


To: DCF Area Administrators  
Child Placing Agency Directors  
Child Welfare Agency Directors  
County Departments of Community Programs Directors  
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities Services Directors  
County Departments of Human Services Directors  
County Departments of Social Services Directors  
Group Home Providers  
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors  
Private Child Placing Agencies  
Residential Care Center Providers  
Shelter Care Providers  
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove   
Administrator

Re: SAFE Home Study Assessment Policy

## **PURPOSE**

This memo sets forth policy requirements for the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation, commonly known as the SAFE tool, for those approving foster care licenses and adoptive homes as required under 2015 WI Act 378. This memo supersedes Numbered Memo 2016-04: Standardized Assessment for the Home Study Process in Foster Care Licensure and Adoption Approval.

## **BACKGROUND**

Recently signed 2015 WI Act 378 requires the use of a standardized assessment, commonly referred to as a "home study", for the process of licensing a home for foster care and approval of adoption. Use of a standardized assessment is intended to improve the method by which agencies study and evaluate prospective foster and adoptive parents. The Department has approved the use of the SAFE home study assessment as the standardized assessment tool.

The SAFE home study assessment is a standardized home study developed by the Consortium for Children. The SAFE home study assists agencies in performing a thorough, structured, and uniform evaluation of families who have applied to become foster or adoptive parents. The SAFE home study assists in identifying and addressing both strengths and areas of concern that may impede functioning, as well as parenting.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS**

Use of the SAFE home study assessment is required for all foster care licensing and to evaluate the suitability of the home for a child who is the subject of an adoption effective October 1, 2016. This requirement applies to all counties, child placing agencies, and the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS).

Additionally, under this Act, the requirement for the standardized home study applies to all public and private adoptions in Wisconsin, whether the child is a U.S. or foreign citizen, but does not apply to an adoption by a stepparent for which other screening standards are required under current law.

The policy requirements for use of the SAFE home study assessment includes the process for completing the SAFE home study, as well as the mandatory training requirements for home study practitioners and supervisors who will be approving the home study report. The policy is effective upon issuance of this numbered memo.

### **eWiSACWIS DOCUMENTATION**

Effective October 1, 2016, agencies shall document the SAFE home study report for foster care licensure and adoption approval in eWiSACWIS. Attached to this memo is the updated Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS policy, which includes requirements for eWiSACWIS documentation of the SAFE home study report.

### **ACTION SUMMARY**

All counties, child placing agencies, and the DMCPS are required to comply with all of the requirements set forth in this memo.

This requirement is effective October 1, 2016 and requires the use of the SAFE home study assessment when licensing a home for foster care and adoption approval.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: DCF Area Administrator

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Out-of-Home Care Specialist  
Bureau of Permanency and Out-of-Home Care  
(608) 422-6937

MEMO WEB SITE: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Attachments: Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Home Study Assessment Policy  
Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS  
[DCF-F-CFS2386-E](#): Foster Home Information for eWiSACWIS

## **Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Home Study Assessment**

### **Introduction**

The SAFE home study assessment is a standardized home study developed by the Consortium for Children. The SAFE home study assists agencies in performing a thorough, structured, and uniform evaluation of families who have applied to become foster or adoptive parents. The SAFE home study assists in identifying and addressing both strengths and areas of concern that may impede functioning, as well as parenting.

Use of a standardized home study assessment is one of the tools agencies use in documenting the analysis of the determination as to whether or not a prospective foster or adoptive home is fit and qualified for caring for children placed in out-of-home care. Consideration must be given to the importance of matching a prospective foster or adoptive home with a child whose needs can be met in that home. The home study determines if a family is ready, willing, and able to become a suitable and safe placement resource for a child or children using the criteria of safety, permanence, and well-being.

In addition to the requirements for completing the SAFE home study assessment, agencies shall also comply with requirements set forth in Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code, Foster Home Care for Children; Ch. DCF 51 Admin. Code, Adoption of Children with Special Needs and Preadoption Preparation Training; and Ch. DCF 54 Admin. Code, Child Placing Agencies, as applicable.

### **Applicability**

Use of the SAFE home study assessment is required for all foster care licensing in Wisconsin and as the evaluation to determine the suitability of the home for a child who is the subject of an adoption.

The requirement for a standardized home study applies to all public and private adoptions in Wisconsin, whether the child is a U.S. or foreign citizen, but does not apply to an adoption by a stepparent for which other screening standards are required under current law.

