

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING JFS 01673, ASSESSMENT FOR CHILD
PLACEMENT**

- **DESCRIBE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY**

Due to federal requirements the homestudy shall not reference the racial or ethnic composition of the neighborhood, the demographics of the neighborhood, and/or the presence or lack of presence of a significant number of persons of a particular race, color, or national origin in the neighborhood. The homestudy should, however, reference the general resources available in the community, such as medical facilities, counseling agencies, schools, colleges, places of worship, theaters, museums, and recreational opportunities.

- **HOME EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

If the applicant currently provides home education for children living in the home or plans to provide home education for any child that will be placed, discuss the home education program and curriculum and the child's educational progress. Indicate whether the home education program has been approved by the superintendent of the local public school district. Discuss the level of flexibility a foster caregiver has regarding home education, as the custodial agency has the right to require a foster child attend public school.

- **CHILDREN RESIDING IN THE HOME (Complete for each child in the home)**

- Describe child's physical appearance and general personality. Describe the types of activities the child enjoys (i.e., music, sports, reading). Indicate child's general activity level and any special talents.
- Describe child's educational situation - school attended or home education program, grade, days per week in school, any special learning challenges the child may have, and any special educational program in which child participates. Describe child's functioning in school academically, behaviorally and socially (Include both positive and negative aspects).
- Discuss the child's physical health. Does the child have any significant or ongoing health issues or take any prescription medication on a regular basis? Does the child have any physical limitations or challenges?
- Describe any developmental delays this child may have, and how this impacts the daily life of the family.
- Describe the child's feelings about another child entering the home, sharing his/her parent(s), space, toys, attention. Is this child excited, unhappy, interested in the prospect? How realistic are the child's expectations?
- Discuss the likely impact of foster care or adoption on this child. Describe how activities now shared between child and one or both parents in the home will be affected. Discuss how birth order/role changes are likely to impact this child and any special considerations that will need to be made to assure this child's needs continue to be adequately met.

- **ADULT CHILDREN OF THE APPLICANT(S)**

(Complete for each adult child of the applicant, including adults who may also live in the home)

- Describe the adult child's perspective on their upbringing, childhood, family life.

- Describe the adult child's current relationship with the applicant(s). Discuss how often they have contact, what type of contact, etc.
- Describe how this relationship will be impacted by foster care or adoption. What role will the adult child play in the foster or adopted child's life? Will they be involved in family activities? Will they be a support to the applicants and able to assist with foster or adopted children?

- **NON-APPLICANT ADULTS IN THE HOME**

(Complete for each adult member of the household who is not an applicant, including any adult children who may live in the home)

- Describe the individual's appearance and general personality. Discuss why this person resides in the household and the relationship between this person and applicant #1 or applicant #2.
- Briefly describe the individual's education and employment history. Describe the individual's health, noting any recurring health problems or physical limitations as well as any mental health issues. Note any past or present issues with drug or alcohol abuse.
- Ohio law requires a criminal records check be conducted for any person eighteen years old or older who lives in the foster or adoptive home. Does applicant or individual report that this adult has a history of criminal behavior? If so, describe. Is there any indication or evidence that this individual has ever hurt a child?
- Describe how the individual feels about a child or children coming into the home and how he/she perceives the child or children will fit into the family. Describe what this individual's relationship/responsibilities will include regarding foster/adopt children in the home.

- **SUMMARIZE APPLICANT'S PERSONAL HISTORY.**

- List full legal name, date and place of birth.
- Give family of origin information. (Description of parents, siblings, and significant others including past and present relationship with these people).
- What methods of discipline or punishment was applicant exposed to as a child? What methods does applicant feel were most effective? least effective?
- How did applicant achieve emancipation?
- How does applicant describe their sexual development?
- Explore applicant's education. What were challenges and successes?
- Explore applicant's employment and work life experience. What have been challenges? Successes?
- What does applicant consider significant events in their life thus far?
- Discuss previous marriages/significant relationships? Is there ongoing contact? Were children involved (discuss child support and visitation issues)? What were lessons learned?
- Discuss any fertility issues. Where is applicant in grief process regarding these issues (this includes single applicants who may be childless)?
- Discuss history of health problems, either with applicant or in extended family, including alcohol or drug abuse. Discuss mental health history.
- Discuss any history of criminal behavior.
- Discuss applicant's use of leisure time. What are applicant's hobbies, talents, interests?
- Discuss goals for the future: educational, career, and/or relationships.

- **DESCRIBE EVIDENCE OF PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY.**

- Give examples of applicant's ability or inability to delay gratification. Describe instances where applicant may have felt unappreciated. How did they handle those situations?

- Discuss a time when the applicant felt frustrated or rejected. How did they handle it and what was the outcome?
- How is conflict managed in the family? Is applicant able to realistically identify their own strengths and vulnerabilities?
- How does applicant express feelings, especially anger?

