

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(14) Resource Development	Effective Date:	September 2015
	Policy Title:	Family Re-Evaluation		
	Policy Number:	14.13	Previous Policy #:	14.13

CODES/REFERENCES

Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-183)

REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall conduct a written comprehensive assessment of the overall quality and functioning of each approved caregiver on an annual basis. The annual re-evaluation must be completed no later than the last calendar day of the 12th consecutive calendar month following the initial approval date or expiration of the current foster home approval period (e.g., the re-evaluation for a foster home approved 01/01/2012 is due by 12/31/2012). If the re-evaluation is not approved timely, the foster home status must be changed from full approval status in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (Georgia SHINES) accordingly (see policy [14.15 Resource Development: Household Approval Status](#)).

DFCS shall ensure no home has more than 12 months of approval. If a re-evaluation is completed within 30 calendar days of the due date, then the approval term (starting month to ending month) and re-evaluation date will remain the same as it was previously. However, if the re-evaluation is completed more than 30 calendar days **early or late**, then the approval term and re-evaluation date must change.

DFCS may initiate a re-evaluation of approved caregivers whenever there are significant changes in the household that impact the caregiver's ability to meet the Safety and Quality Standards (SQS) and the issues of concern cannot be adequately addressed through an addendum to the most recent Family Evaluation (see policy [14.14 Resource Development: Family Evaluation Addendums](#)). Additionally, previously approved foster caregivers who request to have their homes re-approved **within three years** of a voluntary closure may be re-opened using the re-evaluation process.

DFCS shall not complete a re-evaluation on a caregiver who is the subject of an active Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation. If the caregiver's re-evaluation becomes due during this time, the home shall be placed in *Full Approval 30-Day Grace* status pending the outcome of the CPS investigation. If the CPS investigation is not resolved during the 30-day grace period, the home shall be placed in *Pending Closure* status until the CPS Investigation is closed and a decision is made regarding whether or not to allow the home to remain open (see policy [14.15 Resource Development: Household Approval Status](#)).

DFCS shall utilize only qualified personnel to complete home re-evaluations (see policy [14.10 Resource Development: Initial Family Evaluation Administrative Requirements](#) for assessor qualifications).

DFCS shall require at least one in-home consultation during the re-evaluation process. Each household member must be interviewed. When practical and appropriate, obtain input from children who have been placed in the home during the re-evaluation period. The following items must be included in the re-evaluation as described:

Criminal Records Checks

For every adult in the household age 18 years and older, the fingerprint-based Criminal Records Check (CRC) through the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) are due at re-evaluation every five years from the date of the initial Family Evaluation. A Criminal Records Check (CRC) is considered timely if conducted within 90 calendar days prior to the re-evaluation due date (see policy [14.2 Resource Development: Criminal Records Checks](#)).

Annually Required Safety Screening

For every adult in the household 18 years of age and older, conduct Child Protective Services (CPS) screening and online background checks (i.e. Georgia SHINES, Department of Corrections Offender Query, Sexual Offender Registry, and Board of Pardons and Parole) annually at re-evaluation. Safety screenings are considered timely if conducted within 90 calendar days prior to the re-evaluation due date (see policy [14.3 Resource Development: Caregiver Safety Screening at Initial and Re-evaluation](#)).

Medical and Drug Screening

1. Primary and secondary caregivers must be medically evaluated every five years at re-evaluation unless more frequent evaluations are warranted. The medical evaluation must be conducted and signed by a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or public health department within 90 calendar days prior to the re-evaluation due date. Utilize the Foster or Adoptive Parent Medical Evaluation Report – Annual Update.
NOTE: Medicals are not required for other household members at re-evaluation, but household members under 18 years of age must have current immunizations.
2. An applicant may be screened out if the certifying medical official endorses that the applicant or other household member's health condition poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Direct threat is defined as a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by modifications in policy, practice, or procedures. When direct threat is the justification for the screening out of individuals with disabilities, the decision must be based on individualized assessments that rely on current medical evidence or the best available objective evidence in determining:
 - a. The nature, duration, and severity of the risks;
 - b. The probability that potential injury will occur;
 - c. Whether reasonable modification in policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk; and
 - d. The actual abilities and inabilities of the prospective adoptive or foster parent.
3. If the certifying medical official endorses that the primary or secondary caregiver (as applicable) has any medical, cognitive, or other condition that will affect caring for a

child or has an ongoing medical condition, the applicant will be required to be medically re-evaluated at each annual re-evaluation until the condition is resolved.

4. The primary and secondary caregiver will be asked to submit to drug screening at any time there is reasonable suspicion of illegal drug use. It must be conducted and signed by a qualified health professional or laboratory. An applicant must be screened out if positive results are reported for any illegal drug.

