

**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

**Original Effective Date:** 06/27/2008  
**Revision Date(s):** 12/01/2017, 09/01/2014, 10/01/2012, 08/06/2009  
**Current Revision Date:** 04/01/2021  
**Approved By:** Cynthia G. Weiskittel

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

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all CCDCFS caseworkers 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 must 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 is submitted to the Recruitment Department. It is processed through the department and logged into all applicable systems.
- C. All Applications for Child Placement received by CCDCFS are 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 and meet the specifications of the Agency's Recruitment Plan.
- E. All adult household members require an abuse and neglect report history search in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). (Note: A SACWIS search 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.)

- G. All applicants and adult household members require a National Sex Offender Registry Search located at <https://www.nsopw.gov/>. The results are reviewed prior to the homestudy approval or update. The applicant may be denied based solely on the results of the search.

## PROCEDURES

- A. The Homestudy Assessor sends an introductory letter to the applicant within seven (7) business days of receiving the case.
- B. The Homestudy Assessor conducts 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 includes:

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 homestudy entails.
- C. The Homestudy Assessor requests three (3) unrelated references and obtains references from all adult children of the applicant. If an applicant has no adult children, the Assessor requests two (2) references from other relatives. This is completed by mailing the requests within thirty (30) days of receiving the case.
- D. The agency obtains additional references if the applicant was previously certified as a foster caregiver or provided care and supervision of children.
- E. All household members must be interviewed face-to-face based on his/her age and development. 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 homestudy.
- G. When the homestudy involves relatives and the child is already placed in the home, the Homestudy Assessor schedules a Family Team Meeting with the child's Worker of Record (WOR) and the family, as needed to address concerns.
- 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 completes the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children / Large Family Assessment and attaches it to the completed JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement ."
  - J. The last visit to the home *MUST* occur within (30) days prior to the transfer of the case to the Resource Manager (RM) unless the RM was the Assessor completing the homestudy.
  - K. All homestudies are completed within (120-180) days of the agency receiving a completed application. Any need to extend the completion date is approved by the Supervisor.
  - L. If an applicant decides to voluntarily withdraw at any point during the homestudy process or the application is returned, the Assessor provides the applicant with a Voluntary Withdrawal Form and closes the case within thirty (30) days of receiving the withdrawal.
  - M. Prior to returning an application to a family, the Assessor photocopies the application, detaches the homework section, crosses off each individual page of the original application and returns it to the family. The Assessor includes a letter documenting the decision to return the application and the reasons why. The applicant is notified that their Pre-service Training Certificate is valid for 18 months from the date of the first class attended.
  - N. Any decision to formally deny an application for child placement is in accordance with O.A.C. section 5101:2-5-26 and includes 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 is called prior to any enforcement action being taken. All parties to the case are invited to the team meeting which is scheduled by the Resource Manager for the purpose of reviewing the issues surrounding the case.
    2. Notification to the applicant is documented on the JFS 01315 "Notification of Denial of Initial Certification, Recertification or Revocation of a Foster Home Certificate".
    3. Notification to the applicant is sent via regular and certified U.S. Mail.
    4. Notification includes 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 also includes 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 also includes 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 6.03.05 “Falsification of Adoptive Application/Homestudy”.
- P. *ALL* cases submitted for Supervisory review includes the Homestudy Completion Checklist and is formatted in the appropriate manner.

**SEE ALSO:**

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

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services Policies and Procedure Manual**

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