supervision reduce risk and improve stability.

### Working with the case team

Maintain regular communication with the agency and the child's caseworker. Share concerns early, document key events, and follow direction on approvals for caregivers, visitors, and care arrangements.

## Try It (approx. 3 minutes)

List three daily routines that help children feel safe and know what to expect.

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Write two ways you will communicate concerns to the agency (examples: email updates, phone calls, documentation).

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## Apply It (approx. 3 minutes)

1. Create a simple daily schedule for mornings, after school, and bedtime.
2. Post emergency contacts in an easily accessible location.
3. Identify one area where you will improve documentation (example: visitor logs, medication log, incident notes).

Notes / Plan:

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## Self-Check (approx. 1 minutes)

1. What is the main purpose of Basic Foster Family Home Support Services?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name one reason predictable routines are important in foster care.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who should you contact if you have a safety concern?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What should you do before using a new babysitter or respite provider?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What should you keep after completing this self-study manual?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructor Notes (Optional)

Facilitators can ask learners to describe their current home routines and how those routines support supervision and stability.



## Module 2: Safety, Supervision, and Reasonable Discipline — 20 minutes

### What You'll Learn

- Describe what 'appropriate supervision' means in a foster home.
- Apply safe discipline practices that support behavior change without harm.
- Identify common home safety risks and practical prevention steps.

### Read & Learn (approx. 11 minutes)

#### Supervision basics

Supervision means knowing where the child is, what the child is doing, and what risks are present. Supervision should match the child's age, developmental level, and safety needs.

#### Safety planning in daily life

Review exits, household hazards, and transportation safety. Secure medications, cleaning products, and sharp objects. Use childproofing as needed and maintain clear emergency procedures.

#### Reasonable discipline

Discipline should teach and guide. Use calm redirection, clear expectations, and consistent consequences. Avoid harsh, humiliating, or physical punishment.

### Try It (approx. 4 minutes)

Write two safety risks that are most relevant in your home and how you will reduce them.

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Describe one discipline strategy you will use when a child refuses to follow directions.

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### Apply It (approx. 4 minutes)

4. Complete a weekly home safety check (alarms, exits, hazards, medications).
5. Use a 'calm-down plan' (safe space, coping tools, adult support) for escalations.
6. Document any recurring safety issues and the steps taken to address them.

Notes / Plan:

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### Self-Check (approx. 1 minutes)

1. What does appropriate supervision depend on?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name two items that must always be secured in the home.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Give one example of discipline that teaches rather than punishes.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why is documentation important when safety concerns occur?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What should be included in an emergency plan?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructor Notes (Optional)

Encourage discussion about how supervision changes during transitions (school pickup, bedtime, community outings).



## Module 3: Babysitters, Overnight Care, Respite, and Backup Caregivers — 20 minutes

### What You'll Learn

- Distinguish between babysitters, overnight care providers, respite providers, and backup caregivers.
- Apply Minimum Standards expectations for agency policies and approvals for care arrangements.
- Identify when a fingerprint-based criminal history check is required before a person acts as a caregiver.

### Read & Learn (approx. 11 minutes)

#### Agency policies for babysitters/respite (Minimum Standards)

Minimum Standards require the agency to maintain written policies for babysitters, overnight care providers, and respite care providers (§749.127). These policies address qualifications, communication during care, agency review/approval, and documentation.

#### Using an unregulated home for babysitting/respite

Minimum Standards allow placing a child for babysitting, overnight care, or respite in a home that Licensing does not regulate if the provider is not subject to Licensing regulation and meets the agency's policy requirements (§749.2635).

#### Backup caregivers and screening

During foster home screening, the agency must identify people who may provide support as caregivers during an unexpected event or crisis. Any such person needs a fingerprint-based criminal history check before acting as a caregiver (§749.2447).

### Try It (approx. 4 minutes)

List the names of two potential backup caregivers and what screening/approval you believe is needed for each.

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Write what information you would share with a babysitter/respite provider before leaving (emergency contacts, routines, restrictions).

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### Apply It (approx. 4 minutes)

7. Complete the Backup Caregiver Information template for each person you may rely on.
8. Confirm the agency's approval process before scheduling babysitting/overnight/respite care.



