Home Study for the_____family

Family address:

Notes:

If being conducted for a child placing foster agency, place agency name here

Applicant Information

Provider Name:		**Spouse Name:**	
Date of Birth:		**Date of Birth:**	
Gender:		**Gender:**	
Religion:		**Religion:**	
Occupation:		**Occupation:**	
Employer:		**Employer:**	
Language(s):		**Language(s):**	
Education:		**Education:**	
Ethnicity:		**Ethnicity:**	
Cell Phone:		**Cell Phone:**	
Home Phone:		**Marriage Date:**	
Work Phone:		**Work Phone:**	
Email Address:		**Email Address:**	

Members of Household

Name	Date of Birth	Age	Relationship	Adopted (Y/N)

Pursuant to Federal Adam Walsh Act and Utah Code Sections 26B-2-120, 26B-2-121, and 26B-2-122, the required criminal record, Child Abuse Index checks, and vulnerable adult abuse and neglect checks were completed for

Indicate names of any other individuals who were screened:

Date the foster address was checked on Utah sex offender registry:

Pre-service training was completed on:

CPR/First Aid training date(s):

Motivation, Understanding and Expectations:

1. Verify applicants are over age 18 and legally married
2. Reasons for wanting to care for foster childrena. Why interested? Why now?
3. Prior home studies, with which agencies? If they've worked for a child placing foster agency, fostered previously for DCFS, or fostered in another state, a reference from each agency is necessary before proceeding. (If the reference is unfavorable, you should staff with your supervisor prior to proceeding any further)
4. Experiences/history of caring for others children
5. Applicant and their children's understanding of foster care
6. Biases, fears, questions, concerns, and experiences with fostering/adoption and caring for children in general.
7. Type of relationship and contact applicants are anticipating and willing to have with bio parents and other significant individuals
8. Expectations of children in foster care - are they realistic?
9. Expectation, ability, and experience with any special needs and trauma histories (any theywill not work with?)
10. Biggest anticipated challenge in fostering/adopting through foster care, how will it behandled?

Child Matching:

1. Family's primary goal (foster reunification, long, short-term, respite, emergency placements, adoption etc.)
2. Understanding and willingness to work toward reunification?
3. Kinds of children who will best fit and be served (age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sibling groups, preferred capacity, max capacity)
4. Outline behaviors and needs they prefer to work with and not work with
5. Do they have any special training, experience, qualifications they have for addressing specific needs?
6. Languages spoken, 1 functionally literate household member (required per Utah Statute)

Community and Support Systems:

1. Available supports: formal (therapy, work supports, etc.) and informal (emotional support, family support. etc.)
2. Babysitters or daycare arrangements
3. Emergency caregivers - do they have a formal arrangement with them?
4. Willingness and ability to participate in support services for themselves or foster kids (therapy, training, etc. Do they have the time?)

Biographical Information of Each Prospective Caregiver: written description of in home interviews with applicants, their children and all household members such as roommates

1. Information about their family of origin, where were they raised, and by whom? History of divorce? Custody? Where are parents now? What is their relationship now as adults?
2. Childhood experiences: parent's values, personality, discipline style, expression of affection/anger
3. Previous/current involvement in therapy (you can ask for a release to speak with or obtain letter from any previous/current therapists if you choose)
4. Physical, emotional, sexual abuse of anyone in their families or themself (explanation required); assess whether adequately resolved or in need of further assessment (you can request a psychological eval or other assessment if needed). While this is a sensitive topic, transparency is required to adequately assess the individual
5. Past experiences with inappropriate sexual conduct (pornography, etc). Assess the same as the previous question
6. Current/Historical Alcohol or Substance use, abuse, and history of anyone in the household. Is it resolved? Are they responsible now? Plan steps in case of concerns in the future.
7. Domestic violence history (as either the survivor or perpetrator). Are there patterns of physical violence? How has this been resolved, or is there a need for further assessment?
8. Personal values, beliefs
9. Health status (medical reference findings) any current diagnoses, medications.
10. Current/Historical Mental health status (any diagnoses or previous issues with depression, anxiety, etc.) to include how it is/was managed. Are they stable? This is required per Utah Statute.
11. Previous marriages and/or other children. What are their relationships like with these people now?
12. Hobbies, talents, interests
13. Education
14. History of investigations (supported/unsupported) of child abuse or neglect (include in the short narrative). Address how circumstances have changed or any safety precautions that need to be in place for licensure.
15. Employment History, current employer, position title, how long they've been employed, what do they like/dislike about their job? Plans for career or position change, more schooling etc.