Caregiver Child Safety Agreement

The Caregiver Child Safety Agreement must be reviewed with and signed by the caregiver(s) annually.

Financial Statement for Resource Parenting

The caregiver(s) must complete a financial statement annually.

Caregiver Written Input

Written input must be obtained from the caregivers using the Caregiver Feedback Form. Written input allows caregivers the opportunity to formally share perceived strengths/needs, concerns, their evaluation of the services provided by DFCS, the impact that fostering has had on their family, and whether or not they wish to continue fostering.

Recommendations and Feedback

A recommendation for approval or disapproval of each applicant home must be included within the written re-evaluation, and written notification must be provided to the caregiver(s) regarding their new approval status within five business days of the approval decision.

The re-evaluation must be signed by approving authority which is DFCS/CPA Director or their Designee. The date of the Director/Designee's signature is the date of approval for the re-evaluation. The Director/Designee must have minimally participated in the IMPACT FCP or other approved pre-service training overview class, or be a fully certified pre-service training leader¹.

PROCEDURES

DFCS and CPA staff will:

1. Develop a system for tracking when home re-evaluations are due for completion to ensure each re-evaluation is approved prior to the last day of the current approval term.
NOTE: Homes may not have more than 12 months of approval.
2. Initiate a comprehensive re-evaluation of the household at least 90 calendar days prior to the expiration date of the current approval term. This will allow adequate time to gather medical evaluations, update criminal records, etc. if needed.
3. Provide caregivers at least 90 calendar days' notice of the need for any medical evaluations or criminal records checks for themselves or household members.
4. Gather information from Social Services Case Managers (SSCMs) who have supervised placements in the foster home during the period being evaluated.
5. Conduct Child Protective Services (CPS) screenings and online background checks (i.e., Georgia SHINES, Department of Corrections Offender Query, Sexual Offender

¹ IMPACT FCP leader training is only provided through the DFCS Education and Training Section.

Registry, and Board of Pardons and Parole). (See policy [14.3 Resource Development: Caregiver Safety Screening at Initial and Re-evaluation](#))

6. Gather basic data to determine present household status, including significant information on the current household, health, employment, and financial status. Require proof of current motor vehicle license and insurance. Include a verification statement that the documents were reviewed and are current.
7. Interview/obtain feedback from all household members.
 - a. Address the relationship between the Agency and the caregivers, including the caregivers' ability to accept Agency supervision.
 - b. Discuss the effects of children leaving the home and the ability of the caregivers to prepare them for leaving.
 - c. Discuss the caregivers' protective capacities and their ability to continue parenting the type of children for which they were approved.
 - d. Review the past year's disciplinary practices and issues.
 - e. Review and have caregivers initial, as indicated, the Caregiver Child Safety Agreement at each re-evaluation.
 - f. Address the caregivers' continued parent development.
 - g. Ask caregivers if there have been any 911 calls or arrests at their home during the past 12 months. Caregivers are expected to report all arrests and 911 calls to their home by the next business day following the occurrence.
 - h. Include all members of the caregivers' household in the re-evaluation process.
 - i. Include the children who have been placed in the home during the past year, the caregivers' interaction with these children, and their ability to meet the children's needs.
 - j. Examine the need for supplemental supervision to continue, if applicable.
8. Address the safety of the home environment, carefully assessing the home's compliance with Safety and Quality Standards.
9. Provide recommendations for the classification of the home, age, sex, number, and characteristics of children for whom the home is approved. Include the beginning and ending dates of approval.
10. Submit the completed re-evaluation to the Resource Development (RD) Supervisor and County Director for approval prior to the expiration of the current approval.
11. Notify the caregivers of the approval status of their home within five business days.
12. Update information on the FA Home page in Georgia SHINES.
13. Document the re-evaluation assessment period in Section 1 (**From** and **To**) in Georgia SHINES.

The approved assessor will compose the Family Re-Evaluation so that it includes (at a minimum) the following components:

General Demographic Information

1. Date of in-home consultation, date of report, date of the Director's/Designee's signature, and new term of approval (month/day/year to month/day/year);
2. Current home address and contact information;
3. List of all current household members including children placed; and
4. Discussion of any changes in family composition since the last evaluation.

Safety

1. Discuss the results of DFCS CPS screening and online background checks.
2. Discuss the results of GCIC and NCIC criminal records checks (CRC) within 90 days of expiration of the approval term (except for ICPC cases). The CRC is due five years from the date of initial approval and then every five years from each subsequent approval.
3. Review the Caregiver Child Safety Agreement and have it initialed by the primary and secondary caregiver, as applicable.
4. Review the disciplinary practices used and whether or not there were any violations of the discipline policy.
5. Review any policy violations and corrective action plans (CAP).

