

Section 3: Assessment of an Applicant

Certification is an assessment process. A home study for the purpose of either foster care and/or adoption is a thoughtful analysis of all the information gathered via interview, observation, collateral contacts, and background checks.

- The Department uses the SAFE Home Study process to assess families for certification and adoption. The SAFE Home Study process, including all tools, are copyrighted by the Consortium for Children. The description below is only a brief overview of the way Oregon utilizes the SAFE process. Each certifier and adoption worker must attend SAFE training and refer to the SAFE Workbook and other materials on completing the SAFE process, including the SAFE questionnaires and psychosocial inventory.
- A SAFE Home Study is required for all families issued a 2-year certificate and for applicants seeking adoption. There are four main components of SAFE:
 1. Information Gathering Tools
 2. Structured Analysis Tools
 3. Preformatted Home Study Reports
 4. Compatibility Inventory
 - a. Note: The Compatibility Inventory is an optional tool.
- The most important aspect of completing the assessment are the interviews with the applicants. The tools used to gather information support the interview process but are intended to guide the interviews, not replace them.

SAFE Home Study Tools

Procedure

The initial tool for gathering personal information from the applicant is SAFE Questionnaire I. Questionnaire I is provided to the applicant(s) to complete prior to the first interview. If the applicant has a Temporary Certificate, Questionnaire I can be left with the applicant to be completed. Questionnaire I covers eight areas of family history and functioning:

1. Personal History
 2. Parenting Practices
 3. Personal and Family Values
 4. Health
 5. Support System
 6. Work
 7. Family Relationships
 8. Marital/Domestic Partner Relationship
- The certifier reviews Questionnaire I and highlights responses that require further clarification. Based upon what is highlighted on Questionnaire I, create a “harvesting sheet” of factors to discuss with the applicant(s).

NOTE:

The SAFE Harvesting Sheet is a way to help organize the information as well as plan the home study interviews.

- The first interview with the family, if there is not a Temporary Certificate, may focus on motivation, a walk-through of the home, and basic certification requirements.
- Administer questionnaires according to the processes outlined in SAFE training. Be mindful that it may take multiple home visits to cover all the items from questionnaires and other application materials. Ask open-ended questions, and allow the applicant(s) to provide the additional information in a safe and nonjudgmental environment.
- Questionnaire II should be administered to the applicant(s) in the home. Questionnaire II is completed by the applicant(s) in the presence of the certifier or adoption worker. This never leaves the sight and control of the certifier or adoption worker. If there are two applicants, each applicant completes Questionnaire II separately, without talking about or showing each other their responses. Immediately after completing the Questionnaire II, the certifier or adoption worker interviews each applicant separately about their responses to Questionnaire II during the same visit to the home. Questionnaire II covers 10 general areas:
 - Problem issues/behaviors
 - Personal alcohol consumption
 - Personal legal/illegal drug use
 - Family substance abuse
 - History of childhood and adult sexual, emotional or physical abuse
 - Child abuse allegations
 - Family violence and crime
 - Family sexual abuse perpetrators
 - Domestic violence
 - Mental illness
- After each interview with a family, the psychosocial inventory (PSI) is completed, utilizing the SAFE Desk Guide as the reference to properly rate each factor. The PSI looks at an applicant's history that has impacted his/her functioning and is used to help determine if the particular issue in his/her history could or currently impacts the applicant's functioning.
- Keep interviewing and collecting information until all items on the harvesting sheet and other areas needing further clarification are understood, so that all psychosocial factors can be rated on the PSI with high confidence ratings. When ready, note the Final Desk Guide Rating on the PSI.

NOTE:

Although not mandatory, consider administering Questionnaire I and II to other adults living in the household who may play an integral part of caregiving.

Assessing Criminal History and Child Abuse History

The certifier must assess how criminal history, including arrests and convictions, impact the applicant's ability to provide for the safety, well-being, permanency, and health needs of a child in the Department's custody. Assessing criminal history occurs for each applicant and adult member of the household.

