

FAMILY AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

Examining Best Practice



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FAMILY ASSESSMENT

- What is a family assessment?
- Why do one?
- How does culture come into play?
- How can personal values impact the process?
- How are adoptive and foster families alike? Different?
- What are potential barriers?
- What knowledge and skills are needed?



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EFFECTIVE ASSESSORS

- Have excellent clinical skills
- Are highly-skilled interviewers
- Are culturally competent
- Are assertive, yet tactful
- Have keen observation skills
- Are skilled in crisis intervention
- Have solid writing skills
- Are flexible and patient
- Are knowledgeable about community resources



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YOUR ASSIGNMENT

- Discuss the characteristics in the envelope that you will evaluate during the home study.
- Rank them in order of importance. (Majority, not consensus).
- Pick a spokesperson to review your group's rankings.



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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What did you learn from this experience?
- How can personal values impact the assessment process, selection process?
- How can Assessors avoid the interference of personal values on the assessment process?



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VALUES ARE...

“...strongly held beliefs of a culture regarding what life and people should like.”

Field Guide to Child Welfare
Judith S. Rycus & Ronald C. Hughes



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CULTURAL RESEARCHERS



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CULTURAL RESEARCHERS

- People with no glasses talk to other people with no glasses.
- People with glasses talk to other people with glasses.
- If a researcher smiles when asking a question, the answer must "yes".
- If a researcher does not smile when asking a question, the answer must be "no".



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CULTURE IS...

"A system of values, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, standards of behavior that govern the organization of people into social groups and regulate both group and individual behaviors."

Field Guide to Child Welfare
Judith S. Rycus & Ronald C. Hughes



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CULTURAL COMPETENCE IS...

- Understanding how our own culture impacts everyday life
- Recognizing the impact of our cultural views
- Learning from other cultures as a lifelong learner
- Being flexible to new developments



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CULTURAL COMPETENCE IS...

- Recognizing how culture impacts perceptions and communication—understanding the “isms”
- Overcoming cultural differences to form positive relationships
- Applying cultural competence to child welfare practice



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THE ESSENTIALS OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Personal attributes
- Knowledge
- Skill



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PURPOSES OF THE ASSESSMENT

- Explores the family's values, expectations and motivation
- Orients the family to the agency's philosophy regarding adoption
- Identifies and highlights the family's strengths and limitations
- Prepares the family for the challenges of adoptive parenting



PURPOSES OF THE ASSESSMENT

- Educates the family about the adoption process
- Develops a working relationship between the family, social worker and agency
- Initiates the self-screening process.



ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

- Motivation/expectations of adoption
- Personal and emotional maturity
- Stability and quality of interpersonal relationships
- Resilience, coping skills and history of stress management
- Openness of family system



ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

- Parenting skills and abilities
- Empathy and perspective-taking ability
- Entitlement
- Ability for “hands on” parenting
- “Lifelong” commitment



ASSESSMENT-LEVEL DEFINITIONS

- Strength – Family is well prepared and experienced.
- Minimal – Family has a beginning awareness of issues and is motivated to learn more.
- Caution – Family displays some deficit; needs considerable development.



EMPATHY AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING

1. What strategies would you use to obtain information about the level of functioning for your selected category?
 - What questions would you ask?
 - What observations would you make?
 - What type of information would you seek?



EMPATHY AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING

- Assessment Questions:
 - How can you tell when people in your family are upset? Mad? Sad?
 - How do you help people in your family when they're feeling really upset? What do you want other people to do for you?
 - Why do you think parents maltreat their children? How do you think they feel?
 - How do you think children feel about their abusive parents?
 - Have you ever had to explain a parent's negative behavior to a child? Tell me about that experience.



EMPATHY AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING

2. What does a **Strength** look like in your category?
3. What does a **Minimum Standard** look like in your category?
4. What does a **Caution** look like in your category?

Share two or three examples with each of the above.



YOUR ASSIGNMENT

1. What strategies would you use to obtain information about the level of functioning for your selected category?
 - What questions would you ask?
 - What observations would you make?
 - What type of information would you seek?
2. What does a **Strength** look like in your category?
3. What does a **Minimum Standard** look like?
4. What does a **Caution** look like?
Provide two or three examples of each.



MOTIVATIONS

These lead to Success:	These lead to Disruption:
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____



No-Nos... STOP!

- Sexual conduct disorders
- Current drug or alcohol abuse
- Severe mental illness
- Current domestic violence



KEYS TO "SECOND LOOK" ASSESSMENT

- History of perpetration of physical/sexual abuse or neglect on children
- Recurrent arrests and convictions
- History of domestic violence
- History of mental/emotional problems
- Substance abuse/addiction history



KEYS TO SECOND LOOK ASSESSMENT

- Rigid or inflexible beliefs
- Marital difficulties or child rearing problems
- Unresolved childhood abuse issues
- Personal history of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, rejection and/or abandonment



A SECOND LOOK ASSESSMENT

Under what conditions might a person who has experienced one of the following issues be a suitable adoptive applicant?

- History of being a perpetrator of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect
- History of domestic violence
- Recurrent arrests and convictions
- Unresolved personal issues related to childhood victimization





What questions could you ask to more fully explore the impact of childhood victimization?



QUESTIONS TO ASK RE: AREAS OF CONCERN

- What happened?
- How did you feel about it at the time?
- What progress have you made in working on this issue since it happened?
- How do you feel about it now?
- How do you solve problems now as a result of our experience?



REHABILITATION STANDARDS

- Age of victim at time of offense
- Age of applicant at time of offense
- Nature and seriousness of offense
- Circumstances under which offense was committed
- Degree of participation by the applicant
- Time elapsed since applicant has been released from justice system (10 years/felony; 3 years/misdemeanor)



REHABILITATION STANDARDS

- Likelihood of recurrence of offending behavior
- Whether applicant was a repeat offender
- Applicant's employment record
- Pending criminal proceedings
- Other factors considered relevant by the agency/Assessor



INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

- A minimum of 4-6 interviews
- Share purpose of interview with applicant
- Diversify location of interviews
- Diversify family structure of interviews
- Interview everyone residing in the home
- Recognize cultural differences in communication styles
- Use behavioral questions instead of theoretical
- Use variety of interviewing techniques



TYPES OF QUESTIONS

- Closed-ended, probing or yes/no
- Open-ended
- Supportive-responsive or active listening
- Clarification
- Confrontation
- Summarization/redirection
- Giving options, advice or suggestions



SHARE YOUR INTERVIEW

Applicant

- How did you feel while being interviewed?
- How did the Assessor make you feel comfortable?
- Did the Assessor use behavioral or theoretical questions during the interview?

Assessor

- How did the applicant avoid sensitive topics?
- How did you feel when using a variety of techniques?
- Did you suspect the applicant was hiding something? How? What?



FINALIZING APPROVAL

- The applicant is approved for adoption or foster care.
- The applicant is deferred or on hold.
- The applicant is inappropriate to adopt.



THE GENTLE REJECTION

- Conduct gentle rejection face-to-face.
- Give applicant concrete examples of why he/she is being rejected or deferred.
- Assist applicant in understanding how the factors would be detrimental to children.
- Provide applicant with alternative ways to be of service.
- Plant seed of doubt along the way.
- REMEMBER, YOU ARE PREVENTING A DISRUPTION or DISSOLUTION!



GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING THE ASSESSMENT



WRITING TIPS:

- Use words that give exact meaning
- Get rid of extra words
- Do not use slang, lingo, or local jargon
- Give complete information



CHILD ASSESSMENT



CHILD ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- Birth and medical information
- Birth family background and social history
- Placement history
- Developmental and educational information
- Mental health status



CHILD ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- Child's cultural needs
- Child's strengths and limitations
- Impact of victimization
- Support child may need throughout their lifetime



PREDICTION PATH (PPS 5330)

1. Placement Trail
2. Strength/Needs Worksheet
3. Prediction Narrative



USING THE PREDICTION PATH

For Cindy and Stephen



MATCHING

- Identify the family's strengths and limitations.
- Review your "second look" issues, the minimal standards/concerns and potential effects.
- Evaluate the family's overall ability and motivation to meet the child's needs.