Medical Evaluation

Discuss the self-reported overall health and well-being of the caregivers and other household members. If a formal medical evaluation was conducted, discuss whether or not a medical evaluation will be due at the next evaluation based on the physician's certification. Confirm household members under 18 years of age have current immunizations.

Finances/Employment

1. Discuss the current employment status of all adult household members and the impact of fostering on the family's financial status.
2. Verify all sources of income and any changes in income since the last evaluation.
3. Discuss evidence of the family's current financial stability (e.g., proof of current utility or mortgage/rent payments). Use results from the Financial Statement for Resource Parenting.

Caregiver/Household Input

Discuss results of the household member interviews and results from the Caregiver Feedback Form. Interview all caregivers, all children in the home, including foster care placement, and all other household members. Discuss any changes to the Caregiver Placement Preferences Form.

Caregiver Protective Capacities

1. Address the relationship between the Agency and the caregivers, including the caregivers' ability to accept Agency supervision.
2. Discuss the caregivers' protective capacities and their ability to continue parenting the type of children for which they are currently approved.
3. Evaluate the caregivers' strengths and needs as it relates to the following
 - a. Making an informed decision to continue/discontinue fostering (Know the rewards and challenges faced by their family as a result of fostering and have made a definitive choice);
 - b. Teamwork and communication (Demonstrated ability to work with birth families, DFCS, and community partners to meet the needs of children);
 - c. Parenting abused and/or neglected children (Demonstrated ability to understand children's needs and issues and the ability to help children form a positive self- image);
 - d. Understanding grief, loss, and attachment issues for children in care (Demonstrated ability to help children identify and manage losses and form

- healthy relationships);
- e. Understanding, preventing, and managing misbehavior (Demonstrated ability to provide appropriate behavior management based on a child's age and developmental needs);
 - f. Supporting primary or birth family connections (Demonstrated encouragement and support of significant connections for a child); and
 - g. Providing a safe, nurturing, and healthy environment (Demonstrated ability to meet the child's physical, emotional, medical, dental, and psychological needs).

Support Systems/Substitute Caregivers

1. Examine the need for supplemental supervision (child care) to continue, if applicable.
2. Review the caregivers' use of non-reimbursed re-occurring and non-reoccurring substitute caregivers. Discuss the frequency of use and safety information obtained on each substitute caregiver. Discuss the use of other natural support systems.

Placements during the Re-Evaluation Period

1. List the names and placement dates of each child placed in the home since the last evaluation and the removal reason (if applicable). Include whether or not a 10-day notice was provided prior to any placements which ended in disruption. Discuss whether or not a pattern of placement disruptions is evident.
2. Gather information from SSCMs who have supervised placements in the home during the period being evaluated. Obtain feedback regarding the quality of care provided by the caregivers. Identify any areas of concern **prior to** the in-home visit for possible discussion with the caregivers at that time.

Update Household Information

1. Discuss general environmental conditions of the home, including general housekeeping standards.
2. Address the safety of the home environment, carefully assessing the home's compliance with Safety and Quality Standards.
3. Document sleeping arrangements, including where all current household members sleep and the type of bed in each room. Assess whether or not the configuration meets utilization standards.
4. Re-assess and ensure the following areas meet Safety and Quality Standards since the last evaluation:
 - a. Presence of weapons in the home, including location and how they are secured;
 - b. Need for Environmental Inspection;
 - c. CPR and First Aid certification;
 - d. Functional smoke detectors on each level of the home;
 - e. Functional carbon monoxide detectors on at least the sleeping level and on the level with an unvented gas heater, if applicable;
 - f. Pool and water safety standards;
 - g. Utilization/Need for car seats; and
 - h. Pet vaccinations.

Training

1. Confirm the caregivers' completion of the required 15 hours of annual continued parent development for the previous calendar year.
2. List the types of classes and number of hours completed.
3. Identify the topics covered and additional parenting skills needing to be developed.
4. Confirm continued parent development activities have been scheduled for completion during the current calendar year.

Assessor's Conclusion and Recommendations

Re-Evaluation Documentation

List the documents reviewed or provided for the home re-evaluation.

Summary of Key Information

1. Discuss key information from the caregivers' written input and household members; discuss any need for follow-up to address concerns, if applicable.
2. Discuss key information from SSCMs' input and any need for follow-up to address concerns, if applicable.
3. Discuss key information from the children previously placed in the home during the re-evaluation period and any need for follow-up to address concerns, if applicable.
4. Summarize key information from any CPS activity and/or policy violations during the re-evaluation period.
5. Discuss the strengths and challenges of the caregivers based upon the service history and information gathered during the re-evaluation.
6. Discuss any changes to the Caregiver Placement Preferences Form.