Procedure

- Provide a 1011F Consent for Criminal Records & Fingerprint Check to each applicant and adult member of the household. This is the legal consent for DHS to run a criminal history check. Submit the 1011F to the Background Check Unit (BCU). For expedited certifications, where placement of the child needs to occur the same day, check with the BCU to determine if it can provide the check, or if it needs to be done at the branch level. For certification, branch level LEDS checks should only occur for emergency certification purposes.
- Review the LEDS and FBI results for each applicant and adult member of the household.
- When the applicant has convictions, a Fitness Determination needs to be made using the Weighing Test found in [413-120-0457](#). Certain arrests which never resulted in a conviction also require a Fitness Determination as found in [413-120-0455](#). Consult with the certification supervisor regarding the decision to move forward with a management approval request. This approval request is documented on the DHS form, [1011d](#). If the decision is to move toward requesting a management approval for criminal history, review Disqualifying and Potentially Disqualifying Criminal Convictions, OAR [413-120-0450](#), and Potentially Disqualifying Arrests, OARs [413-120-0450 to 0455](#), to determine the appropriate person/entity to authorize the approval. Branch staff can also consult with a Foster Care Coordinator.
- Factors to consider in the Weighing Test include but are not limited to:
 1. The severity and nature of the crime. Was it a person-to person crime? Was it a violent crime or a sexual offense?
 2. The number of criminal offenses. Is the criminal history limited to one or a few incidents, or is there a long-standing pattern of behavior?
 3. The circumstances surrounding the crime. Who was involved? What was occurring in the applicant's life at the time that may have impacted his/her decision?
 4. The applicant's explanation of the crime. Is the applicant open about the crime? Does the applicant have some insight about his/her behavior at the time? Does the applicant take responsibility for his/her behavior? The facts supporting the conviction or pending indictment. What does the police report or other court records indicate?
 5. The relevancy, if any, of the crime or false statement to the applicant's ability to be a foster parent or other person in the household. How does the crime relate to safe parenting? How does it relate to the applicant's ability to work cooperatively with a state agency and community partners?
 6. Intervening circumstances relevant to the responsibilities and circumstances of the applicant's ability to care for a child, such as:
 - a. How long has it been since the crime occurred?
 - b. What was the age of the applicant at the time?

- c. Did the applicant receive any rehabilitative services as a result of the crime, and if so, what evidence is there that he/she changed his/her behavior as a result?
- d. Did the applicant commit more crimes after receiving services?
- e. Was the conviction set aside?
- f. Do references and/or other collateral sources know the applicant's criminal history? If so, do they recommend the applicant as a foster parent?
- After completing the Weighing Test, consult with the certification supervisor to determine whether to seek management approval of the criminal history. Document the results of the Weighing Test on form CF 1011D.

NOTE:

Visit the [Child Welfare Criminal History Tools](#) page for quick reference guides and information to include when requesting a fitness determination.

- Assess child abuse/neglect history in the Department's OR-Kids electronic system and any reports received from other states or countries in which the applicant or adult member of the household was either alleged, Unable to Determine, or Founded to have committed an act of child abuse or neglect.

NOTE:

Having trouble receiving results from another state agency? Review the [Adam Walsh State Contacts for Child Abuse Registries](#) for contact information to individually contact that state.

- When the applicant(s) or adult member of the household has an unfounded allegation of child abuse/neglect, Closed at Screening reports, prior Oregon Alternative Response assessments, or similar dispositions from another state, consider whether there is a pattern of behavior, indicative of poor decision making, poor coping skills, ineffective parenting, or dysfunctional family relationships. There is no management approval needed for these types of reports or dispositions.
- When the applicant(s) or adult member of the household has a founded or substantiated allegation of child abuse/neglect (or similar disposition from another state), staff with the certification supervisor, and consider the following questions to determine whether to seek management approval:
 1. What was the severity of the abuse/neglect?
 2. What were the circumstances surrounding the abuse/neglect?
 3. How long ago did the abuse/neglect take place?
 4. Did the applicant have an open child welfare case as a result, and were his/her children in substitute care?
 5. Did the applicant receive services, and is there evidence that his/her protective capacity increased?
 6. Was there a pattern of abusive/neglectful behavior, and if so, for how long? Was there a pattern of unable to determine dispositions?

