



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	IV	Out of Home Placement	
Chapter:	B	Resource Care	5-28-2013
Subchapter:	2	Resource Home Selection	
Issuance:	235	Home Study	

Purpose and Authority 5-28-2013

Pursuant to the Resource Family Licensing Act, N.J.S.A. 30:4C-27.3 et seq., N.J.S.A. 30:4C-4(h) and 30:4C-26a, a person providing resource family care to a child in placement must be licensed by the Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing (OOL).

CP&P does not preclude a caregiver from providing resource family care based solely on the caregiver's culture, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, affectional orientation, or marital/civil union or domestic partnership status. The caregiver may be married/civil union partnered, in a domestic partnership, cohabiting, single, separated, widowed, or divorced.

Licensing Regulations - The Manual of Requirements for Resource Family Parents, at N.J.A.C. 10:122C, outlines the provisions by which a home is licensed as a resource family home. Adoptive homes are subject to Home Study requirements as well; the Division shall conduct a home study of an adoptive applicant in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:121A-5.6, Home study services.

The Home Study and Licensing process is completed within 150 days, with the active participation of the CP&P Resource Family Support Unit and the DCF Office of Licensing.

A resource family home license permits a resource family to provide one or more of the following out-of-home care services:

- Foster Care
- Adoptive Care
- Kinship Care

- Contract agency home care

See N.J.A.C. 10:122C-1.2(a) and (b)1-4.

The resource family may provide emergency placement services, or be asked to provide placement for the sibling of a child already placed in the home, or the placement of a sibling group.

Definitions 3-9-2009

"Household member" means a person residing in the resource family home other than a resource family parent, resource family parent applicant, or child in placement. Household member shall include boarders and frequent overnight guests in the resource family home.

"Level I Requirement" means a licensing requirement, as set forth in the Manual of Requirements for Resource Family Homes, with which a resource family parent or resource family parent applicant must be in full compliance to receive or maintain a license. Level I requirements impact the safety, health and rights of children in placement.

"Level II Requirement" means a licensing requirement other than a Level I requirement, with which a resource family parent or resource family parent applicant must be in substantial compliance to receive or maintain a license. All requirements, other than Level I, are considered Level II.

Ideal Candidate 5-28-2013

An ideal resource family applicant is one who is willing and able to provide:

- safe, temporary care for a child - resource family care or emergency care; and, if reunification with the family of origin is not possible for the child,
- a commitment to provide a permanent home for the child, through either adoption (preferred) or Kinship Legal Guardianship.

Purpose 5-28-2013

The home study process engages the Resource Family Support Worker (RFSW), Resource Family Trainer (RFT), and applicant, in an exchange of information, to mutually assess whether the applicant can meet the CP&P and OOL requirements to become a licensed resource family, assist CP&P in carrying out responsibilities for children in placement, and use the agency's services in the best interests of children and families.

CP&P shares a copy of the Home Study with the applicant prior to licensure, to promote full disclosure and ensure the accuracy of the information captured in the study. Reference letters and the psycho-social inventory are not shared. A statement, summarizing the results of each reference, is provided. As a safeguard, to ensure the Home Study is not used for other purposes, it contains the following language:

"The Home Study has been prepared by/for the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection & Permanency for the express purpose of the placement of a child under the supervision of the Division, including Interstate Home Study Assessments. The Division disclaims any responsibility for any other use of this Home Study."

For licensed homes, CP&P will provide a copy of the Home Study to the licensee, upon written request. Reference letters and the psycho-social inventory are not shared. A statement, summarizing the results of each reference, is provided.

Authority 3-9-2009

N.J.A.C. 10:122C-5.3 requires a resource parent applicant to permit and participate in a home study process conducted by CP&P or a contract agency.

SAFE Home Study Tools 5-28-2013

Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) is a comprehensive set of tools that the RFSW uses throughout the home study process to assist with the evaluation of a prospective resource family home. SAFE provides the foundation for both a descriptive and a psychosocial evaluation of families.

DCF prepares the SAFE Home Study for use by CP&P for the placement of a child under its supervision, including Interstate Home Study assessments. CP&P is not responsible for any unauthorized use of this study.

Each component of the SAFE Home Study must be completed prior to making a licensing recommendation for a prospective resource parent. All of the components can be accessed through the Consortium for Children's website at <http://safehomestudy.org/Home.aspx>.