9. Keep a written record of the arrangement (dates/times, provider identity, contacts, and approval confirmation).

Notes / Plan:

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### **Self-Check (approx. 1 minutes)**

1. Which Minimum Standards section requires written policies for babysitters and respite providers?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. When may you place a child in a home Licensing does not regulate for babysitting/respite?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What screening is required before a person acts as a caregiver in a crisis situation?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name two items that should be documented for a babysitting or respite arrangement.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Who should be contacted if a planned caregiver is not approved?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Instructor Notes (Optional)**

Reinforce that 'approved as a frequent visitor' is not the same as 'approved to act as a caregiver.' Approval depends on role and agency policy.



## Module 4: Documentation, Reporting, and Compliance Basics — 20 minutes

### What You'll Learn

- Identify key documentation expectations for foster homes and support staff.
- Explain when and how to report incidents or safety concerns.
- Apply basic confidentiality practices in daily communication.

### Read & Learn (approx. 11 minutes)

#### Documentation fundamentals

Maintain records that show approvals, contacts, and significant events. Documentation should be timely, factual, and consistent with agency procedures.

#### Incident awareness and reporting

Know what requires immediate notification versus routine documentation. When unsure, contact the agency for guidance. Document who was notified, when, and what actions were taken.

#### Confidentiality and privacy

Share information only with those who have a legitimate need to know. Protect records, avoid discussing cases in public, and safeguard electronic access.

### Try It (approx. 4 minutes)

Write a short example of a factual incident note (who/what/when/where/action taken).

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List three ways you protect confidentiality in the community (school events, appointments, phone calls).

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### Apply It (approx. 4 minutes)

10. Use consistent logs (visitor log, medication log, incident notes) and file them in one place.
11. Establish a routine for weekly documentation review to ensure it is complete.
12. If an incident occurs, document the timeline and communication steps taken.

Notes / Plan:

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### Self-Check (approx. 1 minutes)

1. What are three qualities of good documentation?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What should you do first if you are unsure whether an incident must be reported?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name one confidentiality practice that protects children's privacy.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why should communications be documented after an incident?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What records should be retained as part of the foster home file?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructor Notes (Optional)

If learners struggle, provide examples of acceptable documentation language and what to avoid (opinions, diagnoses, assumptions).



## Case Study

Read the scenario and answer the guided prompts. Use Minimum Standards and your agency policies as your reference point.

**Scenario:** The foster parents need to travel unexpectedly for a family emergency. They plan for a trusted adult to care for the children for several days. The home previously listed this adult as a support person but the adult has not yet completed all background screening steps.

### Guided Prompts

What questions should be asked to confirm whether this adult can act as a caregiver during the foster parents' absence?

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What documentation should be verified or updated before the adult provides care?

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If the adult cannot be approved in time, what is an appropriate alternative plan that still supports safety and continuity?

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## Tools & Templates

Use these tools to support compliance, planning, and supervision.

### Backup Caregiver Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Availability (days/times): \_\_\_\_\_

Background check status: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Babysitter / Respite Arrangement Record

Provider name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) and time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Children in care: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contacts shared: \_\_\_\_\_

Approval/confirmation date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Home Safety Quick Check

Exits clear and working smoke alarms checked \_\_\_\_\_

Medications and hazardous items secured \_\_\_\_\_

Supervision plan for indoor/outdoor activities \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation safety plan \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency numbers posted \_\_\_\_\_



## Module Knowledge Check (10 minutes)

1. What must be in place before a person acts as a caregiver during an unexpected event or crisis?

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2. Under what conditions may a child be placed for babysitting/overnight/respite in a home that Licensing does not regulate?

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3. List two items that must be documented when arranging babysitting, overnight care, or respite care.

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4. Give one example of appropriate discipline and one example of prohibited discipline.

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5. Who should be notified if there is a safety concern or serious incident?

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## Answer Key (for Self-Study Review)

1.

A fingerprint-based criminal history check (and any other required screening steps under agency policy) must be completed before the person acts as a caregiver.

2.

It is permitted if the provider is not subject to Licensing regulation and meets the agency's written policy requirements for babysitters/overnight/respite providers.

3.

Examples: dates/times of care, provider identity, children in care, emergency contacts, and agency review/approval as required by policy.

4.

Appropriate: loss of privileges tied to behavior, extra teaching/practice, time-limited separation with supervision. Prohibited: harsh, cruel, humiliating, or physically punitive actions.

5.

Follow agency reporting procedures; notify the child's caseworker/agency contact and report to the appropriate hotline or Licensing as required by the severity and timelines.



## Resources & Referrals

- DFPS Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies (Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 749).
- Agency policies and procedures for foster homes, babysitters, overnight care, respite, supervision, and incident reporting.
- Caseworker / on-call contact list and after-hours reporting procedures.

