

Effective Date: 2/19/1993 Revision Dates: 10/15/1993, 10/2010, 2/26/2026	Responsible Administrators: Christine Lemanski, Foster Care Program Manager Trinette Redinger Ramsey, Treatment Program Manager Sarah Azevedo, Intake & Investigations Program Manager
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Policy 308 Relative/Non-Relative Home Assessment

A. POLICY

The Division has the responsibility to ensure that children reside with caregivers who are safe and able to meet their needs. When it is determined that a child cannot remain safely in their own home, the Division will make every effort to identify a suitable relative or non-relative (kin) caregiver. The Division will complete a home assessment of any relative or (kin) identified as a potential caregiver. The Division has an obligation to provide reunification services to the child's family and for assessing and offering supportive services to alternative caregivers.

Legal Reference:
 Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006
 ([Public Law 109-248](#) Sec.152)

B. PROCEDURES

1. Once the family has identified a possible resource, the caseworker shall conduct a FOCUS check to ensure that the identified resource(s) and all household members, including minors above the age of 12, have not had any activity with the Division that would make the resource unsuitable as a placement option.
2. For all household members over the age of 12, the case worker shall:
 - a. Complete a criminal history screening in DELJIS.
 - b. Conduct a sex offender registry check on all household members over the age of 12. (Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006)
 - Delaware Sex Offender Central Registry: <https://sexoffender.dsp.delaware.gov/>
 - National Sex Offender Public Website: <https://www.nsopw.gov/>
 - c. If a provider has lived in another state within the past 5 years, a child abuse history check should be requested from the previous state and reviewed.
3. If potential caregivers have significant or worrisome DFS or criminal history, the case worker and supervisor will discuss the background and

determine the suitability for placement. History considerations should include:

- a. Finding with a conviction or substantiation
 - b. Length of time since incident
 - c. Evidence of rehabilitation
4. Prior to the placement of the child, the case worker shall complete a Relative/Non-Relative Home Assessment of the potential resource, which includes the following:
- a. Interviews with all adult household members to obtain information about the home environment and the household's willingness to care for the child. Information will be gathered for all household members, including dates of birth and verification of identification such as a driver's license etc.
 - b. Caretaking capacity, including financial, supervision, and transportation considerations.
 - c. An environmental check, to include condition of the home, sleeping arrangements, adequate food, access to working utilities and no safety hazards.
5. The case worker will discuss the expectations and responsibilities of caring for the child, which may include abiding by safety agreements (refer to DFS Policy 304), providing for the child's needs, arranging visitation and maintaining connections with parents and siblings, and continuing to engage with the Division. The case worker will assess needs of the Relative/Non-Relative provider and refer to appropriate services to support the Relative/Non-Relative in providing care to the child(ren). For example, consider a referral to the Kinship Navigator service.
6. Relative/Non-Relative Home Assessment will be completed and approved in FOCUS.

For Children who are NOT in custody of the Division

7. The caseworker will ensure that the child's legal caregivers understand that they remain responsible for the child's financial, medical, legal, and educational needs and they must remain in contact with the alternative caregiver to ensure the child receives all necessary support. Caseworkers may consider having the parent sign the following documents:
 - a. [Relative Caregivers' Medical Authorization Affidavit](#)
 - b. [Relative Caregivers' School Authorization Affidavit](#)
8. The caregiver will be added to the FOCUS case as a case person with a "Not Involved" role.

For Children who ARE in custody of the Division

9. If there is a decision made to place the children, the caseworker/supervisor will notify the foster care unit, DAG and OCA of the decision.
10. The relative/non-relative resource will be added to FOCUS as a provider by the caseworker in order to make the placement. Clothing and Incidentals should be selected on the placement.
11. The caseworker shall instruct the placement resource to apply for all applicable benefits, particularly Medicaid and Purchase of Care (POC), through the local DHSS State Service Center or online at <https://assist.dhss.delaware.gov/> and provide the relative/non-relative with a placement packet, including a residence letter.
12. Relative/non-relative resources are eligible for clothing and incidental payments as well as an initial clothing allowance to support the placement. To receive approved payments, the Relative/Non-Relative is required to register as an eSupplier at <https://esupplier.erp.delaware.gov>. Additional information about registration can be found in the FAQs section of the website.
13. The relative/non-relative resource will be referred to the foster care supervisor for assignment and completion of the Relative/Non-Relative Home Assessment Follow-Up in FOCUS.
14. The caseworker and foster care coordinator will discuss plans for continued DFS custody and permanency considerations. The foster home coordinator will make contact with the resource within 5 days and whenever possible will conduct a joint home visit with the caseworker and relative/non-relative resource to determine next steps within 10 days.
15. The foster care coordinator will discuss options available to the Relative/Non-Relative caregiver:
 - a. Guardianship
 - b. Certified or Licensed Kinship Care provider
 - c. Licensed foster parent

It is the shared responsibility of both the case worker and coordinator to stay connected with the resource to provide support, as well as ensuring they are considered a valued member of the child's team and included in relevant team meetings.

16. If the foster care coordinator has concerns about the placement decision, they will discuss their concerns with the foster care coordinator supervisor. The foster care supervisor will discuss concerns with the caseworker supervisor. If the two supervisors cannot come to a resolution, then the final decision about the appropriateness of the placement resource will be made by the Regional Administrator.

17. If new allegations of abuse or neglect are suspected regarding the placement resource, the allegations will be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line. Upon review of the allegations, the assigned worker should consider if removal is necessary.

C. FOCUS

1. Relative/Non-Relative Home Assessment
2. Relative/Non-Relative Home Follow-up
3. The relative/non-relative needs to be set up as a placement provider in FOCUS if they are caring for a child in DFS custody.

D. FORMS Use the DFS policy website to access any forms:

<https://kids.delaware.gov/policies/dfs-policies>

1. Relative/Non-Relative Home Assessment /Follow Up Guide
2. Kinship Navigator Referral form
3. Kinship Navigator Brochure