SELECTING FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN



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SELECTION AND MATCHING CRITERIA

Child's Traits

- Physical attributes
- Personality
- Habits
- Likes/dislikes
- Current needs
- Anticipated needs
- Interests
- Skills/habits

Good Match

- Finds child appealing
- Similar personality traits
- Conducive/open lifestyle
- Appreciates diversity
- Experienced with similar need
- Open attitude/ample resources
- Similar interests
- Appreciates child's abilities



SELECTION AND MATCHING CRITERIA

Child's Traits

Physical attributes
 Personality
 Habits
 Likes/dislikes
 Current needs
 Anticipated needs
 Interests
 Skills/habits

Poor Match

Uncomfortable with appearance
 Vastly different personality
 Opposite/rigid lifestyle
 Expects conformity
 Inexperienced with need
 Reluctant/no resources
 Dissimilar interests
 Does not value abilities



LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, as amended (MEPA)



ICWA

Historical Background

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 (passed in 1978, implemented in 1979) was legislated as a result of the recognition that nearly 90% of Native American children were being placed transracially and transculturally during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

It was common practice then to remove Indian children from their families only to place them in Eastern boarding schools and non-Native American foster homes. The placements were not done as a result of abuse or neglect, but rather in an attempt to assimilate Native American children into the broader society's expectations.

In addition, ICWA is one of several pieces of legislation enacted over the course of many years to honor the numerous treaties and agreements between the United States government and Native American Tribal governments.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAW

- Regulates placement of Native American (NA) and Alaskan Native (AN) children
- Applies to all custody proceedings NA and AN children
- Must be member of a federally recognized tribe or must be eligible
- Jurisdiction is with tribes, not courts or agencies
- Establishes guidelines for removal and placement practices
- Must notify tribe
- Establishes placement preferences



MEPA

Historical Background

<p>The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (enacted in 1994, implemented in 1995) was legislated as a result of the disproportionate number of children of color in the nation's out-of-home care population. Children of color experience the poorest outcomes in child welfare and often are not achieving permanency.</p>	<p>MEPA was legislated to eliminate discriminatory practices that denied children permanency and discouraged applicants from becoming foster and adoptive parents. In addition, one significant goal of MEPA was to expand the pool of qualified families of color who could become foster and adoptive families for children in need of temporary and permanent care.</p>	<p>The Federal Government was not satisfied the law was being interpreted and implemented as intended. Some found ways to circumvent the law, and children of color continued to languish in the foster care system. Consequently, a revision of MEPA was passed to reform the law. This is known as the Interethnic Adoption Provisions (IEP) Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996.</p>
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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAW

- Guides decision making for children
- No delays or denials of any kind are permitted.
- Race, color or national origin (RCNO) cannot be routinely considered as relevant factors in assessing a child's best interest.
- Cannot assume needs based on RCNO can be met only by same RCNO parent.
- Broad or general assumptions are to be put aside.
- Only most compelling reasons may serve to justify considerations of RCNO.
- Recruitment of families should mirror demographics of all children needing foster or adoptive homes.



FINDING A HOME

For Cindy and Stephen



PRINCIPLES OF ADOPTION PRESENTATION

- Share information incrementally. Do not save all the "bad" stuff for last.
- Introduce prospective adoptive parents to other professionals and previous foster parents.
- Prospective parents should be told information at least three times prior to beginning visitation, and in a variety of ways; e.g. written, verbally in person, recorded.
- Employ active listening skills.



PRINCIPLES OF ADOPTION PRESENTATION

- Remember to share positives/strengths about child and birth family.
- Use caution in interpreting medical or psychological information.
- Avoid "blind" presentations.
- Allow private time for prospective parents and child during presentation meeting.
- Avoid giving message that a decision is expected or will be accepted "on the spot".



Family and Child Assessment

Agenda

Day One

Section I	Introductions and Icebreaker	30 minutes
Section II	What's In It for Me?	30 minutes
Section III	Values and the Family Assessment Process	45 minutes
	Break	15 minutes
Section IV	Cultural Issues in Placement	60 minutes
	Lunch	60 minutes
Section V	Purposes and Goals of the Family Assessment	30 minutes
Section VI	The Family Assessment – Assessment Categories	90 minutes
	Break	15 minutes
Section VII	The Family Assessment-Areas to Be Expected	45 minutes

Day Two

Section VIII	Interviewing Applicants	90 minutes
Section IX	Finalizing Approval	30 minutes
	Break	15 minutes
Section X	The Written Assessment	30 minutes
	Lunch	60 minutes
Section XI	Assessing the Strengths and Needs of the Child	90 minutes
	Break	15 minutes
Section XII	Matching and Selection of Families for Children	75 minutes
Section XIII	Conclusion/Evaluation	15 minutes

Family and Child Assessment Competencies

201-02-003

Knows the topics and issues to be explored and discussed during a resource family assessment

201-02-004

Knows the personal and family characteristics, dynamics and motivations that can enhance or interfere with successful relative, kinship, foster, adoptive or respite care

201-02-005

Knows family characteristics and circumstances that warrant automatic disapproval of an applicant

201-02-007

Understands how a family's unrealistic expectations for relative, kinship, foster and adoptive parenting can increase the challenges and the risk of placement disruption

201-02-008

Knows interview and engagement strategies that encourage applicant families to participate in a collaborative, focused and honest self-assessment

201-02-009

Knows how to use the family assessment to educate and prepare prospective applicants for foster or adoptive parenting

201-02-010

Knows strategies to help applicants explore their motivation to become resource families and how this may affect their expectations and success

201-02-014

Knows how to use educational and counseling strategies to help inappropriate applicant families withdraw from applications

201-02-016

Knows how to prepare clear, concise and thorough assessment reports to support approval, denial, and where appropriate, licensure of resource families

201-02-018

Can deny or defer inappropriate applicant families and clearly articulate the reasons for this decision to the family

201-04-001

Knows the importance of gathering complete assessment information about children in agency care and their families and documenting this information in family case records

201-04-002

Knows the types of information needed to select the best placement for a child and possible sources of this information

201-04-003

Knows the provisions and requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and the application to identifying and selecting adoptive families for children

201-04-010

Knows how to determine the best family characteristics and structure to meet a child's individual needs and to reduce the likelihood of placement instability or disruption

201-10-001

Knows the provisions and requirements of the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and how they affect foster care and adoption practice

Development of Cultural/Ethnic Competence

Twenty-four attributes, knowledge areas and skills are essential to the development of cultural or ethnic competence (Wilson, 1982):

Personal Attributes

- Personal qualities that reflect “genuineness, empathy, non-possessive warmth” (Traux and Mitchell), and a capacity to respond flexibly to a range of possible solutions
- Acceptance of ethnic differences between people
- A willingness to work with clients of different ethnic minority groups
- Articulation and clarification of the worker’s personal values, stereotypes and biases about their own and others’ ethnicity and social class, and ways these may accommodate or conflict with the needs of ethnic minority clients
- Personal commitment to change racism and poverty
- Resolution of feelings about one’s professional image in field that have systematically excluded people of color

Knowledge

Knowledge of the culture (history, traditions, values, family systems, artistic expressions) of clients

- Knowledge of the impact of class and culture on behavior, attitudes and values
- Knowledge of the help-seeking behaviors of various cultural groups
- Knowledge of the role of language, speech patterns and communication styles in culturally-distinct communities
- Knowledge of the impact of social service policies on clients of diverse cultures
- Knowledge of the resources (agencies, persons, informal helping networks, research) that can be utilized on behalf of clients and communities of various cultures
- Recognition of the ways that professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of culturally-diverse clients
- Knowledge of power relationships within the community, agency or institution and their impact on culturally-diverse clients

Skills

- Techniques for learning the cultures of diverse client groups
- Ability to communicate accurate information on behalf of culturally-diverse clients and their communities
- Ability to openly discuss racial and ethnic differences and issues
- Ability to assess the meaning ethnicity has for individual clients
- Ability to differentiate between the symptoms of intra-psychic stress and stress arising from the social structure
- Interviewing techniques reflective of the worker's understanding of the role of language in the client's culture
- Ability to utilize the concepts of empowerment on behalf of ethnic minority clients and communities
- Capability of using resources on behalf of ethnic minority clients and their communities
- Ability to recognize and combat racism, racial stereotypes and myths in individuals and in institutions
- Ability to evaluate new techniques, research and knowledge as to their validity and applicability in working with diverse cultural groups

Definitions and Descriptions for Assessment Criteria

Category I - Motivation/Expectations of Adoption

What do families anticipate or look for/count on for their experience as adoptive parents? Why are they planning and hoping to become adoptive parents?

