

# **RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY**

## **Guide for Developing Your Facility's Operations Manual**



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## **Introduction**

Residential Care facilities for Children as stipulated in the Social Services Agencies (Operators of Residential Care Facilities for Children) (Registration, Licensing and Minimum Operating Requirements) are defined as “the entity of the premises of a 24 hour facility where residential care services are provided for ten or more full time residents. Residential Care Services are defined as “those services provided at a residential care facility for children that contribute to the health, education, and welfare of children while under the care and supervision of the operator.”

The existing facilities are government or privately owned and are located in varied districts throughout the country of Belize. They provide temporary out of home care for children who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, orphaned or for juveniles who have come in conflict with the law. The Operator of these facilities ensures that support programs and services are integrated to meet the physical, physiological, psychological and developmental need of the children whilst at the facility.

These facilities are licensed under the **Social Services Agencies (Operators of Residential Care Facilities for Children) (Registration, Licensing and Minimum Operating Requirements) Regulations, 2004**. The Act stipulates the minimum requirements for a license to operate; and ongoing operation of a license facility addressing areas such as General Administration Policies, Minimum Requirements for the Physical Environment, Minimum Programming Requirements, Minimum Health and Safety Requirements, Minimum Education Requirements, Minimum Requirements for Behavior Management, Health and Family Life Education and Disaster and Crisis Management Requirements .

The Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (MHSTPA), through the Inspector of Social Services Institutions (ISSI) have responsibility for the licensing, registration and regulation of care facilities for children and adults countrywide, with the Department of Human Services and the Community

Rehabilitation Department tasked with the responsibility of placement and case management of the residents. This Guide has been developed to assist in the preparation of an operations manual for residential care facility for children.

It is required that an applicant prepare an **operational manual** to support their application for licensure. The operation manual is a guide to indicate how you wish to operate your facility; ensuring that such standards of operation are cohesive with that of legal requirements as stipulated in the **Social Services Agencies Act**.

In addition, it is recommended that applicants prepare a business plan prior to submission of application. A business plan will serve as a guide for operating the business and can assist in identifying the varied components of starting and operating a financially sustainable residential care facility for children.

Furthermore, it is advisable that applicants first determine the need for the facility. Well researched demographics information will provide valuable data to inform the choice to operate a care facility for children.

Another major step in planning a residential care facility for children is finding a suitable site. Whether the facility is leased, purchased or constructed, a well located, aesthetically pleasing, safe and functional space is important. Operator must ensure that such physical aspects of the facility are in compliance with the standards as stipulated in the Social Services Agencies Act, Belize Building Authority, Department of Public Health and the Belize Fire Department.

### **Items to Consider**

A license Residential Care Facility for Children must comply with the minimum operating standards as is set out in the **Social Services Agencies (Operators of Residential Care Facilities for Children) (Registration, Licensing, and Minimum Operating Requirements) Regulations, 2004**, providing:

- 1) A **physical environment** that is a place where children have adequate space and a clean and safe environment to grow and develop to their full potential (21) (1)
- 2) A **developmentally appropriate program plan** composed of daily activities that meet and enhance the individual needs of children with different cultural, language, developmental differences and special needs; including experiences to facilitate children's cognitive, physical, emotional, and social needs. (23) (1)
- 3) An Appropriate number of trained staffs who understands the needs of the residents and can appropriately deliver quality care.

**Below list guidelines to assist with the development your facility's operation manual**

A well developed and comprehensive operation manual will set the foundation for the successful operation of the residential care facility for children.

An operation manual is required when:

1. A new facility is established and submits application for licensure.
2. An existing licensed facility is being purchased by a new operator.

The following requirements for development of an operation manual identify the information that must be included in the manual. Upon receipt of the manual, the Inspector of Social Services Institution and Vetting Committee will complete a review.

There are three possible outcomes following the review.

- 1) Proposal for operation is approved
- 2) Manual is returned, or meeting held with applicant, specifically identifying components that do not meet the requirements with recommendations for revisions and/or additions.
- 4) Proposal for operation is halted on the grounds that Applicant no longer wishes to proceed with licensing application or the terms of operation of the facility does not meet the required needs of children in care.

The requirements listed below must be included in the proposed operation manual. The completed manual must be bound, typed and contain all required information. The Inspector of Social Services Institutions is available to assist the applicants during the development phase of the manual.

As a potential employer, it is advisable to familiarize yourself with the Labor Act available at <http://goo.gl/V0dC0z>.

In addition it is recommended that the approved operation manual is provided to all staff and that it is reviewed during the employee orientation process and regularly thereafter.

