



To: Texas Judges Hearing Child Protective Services Cases  
From: Hon. John Specia (ret.), Jurist in Residence  
Office of Court Administration  
Date: April 15, 2010  
RE: Permanency Care Assistance Program

Greetings fellow judges! This is a follow up to the previous JIR sent to you on March 8, 2010 in response to several questions I received regarding the issue of verification under the new Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Program.

**Q: Are the requirements to become verified more stringent than those for licensing?**

**A:** In Texas, foster homes are verified, not licensed. Licenses are granted by DFPS to Child Placing Agencies who in turn verify foster homes. The verification process is the same for all homes regardless of whether the home is being verified to take a child in preparation for a PCA agreement or as a regular foster home. However, as part of the verification process, DFPS can elect to waive certain non-safety issues that might otherwise prevent a home seeking verification to provide foster care to non-relatives from being verified. An example of this is square footage per child or person or the requirement that children of a certain age sleep in separate beds.

**Q: Who is responsible for verifying relative caregivers who wish to enter into a PCA Agreement?**

**A:** Any Child Placing Agency as well as DFPS can verify relatives (fictive or biological) for PCA.

**Q: Is there funding available to accommodate the increase in applications for verification?**

**A:** No. DFPS will use existing resources to accommodate verifications processed by DFPS and CPAs.

**Q: Will DFPS provide services to verified placements once the PCA Agreement is final?**

**A:** There are no post-PCA services at this time. However, DFPS will continue to use existing appropriations to provide services for CPS children in verified placements.

**Q: How long are verifications valid and can they be issued on a temporary basis?**

**A:** Verifications do not have an end date. CPAs are required to re-evaluate a home for compliance with minimum standards at least once every two years.

**Q: When does a family stop receiving foster care payments and begin receiving PCA payments?**

**A:** Once PMC is awarded the foster care payments end and the PCA payments begin.

**Q: If the relative switches CPAs during the six month period, must the family become re-verified and start the six month process again?**

**A:** Because each CPA independently verifies foster homes, the home would have to undergo the verification process again. However, the six consecutive month process that requires the child live with the family does not. As long as the child's residence does not change, the six consecutive month residency process is not interrupted even though the home must start the verification process over. [Click here for more information about the PCA program.](#)

If you have any questions or topics that you would like to see covered, please let me know at [jurist@courts.state.tx.us](mailto:jurist@courts.state.tx.us).