This policy applies to all counties, child placing agencies, and the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) prior to issuing a foster home license or adoption approval. Agencies may only provide home study approval within their statutory authority under s. 48.57 (1) (hm), Wis. Stats.

The requirements under this policy are contained in boxes.

Agencies shall assure that all actions of either the agency or contracted provider staff comply with this policy.

## **Definitions**

“Home Study Practitioner” is the caseworker or licenser who is completing the home study components and writing the home study report for foster care licensure and/or adoption approval, and has also completed the mandatory training requirements.

## **SAFE Home Study Assessment Components**

The home study process is broad and goes beyond evaluating family dynamics. The SAFE home study assessment has three components that shall be utilized when administering the assessment:

- Information Gathering Tools
- Structured Analysis Tools
- Preformatted Home Study Report

SAFE home study practitioners shall utilize these three components when administering the SAFE home study. Each component is described in more detail below. For additional information on the SAFE home study process, review *Appendix A, SAFE Home Study Flow Chart*, and *Appendix B, SAFE Supervisor Flow Chart*.

## **Information Gathering Tools**

The SAFE home study process utilizes the following information gathering tools to support the SAFE interview with families:

- SAFE Questionnaire I
- SAFE Questionnaire II
- Reference Letters
- Home Study Interview

Home study practitioners are required to administer each of these tools, which are explained further below.

### **SAFE Questionnaire I**

SAFE Questionnaire I reviews a variety of areas that are related to family history and functioning. Home study practitioners shall administer Questionnaire I using the following guidelines:

- Provide Questionnaire I to the foster home or adoptive home applicant(s) to complete and return to the agency prior to the first interview. Typically, this will be provided with the foster home or adoptive home application.
- Questionnaire I shall be administered to each applicant; it may also be administered to other members of the household, if the agency chooses.
- SAFE home study practitioners shall review the completed Questionnaire I in preparation for the home study interviews.

The template for Questionnaire I is available for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#). The template is only available to individuals who have completed the two-day initial SAFE training.

### **SAFE Questionnaire II**

SAFE Questionnaire II reviews issues or behaviors amongst the applicant(s). Home study practitioners shall administer Questionnaire II using the following guidelines:

- Questionnaire II shall not be provided or mailed to the applicant(s) ahead of time.
- Questionnaire II shall never leave the home study practitioner's sight or control.
- Questionnaire II shall be administered directly by the home study practitioner in a private setting with all applicants present and together.
- Questionnaire II shall be administered to all applicants; it may also be administered to other members of the household, if the agency chooses.
- Applicants shall not communicate with each other or the home study practitioner while completing Questionnaire II.
- Home study practitioners shall interview each applicant privately and individually immediately after the administration of Questionnaire II. The SAFE training provides practitioners with resources and information to assist in their interviews.

The template for Questionnaire II is available for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#). The template is only available to individuals who have completed the two-day initial SAFE training.

### **Reference Letters**

Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code requires reference letters in accordance to the applicant's level of care certification, which are required as part of the SAFE home study process. References shall be administered for each applicant as required under Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code.

Reference letters shall be mailed to the individuals who will be providing the reference; they shall not be given to the applicant to provide the letter to the individuals. Reference letters shall be returned directly to the agency.

The template for the Reference Letter is available for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#). The template is only available to individuals who have completed the two-day initial SAFE training. Agencies may use the Reference Letter template provided by the Consortium for Children, or they may use their own agency-specific reference letter.

### **Home Study Interview**

The home study interview is considered the most important aspect of the SAFE home study process. The Information Gathering Tools noted above shall be used to develop questions to ask the applicants in the home study interviews. Interviews shall be age and developmentally appropriate and include the use of interpretive services, as needed.

### **Applicants:**

A minimum of three interviews are required per applicant. If the home is a two-parent home, a

minimum of four interviews are required, as the second interview shall be completed with each applicant separately.

- First interview: Introductory interview with all applicants.
- Second interview: Questionnaire II and applicant history. Conducted with each applicant individually and privately.
- Third interview: Marriage and/or support interview with all applicants.

**Other Household Members:**

All household members shall be interviewed. If there are any other household members, such as children or others residing in the home, additional interviews are required.

**Documentation**

The agency shall document and maintain original copies of the completed Information Gathering Tools in the applicant’s file.