- **DESCRIBE APPLICANT'S COPING SKILLS AND HISTORY OF STRESS MANAGEMENT.**
 - Include description and examples of how applicant handles grief and loss. Is applicant able to see humor in stressful situations?
 - Is applicant flexible? Do they usually have a back-up plan?
 - When confronted with an "impossible" task does this person: dig in and work harder? ignore the situation? ask for help?
 - How does the applicant know when they are getting stressed out, what are the indicators? What do they do to take care of themselves?

- **DESCRIBE APPLICANT'S STABILITY AND QUALITY OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.**
 - Give examples of strengths or vulnerabilities in this area. Is stability reflected in family history and current relationships?
 - Who does the applicant rely on for support when they need anything? How long have they known them and what kind of support have they helped the applicant with in the past?
 - Does this person have long term or close friendships, or primarily remain to himself, with "associates" rather than friends?

- **DESCRIBE THE LEVEL OF OPENNESS APPLICANT HAS IN RELATIONSHIPS.**
 - Describe boundary issues as well as general openness or rigidity to new ideas or accepting help. Has the applicant ever used community resources to help solve a problem? How do they feel about getting help from outside their immediate or extended family?
 - Is this person able to be flexible in their roles when the situation calls for it? Does applicant acknowledge and appreciate individual differences between people?
 - What challenges does the applicant anticipate in the extended family with integrating foster or adopted children with other grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, etc.

- **DESCRIBE APPLICANT'S ABILITY TO EMPATHIZE WITH OTHERS.**
 - Give example(s) of instances where this has been a strength or caused problems in applicant's life. Give your impression of applicant's ability to correctly interpret verbal, non-verbal and behavioral cues. Can they tell when people in their family are upset?
 - Describe applicant's ability to verbalize what another person is feeling. Are they able to visualize themselves in the child's or birth parent's place without being judgmental?

- **DESCRIBE APPLICANT’S MOTIVATION TO FOSTER/ADOPT.**
 - What is the reason and interest in foster care/adoption? Why now?
 - What is their understanding of foster care/adoption?
 - What are their expectations? What do they think it will be like?
 - How many children are they interested in providing foster care for or adopting?
 - What kind of child or children do the applicants feel prepared to parent? Age, race, sex, special needs, etc. Be generic as JFS 01673A will list specific information. What type of child are they not willing to parent? Is this the same for foster care and adoption?

- **DESCRIBE EVIDENCE OF APPLICANT’S UNDERSTANDING OF ENTITLEMENT ISSUES.**
 - Does applicant understand how entitlement issues impact foster and adoptive families?
 - Are they able to verbalize their feelings about parenting “another person’s birth child?” What worries them about parenting another person’s child?
 - Do they show evidence of an ability to internalize their rights and responsibilities (limited in foster care but entire in adoption)?

- **DESCRIBE EVIDENCE OF APPLICANT’S ABILITY TO MAKE AND HONOR COMMITMENTS.**
 - Give examples of applicant’s ability or inability to maintain long-term relationships and to keep promises/commitments even when applicant’s quality of life may seem adversely affected.
 - Is applicant able to realistically anticipate child’s future needs and problems? Are they capable of meeting long term needs of children in care? For adoptive applicants, are they willing to continue the parenting role into the child’s adulthood?
 - Describe something the applicant has made a lifelong commitment to. Are there times the applicant wanted to give up? What was the outcome?

- **DESCRIBE APPLICANT’S PARENTING SKILLS AND ABILITIES.**
 - Describe the applicant’s parenting style. Describe the nature and extent of previous experience with child supervision and parenting. Does applicant *enjoy* parenting activities? What about parenting gives them satisfaction? Frustration?
 - Describe applicant’s knowledge of various parenting skills/techniques and their experience with practical application of these. If applicant has children, do they parent them all exactly the same way?
 - How do they/would they handle sibling issues such as jealousy, fighting, and competition? What concerns do they have in integrating foster or adopted children with their biological children?
 - Describe applicant’s ability to help children develop confidence and positive self-esteem.