Marriage:

1. Describe marriage, or current relationship
2. What do they see as their strengths as a couple?
3. Weaknesses as a couple (what do they think they could do better or work on?)
4. Balance of power and responsibilities
5. How do they provide each other with emotional support?
6. Examples of how they manage stress
7. Sources of conflict/disagreement, and how they are typically resolved
8. Assess if there has ever been any physical altercations, or if there are anger management concerns. If so, you can request a further assessment be completed
9. Has the relationship ever been threatened (a pending separation or divorce)? If so, how did they overcome this? How will they avoid this moving forwards?

Family:

1. List applicant's children, ages, personalities, interests, school, extracurricular, special needs, health, etc. Written descriptions of In-home interviews are statutorily required for all family members and residents (age and ability permitting).
2. Are any of the children in the family adopted?
3. Others living in home such as roommates, extended family members, tenants (what is their involvement, relationship, etc.)
4. Family functioning/interactions
5. Special needs of any family member, and how these are addressed
6. Compromised immunity of any household member, and how this will impact placements, visits, etc.
7. Family cohesion/adaptability
8. Roles and responsibilities
9. Address MIS history of any child residing in the home, plan for safety
10. Primary language spoken in home. Can at least one communicate with child and read English? Required per Utah Statute.

Lifestyle:

1. Daily schedules (work/school, activities on weekdays/weekends) flexibility to accommodate visits, appointments, and the changing needs of foster children? Do they understand the time requirements?
2. Childcare (supervision) when parents aren't home
3. Ethnic, cultural, religious practices (assess for their openness to assimilating foster kids)
4. Home responsibilities (chores)
5. Holiday traditions, travel and vacations, etc. How does a foster child fit into this?
6. Recreational interests as a family. How does a foster child fit into this?

Parenting:

1. Have each parent describe their own parenting style
2. Have each parent describe their own parenting strengths and areas to improve upon
3. Family rules and expectations (how will foster kids learn these?)
4. Methods of discipline (examples)

Financial Summary:

1. Use the chart from initial application to summarize annual gross income, monthly net income, fixed bills, amounts available after obligations are fulfilled. Ensure adequate income to sustain the family and the addition of foster/adoptive children.
2. Discuss any circumstances to be considered when determining adequate income and describe here. Use poverty guideline website as a guide
3. Address any bankruptcies and describe the circumstances. How are they managing finances now?

References/Inquiries:

1. One must be from a relative, 2-3 additional must be from non-relatives no more than original
4. This is required per Utah Statute.
2. Describe reference responses regarding character and suitability of the applicants. This is required per Utah Statute.
3. Address any concerns or limitations noted on reference letters and how addressed through this interview.

Home/Neighborhood (see attached Safety Inspection Checklist)

1. Describe the home, neighborhood, layout, yard, available bedrooms (and capacities, genders they can serve)
2. Address housekeeping standards, condition of home and grounds
3. Safety plan issues, compliance plan for safety checklist items
4. Any firearms in home (list how secured)
5. Any pets? Describe (indoor? Outdoor? Good with kids? Concerns, vaccinations etc)
6. Sex offender registry checked for household members or surrounding homes that may contain offenders? Safety plan needed? Discussed with family?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Base this section on the compilation of all information gathered (references, medicals, releases of info to speak with other parties, assessments (if required), background screenings, questionnaires, how applicants presented in the interview, assessment of how they responded to questions asked, coping skills, parenting skills, adaptability, priorities, assessment of how they will likely handle fostering, primary goals (reunification, adoption etc).

Address any concerning details and how they have been resolved (or if not resolved, how they are being addressed). Discuss types of cases, behaviors, situations recommended (or not recommended) and why. State any recommendations for ongoing training, support, DCFS interaction, licensor/agency monitoring, safety plan issues. Recommendations for age groupings, max capacities, genders, behaviors etc. You can make any recommendation you see fit here based on observed findings. Keep biases and opinions out of it and simply report the facts based on your professional interactions with them.