Agencies shall only release the Information Gathering Tools to the applicant for which they reference (i.e. agencies shall not release one of the Information Gathering Tools to applicant one, if they are referencing applicant two).

There are additional recommendations related to the home study interviews, which include:

- All home study interviews occur in the applicants’ home.
- No interview takes longer than an hour and a half.
- At least 7 days pass between home study interviews.

**Structured Analysis Tools**

The SAFE home study format also provides home study practitioners with structured analysis tools to assist the evaluation of the applicants. SAFE uses the Psychosocial Inventory and SAFE Desk Guide to complete a psychosocial evaluation that is incorporated into the home study report. The Psychosocial Inventory and SAFE Desk Guide are complimentary tools that support and guide the home study process. Home study practitioners shall use both of these tools during the home study process.

**Psychosocial Inventory**

The Psychosocial Inventory contains psychosocial factors to be considered by the home study practitioner when completing the home study. The Psychosocial Inventory reviews any issues, behaviors, and events that have occurred in an applicant’s history and determines if they currently impact an applicant’s functioning or ability to parent.

**SAFE Desk Guide**

The SAFE Desk Guide defines each factor of the Psychosocial Inventory and provides criteria to guide the home study practitioner in rating the applicants’ strengths and issues of concern.

## **Preformatted Home Study Report**

The SAFE home study process provides a preformatted home study report that assists the home study practitioner in writing the home study.

The home study report is organized into five sections:

- Information about the applicants;
- An introduction to the applicants;
- The Psychosocial Evaluation;
- Conclusions and Recommendations; and
- Signatures of the applicants, the home study practitioner writing the home study, and the supervisor approving the home study.

Applicants shall be provided the opportunity to review the home study report. Applicants shall sign the home study report once it has been reviewed. If an applicant chooses not to sign the home study report, the agency shall attach documentation to the home study report that states the applicant had the opportunity to review and sign the home study report and chose not to do so.

## **Timeframe**

The home study report shall be completed prior to the agency rendering a decision on the application as described in Ch. DCF 56.04(5) Admin. Code.

## **Documentation**

The Department of Children and Families has a SAFE home study template approved by the Consortium for Children which incorporates other licensing requirements per Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code. Agencies shall document the results of the home study for initial licensure/approval and renewal on this template, which is available to agencies through eWiSACWIS, the Department's website, or for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#).

Additionally, child placing agencies shall provide a copy of the completed and signed home study report to the Department of Children and Families for documentation in eWiSACWIS using the following form:

- [DCF-F-CFS2386-E Foster Home Information for eWiSACWIS](#)

## **Initial Home Study Report**

Agencies with access to eWiSACWIS shall document the initial home study report in eWiSACWIS prior to the issuance of a foster home license or adoption approval.

Agencies without access to eWiSACWIS shall document the initial home study report in the home provider file. Agencies may access the home study report at the following links or for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#):

- [DCF-F-CFS2402B-E Multipurpose Home Study Report - Couples / Single](#)
- [DCF-F-CFS2402A-E Multipurpose Home Study Report - Couples / Single \(With Instructions\)](#)

### **Home Study Report Update/Recertification**

Agencies with access to eWiSACWIS shall document the home study report update/recertification in eWiSACWIS prior to the issuance of a foster home license or adoption approval.

Agencies required to provide home study report updates to the Council on Accreditation (COA), shall provide the updated home study report in the SAFE format.

Agencies without access to eWiSACWIS shall document the home study report update/recertification in the home provider file. Agencies may access the home study report at the following links or for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#):

- [DCF-F-2623B-E Multipurpose Home Study Update / Recertification](#)
- [DCF-F-2623A-E Multipurpose Home Study Update / Recertification \(With Instructions\)](#)

For more information and guidance on writing a SAFE home study update/recertification see *Appendix C, Directions for Using the SAFE Update*.

### **International Adoptions**

The Consortium for Children has a home study report available that is specific to international adoptions. The international adoption home study report is Hague compliant. The template for the international adoption home study report is available for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#). The template is only available to individuals who have completed the two-day initial SAFE training.

There are two versions of each type of home study report available, which are listed above. Both versions contain the same content; however, the home study reports with instructions will include additional information to guide the home study practitioner when writing the report. Agencies without access to eWiSACWIS may choose to use whichever version they prefer, with or without instructions.