Category II - Personal and Emotional Maturity

There are several characteristics that enable caregivers to withstand the challenges presented to them. These include:

- Strong and positive self-esteem
- Ability to care for themselves emotionally
- Ability to cope with challenges without experiencing a threat to their competence, confidence, self-esteem or identity

Category III - Stability and Quality of Interpersonal Relationships

People who have a strong and dependable network of supportive and nurturing relationships are generally able to cope with stress and challenges created by adoption.

Category IV - Resilience, Coping Skills and History of Stress Management

Families who have continued to function and remain productive during high stress situations will usually have the coping skills and strengths to adjust to the changes and pressures of caregiving. Learning how a family journeyed through difficult or traumatic events or major life changes will suggest the competence level of problem solving.

Category V - Openness of Family System

An “open system” refers to a family that is able to adapt and change in response to challenges from inside and outside of the family. An “open” family is linked with a broader network of extended family, friends and community. Their boundaries are flexible and the family comfortably readjusts to change.

Category VI - Parenting Skills and Abilities

Experience in parenting or other outside experiences in working with children suggests a level of knowledge and understanding for this criteria. Unless the family's history demonstrates major problems in rearing their own children, most prospective caregivers have appropriate parenting skills. Areas of criteria needing assessment include:

- The parents gain pleasure, gratification and enjoyment from parenting.
- The parents have the ability to individualize children and their needs, and to respond accordingly.
- The family has had prior experience parenting other people's children, including children with physical, emotional or behavioral problems.
- The parents utilize disciplinary strategies that are appropriate for children who have experienced prior maltreatment and separation.

Category VII - Empathy and Perspective Taking Ability

Empathy is the ability to relate to and understand another's point of view. Perspective-taking is the ability to understand someone else's perspective or point of view. The following are relevant criteria to determine empathy:

- The parents are able to recognize and properly interpret each other's and their children's verbal, nonverbal and behavioral cues, and can verbally articulate what other family members are feeling.
- The parents can articulate empathy for the child's biological family and can understand the biological family's situation.

Category VIII - Entitlement

"Entitlement" is defined as the right to receive, demand or to do something. For adoptive parents, it refers to their belief in their inalienable right and responsibility to act in ways that promote the adopted child's best interest.

Category IX - Ability for "hands-on" parenting

A trait often observed in foster and adoptive families is called "hands-on" parenting. This type of parenting style engages the parent and child in doing things together, rather than watching from the sidelines. These parents provide positive, concrete reinforcement; shape desired behaviors; cheer, direct and coach. They encourage the child to think through decision-making by modeling and providing options.

Category X - "Lifelong" commitment

Adoption is a permanent commitment. Families must be guided in looking long term at their relationship with the child; projecting challenges and issues that will surface in childhood and adolescence as a result of sexual abuse; reasonable expectations for emancipation; and issues related to search and reunion.

Adapted from the Field Guide to Child Welfare by Rycus and Hughes (1998).

Family Assessment and Preparation Study

Refer to the PPS 5318 instructions to assure each narrative element is adequately assessed.

1. Original 2. Update/Addendum 3. Child Specific

Agency	Assessor (licensed professional)	Phone #	Email Address	Date
Parent 1 Name First Middle Last (Maiden)	Applying to <input type="checkbox"/> adopt		Email Address	
			Cell Phone #	
			Work Phone #	
Parent 2 Name First Middle Last (Maiden)	Applying to <input type="checkbox"/> adopt		Email Address	
			Cell Phone #	
			Work Phone #	
Street Address	City	State	Zip Code	County
Home Phone #	Fax #			

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (Add another sheet if necessary)

	Parent 1	Parent 2	Household Member	Household Member	Household Member	Household Member
Name						
Relationship to Parent 1						
Date of Birth/Age						
Race*						
Ethnic Background*						
What Languages are spoken in the home						
School Grade Completed						
Social Security Numbers						
Area of Specialized Education (If Applicable)			Notes:			
Marital Status (if Currently Married, Date of Marriage)						
Employer or Source of Income						
How Many Years With This Employer						
Occupation						
Days/Hours of Work (In Normal Week)						
Driver's License Number						

* For statistical purposes only

DESCRIPTION OF HOME AS IT PERTAINS TO ADOPTION OF CHILDREN

FLOORS APPROVED FOR SLEEPING	<input type="checkbox"/> First Floor <input type="checkbox"/> Second Floor <input type="checkbox"/> Third Floor <input type="checkbox"/> Basement
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SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS *If family will obtain crib at the time an infant is placed in the home, please indicate that below

BEDROOM #	FLOOR/LEVEL	OCCUPANT(S)	TYPE OF BED(S): crib*, toddler bed, twin, full, bunk, etc. (If bunk, indicate upper-U, or lower-L)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Briefly describe family's home. Please use the following as a guide. What type of structure is the home? Is it a single family home, two family, mobile or apartment, etc.? What type of construction is the home? How many levels are there? How many rooms are there? Does the home have a basement? Is the basement finished? Is there an exit from the basement? Describe general atmosphere. Describe furnishings, housekeeping, etc.

Outside Space *Check all that apply*

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patio | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot Tub | <input type="checkbox"/> Fenced Yard | <input type="checkbox"/> Detached Garage | <input type="checkbox"/> Play Equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Porch | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed/Barn | <input type="checkbox"/> Attached Garage | <input type="checkbox"/> Pool/Pond/Lake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fenced and Locked Gate | <input type="checkbox"/> Handicapped Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify | | |

Comments on safety issues in areas outside of the home.

Does any family member smoke? Yes No Is smoking allowed in the house? Yes No

Are there pets in the home? Yes No If yes, List/Describe

Do pets meet local safety requirements (vaccinations, vicious animal restrictions, etc.)? Yes No

What resources are available in the community that meet the needs of the child(ren) that may be placed in the home; such as, medical facilities, counseling agencies, schools, colleges, places of worship, theaters, museums, and recreational opportunities?

Name of school district where home is located

Children placed in the home would attend the following schools	Elementary School	
	Address	
	Middle School	
	Address	
	High School	
	Address	

Is any child currently residing in the home homeschooled? Yes No

If yes, is the home school registered with the State Board of Education? Yes No

Does Parent plan to home school any child that will be placed? Yes No

If yes, permission for home education must be approved by DCF. If Parent plans to home school any child or children that will be placed, please give a description of the home school program.

Does Parent operate a business from the residence? Yes No

Is the business for child care, adult day care or a rooming house? Yes No

If other than child care, adult day care or rooming house, describe type of business

If applicable, describe impact of home business on Foster/Adopt plan (hours of operation, flexibility, etc.)

