

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
(CCDCFS)
Policy Statement**

Policy Chapter: Substitute Care
Policy Number: 6.02.06
Policy Name: Foster and Adoptive Homestudy Completion *PLR*

Original Effective Date: 06/27/2008
Revision Date(s): 10/01/2012, 08/06/2009
Current Revision Date: 09/01/2014
Approved By: Patricia L. Rideout

PURPOSE: To outline the requirements for conducting a Foster Care or Adoptive Homestudy.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all CCDCFS case workers who perform Foster Care and Adoptive Homestudies and to anyone submitting an Application for Child Placement to the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS).

POLICY

- A. All Homestudy Assessors will adhere to the requirements set forth by the Ohio Administrative Code as it pertains to Foster Care and Adoption, and all applicable Agency policies and procedures.
- B. All Applicants must submit a completed JFS 1691 "Application for Child Placement". This application will be submitted to the Recruitment Department. It will be processed through the department and logged into all applicable systems.
- C. All Applications for Child Placement received by CCDCFS will be reviewed by a Resource Department Supervisor prior to being assigned to a Homestudy Assessor.
- D. All applicants must be a legal resident of the United States and reside in the State of Ohio.
- E. All applications require an abuse and neglect report history search in SACWIS. (Note: Must be conducted in 10 days for all new household members.)
- F. All applications require a Central Registry search on each adult household member. (Note: This is required in addition to the SACWIS search, if the agency has access to SACWIS and must be conducted in 10 days for all new household members.)

PROCEDURES

- A. The Homestudy Assessor will send an introductory letter to the applicant within seven (7) business days of receiving the case.
- B. The Homestudy Assessor will conduct a Face-to-Face visit with the applicant, in the applicant's home within fourteen (14) business days of receiving the case assignment.
This visit will include:
 - 1. completion of an initial safety assessment (JFS 1348 "Safety Audit of a Foster Home"),
 - 2. a discussion regarding any areas of concern,
 - 3. a discussion regarding all required paperwork, and
 - 4. a discussion detailing what the process of the home-study will entail.
- C. The Homestudy Assessor will request three (3) unrelated references and two (2) related references (as documented in the 1691). This will be completed by mailing the requests within 30 days of receiving the case.
- D. The agency will also obtain additional references if the applicant was previously certified as a foster caregiver or provided care and supervision of children.
- E. All household members over the age of four (4) years *MUST* be interviewed. At least one of the interviews with each household member *MUST* take place within the home.
- F. A total of three (3) visits must take place in the home during the course of the home- study.
- G. When the homestudy involves relatives and the child is already placed in the home, the Homestudy Assessor will schedule a Family Team Meeting with the child's Worker of Record (WOR) and the family within thirty (30) days of receiving the case.
- H. The Assessor may request additional information to be provided by the Applicant if:
 - 1. an applicant or household member has suffered a serious illness or injury within the past year; or;
 - 2. the Assessor determines it to be necessary to ensure the safety, health, or care of any foster child who may be placed in the home.

- I. When the placement of a foster or adoptive child brings the number of children residing in the home to a total of five (5) or more, including biological, kinship, foster, and adoptive children, the Assessor shall complete the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children / Large Family Assessment and attach it to the completed JFS 01673 "Assessment For Child Placement ."
- J. The last visit to the home *MUST* occur within thirty (30) days prior to the transfer of the case to the Ongoing Resource Manager unless the Ongoing Resource Manager was the Assessor completing the home-study.
- K. All homestudies will be completed within 120 days of the case assignment. Any need to extend the completion date will be approved by the Supervisor.
- L. If the Applicant decides to voluntarily withdraw at any point during the home-study process or the application needs to be returned, the Assessor will provide the applicant with a Voluntary Withdrawal form and close the case within thirty (30) days of receiving the withdrawal.
- M. Prior to returning an application to a family, the Assessor will photocopy the application, detach the homework section, cross off each individual page of the original application and return it to the family. Assessor will include a letter documenting the decision to return the application and the reasons why. The applicant will also be notified that their Pre-service Training Certificate is valid for 12 months from the date of the first class attended.
- N. Any decision to formally deny an application for child placement will be in accordance with O.A.C. section 5101:2-5-26 and will include the following:
 - 1. If there are children in custody placed in the applicant's home; or, the applicant is under consideration for purposes of potential child specific placement , a team meeting must be called prior to any enforcement action being taken. All parties to the case must be invited to the team meeting which will be scheduled by the Resource Manager for the purpose of reviewing the issues surrounding the case.
 - 2. Notification to the applicant will be documented on the JFS 01315 "Notification of Denial of Initial Certification, Recertification or Revocation of a Foster Home Certificate".
 - 3. Notification to the applicant will be sent via regular and certified U.S. Mail.
 - 4. Notification will include the reason for the decision to recommend denial of initial certification and the specific law or rules with which the applicant is allegedly not in compliance.

5. Notification of the decision to recommend denial of initial certification shall also include the method for requesting an appeal via CCDCFS Policy 6.02.12 "Appeals of denials and revocations recommendation of foster care licensure and adoption approval"
 6. Notification to the applicant will also include a statement to the fact that the final decision to deny the initial certification will be made by ODJFS.
- O. Applications submitted for Adoption Approval Only which is thought to be knowingly falsified are subject to the requirements of agency policy 6.03.03 "Falsification of Adoptive Application/Homestudy".
- P. *ALL* cases submitted for Supervisory review will include the Homestudy Completion Checklist and will be formatted in the appropriate manner.
- Q. *ALL* cases recommended for licensure will be informed by the Assessor of the requirement to complete Foster Parent 101 training prior to the placement of any foster child in the home. Newly licensed homes will be registered for this training by the Ongoing Resource Manager.

SEE ALSO:

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-7
Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-5
Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-33
Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-48

Related County Policies

Policy 6.02.12 - Appeals of denials and revocations recommendations of foster care licensure and adoption approval

Policy 6.03.05 - Falsification of Adoptive Application/Homestudy