If agencies require additional agency-specific information in the home study report, the agency may include this information in an addendum to the home study report. Additionally, if agencies require a notary on the home study report, the notary may be included in the signature page of the report or in an addendum to the report.

### **Compatibility Inventory**

The SAFE Compatibility Inventory provides a systemic and comprehensive method to identify an applicant's compatibility with a child or children to be placed in their home. The Compatibility Inventory evaluates an applicant's strengths and resources and the child's needs. The Compatibility Inventory can be either child specific or for a future placement.

The template for the Compatibility Inventory is available for download on the [Consortium for Children's website](#). The template is only available to individuals who have completed the two-day initial SAFE training.



Agencies may utilize the Compatibility Inventory, if the agency chooses, or agencies may utilize provider characteristics as required in the [Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS](#) policy. Additionally, agencies may utilize the Information to Out-of-Home Care Providers Part A & B forms as set forth in Ch. DCF 37 Admin. Code.

### **Technical Assistance**

The Consortium for Children will provide agencies with technical assistance as they complete the SAFE home study process. The Consortium for Children will provide the following technical assistance:

- SAFE Resource Center, which provides support articles, information about SAFE, and other helpful resources. The SAFE Resource Center can be accessed at the [Consortium for Children's website](#).
- Clinical and technical support, which provides agencies with a free 40-hour a week help desk. SAFE clinical and technical support may be contacted at the SAFE help desk, (415) 491-2418 or on the [Consortium for Children's website](#).

### **Mandatory Training Requirements**

Use of the SAFE home study assessment requires that anyone who will be administering and approving the SAFE home study attend mandatory training. Agencies shall not begin using the SAFE home study format until both the agency's home study practitioner and their supervisor, have attended the mandatory SAFE training.

There are two mandatory SAFE trainings, depending on the person's job function at their agency: Two-day initial SAFE training and the SAFE supervisor's training.

#### **Two-Day Initial SAFE Training**

The two-day initial SAFE training provides participants with an overview of the SAFE instrument, and teaches participants about the process and format of the SAFE home study and home study updates. Additionally, all participants will receive the SAFE Desk Guide, Workbook, access to all of the SAFE forms and templates, and continued technical and clinical support.

The two-day initial SAFE training is required for:

- All home study practitioners who will be licensing a home for foster care and/or approving a home for adoption.
- All supervisors who will be approving the SAFE home study report.

If a new staff person is hired to license foster homes and/or approve prospective adoptive homes, that person shall not begin utilizing the SAFE assessment until they have received the two-day initial SAFE training. Instead, they shall assist their supervisor and/or a home study practitioner who has completed the initial SAFE training in completing the SAFE home study assessment, such as assistance with the interviews, SAFE Questionnaires, and writing the home study report.

However, they shall not complete any of these functions without direct supervision from their supervisor and/or a home study practitioner who has completed the initial SAFE training.

The supervisor has the responsibility to prepare any new staff to perform SAFE home studies between the time they are hired and when they are able to attend the initial two-day SAFE training. Supervisors shall refer to their SAFE workbook to familiarize the new practitioner with the SAFE format and requirements.

### **SAFE Supervisor's Training**

The SAFE supervisor's training is targeted at supervisors who are responsible for the ongoing supervision of home studies. This is a one-day training which provides guidance as to how to supervise SAFE in the most effective manner. Participants are asked to bring their SAFE Desk Guide with them to the supervisor's training.

All participants of the supervisor's training are required to complete the SAFE two-day initial training prior to completing the supervisor's training. Supervisors need to have an understanding of the SAFE instrument, which they receive in the two-day initial training. Without understanding the instrument and process, it would be challenging to the supervisor to adequately approve and supervise the SAFE home study. Additionally, supervisors need to have their own sets of materials (i.e. the SAFE Desk Guide & Workbook), as well as access to the SAFE forms and templates; participants only receive these materials at the two-day training.

The SAFE supervisor's training is required for:

- All supervisors who will be approving the SAFE home study.

If a new supervisor who will be approving the SAFE home study is hired, that supervisor shall not approve the SAFE home study until they have received the two-day initial SAFE training and SAFE supervisor's training.

