

1716 FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILY ASSESSMENT AND HOME STUDY

Chapter: **Foster Care Providers**

Section: **Licensing**



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

Policy Directive: **12-07**

Approved:

Effective Date: **September 2012**

Scheduled Review Date:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maggie Bishop".

Maggie Bishop, DCYF Director

Related Statute(s): [RSA 170-E](#)
Related Admin Rule(s): [He-C 6446](#)
Related Federal Regulation(s):

Related Form(s): **FORM 2162 and FORM 2163**
Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

Purpose

DCYF licenses foster families that meet the safety, well-being, and permanency needs of children/youth in care. Prospective foster and adoptive parents must possess the skills or have the potential to develop the skills to meet these needs. This policy outlines the procedures to effectively assess families who apply for a foster home license, in accordance with the Foster Family Care Licensing Requirements, He-C 6446.

Policy

- I. Through recruitment, DCYF seeks to develop an adequate number of foster and adoptive families that reflect the diverse racial, ethnic, and minority status of the children/youth in care.
- II. Applicants for a foster family care license are licensed by the office that serves their catchment area.
- III. An initial home visit is conducted with the prospective family to provide the family with assistance in clarifying their ideas and feelings about foster and adoptive care and their ability to meet the needs of the children/youth in the custody or guardianship of DCYF.
- IV. All adult household members must be interviewed individually and jointly, if in a marriage or domestic partnership.
- V. Former spouses and partners, boarders, relatives, and adult children of the applicant(s) may be interviewed to assess the applicant(s)' history regarding their ability to care for children/youth and have healthy adult relationships.
- VI. The home visit provides the information necessary to determine if the applicant(s) meets the Foster Family Care Licensing Requirements in He-C 6446 and to assist in making appropriate matching and placement decisions for the foster family and the child/youth.

Procedures

- I. The Resource Worker arranges a time for the interview in the applicant(s)' home when all the family members can be present and makes arrangements for follow-up visits.
- II. Due to the sensitive nature of the information being discussed, such as sexual abuse, personal history, or substance abuse, it may not be appropriate for children/youth to be present for the entirety of the interview. The Resource Worker must make every attempt to discuss with the

children/youth their acceptance and enthusiasm or concerns about foster care and the children/youth's willingness to share their lives with a foster sibling.

- III. The Resource Worker may send a copy of the 2-page template, the "Foster/Adoptive/Relative Care Home Study" (Form 2162) to the foster family prior to the interviews to give the family a sense of what will be discussed in the interview.
- IV. The Resource Worker and foster family need to plan a minimum of 2 visits or interview sessions to complete the home study. The interview with the family must be a minimum of 3 to 6 hours over multiple sessions.
- V. The Resource Worker uses the questions listed in the "Foster/Adoptive/Relative Care Home Study" (Form 2162) to cover all the topics. Further questions may be generated as a result of the structured interview.
- VI. The Resource Worker must be aware of both verbal and non-verbal responses to determine if the verbal and non-verbal cues are consistent and document non-verbal cues or inconsistencies between verbal and nonverbal information.
- VII. The Resource Worker must tour the home and environment, making note of:
 - A. Sufficient space and furnishings for the number of people in the home with attention to sleeping arrangements and privacy;
 - B. Sufficient facilities and utilities, such as one full bathroom for every 8 residents, electricity, telephone, and heat;
 - C. Cleanliness of home;
 - D. Safety environment in the home for age appropriate children/youth;
 - E. Safety environment outdoors for age appropriate children/youth;
 - F. Safety environment of any out buildings on the property for age appropriate children/youth;
 - G. Storage of weapons, toxic substances, and medications;
 - H. Composition of neighborhood and community;
 - I. Accessibility of social services in the community;
 - J. Presence of pets; and
 - K. Evidence of smoking in the home and its potential effect on children/youth.
- VIII. The Resource Worker reviews the family's "Autobiography of Foster/Adoptive Parents" (Form 2163) and compares the information provided by the family with information collected during the interview.
- IX. A draft of the "Foster/Adoptive/Relative Care Home Study" must be shared with the family for review and revision.

- X. The Supervisor must review the "Foster/Adoptive/Relative Care Home Study" for completeness and refer any concerns to the Resource Worker for follow-up.
- XI. The final approved "Foster/Adoptive/Relative Care Home Study" must be signed by the foster family, Resource Worker, and Supervisor.
- XII. The original approved Foster/Adoptive/Relative Care Home Study is retained in the foster family record according to [Policy Item 1740, Foster Home Record Maintenance](#).
- XIII. A copy of the approved "Foster/Adoptive/Relative Care Home Study" is sent to the foster family.