7. What does the applicant say about the abuse/neglect?
 - a. When the applicant(s) or adult member of the household has an unable to determine allegation of child abuse/neglect (or similar disposition from another state) in addition to the considerations above, consider the following:
 - What was the reason for the disposition? Was the Child Protective Services worker unable to locate the family, or was there conflicting information that resulted in the disposition?
- Consult with the certification supervisor, program manager, and, optionally, the Foster Care Coordinator, to determine whether to seek approval to continue the assessment given the applicant(s) or adult member of the household's child welfare history. Document the assessment of the information on form CF [0117](#).

Physical/Social Environment

- Assess the physical environment through observation and the social environment through observation and interviews. When physical areas need improvement, assess the applicant's response to feedback as well as his/her effort to remedy the issue. Take into consideration the age and characteristics of children for whom the applicants are interested in (or are currently) providing care.

Assessing the Physical Environment

- Using form CF [0979](#) Safety Home and Surroundings, assess the physical home environment.
 1. The cleanliness and maintenance of the home. Consider the following:
 - a. Is the home exterior and property well kept, is some maintenance required, or is it extremely run down?
 - b. Is the home interior clean and comfortable, slightly cluttered, or dirty with pronounced, offensive odors?
 - c. Does the home interior reflect consistent care and attention, are some minor repairs in order, or are there signs that it has received virtually no upkeep (e.g.; heater does not work, problem with mold, or substantial renovation is required to be habitable)?
 2. The home is a safe environment. Consider the following:
 - a. Are there any safety issues noted on the Safety Checklist Home and Surroundings?
 - b. Is the applicant safety conscious?
 - c. Is the applicant knowledgeable about child safety issues?
 3. The condition of the furnishings, play areas, and clothing. Consider the following:
 - a. Is the home adequately furnished with clean, sturdy, and functional furniture?
 - b. Does the applicant understand the need for and provide proper clothing, toys, and equipment that are age appropriate for the children being considered?
- Staff any safety issues with the supervisor. If needed, consult with the Foster Care Coordinator.

Marijuana in the applicant(s) home

- When assessing applicants' marijuana use, either medical or recreational, ask them similar key questions you would ask for other legal (and potentially addictive and mind altering) drugs, including alcohol, and certain prescription medications such as opiates:
 1. How often are they using marijuana?
 2. What times of the day are they using marijuana?
 3. In what form are they using marijuana (i.e., smoking, edible consumption)? And how much THC are they consuming?
 4. What effects does marijuana have on their ability to have sound judgment and decision making?
 5. Where do they store their marijuana products, and are the storage processes child proof?
 6. What is the plan to assure any child placed in the applicant's home would not have access to the marijuana or be subjected to any secondhand smoke?
 7. Does the applicant's doctor have any concerns about this applicant's ability to provide safety and well-being for a child?

Marijuana – Recreational

While medical marijuana has been legally authorized by physicians in Oregon for years, as of July 1, 2015, recreational marijuana is also legal for Oregonians age 21 and over. Oregonians may grow up to four plants on their property (regardless of how many people live in the residence). Homegrown marijuana is not allowed to be in public view, meaning the plants cannot be readily seen from a public place (i.e., outside the residence from the street).

- Personal possession for Oregonians age 21 in older per household includes:
 1. 8 ounces dried flowers/leaves
 2. 4 plants
 3. 16 ounces homemade solids
 4. 72 ounces homemade liquids
 5. 16 ounces homemade concentrates
- Beyond homegrown/produced product, households may consume purchased products, including items called “edibles” that may be in the form of cookies and candies, etc. These “edibles” often appear attractive to children. Recreational marijuana cannot be sold or used in public, nor can it be used recreationally by anyone under the age of 21.