Operation Manual to be reviewed annually, if there are any changes made to the operation and programming of the facility; changes to be forwarded, in writing, to the Inspector of Social Services Institution (ISSI) under the heading “**Amendment to Operation Manual**, listing the name of facility, and date of amendment. **The Ministry to approve all changes made prior to the facility implementation.**

## Requirements

### Part I

#### 1.0 Introduction

**Include the following in the introduction to the proposal:**

**Cover page-** Applicants Name, Name of the Facility, Date of submission.

**Table of Contents-** To facilitate the review process, ensure that the proposal follows the sequence identified in the table of content and pages are appropriately numbered and referenced.

**1.1 Mission Statement-** involves a statement of the purpose of the facility. Discussing the overall goal, explaining why it exists.

**1.2- Background-** A statement explaining the belief and values of the Operator regarding children’s development, growth and learning. The background statement explains the approach a facility will take in planning its daily programs to meet the needs of the residents; including a history of the organization and key stakeholders.

**1.3 Goals-** This section address the objectives, aims and desired results for the residents placed at the facility.

## **Part II**

### **2.0 Administration**

**2.1 Administrative Structure-** This section provides an explanation of the organizational structure of the facility.

**2.2 Admittance Policy-** This section addresses the questions who will be allowed to admit residents into the facility? What is the documentation required upon admittance of residents into the facility? Role of the staff upon admittance of the residents into the facility? Operator's expectation from the Department of Human Services or Police as it relates to admittance of residents into the facility? Operator's expectations from the resident place at the facility. How emergency placement will be addressed? Process for orientation of the residents into the facility. Section 9 (1) (2)

**2.3 Files and Forms-** A statement of how individual children's records and staff records will be maintained in a confidential, organized and complete manner. Including any relevant information on process to ensure that all required information is collected and maintained for each resident's and staff files. Section (19) (1)

**2.3.1 Records-** Discussion of the composition of residents and staff file as stipulated in the regulations (annex sample of the forms that will be utilized) Section (19) (1), 5 (d)

## **Part III**

### **3.0 Operational Policies**

**3.1 Physical Environment-** Every Operator shall ensure that the residential care facility under his management and control is a place where children have adequate space and is a clean and safe environment to grow and develop to their full potential. (21) (1)

This section address the Operator's policy as it relates to the maintenance and upkeep of the facility to ensure compliance with the legislation.

## **Part IV**

### **4.0 Minimum Programming Requirements**

Each residential care facility for children shall develop and implement a flexible written program plan composed of activities that meet and enhance the individual needs of

children with different cultural, language, and developmental differences and special needs. (23) (1)

#### **4.1 Health and Safety Requirements**

It is the Operator's responsibility to ensure that the operation of the facility meets the required standards for health, safety and nutrition; ensuring that programming is in compliance with the legal frame work. (25) (1)

##### **Required:**

- Guidelines for good health and safety practice for both residents and staff
- Policies addressing nutrition and special dietary needs of the residents.
- Policies in relation to the physical health of residents
- Policies for management of infections and illnesses
- Policies pertaining to general hygiene, environmental sanitation, food preparation, personal appears of residents and staff, medical precautions and procedures and plan for training of staff to enhance capacity in these areas.
- Policies as it relates to sanitation and environmental safety.
- Policies to address visitation/ contact with child.
- Policies to address unwanted person from entering the facility.
- Plans for involvement of local entities to assist with the execution of the polices set out.
- Policies addressing the proper of supervision or residents.

#### **5.0 Program Statement Section (23) (1)**

The program is to promote full participation of all residents, including those with diverse abilities, and must stimulate their cognitive, physical, emotional, social and language development.

##### **Required**

- Program philosophy statement
- Information on how the programs will be met and the approach to programming that will be used. This will include an explanation on how staff will foster children's growth and development in a positive and nurturing environment.
- Information on the inclusive nature of the program including statements, policies and procedures, and any special personnel that will be utilized to meet objectives.

## 5.1 Program Plans

A program plan documents activities and experiences planned or carried out daily, weekly or in some cases over extended periods with/for the residents. The method of planning is based on the center's mission, the needs of the residents and the philosophy and belief about how the residents learn grow and develop.

