

Comprehensive Provider Assessment Instructions

These instructions are designed to be used when completing the Comprehensive Provider Assessment, including assessing 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 Provider 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	When to Complete
CPS Assessment; child cannot be safely maintained in own home. Parent identifies Temporary Safety Provider.	Initial Provider Assessment	Prior to child being placed with Temporary Safety Provider, and reviewed and updated prior to case decision.
CPS In-Home Services; child cannot be safely maintained in own home. Parent identified Temporary Safety Provider.	Initial Provider Assessment Comprehensive Provider Assessment	Initial: Prior to child being placed with Temporary Safety Provider. Comprehensive: Within 30 days of placement with Temporary Safety Provider.
CPS In-Home Services; child was placed with Temporary Safety Provider during the assessment and case was transferred to In-Home Services.	Comprehensive Provider Assessment	Within 30 days of case being transferred to In-Home Services.
Permanency Planning Services; relative/fictive kin has been identified as a placement resource.	Initial Provider Assessment Comprehensive Provider Assessment	Initial: Prior to child being placed with relative/fictive kin. Comprehensive: Within 30 days of placement with relative/fictive kin.
Permanency Planning Services; child was placed with Temporary Safety Provider during In-Home Services and custody was assumed within 30 days of placement.	Comprehensive Provider Assessment	Within 30 days of custody.
**Permanency Planning Services; guardianship with a relative, fictive kin, or foster parent is being considered after reunification and adoption have been ruled out as suitable options.	Comprehensive Provider Assessment, including the assessment for Guardianship on page 10.	Within 30 days of recommending to the court that Guardianship be awarded.

**Optional, but recommended in order to assess the child and potential guardian prior to recommending to the court that guardianship be awarded to the caregiver.

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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 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 Instructions (DSS-5203ins) for additional instructions on that form.

Completing the Comprehensive Provider Assessment

The Comprehensive Provider Assessment will support decisions about use of a kinship provider that is safe and able to meet the child(ren)'s ongoing needs.

All the information requested on Page 1 can be carried over from the Initial Provider Assessment form, but it must also be updated as additional information is received. Note: Development of a diagram of the kinship network is a helpful tool in working with the family to help them identify its support system, the nature of the interrelationships and recurring patterns in issues such as abuse, substance use, suicide, etc.

Page 1 captures demographic information and information required for background checks, including criminal, CPS, and 911 call logs.

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

*When documenting the child's, kinship caregivers', and other household members' race and ethnicity on page 1, use the following guide:

Race	Ethnicity
American Indian or Alaskan Native	Hispanic or Latino
Asian	Not Hispanic or Latino
Black or African American	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	
White	

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, or within 30 days of initiating In-Home or Permanency Planning Services. The Comprehensive Assessment may also be used to update information about the placement in preparation for court reviews and permanency planning reviews. The county child welfare worker will need professional expertise to evaluate these factors. If the child welfare worker does not have the training and experience to accurately assess the family, another child welfare worker or supervisor should accompany them on this assessment visit.

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Ratings for the Requirements (A/F/U)

Acceptable: Based on the information obtained, the provider(s) and/or his or her home is found to be safe and appropriate for consideration for the child(ren) regarding this requirement.

Follow Up Needed: Based on the information obtained, services and/or modifications are required for the provider(s) and/or his or her home to be found safe and/or appropriate for the child(ren) regarding this requirement. Any identified services or modifications must be clearly identified with a plan for resolution with a required completion date (indicate on Page 8 Review Date). Use page 7-8 to document additional details if needed. If a provider is unable to provide care immediately, but could do so within a short time frame, assess if this is the best resource for the child and, if so, arrange for another provider (preferably with a relative) and assess this resource as a backup placement.

Unacceptable: Based on the information obtained, the provider(s) and/or his or her home is found to be unsafe and/or inappropriate for the child(ren) regarding this requirement.

Upon completion, the assessment form must be reviewed with the caretaker(s), signed and dated by the caretaker(s) and the county child welfare worker. The child welfare supervisor must review and sign the form as soon as possible, or on the next working day.

Guidance on Comprehensive Provider Assessment Tool

1. As the child welfare 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/contact plan. Determine if these attitudes are having a negative influence on the Family Time and Contact 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 interventive 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

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functioning based on the day-to-day activities.

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

Guardianship Assessment

This section of the assessment tool should be completed when recommending guardianship be awarded to a specific person(s), including relatives, fictive kin, and foster parents. This tool assesses the potential guardian's willingness to provide a permanent home for the child and meet the child's well-being needs, the child's attachment to the potential guardian, the child's feelings about the guardianship arrangement, and the child's eligibility for guardianship assistance. All factors listed in this section must be met in order for guardianship to be pursued.

Guardianship Assistance Program

Factors 1-5 must be met in order for the child to be eligible for the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP). If the child is not eligible for GAP, the potential guardian should be made fully aware that if they assume guardianship, they may be eligible for adoption assistance if they later decide to adopt.