Marijuana – Medical

A patient with a qualifying condition and a recommendation from his/her attending physician may register for a medical marijuana card through the Oregon Health Authority. There are many regulations set for the number of plants grown by someone growing marijuana for themselves or others. Oregon law allows limited use and growing of medical marijuana. For more information on Oregon's Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP), refer to [the website](#). Ask for a copy of the medical marijuana card to verify authenticity with the OMMP.

- An OMMP cardholder may possess up to:
 1. 6 mature plants
 2. 18 plant seedlings
 3. 24 ounces of usable marijuana

NOTE:

In limited circumstances, outside evaluations such as drug/alcohol assessments are helpful in informing the assessment process. Always consult with your supervisor and, if needed, a Foster Care Coordinator in determining whether an outside evaluation is needed. It is important that the Department seek only diagnostic information and information about how an applicant's condition may impact his/her functioning. The Department does not ask the evaluator to recommend whether an applicant should be a foster parent, or what services be provided to make him/her safe as a foster parent. It is the role and responsibility of the Department to use the diagnostic information from the evaluation in the determination whether the applicant meets certification standards.

Assessing the Social and Personal Characteristics

Medical

Does the applicant(s) take any prescription medication? Consider utilizing the DHS form, Medical B (required for adoption applications), for a medical provider for information on potential medical concerns. Assess how the medicine and the underlying medical condition impacts the applicant's ability to meet the safety and well-being needs of a child placed in the home.

Finances

Assess the applicant's financial history and current finances. The applicant must have adequate financial resources. Use the Department Financial Form [1291](#) to gather and assess the financial stability of the applicant. Form [1291](#) is always used at initial certification but may be used at time of renewal if the certifier deems necessary.

- *Support System.* Assess the applicant's emotional and tangible support available. Consider the following:
 1. Does the applicant have friends who are supportive and helpful and live nearby?
 2. Does the applicant have a plan for babysitting, child care, and/or respite care?
 3. Does the community provide adequate, affordable resources?
- *Household Pets.* Assess the presence of household pets. Consider the following:
 1. Are the pets treated well by the family members?
 2. Does the applicant provide appropriate shelter, diet, grooming, and veterinary services for the pet?
 3. Are the pets comfortable with children?
 4. Does the pet behave in a predictable and safe manner around people, particularly children?
 5. Is the pet an unusual pet that may pose unique threats to children (e.g., snakes, certain dog breeds)?

Applicant's Children

Minor Children

If an applicant has minor children, assessment of the children will vary depending upon their age and whether they live in the home. When the minor children do not live in the home, the assessment includes the reasons that the children do not live in the home. When they live in the home, whether it be full time or part time as part of a custody arrangement, assess each child's functioning and attitude about having foster children placed with their family. If age-appropriate, interview the children to gain information regarding their interests, perceptions of their parents, and readiness to accept foster children into the home.

- Consider the following:
 1. Is the child's behavior, age, and development appropriate?
 2. Is there a reason to believe a child's behavior may pose a threat to the safety, health, or well-being of others, including any drug/alcohol use?
 3. What is the extent of each child's health, educational, or mental health needs? Are the applicant(s) capable of meeting those needs?
 4. If appropriate, request a signed Release of Information to obtain:
 - a. School records
 - b. Medical records
 - c. Treatment records
 - d. Juvenile Court, when there is reason to believe the minor has juvenile records.

Adult Children

Adult children are a good source of information concerning the applicant's functioning and parenting abilities. This includes adult children who are estranged from the applicant. Assess the level of participation the adult child will have in the care of the foster children. Use of the SAFE Questionnaire for Adult Children is recommended to gather information about them and the how the applicant's parenting impacted their well-being. When adult children live in the home, assess each adult child as a member of the household, conducting the same criminal history and child welfare history checks as mentioned earlier in this section.

There are situations where the applicant is the grandparent of the child placed in foster care, and therefore the adult child is the parent of the child being placed. When this occurs, connect with the child's caseworker to determine what information is appropriate to gather from that adult child/parent. It is possible to utilize the SAFE Questionnaire for Adult Children even with an adult child involved with DHS. Even if it is not used, it is relevant to ascertain how that adult child feels about his/her child being placed with the applicant. Reach out to other adult children for additional information.

