



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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Family Programs Office: Statewide Child Welfare Policy Manual

MTL # 1004-040110

04/01/2010

TO: Amber Howell, Deputy Administrator - Division of Child and Family Services – Central Office
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POLICY DISTRIBUTION:

Enclosed find the following policy for distribution to all applicable staff within your organization:

- 1004 Training, Assessment and Licensing of Foster, Relative and Adoptive Homes

This policy is/was effective: 09/18/2009

This policy is new. Please review the policy in its entirety

This policy replaces the following policy(s): MTL # 1004-121207 Policy Name: Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE)

This policy has been revised. Please see below for the type of revision:

This is a significant policy revision. Please review this policy in its entirety.

This is a minor policy revision: (List page number & summary of change):

▪

A policy form has been revised: (List form, page number and summary of change):

▪

NOTE:

- Please read the policy in its entirety and note any areas that are additionally required by your agency to be in compliance with the policy enclosed.
- This is an **All STAFF MEMO** and it is the responsibility of the person listed above to disseminate the policy enclosed to appropriate staff within his/her organization and to ensure compliance.
- The most current version of this policy is posted on the DCFS Website at the following address: http://www.dcf.state.nv.us/DCFS_Policies_CW.htm. Please check the table of contents on this page for the link to the chapter you are interested in.

1004.0 Training, Assessment and Licensing of Foster, Relative and Adoptive Homes

1004.1 Policy Approval Clearance Record

Check one only: <input type="checkbox"/> State Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Policy	This policy supersedes: 1004-121207	Number of pages in Policy: 7 Date Policy Effective: 09/18/09
PART Recommendation Date:	N/A	Policy Lead: N. O'Neill, SSPSIII
DMG Approval Date:	09/18/2009	Policy Lead: N. O'Neill, SSPSIII
Review by Representative from the Office of the Attorney General:	N/A	Signature: N/A
DCFS Administrator Approval:	09/18/2009	Signature: ON FILE

1004.2 Statement of Purpose

1004.2.1 Policy Statement: Agencies providing child welfare services shall utilize and equivalent means of training, evaluating and assessing the appropriateness for licensing of potential family foster homes, relative and adoptive families (as required).

Agencies providing child welfare services shall maintain consistency in the information provided to prospective foster/adoptive parents and in the evaluative elements of home studies.

Purpose: This policy is intended to standardize foster and adoptive training, assessments and home studies across the State; and to promote a formalized foster and adoptive home study and assessment process that minimizes placement moves for children, and minimizes delays in assessments for families. It is intended to apply only to family based foster care, non-parental ICPC, relative care and adoptions. This policy is not applicable to licensing of group care for which shift staff is employed.

1004.3 Authority

NRS 127.2805
 NRS 424.030;
 NAC 127.390; .395; .400; .410; .420
 NAC 424.120;

1004.4 Definitions

1004.4.1 Agency which provides child welfares services:

- A. In a county whose population is less than 100,000, the local office of the Divisions of Child and Family Services: or
- B. In a county whose population is 100,000 or more, the agency of the county which provides or arranges for necessary child welfare services.
- C. May also be referred to as "Agency" or "Child Welfare Agency."

1004.4.2 Division of Child and Family Services: Nevada Agency under the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. May be referred to as DCFS, Division, or State.

1004.4.3 Dual Licensure: Approved families will be licensed to provide foster care and approved to adopt.

- 1004.4.4 Fictive Kin:** Refers to a person not related by birth or marriage who has a significant emotional and positive relationship with the child.
- 1004.4.5 ICPC:** Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.
- 1004.4.6 Partnering for Safety and Permanence-Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP):** A process, developed by the Child Welfare Institute, to train and license foster and adoptive families using consultation and interaction with the participants to allow families to “self select,” as they learn about the needs of children in foster care. Information used to complete the PS-MAPP home study is collected throughout the process.
- 1004.4.7 Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (P.R.I.D.E.):** A model for developing and supporting foster families and adoptive families, utilizing a standardized, consistent, structured framework for the competency-based recruitment, preparation, and selection of foster and adoptive parents, and for foster parent in-service training and ongoing professional development.
- 1004.4.8 Resource Family (Flex Family, Legal-Risk):** A family who is licensed to provide caregiver services for a child in the custody of a child welfare agency. The term refers to a family willing to work within the concurrent planning framework. These families understand that it is in the child’s best interest to reunify with their families, whenever possible. They establish mentoring-type relationships with birth families, yet are committed to guardianship, adoption or relative placement of the child if reunification efforts are not successful.
- 1004.4.9 State:** An alternate word for the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS); Family Programs Office (FPO); or the Bureau of Services for Child Care (BSCC).
- 1004.4.10 Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (S.A.F.E.):** The comprehensive family evaluation that utilizes four key elements in creating a home study suitable for both foster care and adoptive placements. These elements are (1) practice values; (2) information-gathering tools; (3) psychosocial evaluation; and (4) child-specific or non child-specific home study.