TRANSPORTATION

Vehicles
 One Car Two Cars Truck/SUV Van Recreation Vehicle Motorcycle Other (specify)

Are vehicles in operable condition? Yes No If no, explain

Was proof of insurance provided for all operational vehicles? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Name of Insurance Company	Policy #
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Does family have infant car seat(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Will Obtain	Does family have toddler car seat(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Will Obtain <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Is the residence on a city bus line? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, distance to nearest bus stop
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Describe alternative transportation plan if family does not own an operating vehicle or live on a bus line

MILITARY HISTORY (For any household member with military history)

Name	Branch	Date Entered	Date Discharged	Type of Discharge
				<input type="checkbox"/> Honorable <input type="checkbox"/> Other
				<input type="checkbox"/> Honorable <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Explain if other than honorable discharge

CRIMINAL HISTORY (Documentation verifying compliance must be received for all convictions)

Does any adult household member have a criminal history? Yes No If yes, please list:

Name	Offense	City and State	Convicted? If yes, date of conviction?	Sentence	On probation? Date of release from probation?
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date

Has any household member been arrested and/or convicted for operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
 Yes No If yes, complete the following for each incident:

Name	City and State	Convicted? If yes, date of conviction?	Sentence	License Suspended or Revoked?	On probation? Date of release from probation?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date

Has any minor in the household been adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent? Yes No If yes, please list:

Name	Offense	City and State	Approximate Date of Adjudication	Sentence	On probation? Date of release from probation?
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date

Parent 2						

CHILD(REN) RESIDING IN THE HOME			
Name	Relationship to Parent 1	Relationship to Parent 2	Date Entered Household
If any child listed above is not a permanent member of the household, please note child's name and when (date) they may be leaving.			
Describe each child's characteristics, including physical description, personality, educational situation and health. Describe child's attitude toward adoption plan, how were they prepared (i.e. TIPS-MAPP, books, ongoing preparation) and how such placements are likely to impact the child. Describe how the worker has helped to prepare the child.			

CHILD(REN) NOT RESIDING IN THE HOME			
Name	Relationship to Parent 1	Relationship to Parent 2	Date Left Household and Reason
If Parent's children live outside the home or only visit, discuss why children are not present, other parties involved, how this situation is now handled and how the situation will be impacted by foster care or adoption. Describe each child's characteristics, including physical description, personality, educational situation and health. Describe child's attitude toward adoption plan, how were they prepared (i.e. TIPS-MAPP, books, ongoing preparation) and how such placements are likely to impact the child. Describe how the worker has helped to prepare the child.			

--

ADULT CHILDREN OF THE PARENT(S)

(If adult children live in the home, please also complete the section below regarding their role as a household member)

For Parent's adult children, discuss each adult child's perspective on their childhood, their current relationship with the Parent(s), how they feel about the Parents choosing to adopt, and how this relationship will be impacted by adoption.

--

NON-PARENT ADULTS IN THE HOME

(Complete for each non-Parent adult member of the household)

Name	Relationship to Parent(s)	Date entered household	Permanent household member? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, date they may leave the home
------	---------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Please describe this adult's general characteristics, including why he/she is living in the household and what his/her role will be regarding the foster/adopt child(ren).

--

NARRATIVE

Categories 1-12 should be fully explored for each Parent. Use as much space as needed for each category, adding more sheets if needed. When there are two Parents, the assessor has the option of:

- A) Completing Categories 1-12 for Parent #1, then completing Categories 1-12 for Parent #2, **OR**
- B) Under each of the 12 categories, give information about both Parents.

(For option B, please make sure each person remains distinct, that you assess each Parent as an individual, as well as part of a parenting team.)

12) Describe each parent's general personality.
2) Summarize Parent's personal history.
3) Describe Parent's personal and emotional maturity.
4) Describe Parent's coping skills and history of stress management.
5) Describe Parent's stability and quality of interpersonal relationships.
6) Describe the level of openness Parent has in relationships.
7) Describe Parent's ability to empathize with others.

NARRATIVE

8) Describe Parent's motivation to adopt.

9) Describe Parent's ownership of parenting children not born to them.

10) Describe Parent's ability to make and honor commitments.

11) Describe Parent's parenting skills and abilities.

12) Describe Parent's ability and willingness to take a "hands on" approach to parenting.

13) Have you ever had an adoptive placement that did not finalize?

14) Have you ever had an adoption that has disrupted or dissolved?

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT #1 AND PARENT #2
(Or, for single Parent, relationship with significant other, if applicable)

If Parent #1 is involved in a relationship with a spouse or domestic partner, or if the Parent is significantly involved with another adult, describe the nature of the relationship between these persons. Describe the communication styles used, how decisions are made and conflicts are resolved. Summarize the stability of the relationship, as well as the impact adoption will have on the relationship.

PARENT(S) SUPPORT SYSTEM
(may choose to attach an ecomap here)

Describe Parent's current support system and supports available in the community. Describe how adoptive placement impacts and is impacted by these supports? Include child care plans and arrangements if they are known at the time of the assessment or available resources.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND/OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS

Describe Parent's spiritual beliefs, values, and practices, and how these will impact the adopt plan and be impacted by the adopt plan.

FAMILY FINANCES

Attach the PPS 5318A, Adoptive Family Budget. Summarize Parent's financial situation, their ability to meet the basic needs of the household, and how this will be impacted by adoption (include detailed budget and recent tax forms).

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING ADOPTION ISSUES

Describe the Parent's ability to meet the special challenges of adoption, including birth parent issues, issues related to commitment and teamwork and his/her ability to work within the guidelines of the child welfare system. If the parent is being recommended for treatment or medically fragile foster care, document how they meet the requirements for the program.

SUMMARY OF COLLATERAL CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

Summarize all references, including information from other agencies and organizations with which parent has had contact with children (including other foster care or adoption agencies).

ADDITIONAL ASSESSOR OBSERVATIONS

Briefly describe any additional observations about this family's situation not captured in other areas.

FAMILY STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

List below strengths and needs that have been identified and discussed by the agency and the family.

Strengths	Needs
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

Describe the plan developed with the Parent(s) to build on their strengths and to address their needs. Include such things as skill development and education.

Briefly (in 1-2 paragraphs) give a summary of this family and their readiness to adopt-

Describe if something should happen to both parents who will care for the child (ren)?

ASSESSOR VISITS WITH PARENT(S) AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Date of visit	Location	Name(s) of those present	Date of visit	Location	Name(s) of those present

ASSESSMENT PROCESS CHECKLIST

(Please note that this is a general checklist. Assessments will vary in requirements depending on the circumstances and agency specific policies.)

Date Parent Attended Information/Orientation Meeting (if applicable)

Date of Initial Assessor Contact

Date Application Received by Agency		
Date Parent Completed MAPP Training (copy of certificate)		
Date Verified Marriage (if applicable)	How verified	
Date Verified Divorce(s) (if applicable)	How verified	
Date Budget Received	Date All Supporting Financial Documents Received:	
Date Well Water Test Completed (if using well water)	Date Alternative Water Plan Submitted/Approved:	
Date Reference #1 Received	Name	Address
Date Reference #2 Received	Name	Address
Date Reference #3 Received	Name	Address
Date Reference #4 Received (optional)	Name	Address
Date Adult Child References Received		
Date KBI Checks Received (annually)	Date FBI Checks Received:	
Date CANIS Received (annually)	Date Abuse/Neglect Checks From Other States Received, if required:	
Date All Medical Statements Received (medications)	Date of Annual Health Examination by Primary Care Physician:	
Date Additional Medical Reports Received, if requested:		
Do any of the above listed verifications contain information that would disqualify either Parent for the program for which they applied? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, explain		
Do any of the above listed verifications contain information that would cause limitations/restrictions regarding the care of a foster or adopted child? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, explain		
<input type="checkbox"/> Check this box if assessment was not initiated within 30 days (of TIPS-MAPP Completion) and explain why.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Check this box if assessment was not completed within 180 days (of TIPS-MAPP Completion) and explain why.		