Parenting Skills

During the interviews and home visits, assess applicants' parenting skills, including both general parenting and specialized parenting. Observe them with their own children. When applicants are not parents, assess based on the applicants' report. Gain additional information from references or family members if the applicant has been around other people's children. Discuss whether the applicant appears to be gaining knowledge and skills from participation in training with the foundations trainer.

- Discuss the following with the applicant:

1. The applicant's knowledge of child development.
 - a. Realistic expectations of child development.
 - b. Healthy activities, including the ability to apply the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard. Discuss the role of the foster parent in ensuring the child can participate in regular childhood experiences, including school activities, sleepovers and other activities with friends.
2. Appropriate Discipline
 - a. Discuss whether the applicant has ever used physical discipline, and whether he/she plans to.
 - b. Discuss how DHS does not allow any form of physical discipline, including cold/hot showers, exercise (as a form of discipline) or group punishments. Discuss the reasons for this, how discipline may trigger a child's trauma based upon his/her experiences.
 - c. Discuss appropriate discipline techniques and refer to training if necessary.
3. Respite/Child Care
 - a. Discuss requirements when utilizing others to care for foster children. Explain background checks will need to be completed for anyone providing respite care/child care unless:
 - A babysitter
 - A licensed child care provider

NOTE:

It is the responsibility of the applicant/certified family to vet a potential respite and child care provider. Sometimes applicants/certified families may request the assistance of the Department in locating respite or child care resources. Some branches may have a list of previously approved respite providers who have voiced a willingness to help other foster families. The branch may refer the family to [211info](#) for child care resources.

4. The applicant's learning experiences. Assess the applicant's investment in the child's social and academic development based on the applicant's functioning with his/her own children or, if there are no children, on what the applicant reports he/she intends to do and what others say about the applicant. Consider the following:
 - a. Is the applicant directly involved in his/her own children's learning experiences? What is the applicant's plan for involvement with the foster children?
 - b. How will the applicant be involved in school (checking homework, meeting with teachers, participating in IEP meetings)?
 - c. How will the applicant directly and indirectly help a child to attain expected developmental tasks and social communication skills?

Specialized Parenting Skills

The assessment of specialized parenting skills may reveal that the applicant does not possess competency in specialized parenting skills or parenting children with special needs, unless he/she

has parented a special needs child, had some sort of experience with the foster care system, or has some sort of experience with children with special needs. Again, discovering how well the applicant is integrating the foundations topics into his/her thinking about these topics will assist the certifier in assessing this area.

- Consider the following:
 1. The applicant's expectations of foster parenting.
 - a. Does the applicant have realistic expectations of foster parenting?
 - b. Does the applicant have an awareness of his/her own limitations in understanding of the challenges of child placement?
 - c. Is the applicant ready to learn?
 2. The applicant's understanding of the effects of abuse and neglect on children:
 - a. Assess the applicant's ability to comprehend and manage the special dynamics resulting from child abuse and/or neglect.
 - b. Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of how a child's normal emotional and physical development may be gravely impacted by the abuse and/or neglect he/she experienced?
 - c. How does the applicant intend to manage the challenging child behaviors associated with abuse and/or neglect?
 - d. Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the unique issues, dynamics, behaviors, and skills needed to parent a child who has been sexually abused?
 3. The applicant's understanding of the effects of separation and loss on children.
 - a. Does the applicant understand the behavioral and emotional effects of separation and loss for children?
 4. The applicant's ability and willingness to use therapeutic and educational resources.
 - a. Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the need to be responsive to appropriate birth sibling contact?

Child Specific Assessments

When the applicant is requesting placement of a specific child/young adult or sibling group, assess whether the applicant has the skills and ability to meet the needs of the children/young adults being considered. Discuss with the child's caseworker to determine if the applicant has the skills/resources to parent the child and what supports may be necessary to support the placement. This discussion may include: Consider all of the elements of general parenting and specialized parenting and do so in the context of what is known about the child/young adult being considered for placement. In addition, the certifier should familiarize him/herself with the child's case plan, permanency plan, concurrent plan, visitation plan, and supervision plan in order to best assess the applicant's ability to follow and support these plans.

