

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

**Policy Chapter:** Substitute Care  
**Policy Number:** 6.07.02  
**Policy Name:** Out of Town Investigation (OTI)/Interstate Compact on the Placement (ICPC) Evaluation Process

**Original Effective Date:** 06/02/2008  
**Revision Date(s):** 02/01/2013, 08/06/2009, 06/02/2008  
**Current Revision Date:** 05/01/2016  
**Approved By:** Thomas D. Pristow

**PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines for conducting a Home Evaluation which have been identified as an Out of Town Investigation/Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (OTI/ICPC).

**SCOPE:** This policy governs all Home Study Assessors who perform OTI/ICPC Home Evaluations and applies to Biological Parents, Relatives/ Non-Relative, Foster and Adoptive Caregivers who are requesting placement of a child, who is in the custody of another state or Public Child Service Agency (PSCA) within the state of Ohio.

### **POLICY**

CCDCFS will complete “Home Evaluations” for the possible placement of children who are in the custody of another (PCSA) located in another state or county. All Home Evaluations will be assessed for safety and the appropriateness of placement utilizing the procedures outlined below.

CCDCFS strongly believes in working cooperatively with other PCSAs when there is a need for collaboration in placement approval and courtesy supervision. It is in the best interest of children to respond timely to any request from another state or county. Child safety is best achieved through active, collaborative, and respectful engagement of parents, family, community, agency stakeholders and all other child protective agencies within and outside the state.

If Cuyahoga County’s OTI/ICPC Unit receives a request for a Foster or Adoption Home Evaluation, please refer to the Foster and Adoption Home study Completion Policy (6.02.06)

### **PROCEDURES**

1. Each home study request will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Criminal history and background information will be assessed to determine the safety of the home. Providing the required information and/or documents does not imply home study approval; however, the information submitted during the home study process is utilized to determine if the home can be approved and placement can be recommended.
2. Upon the receipt of a written request from another county agency within the State of Ohio or another state, the OTI/ICPC Supervisor will assign the case to an OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor.
3. The assigned OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor will make contact with the parent/perspective caregiver within three (3) business days. During this conversation, an initial visit should be scheduled to meet the family and schedule an appointment to be fingerprinted.
4. The OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor will send out an introductory letter and OTI/ICPC packet (see addendum). The OTI/ ICPC packet will include:
  - (a) Identifying Data Form
  - (b) Fingerprint Process
  - (c) Employment verification
  - (d) Financial Statement
  - (e) Caregiver's Statement
  - (f) Social History
  - (g) Medical Statement (only if medical concerns have been disclosed)
    - an applicant or household member has suffered a serious illness or injury within the past year,
    - the applicant is receiving a disability benefit,
    - Assessor determines it to be necessary to ensure the safety, health, or care of any foster child who may be placed in the home.
  - (h) Non-Conviction Statement
  - (i) Juvenile Authorization and Disclosure Forms
  - (j) JFS 01447 "Assessment of Relative or Nonrelative Substitute Caregiver"  
(Not required for parent assessments)
5. The first home visit will include:
  - (a) Discussion detailing the process of the home evaluation
  - (b) Safety assessment of the home
  - (c) Discussion regarding any areas of concern
  - (d) Discussion regarding all required paperwork/ Releases of information
  - (e) Sharing of information for the child(ren) to be placed
6. All household members over the age of four (4) years shall be interviewed (unless the child has delays preventing him/her from being interviewed).

7. The OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor will assess the parent/perspective caregiver's suitability and willingness to provide care for the child who is in need of placement.
  - (a) A review of child protective service history will be conducted utilizing the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) to ensure that any social service history the perspective caregiver has, does not pose a threat to the child/ren.
  - (b) All adults in the home, 18 years and older, must be fingerprinted (**FBI & BCI**) by CCDCFS at the time the Caregiver is being considered for placement. A "Non-Conviction Statement" must be completed by all adult household members.
  - (c) The parent/perspective caregiver must submit written notification if a person residing in their home is between the ages of 12–18 and has plead guilty or been convicted of certain criminal offenses or has been found to be delinquent.
8. If the information gathered indicates the home is unsafe or inappropriate, the placement request will be denied. If the child has been placed in the home, without CCDCFS's recommendation, the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor will notify the sending agency/state's Interstate Compact Office of the illegal placement. When a parent/perspective caregiver is denied for placement, the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor will provide written notification of the denial.
9. If the prospective caregiver had their parental rights involuntarily terminated and/or any adult in the home has been convicted of the following crimes and the crime was against a child, elderly person, developmentally disabled person or mentally handicapped person, the prospective caregiver will automatically be denied for placement:
  - (a) Aggravated murder, murder, voluntary manslaughter
  - (b) Felonious assault, aggravated assault, assault, endangering children, rape, sexual battery, corrupting a minor, gross sexual imposition, sexual imposition
  - (c) The agency is prohibited by law to approve a caregiver if they or any other adult residing in the home has a FELONY conviction of domestic violence involving spousal abuse, rape, sexual assault or homicide regardless of when the crime was committed.
10. If the biological parent has been convicted of any of the above listed crimes and the crime was against a child, elderly person, or mentally handicapped person the biological parent may be denied for placement. The Rehabilitation Standard Form must be completed with a statement as to why, even with the above conviction(s), the child should be placed with the biological parent. This will also include an evaluation of safety of the child. A placement recommendation with a biological parent with this history can only be approved by the Agency's Chain of Command.