DISPOSITION OF ADOPTION APPLICATION	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adoption application denied. Reasons
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adoption application approved for Parent #1 <input type="checkbox"/> and Parent #2 <input type="checkbox"/> . If not approved for both, please explain reason.
Summarize child or type of child for which approval is granted (include age, gender, number of children and acceptable characteristics)	
SIGNATURES	
Assessor Signature (licensed professional)	Date
Supervisor Signature	Date
PARENT(S) SIGNATURES	
Parent 1	Date
Parent 2	Date

Note For each change, an addendum must be added to the narrative describing the change and indicating the caregiver(s) approved of the change.			
CHANGE TO APPROVED USAGE OF HOME		Use either one of the boxes below, but do not use both	
Subsequent Determination Date	Age Range From To	Place Number Before Gender M F	If home can accept either gender, check box <input type="checkbox"/> and enter number

Assessor Name (licensed professional)		Assessor Signature (licensed professional)		Date
Supervisor Name		Supervisor Signature		Date
CHANGE TO APPROVED USAGE OF HOME			Use either one of the boxes below, but do not use both	
Subsequent Determination Date	Age Range From To	Place Number Before Gender M F	If home can accept either gender, check box <input type="checkbox"/> and enter number	
Assessor Name (licensed professional)		Assessor Signature (licensed professional)		Date
Supervisor Name		Supervisor Signature		Date
CHANGE TO APPROVED USAGE OF HOME			Use either one of the boxes below, but do not use both	
Subsequent Determination Date	Age Range From To	Place Number Before Gender M F	If home can accept either gender, check box <input type="checkbox"/> and enter number	
Assessor Name (licensed professional)		Assessor Signature (licensed professional)		Date
Supervisor Name		Supervisor Signature		Date
CHANGE TO APPROVED USAGE OF HOME			Use either one of the boxes below, but do not use both	
Subsequent Determination Date	Age Range From To	Place Number Before Gender M F	If home can accept either gender, check box <input type="checkbox"/> and enter number	
Assessor Name (licensed professional)		Assessor Signature (licensed professional)		Date
Supervisor Name		Supervisor Signature		Date
CHANGE TO APPROVED USAGE OF HOME			Use either one of the boxes below, but do not use both	
Subsequent Determination Date	Age Range From To	Place Number Before Gender M F	If home can accept either gender, check box <input type="checkbox"/> and enter number	
Assessor Name (licensed professional)		Assessor Signature (licensed professional)		Date
Supervisor Name		Supervisor Signature		Date
CHANGE TO APPROVED USAGE OF HOME			Use either one of the boxes below, but do not use both	
Subsequent Determination Date	Age Range From To	Place Number Before Gender M F	If home can accept either gender, check box <input type="checkbox"/> and enter number	
Assessor Name (licensed professional)		Assessor Signature (licensed professional)		Date
Supervisor Name		Supervisor Signature		Date



Large Family Assessment

(to be completed at the time of the PPS 5318 Assessment for Child Placement any time the number of children in the home plus the number of children the family is approved to adopt equals five or more children who will be actively parented)

SECTION I: AGENCY INFORMATION (List the name of the agency and assessor completing this form)			
Agency Name		Assessor (licensed professional: <i>first and last</i>)	
SECTION II: FAMILY INFORMATION			
Name of Adoptive Parent 1 (<i>first and last</i>)			
Name of Adoptive Parent 2 (<i>first and last</i>)			
Address		City	State Zip
List the name, gender, age and status (i.e. adopted, biological, foster, kinship) of all children residing in the home:			
Name (<i>first and last</i>)	Gender	Date of Birth	Status
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
List the name, gender and age of any child <u>not</u> residing in the home. Indicate the child's relationship (i.e. adopted, biological, foster, kinship) and the reason the child is not residing in the home:			
Name (<i>first and last</i>)	Gender	Date of Birth	Relationship
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
Reason child does not reside in the home			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
Reason child does not reside in the home			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
Reason child does not reside in the home			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship
Reason child does not reside in the home			

SECTION III: ASSESSMENT

Family Motivation

Describe the family's motivation for wanting a large family.

Special Needs

Summarize all the special needs of the prospective adoptive child(ren). If there is no specific child to be adopted at this time, then base the assessment on the characteristics the family is approved to adopt.

N/A- The family is not approved to adopt children with special needs at this time.

Identify all the special needs of all children currently residing in the home of the prospective adoptive family.

N/A- None of the children currently residing in the home have special needs.

Describe how the prospective adoptive family meets the special needs of each child residing in the home.

N/A- None of the children currently residing in the home have special needs.

Describe the prospective adoptive family's training and/or experience parenting children with special needs similar to the prospective adoptive child/ren. If there is no specific child to be adopted at this time, then base the assessment on the characteristics the family is approved to adopt.

N/A- The family is not approved to adopt children with special needs at this time.

Resources and Supports

Summarize the community resources available to the prospective adoptive family and the resources currently utilized by the prospective adoptive family. Identify how the prospective adoptive family plans to utilize these resources to parent a large family. Be sure to talk with all current service providers to obtain an assessment of participation and compliance with any treatment or medical protocols.

Summarize the prospective adoptive family's support system and give examples of how they utilize that support system. Be sure to include where the family goes for concrete support (money, transportation, child care, respite), emotional support, and information/advice. Identify where the support comes from (e.g., extended family, friends, neighbors, organizations and professionals) and whether the support system is mostly formal, informal or a combination. List any support groups that they belong to and how often they participate. Identify support groups in the community that might be helpful to the prospective adoptive family.

What is the impact on the prospective adoptive family's financial stability, now and in the future, of having a large family with many children? What resources does the family say they need in order to include an additional child(ren) in the family?

Discuss the prospective adoptive family's ability and willingness to participate in additional training and services to address any additional child's special needs. If there is no specific child to be adopted at this time, then base the assessment on the characteristics the family is approved to adopt. (Please remember that families cannot be required to attend any additional training based on race, color or national origin (RCNO) of the family or of the child to be placed.) Do the services they may need exist in their community or will they have to go elsewhere to get the child's service needs met? Are there barriers to accessing services? How will the barriers impact the family?

N/A- The family is not approved to adopt children with special needs at this time.

Opinions of Other Children, Adults and Service Providers

Summarize the interviews with all children age four and older who are residing in the home. Questions to consider: What has been the best experience about being in this family? What has been the worst experience about being in this family or being raised by this family? What are the positive things or strengths of this family that makes them a good choice for adopting another child/other children? What concerns do you have about bringing another child(ren) into the home? How would this adoption affect your life?

Describe the interviews or attempts to interview adult children outside of the home. Questions to consider: Do the adult children feel the prospective adoptive family is capable of caring for additional children, including those who may have special needs? Will adult children be a support system to the family, able to help out as needed? What will their role be with the adopted children?

Summarize the opinions of other adults living in the home. Include what the role of these adults will be when additional children come into the home?

If the family has a specific child(ren) they are planning to adopt, obtain the impressions of service providers working with the prospective adoptive child(ren) about the ability of the prospective adoptive family to meet the child's needs and incorporate the additional child(ren) into the home.

N/A- The family is not planning to adopt a specific child at this time.

Family System

Describe the prospective adoptive family's current organization of the family system, including time management, flexibility, keeping appointments, who is available to the children during the day, transportation, and supervision, etc.

How will an additional child (or children) impact the prospective adoptive family system, including time management, flexibility, keeping appointments, who is available to the children during the day, transportation, and supervision, etc.?

Describe the prospective adoptive family's plan in the case of death, illness, or other crisis leading to the inability to care for the child(ren), including who the family would designate as the guardian if the prospective adoptive parents became unable to provide care? Is this the same person that would care for the children currently in the home?

SECTION IV: SUMMARY

Summary of recommendation for approval of the large family assessment of the prospective adoptive family, or the assessor's reasons for not recommending approval of the large family assessment.