Please do not use this study for the purpose of adoption that is not directly involving a public welfare system.

COMPLETED BY:

Name:	
Date:	

Foster Care Home Inspection Checklist

Family address:
Notes:
Date of visit:

- ☐ Initial
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Other:

Home Safety Requirements: R501-12

- ☐ Address visible/home accessible
- ☐ Parents don't provide child care (*see statutory definition on licensor reference guide*) or DHHS licensed services in home
- ☐ Interior/exterior and contents maintained/clean and safe condition R501-12-7(3)(e)
- ☐ Hazards abated *R501-12-7(1)*
- ☐ Swimming pools secured to prevent unsupervised access
  - ☐ N/A
- ☐ Parents follow all laws regarding care and number of pets
  - ☐ Discussed with provider?
  - ☐ N/A
- ☐ No smoking in presence of foster children
  - ☐ No smokers in this home
- ☐ 2 exits on each level of home adequately sized for emergency personnel with egress to ground level (safety ladders, stairway, etc) or automatic fire suppression system
- ☐ Safety devices appropriate to age (outlet covers, safety gates, fireplace gates, etc)
  - ☐ Discussed with provider?
- ☐ Protective gear is accessible/utilized (helmets, life vests, safety certification training, body padding)
  - ☐ Discussed with provider?
- ☐ Working appliances/plumbing
- ☐ Bathrooms have locking capability R501-12-7(1)(f)
- ☐ Working smoke detector on each level R501-12-7(1)(c)
- ☐ Carbon monoxide detector on each level R501-12-7(1)(c)
- ☐ Extinguisher in home (minimum rating *2-A-10BC*) R501-12-7(1)(d)

- ☐ 911 recognizable phone on site
- ☐ Emergency numbers posted visible to children (including address of the home)
- ☐ Fully supplied first aid kit in home (medications removed)
- ☐ Alcoholic beverages are monitored and inaccessible to children at all times
    - ☐ N/A
- ☐ Hazardous chemicals are locked in original or manufacturer complaint packaging *R501-12-8(10)*
    - ☐ Where/how stored:
- ☐ Medications (including prescriptions, over-the-counter, vitamins, and supplements) are locked and in original packaging (can not be split into daily dose dividers)
    - ☐ Where/how stored:
- ☐ Flammable substances (gas, kerosene) are locked in ventilated areas separate from living areas
    - ☐ Where/how stored:

Bedrooms: R501-12-7(2)

- ☐ Number of available bedrooms for fostering:
    - ☐ Minimum 40 square feet per occupant
        - ☐ Measurements/Capacity:
    - ☐ Not shared by opposite genders (over age 2)
    - ☐ No foster children over age 2 in parents' room
    - ☐ Foster children do not share bedrooms with adults
    - ☐ Each child has an individual bed/crib and mattress and linens that meet their needs
    - ☐ If foster bedroom is on the ground floor, it has one screened window that opens to be used to evacuate
        - ☐ N/A
    - ☐ If foster bedroom is not on the ground floor, it has a source of natural lights, and 2 exits, one of which shall exit directly outside of the home in case of evacuation
        - ☐ N/A
    - ☐ Closet and dresser provided
    - ☐ No more than 4 total children in a foster bedroom
    - ☐ No more than 3 foster children in the home (see sibling and respite exceptions)
    - ☐ No more than 2 children under age 2 in the home (including biological, adopted, foster, etc.)
    - ☐ No more than 2 non-ambulatory children in the home (including biological, adopted, foster, etc.)