The RFSW administers the SAFE Home Study components as follows:

- New Jersey Resource Family Home Study Report - completed with the resource parent applicant(s), as a tool to gather and document descriptive information about each applicant and the members of the household. Information contained in the Home Study Report includes, but is not limited to:

- Identifying information about each applicant and household member;
 - Dates of contact with each applicant and household member;
 - Date each reference is received;
 - The motivation of each applicant to provide resource family care, or, when applicable, to adopt or provide permanency for a child;
 - A description of the home environment and neighborhood;
 - Identification of other adults and/or children who frequent the home;
 - The results of the CHRI and CARI checks;
 - The Psychosocial Inventory results;
 - The type of child the prospective family can best care for, using characteristics listed in NJS;
 - A statement indicating whether the prospective resource family home is recommended for licensure.
- Questionnaire I
 - Provide each prospective resource parent with Questionnaire I at the time a Resource Family Home Application is obtained.
 - Ask the applicant to return the questionnaire within five (5) days, to be reviewed prior to the second home visit.
 - Review each applicant's completed questionnaire, making note of responses which need to be further explored during the first home visit.
 - Questionnaire II
 - Administer Questionnaire II to each prospective resource parent after rapport has been established. Acknowledge that the questionnaire explores sensitive areas to assure a child's safety in a resource family home placement.
 - Give Questionnaire II to each applicant during a home visit. Ask applicants to complete it in your presence.

- Observe that each applicant completes it independently.
- After the questionnaire is completed, meet with each applicant individually to discuss the responses.
- Psychosocial Inventory
 - Use the Psychosocial Inventory as a tool to rate all the psychosocial factors on the inventory after every face-to-face contact with each applicant, as per instructions in the SAFE Psychosocial Inventory Desk Guide.
 - Use the results of the inventory as a guide to complete the psychosocial evaluation section of New Jersey Resource Family Home Study Report.

Other Home Study Requirements

10-19-2009

Checklist of Standards - The RFSW uses CP&P Form [5-34](#), Checklist of Standards for Resource Family Homes, during and after the home visit to assess the resource family home against required standards in the Manual of Requirements for Resource Family Parents, N.J. A.C. 10:122C. See CP&P Form [5-34](#) in the Forms Manual, Volume X.

References:

- Each applicant provides three personal references from persons unrelated to him or her. Applicants from the same household may provide the same personal reference, provided that the reference has knowledge of both applicants. At least one personal reference shall have known the applicant for five years.
- One Employment Reference, CP&P Form [5-24](#), for each employed applicant;
- One School/Day Care Reference, CP&P Form [5-2e](#), for each child in the household;
- One Police Check, CP&P Form [5-25](#), for each adult in the household;
- One Medical Reference, CP&P Form [5-2c](#), for each member of the household. The medical examination is current within the last twelve months of the submission of the Home Study packet to OOL.

Financial Statement - The RFSW assists the applicant in completing the CP&P Form [5-2g](#), Financial Statement, in order to assess the applicant's ability to be economically independent of the expected foster care payment prior to placement.

Confidentiality - Administrative Order 2:01, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, and professional ethics require that any information obtained during the Home Study process be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Criminal history information may not be released by CP&P to anyone, including other household members, without the signed consent of the person or without a court order.

The Division assures confidentiality of reference letters. However, in the event of an administrative hearing at the Office of Administrative Law (OAL), to dispute denial of a resource parent applicant, the references submitted during the application process may be discoverable.

Background Checks - If any individual refuses to sign the necessary consent forms for CARI and CHRI background checks, CP&P concludes the home study process and notifies OOL. The RFSW sends a CP&P Form [5-2m](#), Resource Family Home Recommendation, to OOL to recommend denial. See N.J.A.C. 10:122C-5.5(a)2. For policy regarding the procedure to request adult probation records from the Probation Services Division, see [CP&P-IX-G-1-100](#), Procedures to Request Adult Probation Records.

Automatic Disqualifier and Waivers - When an applicant, or any adult residing in the household, is found to have a criminal conviction for a crime outlined in N.J.S.A. 30:4C-26.8d, the applicant must be disqualified. Also see N.J.A.C. 10:122C-5.4.

Waivers eligible for consideration with appropriate approval are outlined in [CP&P-IV-B-2-300](#):

- Serious criminal conviction - An ASFA crime outlined in N.J.S.A. 30:4C-26.8e for which more than five (5) years have passed since the applicant was terminated from probation or parole, or was released without probation or parole from a correctional facility.
- Serious criminal conviction - A non-ASFA violent crime not included in the list of ASFA offenses above, regardless of the amount of time that has passed since conviction/parole/probation.
- Other criminal conviction - Other crimes, such as non-violent crimes, victimless crimes, crimes against businesses (fraud, shoplifting, welfare fraud) and older criminal convictions.
- Disorderly persons offenses.

Time Frames

3-9-2009

Day	Responsible Party	Task to Be Completed
1-7	Resource Family Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews and approves the completed application. • Sends a copy to OOL. • Has initial conference with the RFSW.
	Resource Family Support Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacts the applicant to schedule an appointment to review the home study process and complete necessary paperwork.
7-30	RFSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sends for references for all household members. • Completes home visit including review of SAFE Questionnaire 1, home inspection using the DYFS Form 5-34, and discussion of pre-service training.
30-60	RFSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts next home visit; interviews the applicant(s). • If a CARI/CHRI waiver is needed, prepares and submits for approval.
	RFSW & Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules/completes conference.
60-90	RFSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes a follow-up visit to the home; conducts interviews, ensures all obstacles/issues are addressed. • Completes the SAFE home study report.
	RFSW & Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules/completes conference.
90-100	RF Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews/approves the SAFE home study. • Sends the Home Study Assessment Packet to OOL.
100-120	OOL Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews the packet; notifies the RFSW of the outcome. • Contacts the family and schedules a joint home inspection with the RFSW. • Completes the home inspection.
	RFSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts joint home inspection with OOL Inspector.