- **DESCRIBE APPLICANT'S ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE A "HANDS ON" APPROACH TO PARENTING.**
 - Cite evidence that applicant will or will not be able to take an active role (vs. passive role) and model appropriate behaviors for the child.
 - Can they use concrete behavior management techniques as well as strategies of a more cognitive nature? Can the applicant do "time-in" with the child rather than having the child do "time-out?"
- **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN APPLICANT #1 AND APPLICANT #2**
 - Discuss how relationship began and length of relationship. How has the relationship changed over time? Describe roles within the relationship. Discuss common interests and goals. Are there areas of difference or discord?
 - Discuss the stability of the relationship. Have there been separations? Has counseling been used? If so, did applicant feel it was useful?
 - Discuss difficulties faced in this relationship, such as financial problems, in-law issues, parenting conflicts or infertility.
 - Discuss how relationship has impacted (or will impact) parenting. How have (will) parenting decisions be made? What do (will) parenting roles look like? How flexible are parenting roles?
 - Whose initial idea was it to foster/adopt? Discuss compatibility/differences in motivation, commitment and energy level toward foster/adoptive plan.
 - Discuss how this relationship will likely be impacted by providing foster care or adopting?
- **SUPPORT SYSTEM**
 - Describe and discuss the family's support system. Include both informal and formal resources - family, friends, church, counselor, club, support group, etc. Include historical and current supports and also who the family plans to use for support in the future.
 - Who do they go to for advice? Who will provide child care if needed? Who will provide respite care?
 - What are the reported opinions of extended family and close friends regarding the applicant's intent to foster/adopt? Is this (and/or would this) be different for foster care versus adoption?
 - In case the applicants are unable to care for any adopted children, who would be responsible for the children long-term? Is this the same plan as the biological children?
- **RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND/OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS**
 - Outline each applicant's religious/spiritual situation. If there are two applicants, comment on compatibility of beliefs and/or methods used to address differences.
 - Discuss impact of religious/spiritual beliefs on family's day-to-day life. Discuss church or synagogue attendance, religious traditions, family rituals, etc.
 - What are the beliefs of extended family members, as they relate to the applicant's family and prospective foster/adoptive children (for example, will extended family expect certain religious rituals or activities for child?)
 - How do applicant(s) intend to meet a child's religious needs? How will conflicts be resolved if the child entering the home has differing religious heritage or practices/beliefs? Is there flexibility in being able to meet the child's needs if they are different from the family regarding religion?

- **FAMILY FINANCES**

- Discuss the family's overall financial situation. Is current income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household? How will the placement of a child or children affect the family financially? Is the family realistic regarding changes that may have to occur in this area?
- If applicable, has family been informed of possible foster care board rates and/or adoption subsidies available? If applicable, has family been informed of the availability and uses of a medical card? Does family appear to understand these programs?
- How are the family's financial decisions made?

(For adoption applicants)

- When will the adopted child be eligible for coverage on the family's health insurance?
- What types of paid leave or other benefits does the applicant(s)'s employer(s) offer regarding adoption?

- **ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING FOSTER CARE/ADOPTION ISSUES**

(For all applicants)

- Discuss each applicant's attitude toward birth parents who a) are unmarried, b) abused their child, c) neglected their child, d) are unable to care for their child due to parent's physical or intellectual limitations, e) are unable to care for their child due to parental abuse of drugs or alcohol, f) are unable to care for a specific child due to the child's special needs, and/or g) chooses not to parent the child for other reasons.
- Describe applicant's ability and/or willingness to have contact with birth parents or other relatives. Describe the type/frequency of contact with which the applicant would be comfortable. Could the applicant support the child being allowed ongoing contact with birth siblings; with grandparents or other extended family; with birth parents? Discuss levels/conditions of openness. Would these be different depending if child is a foster child or adopted child?
- Discuss applicant's attitude toward previous caregivers or significant others, such as previous foster parents, teachers or therapists. Is applicant supportive of child remaining in contact with previous caregivers or significant others? Discuss levels/conditions of openness.
- Describe foster/adoptive parent's understanding of the separation and loss that children go through in the child welfare system. Discuss applicant's plan to help children cope with these issues.
- Consider the type of child the foster or adoptive applicant is willing to consider. How does the applicant imagine that child fitting into the home? What challenges do they anticipate?
- What does applicant expect from the agency to help them be successful?

(For foster care applicants)

- What is the family's ability to accept and work toward reunification with the child's birth family? If appropriate to the reunification plan, would the applicant consider mentoring the birth parent(s) directly?
- Is the family willing to create a Lifebook for the child(ren) in their home. Are they willing to display pictures of birth parents in the child's room?
- Discuss the applicant's ability to help the child transition back to the birth family or onto an adoptive placement. Is applicant willing to help do what is best for the child even if they do not agree with the plan for the child?
- Is applicant open to placement of a child into the home for which permanent custody is likely but not yet granted? Discuss level of risk applicant is willing to accept. Describe applicant's strengths and limitations in ability to manage and cope with such a placement.

(For adoption applicants)

- How does the applicant plan to talk to the child about their past and about adoption? Include attitudes regarding access to and use of lifebook and/or other items that connect the child with their

biological roots and placement history.

- If ongoing direct or indirect contact with birth family does not occur, how will adoptive applicant feel if child searches for birth relatives as an adult? What if the child chooses not to search?

- **SUMMARY OF COLLATERAL CONTACTS AND INFORMATION**

- Summarize references including attempts to obtain references from all other agencies or organizations for which the applicant has provided care and/or supervision of children, be it paid or voluntary.
- Has applicant ever applied to foster/adopt before? To whom and when did they apply? What was the outcome? Attach previous assessment forms/reports as needed. How does the family feel about their experience? What did they learn/gain from this experience?
- Has applicant ever received services from a social services agency? If yes, provide details.