### Required

- A sample program plan of the target population
- Sample of routine base activities to be used to support the inclusion of children with special needs into the programs.
- Details on how activities and experiences will be documented.
- Plans to incorporate indoor and outdoor physical activities which provides opportunities for fine and gross development
- Creative learning experiences which allows residents the opportunity to develop and express their own ideas, feelings and culture
- Recreational plan for residents and staff
- Religious practices for residents and staff

## 4.2 Behavior Management Guidelines

All licensed residential care facility for children are required to have a written behavior guidance policy for residents, staff and volunteers which details both permitted and prohibited behaviors guidance practices. It is the Operator's responsibility to develop the policy, train staff and monitor the implementation of the policy in the facility. Effective behavior guidance strategies are developmentally appropriate, and are positive in nature. (37) (1)

### Required

- Behavior management policy which includes the following:
  1. **Statement of Beliefs**- Outlines the philosophy regarding behavior guidance including the Operator's belief in and goals for residents, staff and volunteers.
  2. **Expectation and Guidelines**- Outlines the expected behaviors of residents, staff and volunteers. It may include information on prevention strategies and acceptable intervention strategies.
  3. **Prohibited Behaviors**- This section to include behavior guidance strategies that the Operator does not permit, and the consequences for breach in of requirements.

**4. Resource and Support-** This section should provide information on procedures, supports and resources used by the facility when dealing with challenging behaviors of residents. Furthermore, this could include a list of resources, supports available to staff or consulting opportunities outside of the facility. Lastly, detailed the training the Operator will provide to staff pertaining to the behavior management guidelines.

### **4.3 Counseling, Health and Family Life Education**

Every operator shall develop a counseling program to be administered within the residential care facility for children by a suitable qualified person that is designed to meet the individual and collective counseling needs of the residents and shall employ mainstream individual and group counseling techniques. Section 39

In addition, every Operator to develop a health and family life education program to be administered within the residential care facility by a suitable qualify person and shall include age appropriate information on 1. Good health and nutrition policies, 2. Modes of transmission, risk factors, prevention, universal precautions for HIV/ AIDS, 3. Sex and Sexuality, 4. Drug Education, 5. Personal Development, in addition to any identified needs of the residents by the Staff. Section 40

#### **Required**

- Policies that will address the counseling needs of residents.
- Policies for the recruitment of qualified personnel to work with the residents.
- Policy to discussed designated area at the facility where services will be provide (if done in house).
- Policies regarding documentation of sessions and decimation of information regarding counseling sessions to resident's respective case workers.

### **4.4 Health and Family Life**

- Policies discussing the persons/ entities that will assist in the development and execution of the health and family life plan.
- Proposed schedule of activities
- Expected outcome of the activities
- Residents participation in the activities

### **4.5 Emergency, Disaster, Crisis Management**

Every Operator shall provide a comprehensive written disaster management and emergency plan. The plan shall include both man-made and natural disaster and include evacuation plans. Section 41

The Crisis management plan shall include provision for appropriate intervention strategies, the immediate normalization of the situation, appropriate rehabilitation strategies for residents involved in the crisis and reporting procedures to the competent authorities. Section 43

#### **Required**

- A comprehensive plan to address the three areas listed above
- Plan to include all the firefighting and safety equipment house at the facility and their location.
- Procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency, disaster or crisis
- Policies on training for residents and staff in regards to practice during an emergency

#### **4.6 Staffing Requirements**

**Hiring Procedures-** This section addresses policy relates to hiring staff, includes, but is not limited to, advertising, interviewing, reference check, probationary period, orientation process, confidentiality, documentation required to keep on file and trainings to be offered.

**Work Schedule-** This section addresses but is not limited to: hours of work, breaks, holidays, leave of absence, illnesses, policy as it relates to maintenance of staff/ child ratio during emergencies, i.e. having staff on call to fill in during the absence or emergencies to maintain compliance with staff/child ratio

**Grievances-** This section addresses policies in relation to addressing grievances of residents and staff.

**4.6 Capacity Development-** Proposed training schedule for staff (year one), at the least three training for year one i.e. Certification training for staff in Basic First Aid and Cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), Basic Counseling training and Basic Social Work Practice and Ethics Training.

#### **4.7 Operating Budget**

The Ministry understands that the operating budget submitted will be an estimation of operational income and expenditures and by no means confirms the financial viability of the facility. However the purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the applicants have fully considered the potential income and operational cost to operate a residential care facility for children. A three year projection will demonstrate an applicant understands of how growing enrollment impacts the long term sustainability of the facility.

#### **Required**

- A three year projection (operating budget) that demonstrates a plan to meet cost while enrollment builds; and shows estimated revenues and expenditures.

It may be useful to consult with financial experts or operators of existing residential care facilities for children for projected cost to operate these facilities when preparing your operational budget.