There is also an Optional SAFE Booster Training. The SAFE booster training is not a required training. However, it is available to all home study practitioners and their supervisors who have completed the two-day initial training, but would like a refresher on the SAFE process. All participants of the booster training shall have completed the two-day initial training. Participants are asked to bring their SAFE Desk Guide with them to the booster training. The booster training will review:

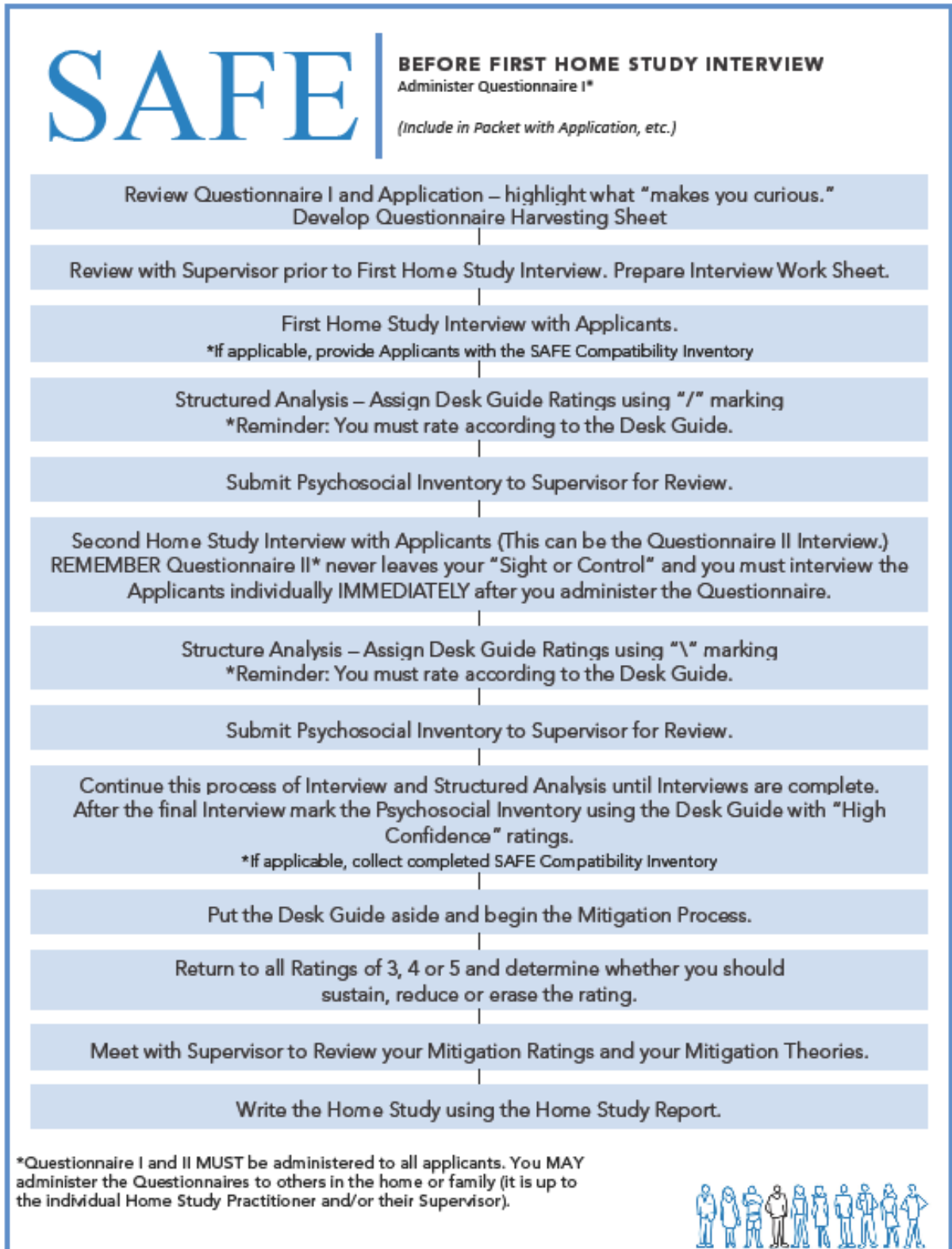
- Improvements and updates that have been made to SAFE,
- How to administer Questionnaire I and II,
- How to use the SAFE Desk Guide and Psychosocial Inventory,
- The SAFE Mitigation Process,
- How to write a SAFE Home Study, and
- Support and resources that are available to SAFE Home Study practitioners.