Firearms: R501-12-8(5), (6) and (7)

- ☐ No firearms in this home **OR**
- ☐ Inaccessible to foster children at all times
- ☐ Unloaded, locked (or rendered inoperable) and ammo locked by a different key/combo elsewhere
- ☐ Stored together with ammo in gun safe (or other commercially manufactured gun storage container) Where/How stored:
- ☐ Parents obtain written permission from caseworker for child's firearm use
  - ☐ N/A

Transportation: R501-12-12

- ☐ Enclosed and registered (no motorcycles or recreational vehicles can be used for transporting foster children)
- ☐ Vehicles have adequate, functional seatbelts
- ☐ Emergency contact info (including agency and caseworker information at minimum) posted in vehicle
- ☐ First Aid kit in each vehicle
- ☐ Age appropriate car/booster seat
  - ☐ N/A

Safety plan initiated?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, provide details below:

Comments to include hazards observed, restrictions on certificate, items to monitor, etc.:

Overall Recommendation:

1. Type:
2. Capacity:
3. Maximum Capacity for Siblings:
4. Genders:
5. Immunized Foster Children Only?
    - ☐ Yes (if all household members did not provide proof of immunization; make note on license)
    - ☐ No (proof provided for all household members)
6. Ages:

Comments on current capacity/maximum capacity/gender groupings, preferences etc.:

Printed name of person completing inspection:

Signature of person completing inspection

Date:

Note: This checklist is a tool for agency convenience and does not modify R501-12 or represent the rule in its entirety. It represents observations specific to the date above. The Licensee remains responsible in ensuring they are in full compliance with R501-12.

HELPFUL HOME STUDY HINTS

1. *KNOW YOUR ROLE*

You are the "gateway" for approving families to care for vulnerable children. You need to be able to justify all of your observations and decisions regarding the family's licensure/certification.

2. *KNOW YOUR GOAL*

Your home study document will be used by DCFS and the courts to match kids to families, so ask questions you'd want to know if you were DCFS. Determine their capability through family's experiences, history, and personalities. Be thorough - you are required to create a home study that is in line with Utah Statute.

3. *ESTABLISH TRUST*

Explain the process transparently, and answer all questions. Always be professional, cordial, non-confrontational, relaxed, and culturally sensitive. Remember that some cultures view eye contact as disrespectful, and others prefer no shoes in the home. Be respectful of the family living environment. Safety inspections can be considered intrusive, so you may want to do this last.

4. *DON'T REACT*

Let them talk; their reality is what you need to assess. Question respectfully to get more information, but do not belittle or overreact. You need to control how you receive the information that people divulge to you, and how you respond. Pay attention to your body language and nonverbal cues. Be matter-of-fact and do not act shocked at any information you hear, just continue to facilitate the conversation. Many sensitive topics will be addressed, and it's important to remain neutral. Remember that a sordid history doesn't mean they should be denied, it can speak to what they've been through. How they have resolved their issues, and where they are at now is more of a concern than what has happened in their past. Be sure to address how they resolved the issues they have faced.

5. *ASK FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR CLARIFICATION*

Even when there may be a long discussion and it is 'inconvenient' for you to have a long home study, ultimately you are gaining information that will help you match them with the best placements.

6. *YOU CAN ASK FOR FURTHER ASSESSMENT*

If you are uncomfortable with something they've discussed (ie: unresolved abuse history, pornography addiction, instability in finances, relationships, employment, residences, untreated mental health concerns, thinking errors, erratic behavior, substance abuse history, domestic violence history, hostility, unfavorable reference letters etc.), then run it by your supervisor (or peers) and determine if a meeting to recommend an outside assessment or evaluation is necessary.

7. *REVIEW ALL FORMS AND RULES, AND READ SOME COMPLETED HOME STUDIES*

This can help with developing additional questions to ask, and get an understanding of what a comprehensive home study is required to look like, according to Utah Statute.

8. *REMEMBER YOUR RESPONSIBILITY*

Families you approved will have abused and neglected kids placed with them- are you comfortable with your decision? If there appear to be disqualifying factors, then involve your supervisor and follow the formal process of denying licensure/certification (if determined to be the appropriate action). Be sure to report "just the facts", and report objectively and professionally. Leave personal opinions and biases out of your document. Remember that you may have to argue your findings in an administrative hearing or other similar setting - are you comfortable with its contents?

9. *KNOW THAT YOU CAN DENY/OR RECOMMEND DENIAL FOR PLACEMENTS TO DCFS*

You can schedule to be present at the DCFS committee meeting to voice any concerns you have about the family (or communicate with the DCFS RFC once assigned to voice concerns).