1004.5 Procedures

- 1004.5.1** Individual protocols for implementing foster/adoptive parent training and licensing will be developed by agencies providing child welfare services. Each agency will also have specific requirements of its workers in terms of training curriculum, supplemental tools and/or questionnaires used to train and assess a potential foster / adoptive parent. Some examples include P.R.I..D.E., PS-MAPP, and S.A.F.E.

D. Information Gathering

1. Information gathered during the home study process must include, but is not limited to, an assessment of the following, as applicable:
 - Personal history
 - Marital / Domestic Partner Relationship
 - Sons / Daughters / Others Residing in the Home
 - Extended Family Relationships
 - Physical / Social Environment
 - General Parenting
 - Specialized Parenting
 - Adoption Issues
 - Support systems
 - Work history
 - Parenting practices
 - Health

- Recent trauma
 - Past sexual abuse
 - Past physical and emotional abuse
 - Drug history
 - History of family violence
 - History of family or personal mental illness
2. During the training/licensing process, typical licensing activities should be occurring concurrently. For example, applicants will be completing their applications, submitting to criminal background checks, and having their initial home inspections completed by the worker to ensure compliance with regulations. In addition, orientation and pre-service training will have been completed by the time the final draft of the home study is completed except as noted in Section 1004.5.1 E. Finally, each agency providing child welfare services may determine that additional information is needed during this information-gathering phase. Each agency may create supplemental forms or questionnaires as deemed necessary.

E. Family Profile

1. Workers should be collecting and updating information for the homes study each time they have contact with the prospective foster/adoptive parents, either through training, questionnaires and/or personal interviews.
2. At the end of the information-gathering phase, when workers are preparing to begin the home study report, any item that is a concern must be addressed with the applicant before recommendation for approval is made by the worker. In some cases, it might be recommended by the worker that the applicant receive counseling or additional training before a recommendation for approval is made.

F. Home Study Reports

1. Workers are to use their agency approved template appropriate to the family circumstances as a guide to drafting the written home study.
2. The final home study report must encompass descriptive information about the family, and integrate psychosocial evaluation. The home study must encapsulate demographic, as well as descriptive information gathered from the initial application, any supplemental questionnaires, and personal interviews. In addition, the home study will also include information from the health and safety inspection and a psychosocial evaluation, which includes a written discussion of all of the issues identified in A. 1 above.
3. The home study report must also include recommendations for approval or denial, final conclusions, impressions of the family and describe the type(s) of children the family can best serve. The completed home study report should be submitted to the licensing supervisor, or adoption supervisor, as soon as completed for final approval or denial by the supervisor.

G. S.A.F.E. Matching Inventory (optional)

1. Once a home has been licensed as a resource family, agencies providing child welfare services may utilize the S.A.F.E. Matching Inventory, according to individual child welfare agency protocol. This tool is completed first by the worker. It rates the strengths and weaknesses of each resource family according to various topic areas. Once this is completed, the instrument is sent to caseworkers to complete on individual children from their caseloads. The tool has instructions for the worker completing the home study and the caseworkers. The intent of the matching inventory is to make more informed placement decisions, utilizing the knowledge the worker has gained through completing a S.A.F.E. home study and the knowledge the caseworker has of the individual child.

2. The Matching Inventory is also available as a preformatted Microsoft Word file, available for download to a worker's computer.