120-150	OOL Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes the inspection report. • Notes any Level 1 violations in the file. • Notifies applicant(s) and RFSW of any violations. • Schedules a re-inspection within 30 days.
	OOL Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews the inspection report. • Issues the license. • Notifies all parties once the license has been issued.

Note: By day 60 of the home study process, the RFSW submits documentation of all work completed to the LO Manager for review. The LO Manager documents his or her review on the CP&P Form [5-12](#), LO Manager 60-Day Review of Home Study.

HIV and AIDS 3-9-2009

Inform all prospective resource parents that if they, or a member of the resource parents' household, is or becomes HIV positive, or has AIDS, the Division must be informed immediately.

The Local Office makes a decision in consultation with its Child Health Unit as to whether the applicant's health allows him or her to provide the care needed by a child in out-of-home placement.

The Division does not require resource family home applicants to undergo HIV testing as part of a pre-service medical examination. However, resource parents specifically caring for children who are HIV positive or have AIDS will be asked to take an HIV test for the purpose of establishing baseline data. In these instances, the Division will assume responsibility for payment of the applicant's HIV test. A refusal to undergo HIV testing will not preclude the resource parent from caring for a child with HIV.

Ask resource parents specifically caring for children who are HIV positive, have AIDS or other infectious disease, to sign CP&P Form [5-41](#), Acknowledgement of Understanding in the Use of Universal Precautions.

Resource Parents as Substitute Care Providers for Other Agencies 3-9-2009

Resource parents are required to inform the Division when they plan to provide care for other children. CP&P does not prohibit resource parents from providing placement or child care services for other agencies, provided that CP&P standards for resource homes, and policies for resource homes and children in placement, are met.

See [CP&P-IV-B-2-100](#), Resource Home Selection, for policy pertaining to selection of a resource home for a child.

Resource Family Transfers to Another Sponsoring Agency 8-17-2009

The Department does not encourage the transfer of a resource family/applicant from one sponsoring agency to another. Approval is authorized only in rare, exceptional circumstances.

Note: When there are outstanding violations (e.g., IAIU investigations in progress, corrective action implementation, etc.), transfers are not approved until all violations have been resolved by the initial sponsoring agency.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- A resource parent or relative of the resource parent is employed by the sponsoring agency; or
- A resource parent who relocates, and whose new residence is a considerable distance from the sponsoring agency, makes support and monitoring difficult.

In these exceptional circumstances, consideration is given on a case-by-case basis, while other options are explored.

In order for the transfer to be approved, the following is required:

- A joint written request for transfer approval, CP&P Form [5-6](#), Request for Transfer Approval, is signed by the resource parent and sponsoring agency. If it is a CP&P sponsored home, the LOM or designee signs the approval.
- The request for transfer approval with all required signatures is submitted to the County Business Manager, or his or her designee, if the resource family is sponsored by a contract agency.
- The request for final approval is submitted to the Chief, Office of Licensing, or his/her designee, once the preliminary transfer approval has been granted by the Business Manager/designee or LOM/designee.
- OOL gives final approval for transfer within ten working days.
- Once final transfer approval is granted by OOL:

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- The sponsoring agency provides the new sponsoring agency with the entire resource family file.
- The new sponsoring agency, after a record review of the resource family file, advises the resource family, or the original sponsoring agency, of the need for any updated or additional information.
- A visit to the resource home is made by the new sponsoring agency staff within 14 calendar days of transfer.

Reopening a Licensed Home 8-17-2009

When resource parents, in good standing, want to re-open their home within a year of the closure date, the resource family may re-apply through their initial sponsoring agency. Re-applying through a different sponsoring agency only occurs in rare, exceptional situations. Re-opening through a different sponsoring agency requires appropriate CP&P administrative approval (LOM/designee or Business Manager/designee) and final approval by the Chief/designee, Office of Licensing.

Resource Family Transfers without Sponsoring Agency Support 4-29-2013

DCF assumes the oversight of a resource home previously supervised by a Sponsoring Agency if the Sponsoring Agency ceases to function as such due to:

- Termination or breach of its contract with DCF;
- Its dissolution as a legal entity; or
- Extraordinary circumstances which require the approval of OOL or the DCF Commissioner.

Applicants for Resource Home Licensure previously overseen by a now-defunct Sponsoring Agency will be processed and overseen by CP&P.