<input type="checkbox"/> Recommended for approval <input type="checkbox"/> Not recommended for approval	Assessor Signature (licensed professional)	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend for approval <input type="checkbox"/> Not recommended for approval	Supervisor Signature	Date

**The agency reserves the right to request documentation or references regarding other household members, adult children, or for any service provider to ensure the capability of the prospective adoptive family to meet the child's needs.*



Department for Children
and Families
*Prevention and
Protection Services*

Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

Rehabilitation Standards

Age of victim at time of offense

Age of applicant at time of offense

Nature and seriousness of offense

Circumstances under which offense was committed

Degree of participation of applicant

Time elapsed since offense (10 years for felony, three years for misdemeanor)

Likelihood of recurrence of offending behavior

Whether applicant was a repeat offender

Applicant's employment record

Whether there are criminal proceedings pending against applicant

Other factors considered relevant by agency, assessor

In order to help the assessor explore any of these areas of concern more fully and accurately, it is recommended that the following questions be addressed by the assessor and applicant:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- How did you feel about it at the time it happened?
- What progress have you made in working on this issue since it happened?
- How do you feel about it now?
- How do you solve similar problems now as a result of your experience?

Interviewing Methods Chart

Strategy	Purpose	Benefits	Liabilities
<p>Close-ended questions</p> <p>Probing questions</p> <p>Yes/No questions</p>	<p>Gather factual information regarding a specific content area</p> <p>Obtain answers to specific questions</p>	<p>Can obtain a considerable amount of information in a short time</p>	<p>Limits potential responses to those directed by the interviewer</p> <p>May be threatening to the client; may encourage evasiveness or lying</p>
<p>Open-ended questions</p>	<p>Gather a lot of information about a wide range of topic areas</p> <p>Gain insight regarding the client's feelings and perception about his/her situation</p>	<p>Worker may discover information he/she may not have thought to ask about</p> <p>Provides information to be used in assessment; helps identify "process"-level issues</p>	<p>Takes considerable time</p> <p>Worker may need to sort through extraneous information to identify pertinent issues</p> <p>Client may use open format to digress and avoid important topics</p>
<p>Supportive responses</p> <p>Active listening</p>	<p>Communicate and demonstrate the caseworker's interest and concern</p> <p>Establish a positive casework relationship</p>	<p>Builds trust, communicates worker's interest and willingness to listen and help</p> <p>May have an enabling effect on the client</p> <p>Client may feel better for having talked.</p>	<p>The client has considerable control of the direction of the interview. Little change may be generated, few goals set.</p> <p>Does not always promote action</p>

Strategy	Purpose	Benefits	Liabilities
Clarification	<p>Promote client’s insight into his/her behaviors and actions to enable change and participation in the casework process</p> <p>Enable caseworker to better understand the dynamics of the client’s problems and behaviors</p>	<p>Allows worker to make an accurate assessment of the causal and continuing factors to the client’s problems</p> <p>Helps move to the process level in interview</p> <p>Helps client attain insight into own feelings</p>	<p>May be threatening to the client. Client may be unaware of, or not want to discuss issues raised by the worker.</p> <p>May increase client’s resistance</p>
<p>Summarization</p> <p>Redirection</p>	<p>Keep the interview focused, on track.</p> <p>Help the client organize his/her information.</p>	<p>Makes efficient use of time by keeping the discussion focused on pertinent topics</p> <p>Helps the client organized her thinking and keep important things in mind</p> <p>Helps client from being overwhelmed by details</p>	<p>A client who has been redirected may feel cut off, as if the worker is not listening to him/her.</p> <p>Over-direction by the worker may lead to moving too quickly off a topic, thus missing important information.</p>
Giving options, advice or suggestions	<p>Offer the client a range of possible solutions to his/her problems.</p> <p>Direct the client into positive action.</p>	<p>Provides the client with potential solutions that he/she had not previously considered</p> <p>Encourages the client to try new solutions</p> <p>Keeps activities goal-directed</p>	<p>May prevent the client from arriving at his/her own solutions to problems</p> <p>Caseworker may be blamed for failures if solutions do not work.</p>

Strategy	Purpose	Benefits	Liabilities
Confrontation	Push the client to admit and acknowledge problems, feelings or behaviors, when other less directive interventions have failed to accomplish this.	<p>Can precipitate movement quickly</p> <p>Can cut out manipulations and digressions by the client and focus discussion on the critical issues</p> <p>Can help the client become aware of his/her own resistance</p>	<p>Cannot be accomplished without a well-established, supportive relationship</p> <p>May greatly increase resistance, if not successful</p> <p>May require considerable follow-up support from the worker. Takes time and commitment</p>

Write It Right

Use words that give an exact meaning.

Too often assessors use statements like:

“They have a stable marriage.”

“They have a good relationship.”

“It is a nice house.”

What do stable, good and nice really mean? It would be more accurate to say:

“Like any other couple, Fred and Mary have had their ups and downs. They both agree that there have been few major disagreements, and they have been able to negotiate or compromise each time. Neither can stay mad very long.”

“While small in size, the Collins home is cozy, neat and comfortable. It is well-lighted and with a fresh coat of paint inside and out!”

Get rid of extra words

Some writers are verbose and wordy. The reader must sift through unnecessary words to get to important information. For example:

“Robert attended North High School and graduated in 1983. He played football, baseball and basketball. Linda attended North High School and graduated in 1983. She was a cheerleader and was in the choir.”

With editing, unnecessary words and phrases are eliminated.

“Both Robert and Linda attended North High School, graduating in 1983. Robert lettered in three sports while Linda was active in cheerleading and choir.”

Do not use slang, “lingo” or local jargon.

This is not professional, and others reading the assessment may not understand these terms. Phrases such as “*he’s a smooth talker*” may not be accurately interpreted. Use “*He’s an articulate and colorful speaker*”.

Give complete information.

Some writers try to cut corners and leave out valuable information. Frequently, information regarding the adoptive family’s neighborhood, culture, personal interests and infertility issues is scanty and insufficient. A four-word sentence does not adequately relay information about important topics.

Prediction Path Packet

Child: _____

Worker: _____

Date Completed: _____

Includes:

- Child's Placement Trail
- Child's Strengths and Needs
- Child's Prediction Narrative
- Signature Page

Placement Trail

Date Placement Began	Date Placement Ended	Length of Placement	Specific Reason for Move	Name/Role of Caregivers	Adjustment Observations

Prediction Narrative

Expected need	When is this need likely to occur?	What events have triggered the need in the past?	Possible interventions	Suggested preventions	Significant dates for the child

We/I have heard and read all information regarding our child's _____, placement history, strengths and needs, and potential future behaviors. We/I understand that the agency has made a good faith effort to predict potential future needs, however, the list may not be exhaustive due to factors or information unknown to the agency.

Date signed: _____ **Parent #1's signature:** _____ **Parent #2's signature:** _____

The following individuals participated in the sharing of information contained in this packet:

Case Study

Stephen, Age Three Days

Stephen is a three-day-old male infant. He was seven pounds, eight ounces at birth, and was 21 inches long. His birth was uneventful, and he fell into the 94th percentile for height and weight. He has only a trace of hair at this time. His eyes are dark. He appears to be a good eater, but sleeps erratically. The nurses report he has a loud, strong cry.

His birth mother, Sandy Allen, is an 18-year-old girl. She is no longer involved with the child's birth father, 19-year-old Michael Taylor. They were high school seniors when Stephen was conceived. Sandy is 5'8" tall, and usually weighs around 137 pounds. She is the middle child of a blue-collar family. She currently lives with her family but plans to move out now that the baby is born, if she saves enough money from her job at a local discount store. Sandy was an average student in school, having difficulty with math and science. She did not like school that much and was glad to graduate last June. She is not sure what she will do with her future.

