

Big Bend Community Based Care Policy & Procedure

Series:	400: Child Welfare Services	
Policy Name:	Home Studies for Relative and Non-Relative Caregivers	
Policy Number:	402	
Origination Date:	03/09/2009	Revised: Board Meeting of 12/13/2018
Regulation:	39.401, F.S. 65C-28.011, F.A.C. 65C-28.012, F.A.C.	

Policy

It is the policy of the Big Bend Community Based Care, Inc. (BBCBC), to mandate that all CMOs to complete comprehensive Home Studies of relative and non-relative foster families.

Procedure

- A. Except for emergency placements or releases made in exigent circumstances, approval for sheltering a child in non-licensed care shall be sought from the court prior to the placement.
- B. A complete and thorough home study shall be completed by the DCM or the CPI within thirty (30) days following the placement of the child in the caregiver's home.
- C. In all instances a home study shall be completed and provided to all parties to the case within seventy-two (72) hours prior to the dispositional hearing.
- D. Upon identification of the need for placement and the availability of a non-licensed caregiver, the following will occur:
 1. The Case Manager or CPI will thoroughly and aggressively explore the appropriateness of the prospective caregiver.
 2. The home study shall include a visit and physical inspection to the home and an interview with the proposed caregivers, as well as criminal delinquency and abuse/neglect history as specified in 65C-28.011, F.A.C.
 3. A determination shall be made and documented regarding the child's feelings on the placement if the child is of sufficient maturity, understanding, and experience to reliably express such feelings concerning placement in this home.
- E. In fulfilling the requirements of Section 39.521, F.S., a summary of the results of the home study shall be prepared, which shall include the recommendation to be made to court.
 1. This summary includes but is not limited to the following categories, each of which shall be summarized:
 - a. Whether each proposed caregiver understands and is able to meet the child's need for protection.

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- b. Whether each proposed caregiver understands the child's need for care and permanency and can provide long-term permanency if needed.
 - c. Whether each proposed caregiver has been informed regarding rights and responsibilities in the dependency process.
 - d. Whether each proposed caregiver will provide adequate and nurturing care and can ensure an adequate and safe home environment.
 - e. Whether each proposed caregiver has a history free of child abuse and free of a criminal record.
 - f. Whether each proposed caregiver is financially able to care for the child to include determining if the caregiver's financial situation is marginal or tenuous so he or she would be totally dependent on financial assistance to care for the child.
 - g. This shall include a summary of the caregiver's understanding of financial assistance, if any, and other services that will be available from the department or contracted provider to assist in caring for the child.
 - h. Whether each proposed caregiver has been counseled on available support in the community.
 - i. Whether or not the placement is to be recommended and an explanation of the decision.
 - j. The relationship, if any, between the adult and the child.
 - k. The attitude of the adult toward the child's parents.
 - l. Demographics on all household members.
- F.** The home study shall include an assessment of the physical conditions of the property.
- G.** The home study will be reviewed by the DCM's Supervisor and/or the CPI's Supervisor.
- H.** The home study must be filed with the courts within three (3) business days of being completed by the DCM or CPI.
- 1. If the recommendation of the home study is unfavorable, the child is in the placement and is at imminent risk, the department or contracted service provider shall request an emergency hearing to inform the court of the findings and make a recommendation for an alternate placement.
 - 2. If it is determined the child is not at imminent risk, a hearing to inform the court shall be scheduled as soon as possible.
- I.** If the child is not in the home where the home study was completed and the proposed caregiver is not selected, he or she shall be verbally advised of the denial by the DCM or CPI within five (5) working days.
- J.** Regardless of the result of the caregiver home study or the department or contracted service provider's recommendation, the placement shall be made or continued if the court so orders.
- K.** When a child has been placed in the custody of a relative or non-relative by the court against the recommendation of the department or contracted service provider, the DCM shall immediately notify his or her supervisor of the court's determination.
- L.** The supervisor shall schedule a staffing to be held within three (3) working days to discuss the reasons for the negative home study and to develop a plan of action and services for the family with whom the child is placed that shall address the child's safety needs.

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- M.** When a child has been placed in a relative or non-relative's home subsequent to a home study being performed for the placement of other children in the home, an updated home study addressing issues surrounding placement of an additional child in the home shall be prepared and provided to the court in conjunction with a recommendation regarding the appropriateness of the child's placement.