11. If a parent/perspective caregiver has been convicted of any of the crimes listed on the "Non-Conviction Statement" and the crime was not against a child, elderly person, developmentally disabled person or mentally handicapped person, rehabilitation standards may be applied.
  - (a) If the conviction was a felony, it must be ten (10) years from the date of discharge prior to the application of rehabilitation standards. If the conviction has not been ten (10) years or longer, approval for placement can only be granted by Agency's Chain of Command.
  - (b) If the conviction is a misdemeanor, it must be three (3) years from the date of discharge prior to the application of rehabilitation standards. If the conviction has not been three (3) years or longer, approval for placement can only be granted by the Agency's Chain of Command.
  - (c) All court obligations, probationary periods, and fees must be resolved prior to rehabilitation standards being applied (i.e. if a person is on probation, their discharge time does not begin until they have completed the probationary period).
  - (d) To apply for rehabilitation standards, the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor must complete the Rehabilitation Standard Form.
12. If a minor with a criminal record resides in a caregiver's home, CCDCFS must review Juvenile Court records to determine if the criminal information poses a threat to the child(ren) being placed. Failure of the caregiver to cooperate with obtaining required information may result in a denial of placement. If the criminal information is of concern, the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor must consult with his/her immediate supervisor. If our agency is unable to approve the home for placement, the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor must follow the steps for denial previously outlined in this policy.
13. If the fingerprint results reveal undisclosed convictions and they are not listed on the Non-Conviction Statement, the criminal history will be brought to the attention of the OTI/ICPC Supervisor. The Home Study Assessor and the Supervisor will determine if the criminal history poses a risk to the child(ren) who may be placed in the home.
14. The OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor will complete a preliminary home evaluation within thirty (30) days to be submitted to the OTI/ICPC Supervisor for review and approval. The preliminary evaluation will be mailed to the sending agency/state's Interstate Compact Office. The preliminary evaluation should at least include the initiation of criminal background checks, the initial contact information and information pertaining to the conditions of the home. If additional information has been obtained from the parent/caregiver(s), the information will be included.

15. If the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor is not able to complete the home evaluation within sixty (60) days, a follow up letter or email will be submitted to the ICPC supervisor and the Sending Agency's /Sending State's ICPC Office to provide a status update and barriers to completion.
16. After all information has been obtained and all interviews have been completed, the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor shall complete the final home study evaluation report and submit all documentation to the OTI/ICPC Supervisor for review and approval. The approved evaluation will be submitted to the Sending State's Interstate Compact Office or the Sending Agency to be processed.
17. At the completion of the home study process, the OTI/ICPC Home Study Assessor will notify the parent/perspective caregiver's in writing to inform them of the outcome of the evaluation.
18. If the Sending Agency places a child into the approved parent/perspective caregiver's home and the Sending Agency is outside the state of Ohio, Cuyahoga County ICPC Assessor will begin supervision services upon receipt of notification that the child has been placed.
19. If the Sending Agency is another PCSA within the state of Ohio, the sending PCSA can request courtesy supervision and support services; however, monthly visits and contact must be made by the sending PCSA who has full responsibility over the case planning and case management.
20. Face to face contact will be attempted within 7 days of placement notification. Face to face contact will be made every 30 days. More frequent visits may occur if situations or concerns arise that require additional support.
21. Support Service needs will be assessed and referrals will be made in efforts to stabilize the placement, strengthen the family unit and preserve the child's placement.
22. On an annual basis (from the date that the home study was approved) the assigned OTI/ICPC Assessor shall complete a re-assessment of the home to assure that the placement continues to meet the requirements outlined in this policy. If there are any new adults in the home, the agency shall conduct complete background checks. If the parent/perspective caregiver moves to a new address, the OTI/ICPC Assessor shall ensure that the home meets safety requirements.

**SEE ALSO:**

Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-52-04  
Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-52-06  
Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-42-18

Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-7