- Consider the following:
 1. The child's medical, dental, educational, developmental, and mental health needs.
 2. The child's behavioral and supervision needs.
 3. The child's Supervision Plan and Level of Care.
 4. CANS assessment.
 5. Visitation and case plan.

Critical Analysis using the SAFE Home Study

Evaluation and Mitigation

Mitigation is the process by which the certifier evaluates all of the information gathered during the home study process. Evaluate how the changes in the applicant's life and/or behavior sustains, reduces or erases the level of potential concern reflected by the final desk guide rating. Take into account considerations independent of the Desk Guide through certifier observation, assessment, and judgment. Consider the likelihood that any issue that received a final desk guide rating of 3, 4, or 5 would have an adverse effect on safe and effective family functioning and parenting.

- The mitigation process includes documenting in the SAFE home study the following mitigation questions for any final Desk Guide Rating of a 3, 4, or 5:
 1. What is the issue/behavior/event of concern?
 2. What is the issue/behavior/event's roots in time, place and cultural/social context?
 3. What was/is the issue/behavior/event's frequency and severity or intensity?
 4. Has the applicant resolved or adapted to the issue/behavior/event? If the applicant has adapted, how much energy is needed for the applicant to sustain his/her degree of adaptation? (Provide evidence that support this evaluation: facts, observations, analysis and examples.) If the issue is sustained, how is the issue/behavior/event affecting the applicant's current functioning and ability to parent, and how does or could that affect children in the home?
 5. Could a placement re-trigger the issue/behavior/event?
 6. How much energy remains to parent if the issue/behavior/event is not resolved?
- If the applicant(s) continues to put energy into a PSI that is a 3, 4, or 5, the desk guide rating cannot be mitigated to a 2 as the issue/behavior continues to impact their functioning (the applicant(s) are still adapting their life around the issue/behavior). If the applicant is not expending any energy into the issue/behavior currently (it is resolved), the desk guide rating can be mitigated to a 2. Any item mitigated to a 2 or reduced through mitigation needs to be corroborated by outside sources.
- Mitigation is not only what the applicant tells the certifier; it needs to be collaborated by outside sources. If the certifier has only the applicant's information, write about what is known and what the issue/behavior/concern may look like when parenting in the future. Consider using the following outside sources:
 1. Correspondence from:
 - a. Therapists/clinicians
 - b. Counselors
 - c. Mentors
 - d. Employers
 - e. Other professionals
 2. Interviews with:
 - a. Spouses
 - b. Children
 - c. Relatives
 - d. Neighbors
 - e. Coworkers

f. Friends

- Remember, the narration in the study should stand up to a challenge.

NOTE:

When determining that an issue cannot be mitigated to a lower rating than the final desk guide rating, determine how to proceed with the applicant. Unchanged mitigation ratings are not necessarily grounds for a denial of an application. They may, however, impact placement matching, capacity decisions, the training plan for the applicant, etc. Sometimes unmitigated concerns will be severe enough to warrant a denial. Consult with the supervisor throughout the home study process and again during mitigation (assessment/evaluation of the information) to determine the course of action. In addition, the supervisor may choose to consult with the Foster Care Coordinator.

Writing the home study

Once the certifier has completed all interviews, gathered all collateral and background information, completed final desk guide ratings and mitigation ratings, the certifier may begin writing the home study that documents the assessment.

- When writing the home study, pay attention to the narration instructions provided in each section of the Oregon SAFE home study.
 1. Use behaviorally specific language that provides clear description.
 2. Reference the source of any information you cite.
 3. Present all essential and critical information.
 4. Avoid generalizations.
 5. Avoid labels.
 6. Narrate the strengths of the foster family in a concise manner.
 7. Fully narrate any concern that received a final desk guide rating of 3 or higher.
 8. Fully narrate critical analysis for mitigation scores and evidence for such scores.
 9. Do not mention the final desk guide ratings within the study itself.

