

Instructions for Kinship Care Assessments

These instructions are designed to be used when completing the Comprehensive Kinship Care Assessment or the Comprehensive Assessment for Guardianship.

When placement with a relative or other kin is being explored, the agency is required to assess the suitability of that home. This table provides an overview of when the Kinship Care Assessment forms are required. This information is provided to ensure that county child welfare agencies use the appropriate assessment form based on the case point in case decision making.

Point in Case Decision Making	Assessment Forms To Be Completed
CPS Assessment; child cannot be safely maintained in own home. Parent identifies Temporary Safety Provider.	Initial Provider Assessment
CPS In-Home Services; child cannot be safely maintained in own home. Parent identifies Temporary Safety Provider.	Initial Provider Assessment, Comprehensive Kinship Care Assessment if placement continues more than 29 days.
Child Placement Services; relative/kinship homes are explored as resources prior to court review. Findings included in court report.	Initial Provider Assessment, Comprehensive Kinship Care Assessment if placement continues more than 29 days.
**Child Placement Services; child has been living with relative for six months or more, in agency custody for at least one year; neither reunification nor adoption is a suitable option; the placement is stable, and continuation of the placement is in the juvenile's best interest.	Face Sheet, Comprehensive Assessment for Guardianship. <i>Note: If the family has never been assessed, this form combines the Initial and Comprehensive Kinship Care Assessments and replaces those two forms. If the Initial and Comprehensive Kinship Care Assessments have been previously completed, only the mandated requirements listed in the adjacent column would be needed to complete the assessment.</i>

**For counties who have elected to provide kinship care subsidy through county funds or IV-E waiver, discussion of the Kinship Care Subsidy would be an additional factor.

Face Sheet

The face sheet has been incorporated into the Initial Provider Assessment.

It is important that all information requested on the face sheet be completed and updated as additional information is received. This face sheet will follow the case from initial placement through case closure.

Initial Provider Assessment

The Initial Provider Assessment is designed to address critical factors of safety and stability. The Initial Provider Assessment should be completed prior to the child(ren)'s placement in the home. Upon completion the assessment form should be reviewed with the caretaker(s), signed and dated by the caretaker(s) and the county child welfare social worker. The social work supervisor should review and sign the form as soon as possible, or on the next working day. See the Initial Provider Assessment for instructions on that form.

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Kinship Care Comprehensive Assessment

The comprehensive assessment is designed to evaluate relational issues such as bonding, attachment, nurturance, commitment, and intrafamilial relationships. This assessment is to be used with the Initial Provider Assessment as a base, and completed within 30 days of the placement. The Comprehensive Assessment may also be used to update information about the placement in preparation for court reviews and permanency planning meetings. The social worker will need professional expertise to evaluate these factors. If the social worker does not have the training and experience to accurately assess the family, another social worker or supervisor should accompany the social worker on this assessment visit. Relevant factors which are unique to the family's culture should be incorporated into each assessments of relational factors. If the family culture is not familiar to the social worker, he or she should become familiar with typical differences.

Upon completion the assessment form should be reviewed with the caretaker(s), signed and dated by the caretaker(s) and the county child welfare social worker. The social work supervisor should review and sign the form as soon as possible, or on the next working day. See the Initial Provider Assessment for instructions on that form.

Guidance on Comprehensive Assessment Tool

1. As the social worker visits the home, he or she should create opportunities to observe how the caretaker, the child, and other household members interrelate. This may mean scheduling appointment times when the entire family and the placed child are at home.
2. Ask the caretaker if they are interested in continuing to provide a home for the child, if this is appropriate. If they are, determine through the interview and observation process their understanding and response to the child's needs.
3. Determine the attitude of the parent and the caretaker about the child's living arrangement and the current visitation plan. Determine if these attitudes are having a negative influence on the visitation plan (frequency of visits, supervision, times, etc.).
4. Regardless of the case status (open investigation or case substantiation), the child needs support to deal with the trauma of maltreatment and/or separation from the parent. It is damaging for the caretaker to "take sides" about the incident, and supportive neutrality should be encouraged. For children placed out of the home, it is critically important that disciplinary methods used are sensitive to the emotional and physical injuries that may have been experienced by the child.
5. Evaluate the caretaker's working relationship with the agency, both from the caretaker's perspective and from the agency perspective.
6. Discuss with the caretaker which kinship resources and agency services they have accessed since the child was placed with them. Determine if other referrals have been made that were not used, and whether the family needs help to follow through. Talk with the caretaker about developmental issues that may have emerged during the placement, and possible intervention strategies.
7. Talk with the caretaker about the status of the other members of the household, including the caretaker, and the impact of placement on the family. Choose appropriate indicators of functioning based on the day-to-day activities.

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8. If health issues have arisen since the initial assessment, discuss them with the caretaker.

The Comprehensive Assessment for Guardianship

This assessment tool was designed in part to use with kin caretakers who were being considered for eligibility for subsidized guardianship payments. Guardianship subsidies are only available in counties who elect to provide the subsidy, either through IV-E waiver or county funds. The State at this point has not approved funding to provide the guardianship subsidy state wide.

This tool can also be used if a kin caretaker does not need agency support, is willing to provide a permanent home for the child, wants to have the legal authority to make most parental decisions on the child's behalf, but will not pursue adoption. The accompanying questionnaire and legal information about the caretaker would be useful to any person considering assuming guardianship of a child in county child welfare agency custody.

Guidance on Comprehensive Assessment for Subsidized Guardianship

1. Factors A-E are required for eligibility for a guardianship subsidy, and are recommended even when a subsidy is not available. If guardianship subsidy is not under consideration, the caretaker's willingness and ability to provide care through the child's minority should be assessed. For unsubsidized guardianship, the caretaker should be made fully aware that if they assume guardianship, they may be eligible for adoption assistance if they later decide to adopt, but not for guardianship subsidy if such a program is instituted in the future. If they are guardian, they can apply for TANF benefits with a child-only grant. If the child has income through Social Security, the income can be applied to the cost of his or her care.
- 2-13 Since the initial and comprehensive assessment may not have been done on this family, use the corresponding guidance described in these instructions.
- 14-20 Each of the remaining questions corresponds with a question on the comprehensive assessment. Use the corresponding guidance for questions 1-5 and 7-8.