H. Abbreviated Assessment and Home Study

1. In rare circumstances, and only with documented approval from a supervisor, an expedited assessment and home study may be conducted. Circumstances for expediting an assessment and home study need to fall into one of the following categories:
 - Relatives seeking licensure in order to obtain reimbursement for children already living in the home **and** no ASFA waivers will be sought;
 - Relatives, in whose home an out-of-state child will be placed (ICPC) **and** no ASFA waivers will be sought; and
 - Fictive family where the child has resided for a minimum of six months **and** no ASFA waivers will be sought.
2. Expedited assessments and home studies must include all of the required elements and orientation and pre-service training must be completed within 12 months of licensure under this provision

I. Summary of Home Study Procedures

1. Worker conducts joint interview (including spouse or domestic partner), or single applicant interview.
2. Begin collection of information for a "family profile."
3. Worker will conduct individual interviews with each applicant.
4. Additional interviews may be initiated according to child welfare agency protocol. A minimum of two (2) personal interviews must be in the applicant's home.
5. Worker reviews all documentation related to the applicants, including the application, interviews, training exercises, questionnaires, biographies and/or profiles, references, background checks, and medical reports, if applicable.
6. Worker completes the home study report based on the specific family situation. The home study must incorporate all information gathered during the process, including the psychosocial evaluation. The worker will make recommendations whether to approve or disapprove the applicants as a resource family. The licensing worker will indicate if:
 - The family has identified a specific child they are interested in, but the child is not living in the home.
 - The family has identified a specific child, and that child is already residing in the home.
 - The family is interested in foster care / adoption / Flexible Family or Legal Risk Adoption / shelter care, but does not have a specific child in mind.
7. Annual updates for all types of resource families are required, according to statute, regulation and individual child welfare agency protocol.

1004.5.2 Timelines:

Table 1004.1: Timelines for implementation

Requirement	Deadline	Starting Date	Responsible Party	Actions to be Taken
Implement-policy and procedures for training, evaluating and assessing the appropriateness of potential family foster care, ICPC, licensed relative and adoptive families.		Within 90 days of approval of this policy	Child welfare agency staff responsible for completing foster home licensing, adoption and ICPC home studies.	Complete training, licensing and home studies for dual licensure of foster and adoptive families including all required elements.

1004.5.3 Forms and Tools:

J. FPO 1004A: SAFE Matching Inventory (Optional)

1004.5.4 Documentation:

A. Case File Documentation (paper):

Table 1004.2 Case File Documentation for SAFE Policy

File Location	Data Required
Information will be located in adoption, licensing or ICPC case files.	Completed applications, biographies, profiles and/or questionnaires, initial and annual home study reports; matching inventory (if used); other supplemental forms and information gathering tools used to complete the home study.

A. Electronic Documentation (UNITY):

Table 1004.3: UNITY Documentation Policy 1004

Applicable UNITY Screen	Data Required
CFS179	Supervisory approval/denial of home study.

1004.5.5 Child Welfare Agency Supervisory Responsibility:

- A.** Review home studies for denial or approval; and conduct case reviews to ensure worker compliance with the policy.

1004.6 Child Welfare Agency Policy Compliance Requirements

1004.6.1 Development of Internal Policies:

- A.** Refer to Section 1004.5.1. Agencies will develop individual protocols to implement this policy.

1004.6.2 Forms and Report Requirements:

- A.** Agencies will develop or utilize existing approved tools and forms (i.e. S.A.F.E. instruments) to implement this policy.

1004.6.3 Compliance Timelines: N/A

1004.7 State Responsibilities

1004.7.1 Participants in Policy Development

- A. FPO Staff: N. O’Neill, Social Service Program Specialist III
- B. Child Welfare Agency Representatives: N/A
- C. External Stakeholders: N/A

1004.7.2 Technical Assistance

- A. Technical Assistance Received: N/A
- B. Resources: N/A

1004.7.3 Clearance Record

Table 1004.4: Policy Clearance History

Policy Name & MTL Number	Workgroup Name & Review Dates	DAG Recommendation Date	PART Final Recommendation Date	DMG Final Approval Date	DCFS Admin. Approval Date	Effective Date
1004-040110	Unknown	n/a	00/00/00	09/18/09	09/18/09	09/18/09
1004-121207	Unknown	n/a	n/a	10/30/07	06/07/05	06/07/05
200 – SAFE	Unknown	n/a	n/a	n/a	06/07/05	06/07/05
400 Licensing Manual	Unknown	n/a	n/a	n/a	06/2005	08/01/05

1004.8 Policy Cross Reference

- 0701 Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)
- 1002 Waivers – Foster Care & Adoption
- 1003 Kinship Care

1004.9 Attachments:

N/A