The Department recommends that agencies have more than one supervisor and more than one home study practitioner trained in the SAFE home study assessment to avoid any difficulties or

disruption in approval of foster homes and prospective adoptive homes should there be staff turnover. The Department will provide SAFE training at least annually.

**Documentation**

Agencies accepting placement of children from public child welfare shall document verification of all completed SAFE training through PDS Online, unless the training preceded the establishment of PDS Online. Documentation shall be provided on completed training, if requested under Ch. DCF 54 Admin. Code.







**Directions for Using the SAFE Update**

**Converting a non-SAFE Home Study to the SAFE Format**

Review the initial non-SAFE study and subsequent updates and documents looking for information that "makes you curious" and needs further clarification and understanding.

Use the SAFE Harvesting Sheet and record the things that "make you curious" from the original Home Study and supporting documents.

Administer SAFE Questionnaire II in the same manner you do for a SAFE Home Study (administer together and interview immediately after).

After the interviews, go through the SAFE Psychosocial Inventory and use the SAFE Desk Guide to assign Desk Guide ratings using a SAFE back slash (/).

Review your ratings of 3, 4 and 5 and determine if the issues, behaviors or events can be Sustained, Reduced or Erased (mitigated). Assign mitigation ratings and place them in the mitigation column.

Use the SAFE Update Report and follow the narration directions.

**Materials Required:**

- SAFE Psychosocial Inventory
- SAFE Questionnaire II
- SAFE Update Report

**Updating a SAFE Home Study**

Review all of the initial Home Study and all updated documents.

Transfer the SAFE Desk Guide Ratings of 1, 3, 4, or 5 (not 2s) and their Mitigation Ratings from the original SAFE Home Study to the Update Psychosocial Inventory in the column indicated on the Inventory (ex. 5/2 - final SAFE Desk Guide Rating 5 mitigated to a 2).

Administer the Update Questionnaire in the same manner you do Questionnaire II (administer together and interview immediately after).

After the interviews, go through the SAFE Update Psychosocial Inventory and use the SAFE Desk Guide to assign ratings using a SAFE back slash (/). You are only assigning SAFE Desk Guide ratings to issues, behaviors or events that have changed since the last Evaluation (Home Study or Update).

Review all of your ratings of 3, 4 and 5 and determine if the issues, behaviors or events can be Sustained, Reduced or Erased (mitigated). Assign mitigation ratings and place them in the mitigation column.

Use the SAFE Update Report and follow the narration directions.

**Materials Required:**

- SAFE Update Psychosocial Inventory
- SAFE Update Questionnaire
- SAFE Update Report

# **Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS**

## Background

Federal and state law requires certain information to be maintained regarding foster care licensing in Wisconsin. This policy combines federal and state requirements and enhancements made to the eWiSACWIS provider section to integrate legal and reporting requirements.

## Purpose

This policy establishes the requirements for data entry of foster homes serving children from the public child welfare system into eWiSACWIS. Additionally, this policy directs agencies how to document information about the licensing activities in eWiSACWIS. Agencies must assure all actions of either agency or contract provider staff comply with this policy.

## Applicability

This policy applies to state and county agencies responsible for Title IV-E and any other agency that acts as an agent or is under contract with a Title IV-E agency to issue licenses or approvals of foster or adoptive parents who will receive placement of children in the public child welfare system.

Therefore, the Special Needs Adoption Program, the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services, county human services or social services agencies and private child placing agencies licensing prospective foster or prospective adoptive parents who will receive placement of a public welfare child or who will receive Adoption Assistance payments.

All child placing agencies that do not have direct access to eWiSACWIS are required to report to the Department the requirements of this policy on the form Foster Home Information for WiSACWIS (DCF-F-CFS 2386) and submit to the Department within the timeframes specified for each area.

Private Child Placing Agencies can access DCF-F-CFS 2386 at:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/doc/DCF\\_F\\_CFS2386.doc](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms/doc/DCF_F_CFS2386.doc)

There are several stages in the foster care licensing process: inquiry, application, a licensing decision, and licensing modifications that will be explored in depth with the documentation requirements.

### Licensing Activity

When a licensing agency receives an inquiry about foster care, the Licensing page must be completed in eWiSACWIS when the provider:

- Submits a Completed Application as defined in Ch. DCF 56.04 Admin. Code or
- Is a relative caregiver who is required to go through the Levels of Care Foster Care Licensing Process according to Ch. DCF 58.13(3), 58.16(3) and 58.04(1) Admin. Code

Licensing agencies can use discretion regarding all other foster care licensing inquiries.