Role of the Supervisor

The role of the supervisor in the home study process is critical. The supervisor is available to the certifier for clinical consultation after each home study interview. Items that require mitigation should be discussed between the supervisor and the certifier. When the certifier and supervisor need additional consultation, the supervisor may contact the Foster Care Coordinator of that district.

- During and at the conclusion of the assessment process, the supervisor:
 1. Follows the SAFE Home Study guidelines for supervision. In addition to the two-day SAFE Home Study training, a SAFE Supervisor training is required for all certification supervisors. Utilize the SAFE Supervisor's Manual as a reference for ongoing supervision of the SAFE Process.
 2. Ensure that all necessary management approvals are obtained, including assessments and approvals for criminal history and child abuse history.
For a Temporary Certificate, ensure receipt of all required documentation.

3. Ensure the certifier's ongoing assessment of the family proceeds quickly, and the family is issued a two-year certificate as soon as possible.
4. If necessary, the supervisor may request a district manager or designee approve a 30-day extension of the Temporary Certificate. If there is a need to extend the Temporary Certificate longer than an additional 30 days past the 180 days allotted for assessment, request an additional extension from the District's Foster Care Coordinator. When requesting an approval for an extension of the Temporary Certificate, the supervisor must discuss the delays with the certifier, determine the actions that need to occur, and develop a timeline to complete the certification process and issue a two-year certificate.
5. Approve the written Home Study. Approval of the Home Study indicates all assessment requirements have been completed and the family meets certification standards to provide care for a child. The supervisor signature must be on or before the date of approval of certification.
6. Approve the certificate in OR-Kids.

Assessment and Home Study Requirements for Purposes of Guardianship

When there has been a casework decision to pursue guardianship with an identified resource, there must be an assessment of the potential guardian's ability to meet the current and long-term needs of the child or young adult. The approval and selection of a guardian is shared by both caseworker and certification staff.

A potential guardian must have a current certificate of approval from DHS child welfare, Aging and People with Disabilities, a private child caring agency, a federally recognized tribe in Oregon with a Title IV-E agreement with the Department, or another state when the potential guardian is currently certified or approved in the state where the potential guardian resides.

Procedure:

The Department must complete an updated home study on the potential guardian. If there is a completed SAFE Home Study, the certifier completes an addendum to the home study unless there is a need to complete the certification renewal. The updated home study or addendum must focus on the long-term commitment of the potential guardian and his/her ability to meet the long-term safety and well-being needs of the child or young adult. The addendum is documented on DHS [2822](#), and should include:

- How the certified family meets the child or young adult's safety needs, including physical and emotional safety. Include any child abuse reports and other certification concerns and how they were resolved.
- How the certified family can provide a lifelong commitment to the child or young adult, including fully integrating the child or young adult into the potential guardian's family.
- How the certified family has met the physical and mental health needs of the child or young adult, including the developmental, educational, social and emotional needs.

Include the support of the child or young adult's identity, including cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, spiritual, sexual orientation and gender identity.

If the potential guardian does not have a completed SAFE Home Study, the certifier will need to complete one unless the Child Welfare permanency manager approves an exception to this requirement. Refer to OAR [413-070-0917](#) (5)-(7).

In completing the SAFE Home Study, utilize the process on the [Consortium for Children website](#) for Converting a Non-SAFE Home Study to a SAFE Home Study. In the home study, focus on the long-term needs of the child or young adult and the ability of the potential guardian to meet those needs.

References and Forms

OAR

- [Child Welfare Policy Division 200 Foster Home Certification](#)
- [Child Welfare Policy Division 120 Criminal Records Check Requirements for Relative Caregivers, Foster Parents, Adoptive Resources, and Other Persons in the Household](#)

Forms

CF 1260A	Application for Approval to care for a child in DHS custody
CF 0117	Request for Management Approval for Specific Rules
CF 1255	Applicant Reference
CF 0979	Safety Checklist Home and Surroundings
CF 0010A	CAF Request for Translation Services
CF 1291	Family Financial Report
CF 1257A	Medical Report A
CF 1257B	Medical Report B