Conclusion

1. Assess the caregivers' service during the re-evaluation period and the impact of service on the caregivers and their family.
2. Assess the caregivers' knowledge and skills relating to applying the reasonable and prudent parenting standard to decisions such as whether to allow children to engage in social, extracurricular, enrichment and cultural activities (see policy [14.26 Resource Development: Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard](#)).
3. Assess the caregivers' ability to continue to manage separation and loss issues which may be triggered by a child's transitions.
4. Assess the caregivers' ability to serve as a partnership or resource parent.
5. Assess the caregivers' partnership with DFCS (and CPA, if applicable). Include an assessment of the caregivers' willingness to act on previous recommendations or follow through with corrective action plans. Assess any community partnership issues.
6. Assess any changes indicated to the types of placements to be made in the future.

Recommendations

1. Provide recommendations for the classification of the home (i.e., Regular Foster Home, Relative Foster Home, or Adoptive Home) and the age, sex, number, and characteristics of children for whom the home is approved.
2. Indicate whether or not the recommendations are different than the caregivers' selections on the Caregiver Placement Preferences Form or the previous approval. Explain the reason for the differences.

Attestation Statement

"I attest that this Family Re-evaluation was completed by a qualified assessor, the applicant(s) meet the Safety and Quality Standards, and all attachments, verifications, and processes for approval have been completed."

Required Signatures (Electronic signatures in Georgia SHINES is acceptable)

Resource Development Case Manager;
Resource Development Supervisor; and
DFCS /CPA County Director or Designee and Official Approval Date

For Adoptive Resources, the RD Case Manager will also:

1. Describe efforts to identify a placement match.
2. List the dates of contacts with the caregivers, including formal presentations of potential placement matches. Describe the reasons the family declined placements, if applicable.
3. Describe information provided to the family to assist them with self-identifying placement matches (e.g., invitations to events, providing instructions to online photo listings, etc.).

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The assessment of an approved home is an ongoing process between DFCS/CPA and caregivers. A home re-evaluation may be completed at any time during an approved home's one year approval period, but is usually completed just prior to the expiration of the current approval period. The key purpose of the re-assessment is to utilize information gathered during the approval term to determine if a home continues to be a safe and suitable environment for the placement of children in foster care and meets Safety and Quality Standards. Information gathered from various sources (i.e., in-home consultation, written input from caregivers, case managers, children placed in the home, documentation, safety screening, training logs) is used to conduct a holistic review of the caregiver and household.

Who is qualified to complete the Family Re-Evaluation/Assessment?

Certified and IMPACT trained DFCS Social Services Case Managers (SSCMs), CPA Case Support Workers, CPA Case Support Supervisors, or contractors may qualify as an assessor and are able to complete the Family Re-Evaluation. A private contractor may complete the Family Re-Evaluation if he/she:

1. Has a minimum of a bachelor's level of education in Social Work, Counseling or Psychology, or a related field (Four years of experience leading pre-service training may substitute for the educational requirement);
2. Has the ability to understand and implement the philosophy and conceptualizations inherent in pre-service training;
3. Demonstrates a functional understanding of the agency's mission;
4. Has the ability to provide thorough well-written Family Evaluations with supported recommendations; and
5. Has successfully completed IMPACT FCP Leader training offered through the DFCS Education and Training Section.

Caregiver Input on the Re-Evaluation

In addition to re-evaluations reflecting a comprehensive review of the overall quality and functioning of the foster home, re-evaluations are also an opportunity for caregivers to formally share insight from their perspective. Caregivers describe their reactions to providing foster care and the impact it has had on them and the members of their family. Caregivers address the stresses and benefits as well as their role in the child's foster care experience over the past year. Caregivers provide their perception of the support the agency has offered, of the supervisory contacts, and of their role as a member of the foster care team. In addition, caregivers provide input regarding training needs and issues. Moreover, caregivers share their views about birth parents, contacts with birth parents, and parent/child visits during the past year.

FORMS AND TOOLS

[Adult Household Member Screening Request Information](#)

[Caregiver Child Safety Agreement](#)

[Caregiver Placement Preferences](#)

[Child Protection Services History Request](#)

[Foster or Adoptive Parent Medical Evaluation Report – Annual Update](#)

[Financial Statement for Resource Parenting](#)

[Financial Statement for Resource Parenting - Spanish](#)