Only two of Sandy's grandparents are still alive. Her paternal grandfather died from heart disease at age 58. Her maternal grandfather died from prostate cancer last year. Both grandmothers are generally in good health; however, her paternal grandmother has mild diabetes, which is controlled by diet. Sandy's parents are high school graduates and both work. Her mother is a secretary for a local podiatrist, and her father works for an electronics company on the assembly line. Both are health conscious due to their parents' health problems. Mr. Allen struggles with high cholesterol but keeps in constant contact with his physician. He would like Sandy to go to college, but she is unmotivated.

Sandy's older sister, Beth, attends the local community college but plans to transfer to a four-year college. She is a good student, but working 40 hours and carrying a full-time class schedule does not leave her much time for studying. Eddie, Sandy's younger brother, is a junior in high school. He is a gifted athlete but is constantly on academic probation and does not get to play that much.

Michael is approximately 5'11" tall and weighs 185 pounds. Mike was an average student in school who enjoyed many extra-curricular activities, such as football and wrestling. While he was not as gifted an athlete as other boys, he made up for it with desire and hard work, earning an "All County" honorable mention during his senior football season. Mike has worked for the past two summers with his father, who owns a small construction company. Mike's parents divorced when he was eight. Mr. Taylor retained custody of Mike and his younger sister, Stephanie, as Mrs. Taylor was in and out of psychiatric facilities with a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. At this time, her whereabouts are unknown.

Mike's maternal grandparents died in a car accident when his mother was a child. Not much is known about them. However, Mike's paternal grandparents have been very involved in his life. The entire family shares meals together three or four times per week. Grandma and Grandpa are in their late 60s, retired and very active. Grandpa is losing his hearing but is too stubborn to get any hearing aids. Grandma is a large, happy woman who has arthritis and poor eyesight. She has a lovely voice and taught herself to play the organ at church. Neither grandparent finished high school; however, Grandpa did complete a carpentry apprentice program and enjoys restoring furniture.

Stephanie is 12 years old with long hair and large eyes (like her Grandpa Taylor). She is a straight "A" student and is a gifted musician. She hopes to play in the orchestra in high school and practices every day. She is shy and is embarrassed about her new braces, which corrected a congenital dental problem.

Case Study

Cindy, Age Eight

Cindy is an eight-year-old girl who was separated on Dec. 13, 2001 (at age five) from her biological family after substantiated sexual abuse by her mother's boyfriend. Cindy's mother, however, staunchly denied that the abuse had occurred, insisted that Cindy was lying and continued to live with her boyfriend. Cindy's initial placement was with a maternal great-aunt and uncle. Her aunt reported that Cindy denied the abuse occurred, but she had recurring nightmares for several months. Cindy's school adjustment was poor, and her aunt was often called to pick Cindy up from kindergarten due to her violent tantrums. All attempts to work with Cindy's mother proved unsuccessful.

Cindy was moved to a foster home on Dec. 6, 2002 when her uncle had a serious stroke, was bedridden and out of work. The aunt, feeling overwhelmed, requested that Cindy be placed in a foster home where "Cindy wouldn't be burdened with old people's problems. Cindy moved to the Johnson foster home, and the worker filed for permanent custody. At the Johnson home, Cindy wet the bed for the first several weeks and constantly talked of "going back with my mom". She was angry and said that "I am bad, that's why no one wanted me". She had a difficult time making friends in her new school due to her aggressive behavior. After the initial adjustment period of about three months, she seemed to improve and settle in. However, her behavior deteriorated and reached a crisis point when the other children in foster care in the home were reunited with their birth family over the Thanksgiving holiday. The foster mother requested her removal on Nov. 30, 2003.

Cindy was then moved to the Smith foster home, where she was the only child in foster care. Mrs. Smith stated that it took Cindy a few months to adapt to their home and that she refused to unpack all of her belongings for three months. She did have a bedwetting problem, but that stopped as Cindy became comfortable with the family. Mrs. Smith stated that Cindy is an adorable child who likes to help and be praised by adults. Even though she likes school, Cindy has had her share of problems there as well. Her best classes are art and music, where she excels.

The Smiths are a middle-aged couple. Most of their children have grown and emancipated. Only a 17-year-old son and a 16-year-old daughter remain at home. Cindy has her own room, which Mrs. Smith said she keeps very neat and is proud of her belongings. However, Cindy will often "borrow" her foster sister's things and only admit to taking them when directly confronted. While the Smiths feel considerable affection for Cindy, they do not desire to adopt her. They feel that Cindy deserves a family of her own.

Prediction Path Packet

Child: Cindy

Worker: A. Assessor

Date Completed:

Includes:

- Child's Placement Trail
- Child's Strengths and Needs
- Child's Prediction Narrative
- Signature Page

Placement Trail

Date of Placement	Reasons For Placement	Name/Role Of Caregivers	Adjustment Observations
12/13/01	Removed from birth mom due to sexual abuse by boyfriend	Maternal aunt/uncle	Tantrums at school Denied abuse by Mom's boyfriend Nightmares
12/6/02	Uncle had serious illness. Aunt must work and care for him.	Jones foster family	Bedwetting School problems Insisted she was going back home
11/30/03	Cindy's behavior too hard for last foster parent to handle	Smith foster family	Wet bed for 2 weeks Fights in school Would not unpack for 3 months

Strengths and Needs of Child

Child's Strengths: Abilities, Skills, Talents, Positive Characteristics, etc.	Child's Needs: Areas in need of help, care, nurturing, parental attention, continued growth, etc.
Cute Funny and charming Helpful around the house Doing grade level school work Eager to please Neat and clean Artistic and musically talented Likes school Has positive cultural identity	Wets bed Gets in fights at school Takes a long time to trust Has tantrums if frustrated Feels guilty about placement Says bad words when mad Stubborn at times Can be sneaky Poor self-esteem

Prediction Narrative

Expected need	When is this need likely to occur?	What events have triggered the need in the past?	Possible interventions	Suggested preventions	Significant dates for the child
Bedwetting	At placement	Moves, anxiety	Buy plastic sheets. Show Cindy how to change sheets. Reward and praise Cindy for a dry bed.	Limit fluids after dinner. Slow transition at placement with several visits. Take Cindy to bathroom 2 hours after bedtime.	Anniversaries of earlier moves (November-December)
School fights	At placement	Moves, anxiety	Be accessible to teachers.	Prepare Cindy for new school placement. Meet teachers; plan strategies together. Contract with Cindy for good school performance in advance.	Ongoing

Expected need	When is this need likely to occur?	What events have triggered the need in the past?	Possible interventions	Suggested preventions	Significant dates for the child
Lacks trust	At placement	Control battles Limit-setting Strange situations	Respect Cindy’s fear of dark. Plan daily “special time” with Cindy. Reassure and re-affirm your love and commitment.	Follow through on all rules and promises. Be consistent. Develop a daily schedule and follow it.	Ongoing, but particularly at anniversaries of moves
Tantrums	In 3-6 months	Control battles Limit-setting	Withdraw attention until tantrum subsides. Intervene with time-out during escalation.	Lower voice. Use star chart to track behavior. Select low frustration activities for Cindy.	Ongoing
Feeling threatened about another move	One year after placement	Anniversary of move to adoptive home	Plan a celebration to mark the date. Provide extra emotional and physical reassurance	Talk about similarities and differences between foster care/adoption Identify and discuss fears	Anniversary of move

Expected need	When is this need likely to occur?	What events have triggered the need in the past?	Possible interventions	Suggested preventions	Significant dates for the child
Conflicted loyalty	At legalization	Discussion of legalization; approaching court date	Review Cindy’s Lifebook. Talk openly about birth family. Seek professional counseling.	Reassure that she can love 2 families Participate with Cindy in adoptive family support group	Anniversary of earlier moves
Identity Confusion	Adolescence	N/A	Obtain additional information. Talk & listen Purchase adoption books for C Provide reassurance to C	Review Cindy’s Lifebook. Attend post adoption group with Cindy.	Birthdays Early to mid-adolescence
Sexual acting out	Any time	Anxiety	Respect privacy. Gently confront inappropriate behavior, provide alternatives. Participate in survivor’s group with Cindy. Attend training. Seek professional help.	Set clear boundaries in the home. Model appropriate behaviors. Talk openly about sex. Listen to Cindy’s concerns.	Anniversaries of moves Puberty

We/I have heard and read all information regarding our child's _____, placement history, strengths and needs, and potential future behaviors. We/I understand that the agency has made a good faith effort to predict potential future needs, however, the list may not be exhaustive due to factors or information unknown to the agency.