When licensing agencies begin the licensing process with applicants by providing them a copy of the agencies paper application, this date must be entered into eWiSACWIS in the “Date the Application Provided to Family” field for all relative applicants or applicants who have placement of a child pending a license. This must be completed within 5 days or by the end of the calendar month, whichever occurs first. Agencies have discretion on when to enter this information on all other types of applications.

The licensing process includes someone who is actively working with a licensing agency to pursue foster care licensure.

The input of this information into eWiSACWIS improves the Title IV-E claiming for activities related to foster care licensing.

Note: A Completed Application includes the paper application and all other materials a prospective foster or adoptive family has to provide to the licensing agency, including meeting with agency staff for interviews, allowing a physical inspection of the home, and providing required information to complete background checks in order to obtain the necessary information to complete the assessment process.

### SAFE Home Study Report

The home study report shall be completed prior to the agency rendering a decision on the application as described in Ch. DCF 56.04(5) Admin. Code.

Licensing agencies shall document the initial home study report in eWiSACWIS prior to the issuance of a foster home license or adoption approval.

Additionally, licensing agencies shall document the home study report update/recertification in eWiSACWIS prior to the issuance of a foster home license or adoption approval.



### Licensing Decisions

Licensing Agencies must document all licensing decisions for the cases required to be entered into eWiSACWIS as stated under the Applicability section. There are three actions a licensing agency can take on an application or reapplication for foster care licensure. They can issue/renew, deny, or not-renew a foster care license.

An applicant for foster care licensure or relicensure can withdraw their application or surrender their foster care license at any time.

Each licensing decision will be explored. A licensing decision shall be documented in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the licensing decision.

### Approved Applications – Issued Foster Care License

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the issuance of the foster care or treatment foster care license:

- Date of the issuance of the license (Decision Date field) and information necessary to create a foster care license.
- Exceptions and Waivers granted.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has automated the documentation of exceptions and waivers so that all exceptions and waivers approved in eWiSACWIS will pre-fill onto the foster care license for the licensing agency. Exceptions and waivers that are approved by the licensing agency and by the Department are required to be documented in eWiSACWIS within 10 days of the licensing agency or Department's decision.

In addition to the state law, the Fostering Connections Act of 2008 requires states to report annually on exceptions and waivers granted to relative caregivers and barriers that exist to licensing relative caregivers.

- Training Completed of Each Licensee.

Effective June 1, 2015, all required foster parent training commensurate with their Level of Care certification must be documented in the Professional Development System Online at <http://wcpds.wisc.edu/pdsonline/>.

- Background Checks Completed.

All background check documentation for foster homes are required to be uploaded into eWiSACWIS. Documentation from the following background checks is required to be added into the eWiSACWIS Person Background Check page:

A. Department of Justice (DOJ)

B. Integrated Background Information System (IBIS) – (This is the *Response to Caregiver Background Check* letter)

C. Adam Walsh / Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprint Check Results Letter

\*If fingerprints are rejected on the Adam Walsh/FBI background check, the rejections must also be uploaded into eWiSACWIS.

D. Wisconsin Sexual Offender Address Check, all pages of the results list must be scanned into eWiSACWIS

E. Local Law Enforcement Checks

F. Armed Forces Checks

- The completion of a Rehabilitative Review and supporting documentation of the Rehabilitative Review, if applicable.
- The Disaster Plan for the foster home.
- Provider Characteristics, which includes values for both Family Accepts and Other Family Characteristics.

Refer to the Licensing Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to approve a license, as well as how to document exceptions and waivers in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/License/Licensing-Home-Providers.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/License/Licensing-Home-Providers.pdf).

Refer to the Maintaining Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document training hours in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/Provider/Maintaining-Home-Provider.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/Provider/Maintaining-Home-Provider.pdf).

Refer to the Provider Imaging Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to add images to the provider in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/Imaging/Imaging-provider.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/Imaging/Imaging-provider.pdf).

