

EFFECTIVE

Immediately, upon receipt.

SUBJECTS

1. Basic assessment process for relative licensing.
2. Documentation of monthly caseworker visit requirements.
3. School transportation payment process.

**1) BASIC
ASSESSMENT
PROCESS FOR
RELATIVE
PLACEMENT**

FOM 722-3

The basic assessment process for placing a child into the home of a relative is revised to include time frames for completion of the Home Study Outline (DHS-197) at the initial placement and for replacements (**see #4 and #5 below**).

When the relative meets initial considerations for placement, a basic assessment of the relative home must be completed by the foster care worker or other designated child welfare staff prior to placing the child in the home. The basic assessment process for a relative placement consists of the following requirements:

1. Complete an Initial Relative Safety Screen, DHS-588, which includes the initial safety requirements for the home.
2. Conduct a statewide criminal history clearance on all members of the household including adolescents and children.
3. Conduct a Central Registry clearance on all adult household members 18 years of age and older.
4. For initial placements, at the time the child first enters foster care, complete the Home Study Outline (DHS-197) within 30 days of the child's placement in the relative home.
5. For replacements, complete the home study outline **prior to** placement in the relative home.

6. Upon placement, the relative must receive a copy of Relative Caregiver Resources & Responsibilities, DHS-Pub-457.

Reason: Foster Care Program Office relative licensing revision.

**2) CASEWORKER
HOME VISITS WITH
FOSTER CHILDREN**

FOM 722-6

Federal law requires states to “describe standards for the content and frequency of caseworker visits for children in foster care, that, at a minimum, ensure that the children are visited on a monthly basis, and that the visits are well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the children’s safety, permanency and well-being.” Quality visits between the worker and child have been found to produce positive outcomes for children in foster care. A quality visit is defined as one in which the worker:

- Meets with each child individually without the presence of other individuals to give the child/youth an opportunity to ask questions.
- Assesses each child’s needs and takes appropriate action or offers services in response to the identified need of each child.
- Shows interest in the individual child to build trust and establish rapport.
- Shares and explains the case plan in a developmentally appropriate way while allowing the child to ask questions and express viewpoints.

Visit Requirements

To ensure that children in care receive the quality visits necessary to assess their evolving needs and ensure their safety, permanency and well-being, workers must visit each child in foster care according to the requirements described below:

- A face-to-face visit with the worker must occur at a **minimum of once each calendar month**.
- The visit must take place in the child’s placement at least every other month.

- Each visit must include a private meeting between the child and the foster care worker.
- The following must be discussed at the monthly visit:

Child Visit:

- Child's medical, dental, and mental health and worker's observation of the child's physical appearance.
- Child's feelings/observations about the placement.
- Education.
- Parenting time.
- Sibling/relative visitation plans.
- Extracurricular/cultural activities/hobbies since last visit.
- Permanency plan.
- Any issues or concerns expressed by the child.

Caregiver (foster parent/relative/unrelated) Visit:

- Date of child's last physical and dental exam.
- Medication dosages and diagnoses for the child.
- Medical/dental/mental health concerns, appointments, treatment, follow-up care and therapy updates.
- Child behaviors, concerns, developmental milestones.
- Educational/school status, performance, behaviors and services provided.
- Caregiver tasks to meet child's needs.
- Caregiver family's adjustment to the child's placement.
- Permanency plan.
- Any Children's Protective Services (CPS) complaints made regarding the placement since the last visit.

- For relative (or unrelated) placements, if the caregiver is pursuing licensure, provide an update on licensing progress.

Documenting Visit Information

The information gathered during the monthly child visit is used to develop the case service plan, to assess the child on the Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS) form, as a reference for needed service referrals and to justify determination of care rates. The information obtained must be documented in the appropriate sections of the case service plan.

General Information:

- Type of visit.
- Visit location.
- Names of all persons present at the visit.
- The worker’s observation of the child’s bedroom.

Caseworker Visit Tools

Two foster care/adoption/juvenile justice caseworker visit tools have been developed to assist workers in gathering the above required information during a monthly visit. The tools are:

- DHS-904, Foster Care/Adoption/Juvenile Justice Caseworker Visit Quick Reference Guide. This is a guide that contains the information that must be covered in a monthly visit but is not intended for recording notes.
- DHS-904A, Foster Care/Adoption/Juvenile Justice Caseworker Visit Tool. This form may be used to take notes during the visit.

The caseworker visit tools provide structure and reminders of required topics. The forms must not be used as the documentation of the foster care worker home visit requirements in the case record, but as a tool to complete the case service plans.

Reason: CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and Foster Care Program Office revision.

**3) SCHOOL
TRANSPORTATION
PAYMENT PROCESS**

FOM 903-9

Pursuant to Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (PL 110-351), children in foster care must have an opportunity to maintain school enrollment in the school they attended prior to removal from their home. When it has been determined to be in their best interest to remain in their school, the assigned foster care worker must first access transportation resources made available through the school district and the McKinney-Vento Act (refer to FOM 722-6, Educational Services in Foster Care).

When transportation provisions are no longer available through McKinney-Vento Act, reimbursement or payment for cost of this special transportation must be completed utilizing the Children’s Services Payment Authorization (DHS-1582-CS). Caregiver expenses for reasonable travel accommodations (such as public transportation, taxi, etc.) will be reimbursed at actual cost. Mileage rates will be reimbursed at the Department of Technology, Management and Budget standard mileage rate in effect at the time the transportation was provided.

The foster care provider must submit documentation of the costs associated with this special educational transportation on a monthly basis to the foster care worker. The documentation must contain the following:

- Number of miles round trip to the child’s school.
- Number of trips to the child’s school; or actual cost of the alternate means of transportation (receipts required).
- Dates of transportation.

The following account structure codes must be utilized to ensure appropriate expenditures:

Payment type	Index	PCA
Educational Stability Travel, IV-E eligible	64410	72555
Educational Stability Travel, Not IV-E eligible	64410	72554

**MANUAL
MAINTENANCE
INSTRUCTIONS**