

OUT-OF-HOME CARE RESOURCES

Foster Home Assessment and Review



DID YOU KNOW?.....

The department shall have personal, private contact with the foster family at a minimum of once every 6 months to ensure that they are able to maintain the expected standards of care and meet the terms of approval and the foster home agreement. Each foster home shall be formally reviewed at least on an annual basis

Note: Foster homes shall be formally reviewed immediately in the following circumstances:

- * following allegations and investigations of abuse or neglect;
- * when there has been significant change in the family's circumstances;
- * if the age, number, and special needs of children that are appropriate to the family, as established at the time of approval or established at subsequent annual reviews, are to be changed
- * where there are concerns that children placed in the home may not be safe and/or well cared for;
- * at any point where there is reason to believe that the foster family is unable or unwilling to meet the terms of the foster home agreement.

Formal Reviews:

- At least one in-home interview is required for the review.
- In a formal review the caseworker must assure that all standards of the original approval are met and assess whether the foster home should continue to be approved for ongoing care.
- Each member of the family or other resident should be interviewed. This should include both parents in a two parent family, adult children or other adults who may be living in the home and any children of the foster family who could reasonably be expected to participate.
- Any child in care who could reasonably be expected to contribute to the assessment, based on age and developmental capacity, should be interviewed.
- Any worker who has placed children in the home should be interviewed or complete a written assessment, based on their knowledge of the home.
- Any collateral agency who has significant knowledge of the home should be interviewed or asked to complete a written assessment based on their knowledge of the home. Ex: schools, crisis units, child activity leaders
- Upon completion of a formal review, a written report shall be completed using a standard format
- The report shall be signed by the foster parent and a copy provided to the foster parent.



Practical Guidelines for Assessments:

- It is part of the ongoing work with foster families and needs to be proactive, constructive, supportive and strengthening.
- The overall objective should be to help foster families identify the skills and supports they require to meet the needs of the children in their care.
- Foster home workers are to maintain regular contact with foster families including home visits.
- Whenever there is contact with a member of the foster family, the caseworker must monitor indicators that the family:
 - May need additional support;
 - May be having problems meeting the needs of children in their care;
 - May be unable or unwilling to meet the terms of the contract.
- Where a worker is aware of possible concerns, these **must be discussed with the foster parents** to determine the validity of the concerns and offer coaching/training or appropriate supports.
- The nature of the concern, the assessment of validity, and any corrective action must be documented on the foster family file
- **Where there are concerns about a foster family's abilities, actions, or standards of the home, these need to be brought to the foster family's attention quickly in a clear, objective fashion.**
- **The foster family needs to be provided with the opportunity to respond to the concerns and work with the foster home worker to strengthen their capacity.**

What if there is suspension with conditions or closure of a home?:

- Prior to suspension or revocation of a foster home, the Regional Director or designate and the Senior Program Consultant, Children's Services must be notified and given a brief background description.
- The caseworker and supervisor will sign the report and the caseworker will review the report with the foster parents. The foster parents will sign the report, if they agree with the contents and recommendations. A copy of the final report is to be provided to the foster family with a copy placed on their file.
- If the foster family disagrees with the report, they will indicate this in writing to the foster home worker. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, the caseworker will advise the foster family that they may access the process set out in the Children's Service Manual "Conflict Resolution" policy, Chapter 4.14.11.
- Where a home has no children currently placed and has not had a child placed during the past calendar year, an assessment must be made annually as to the family's interest and ability to foster. Where it is unlikely that the family will take further

placements, the foster home file should be closed on ACI. The paper file is closed and as appropriate, a letter is sent thanking the foster family for their contribution to Children's Services.

Point of Interest:

A foster home report outline can be viewed in Chapter 4, pg 57 of the Children's Services Policies and Procedures Manual

For further information see: Section 4.4.8 of the Children's Services Policies and Procedures Manual