Date signed: _____ **Parent #1's signature:** _____ **Parent #2's signature:** _____

The following individuals participated in the sharing of information contained in this packet:

A. Assessor

S.W. Supervisor

Mrs. Smith (foster parent)

L. Therapist, LMSW

SOCIAL HISTORY OUTLINE FOR CHILDREN

Assessor – Family and Child
Handout 15

Agency:		County of Residence:	
Compiled by:		Date:	
Child Information:		Name:	
Date of Birth:		Current Address:	
Place of Birth:		Previous Address:	
Sex:	Race:	Grade in School:	Religion:
Informants:	Name:	Telephone: ()	
Address:			
Comments: (Reliability etc.)			
Responsible Person or Agency:	Name:	Telephone: ()	
Address:			
Guardian Ad Litem:			

Presenting Problem. Nature of current problem. Examples. The situation and circumstances at onset. How problem developed. How it recurs. Secondary problems. Efforts by the family and/or others to cope/solve the problem. How successful? Previous diagnostic studies. Date of studies, location and results.

Reason for Referral. Who assisted parents, guardia, or court to decide to request servcies? Alternative plan to out-of-home care considered? Why/How was decision reached? What are the parent's/caregiver's expectations of the service? To what degree are they able/willing to participate in the diagnosis/planning/treatment of the child? How does the child/youth feel about the referral? Has the worker interviewed this child? If so, where/when/under what circumstances? Worker observation and impressions of the child.

Family Information. Father. Full name, birth date, place of birth, ethnic background, present location, education, occupation, physical description. What is the status of the father's physical and mental health? Comment on father's family background, significant early childhood relationships and experiences.

Mother. Full name, birth date, place of birth, ethnic background, present location, education, occupation, physical description. What is the status of the mother's physical and mental health? Comment on mother's family background, significant early childhood relationships and experiences.

Date of parents' marriage. Have they been married previously? Give dates/information. If one/both parents are deceased, give cause of death. What was effect on the child? Comment on relationship between the parents. Do their religious affiliations/attitudes affect the child?

Siblings. List names, dates of birth, grade level in school, state of physical, emotional health. List with whom they are currently living. Show history of foster home/residential/ institutional placements and other pertinent information.

SOCIAL HISTORY OUTLINE FOR CHILDREN

Assessor – Family and Child
Handout 15

Family Status. How is the family regarded in the community? How is their economic and social level perceived? Cite evidence of family stress and how it is handled. Has the family used a public or private agency's services? Detail Social Security benefits, Veterans's benefits or other resources such as health insurance etc.

Early Development of the Child. Discuss mother's health/attitude during the pregnancy, the nature of the delivery, the child's condition and early feeding experiences. Identify age at which the child began walking and talking. Include description of any gross abnormalities. Discuss toilet training, parental attitudes toward that training and methods used. At what age was the toilet training accomplished? Discuss past and present sleeping arrangements. Is there evidence of sleep disturbances, nervous habits or experiences that may be upsetting to the child? Who was attending physician at the time of the birth? What is the name/address of the hospital/facility where the child was delivered? Give a current description of the child.

Medical Information. Give a general history of the child's health. Include a chronological description and age at occurrence of illnesses, injuries, diseases, accidents, operations, convulsions, chronic conditions, and their after effect. Report on immunizations, permanent physical defects, including parental/child attitudes towards these defects, and medication child is currently receiving. Cite names and addresses for the family physician, the school physician, the attending psychiatrist and hospitals utilized.

Sexual Development. For females: age at onset of menstruation. For males: other signs of puberty. Discuss over/under development of sexual organs; defects and efforts to correct them. Give information about sexual experiences, detailing child's curiosity about sex and parental handling of that curiosity. Cite the information given to the child by the parent and the parental handling of the child's sexual behavior. Present information on the child's relationships with same and opposite sex. Indicate possible influence of sexual abuse on the child's development.

School Progress. Present a complete history of school progress, behavior and attitudes toward the teacher and other children. How does the current teacher view this child's problems? What action/method of discipline does the school employ for this child? Give the names and addresses of the schools and dates of attendance.

Relationships within the home. Describe the nature of the child's relationships with household members - parents, brothers, sister, other relatives in the home and other non-relatives in the home. Who does the child particularly like? Is heshe/ shy, fearful, dependent/independent in relationship to parents and others? What are parental methods of discipline? What is the child's attitude toward authority? If the child has lived in places other than the parental home, detail these living arrangements and the child's experience there.

Relationships out of the home. Describe the child's social relationships and play. Include a description of usual behavior with friends. What are the friends' ages and gender? Describe the opportunity/lack of opportunity to choose and play with friends. If delinquent behavior is involved, describe the acts and circumstances under which they were committed. List the child's hobbies, leisure time and group activities, special likes and dislikes and abilities as viewed by his parents and teachers.

Agency Evaluation and Recommendation. Detail/Summarize the worker's observations and impressions of the child/family situation. What does the agency and/or family expect from services and/or placement? What potential plans are being developed for termination of services or placement? Will continuing supportive casework services be available to the family/parents?

Contemporary American Law Regarding Child Protection

Major Federal Legislation Concerned With Child Protection, Child Welfare, and Adoption-ICWA/MEPA

1970 – Present

Adapted from the Child Welfare Information Gateway

Can be accessed at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/majorfedlegis/>

P.L. 95-608 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 Overview

S. 1214

Enacted Nov. 11, 1978

Purpose: To establish standards for the placement of Indian children in foster and adoptive homes and to prevent the breakup of Indian families

Major Provisions of the act

- Established minimum federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families
- Required Indian children to be placed in foster or adoptive homes that reflect Indian culture
- Provided for assistance to tribes in the operation of child and family service programs
- Created exclusive tribal jurisdiction over all Indian child custody proceedings when requested by the Tribe, parent or Indian “custodian”
- Granted preference to Indian family environments in adoptive or foster care placement
- Provided funds to tribes or nonprofit off-reservation Indian organizations or multiservice centers for the purpose of improving child welfare services to Indian children and families
- Required State and federal courts to give full faith and credit to tribal court decrees
- Set standard of proof for terminating Indian parents’ parental rights that required the proof to be beyond a reasonable doubt

P.L. 103-382 Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 Overview

H.R. 6

Enacted Oct. 20, 1994

These provisions were enacted as title V, part E, subpart 1, of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994.

This title amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

Major Provisions of the act

- Prohibited state agencies and other entities that receive federal funding and were involved in foster care or adoption placements from delaying, denying or otherwise discriminating when making a foster care or adoption placement decision on the basis of the parent or child's race, color or national origin
- Prohibited state agencies and other entities that received federal funds and were involved in foster care or adoption placements from categorically denying any person the opportunity to become a foster or adoptive parent solely on the basis of race, color or national origin of the parent or the child
- Required states to develop plans for the recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state from which families are needed
- Allowed an agency or entity to consider the cultural, ethnic or racial background of a child and the capacity of an adoptive or foster parent to meet the needs of a child with that background when making a placement
- Had no effect on the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978
Made failure to comply with MEPA a violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act

Major Federal Legislation Concerned With Child Protection, Child Welfare, and Adoption
<https://www.childwelfare.gov> 9

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