If a county or private agency does not currently have scanning capability, the licensing agency should contact their regional DCF Area Administration staff to discuss available options to ensure that the documentation is added into eWiSACWIS. Statewide Eligibility Unit (SEU) staff can assist agencies in getting the background check information scanned and uploaded.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) has verified that the Adam Walsh / FBI fingerprint checks can be scanned and uploaded into eWiSACWIS to verify that all federal and state required caregiver checks are completed as required by Title IV-E claiming requirements. Per DOJ, current FBI regulations prohibit any federal background check documentation from being emailed between agencies. If counties or private agencies need to send caregiver background check documents to the regional Title IV-E

eligibility units to be scanned and uploaded into eWiSACWIS, they will have to either mail, hand deliver, or fax the Adam Walsh / FBI background check results. DOJ also indicated that background check documents should be dated, i.e. handwriting the date the Adam Walsh / FBI background check prior to adding the document into eWiSACWIS.

Per DOJ, this documentation would meet the federal FBI requirement associated with the dissemination of the Adam Walsh / FBI background check results. This dissemination requirement only applies to federal caregiver background check documentation. If the county or private agency does not keep a hard copy of the Adam Walsh / FBI background check in their licensing provider file, then the date the document was uploaded into eWiSACWIS would be captured and saved by the system. This date, as documented on the background check added into eWiSACWIS, would serve as verification of the document's dissemination date to DCF.

The automated process for uploading caregiver background checks directly into eWiSACWIS is outlined in a Quick Reference Guide that can be found on the eWiSACWIS Knowledge Web. You can find the quick reference guide by using the following web link:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/WiSACWIS/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/Imaging/Imaging-background-checks.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/WiSACWIS/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/Imaging/Imaging-background-checks.pdf).

Additionally, there are webcasts that outline the system enhancements, including the scanning and uploading of caregiver background check documentation. You can find the webcasts by using the following web link:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/WiSACWIS/knowledge\\_web/project-support/release-highlights-wc-notes.htm](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/WiSACWIS/knowledge_web/project-support/release-highlights-wc-notes.htm).

#### Denial of a Foster Care Application

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the denial of the foster care license:

- The date of the decision to deny the foster care application for licensure or relicensure.
- The Denial Reasons, including the specific code citations for the denial and any supporting documentation for the decision.
- The denial letter that is sent to the applicant(s).
- Documentation of a Negative Action Notice being submitted to DCF if the denial or non-renewal is based on Ch. DHS 12 Admin. Code.

Refer to the Denied Foster Home License Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document denials in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/License/Denied-License.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/License/Denied-License.pdf).

Refer to the Provider Licensing Appeals Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document appeals by the foster parent(s) in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at: [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/Provider/Provider-Licensing-Appeals.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/Provider/Provider-Licensing-Appeals.pdf).

#### Withdrawn Application for a Foster Care License or Renewal

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the decision of a relative applicant or an applicant who has submitted a Completed Application if they choose to withdraw his or her foster care application for licensure or renewal:

- The date of the decision to withdraw the application or renewal request by the applicant.
- The reason for the withdrawal.

If the applicant is a relative caregiver who is receiving Court Ordered Kinship Care payments and he or she is withdrawing his or her application in accordance with the permissible exceptions in Ch. DCF 58 to continue to be eligible for Court Ordered Kinship Care payments, then the reason is either that he or she is refusing or unlicensable.

Refer to the Maintaining Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document withdrawals in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at: [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/Provider/Maintaining-Home-Provider.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/Provider/Maintaining-Home-Provider.pdf).

#### Modification of Foster Care Licenses

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Administrative Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of notification of the occurrence of the following modifications of a foster care license:

- A change of address of the licensee.
- A licensee's wants to have a license condition changed.
- A change in the marital status of the licensee.
- A household member leaves the home.
- When someone enters the household.
- Provider Characteristic updates, which includes values for both Family Accepts and Other Family Characteristics.

Refer to the Modifying a Provider's Foster Home License for guidance on how to document license modifications in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at: [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/License/Modifying-a-License.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/License/Modifying-a-License.pdf).

#### Revocation of a Foster Care License

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the decision to revoke a foster care license:

- The date of the revocation.
- The code citations and supporting rationale for the revocation.
- Documentation of a Negative Action Notice being submitted to DCF if the revocation or non-renewal is based on Ch. DHS 12 Admin. Code.

Refer to the Licensing Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to revoke a license in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis\\_quick\\_ref\\_guides/License/Licensing-Home-Providers.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/ewisacwis_quick_ref_guides/License/Licensing-Home-Providers.pdf).